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THE MEANINGS OF SEX:
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN NORTHEAST THAILAND

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It is my hope that Thai researchers can learn, from both the strengths and weaknesses of this study, to ask the right questions and find effective approaches for studying one of the most important and pervasive parts of the lives of a group of people with whom we share much, and from whom we can learn much.

ABSTRACT

This ethnographic study examines the understanding of the concept of sex (*phêet*) among university students in Mahasarakham province in northeast Thailand. Specifically, it describes different categories of sex and related concepts, meanings associated with each, and how those are communicated through social action.

Northeast Thailand has shifted away from an agricultural-based society to a cash-based agro-industrial one. This, combined with the influence of a Bangkok-centered national elite and international globalization, has resulted in an influx of new cultural knowledge and shifting meanings related to sex, some reinforcing each other, others in conflict. Many of these conceptual conflicts are located in tensions between tradition and modernity, local culture and Bangkok culture, and Thai-ness and foreign-ness. At these points of tension, meanings are reinterpreted and recreated.

This study relies on a variety of research methods including participant-observation, interviews, and questionnaires, and thus is methodologically situated at a crossroads of qualitative and quantitative traditions. This mixed method approach facilitates a broad understanding of the concept of sex, including categories of sex, sex roles, and sex behavior.

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PREFACE

I began learning Thai in 1987 while participating in the University of Wisconsin's College Year in Thailand (CYIT) program in Chiang Mai, in the North. During this year, I did ethnographic research on prostitution, interviewing sex workers in the local brothels (DaGrossa, 1989). I was, and continue to be, interested in studying sex and gender-related topics because, like eating, sex is a fundamental part of all cultures but has not been adequately studied. Sex as a topic of study has been problematic for anthropologists in part because some expressions of it occur in private, but also because of the cultural baggage we carry with us into the field.

What I knew about prostitution in Thailand intrigued me. Domestic (i.e., Thai for Thai) prostitution is present throughout Thailand and is very similar from place to place. Even in Bangkok, most of the women come from the North and Northeast regions. I began to look at prostitution as a reflection of, and model for, sex roles in Thailand. The girls and women were considered good daughters by many people, including their families. Yet they were engaged in a practice that explicitly violated behavioral ideals for young women. Many of the women did not tell their parents exactly what they did, though some of them thought they probably knew anyway. I concluded that the value of what they were doing was greater than the value of their virginity and reputation. I now believe I was only partially correct. I failed to understand the cultural values in play. The significance of maintaining appropriate social appearances to protect social harmony facilitates the transition of women from prostitutes to village wives and mothers (Peracca, Knodel, & Saengtienchai, 1998). What for Americans would be a "lie" does not carry the same meaning for these women. I only later realized this. The significance of the effort to uphold a good appearance was lost on me. It wasn't simply a "lie" for self-preservation; it was the appropriate action for social preservation. It allowed the girls, their families, and their villages, to accept things and move on without causing conflict or loss of face. Is this also true in Isan? How

does it relate to the larger concept of sex? Does it facilitate the occurrence of other kinds of socially unacceptable sexual behaviors?

I arrived in Mahasarakham in 1989 to teach English at Srinakharinwirot University. It was my first experience in Isan. The endless rice fields delineated by berms and village roads and cut by the main highway were spectacular shades of gold and green. The small towns where the bus stopped along the way felt downright lively after miles of paddies. I rode into Mahasarkham's municipal district on an air-conditioned bus in the evening. It looked familiar, like Chiang Mai, but smaller. I soon learned that there are many other differences.

Mahasarakham is small, largely rice-farming province in the middle of the northeast region of Thailand. The Northeast is commonly known as "Isan" throughout Thailand, and it is the preferred name locally.¹ It is the poorest, most rural, and most largely populated of the four regions in the country.² Isan is linguistically and culturally distinct from the rest of Thailand though Isan people have a strong national Thai identity. People in Mahasarakham and throughout much of Isan speak "Thai-Lao," often simply called "Isan." It is a dialect of Lao and local variations in vocabulary and pronunciation are found from province to province. Additionally, all Isan people can understand Central Thai (called simply, "Thai"), the official language of the country, and most can read, write, and speak it.³

Isan has attracted fewer cultural researchers than the other regions of Thailand, though notable ones include Keyes (1967), Lefferts (1993, 1997, 1999), and Tambiah (1973). Current researchers working on sex-related topics here include Mills (1992, 1999) and Lyttleton (1999). Much of the attention given to AIDS-related issue in Thailand has gone largely to the areas

¹ The official name of the administrative region is *phâak tawanòøk chĩang nũa* (northeast region), though one rarely hears this used in Mahasarakham unless being listed or compared to another administrative region.

² The other regions are central (surrounding Bangkok), southern, and northern (including the well-known city of Chiang Mai).

³ Those who are not literate in Thai, are also generally not literate in Lao. Very few Isan people can write in Lao and so use the Thai writing system, even when rendering Isan words.

around Chiang Mai and Bangkok, the two epicenters for the HIV virus. This may be warranted, since Isan has demonstrated lower rates of infection for HIV. In other areas, such as education, Isan has, for various reasons, traditionally received less financial, political, and other attention than the other regions.

I was only 22 when I first taught at SWU, the same age as some of my students, but the differences between them and my classmates at Drew University seemed huge. Most of the prostitutes I had talked to also fell in this same age group. At the time, there weren't many anthropological studies of Thai and even fewer of Isan youth. Since then, researchers such as Mills (1990, 1992, 1995, 1999), Lyttleton (1994, 1999), and Hesse-Swain (1992, 2001) have contributed to the scholarship on Isan youth. Ethnographic studies of sex and gender most often focus on adults. But in many countries, including Thailand, young adults represent the largest segments of the population (East-West Center, 2002, p. 57-58). Thailand is just now easing out of a "youth bulge," in which "20 percent or more of a population is in the age group 15 to 24 years" (East-West Center, p. 57). With Srinakharinwirot University and seven other colleges in a small area, Mahasarakham seemed an excellent location to study the sexuality of students.

My second trip to Mahasarakham was in 1993-1994 to conduct this research and teach English at Srinakharinwirot University. Evidence of the government and non-governmental organization sectors' excellent HIV and AIDS educational campaigns during the previous few years was abundant. This is an excerpt from my field notes describing a parade on the King's birthday, which falls near World AID's Day (December 1):

There were many banners and signs and kids wore skull and crossbones, needles, whiskey bottles, and condoms on their heads like Burger King crowns. One kid wore a cigarette There were kids dressed as HIV (scary, monster-like beings), as AIDS, and as condoms. Blow-up condoms colored the parade like a spread of party balloons. The Tesaban [municipal] group walked along in beautiful *phâasîn*.⁴ The men carried 2 or 3 foot long wooden phalluses with condoms on

⁴ a sarong-like cloth worn by women

the ends. There were signs touting monogamy (*rák diaw jay diaw*⁵) and family. ... Even the little *ànúban*⁶ kids carried signs about condoms. Three or four boys from Padungnari School dressed as women with big boobs wearing *phâasîn*. As they passed, the boys standing near me squeezed one of his [sic] boobs and asked "aw máy?"⁷ One of the odder parts was the band playing "When the Saints Come Marching In." [field notes 12/5/94]

This particular selection highlights some of the many concepts related to sex that I observed during this fieldwork: masculinity and femininity, marital relations, sexual behaviors, festivities, family roles, health, and modernity. All these are sexed, and all contribute to an understanding of sex in Mahsarakham. This study set out to delve deeper into the meanings of sex among university students, whose experiences and opportunities are quite different from less educated villagers. A more in-depth understanding of sex, particularly in this under-studied area, seems important, especially given ongoing international interest in sex-related issues such as human rights, women's rights, prostitution, and AIDS. I hope this study will contribute to this understanding.

⁵ literally "one love, one heart," a popular expression suggesting faithfulness/monogamy

⁶ kindergarten

⁷ "Want (some of this)?"

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This dissertation explores the meaning of the cultural construct sex (*phêet*) for students at Srinakharinwirot University (SWU)¹ in Mahasarakham² (see Appendix A for a description of the transcription of language in this dissertation). My purpose is to uncover and describe what students mean when they talk about sex, how they parse it into meaningful categories, and how those categories are applied and experienced in everyday life.

Why Study Sex?

Sex has particular meanings in the United States (and other English speaking cultures), some of which are shared by other cultures, many of which we regard as natural and/or universal. Certainly, sexual behavior, namely copulation, is necessary to the reproduction of the human species. Biological sexual categories, though arguably not entirely arbitrary, nonetheless are culturally constructed in that their criteria and the meanings attached to them are defined variably across cultures. Even in a single culture, meanings may vary geographically, temporally, and based on differing social positions. In an ethnographic description of virtually any aspect of sex, it would be wise for the researcher to first explain what is meant by "sex," or whatever comparable concept or concepts exist in the culture under study.³

In the United States, what do we mean by *sex*? Is there a common definition? Does it always mean the same thing? If one considers how people use the word *sex*, one probably concludes that there are multiple meanings, or that sex has many different aspects. Not all of these meanings are revealed in every use. Consider these uses:

1. Have you had sex?
2. It was difficult to determine the sex of the baby bird.

¹ Srinakharinwirot University (pronounced *sīnakharinwīrōot*) was renamed Mahasarakham University in December 1995.

² Mahasarakham is pronounced *māhāsāārākhaam*.

³ The contributors to Ortner and Whitehead's 1981 volume take this approach, defining male, female, and sex in different cultural contexts.

3. There is too much sex in that movie.
4. She oozes sex.

In example 1, and possibly 3, "sex" refers to a category of actions. It may or may not refer specifically to copulation, possibly even more specifically penile-vaginal copulation. In example 2, it refers to different categories of organisms, including, though perhaps not limited to, male and female. Example 3 may, in some instances, refer to more than a category of actions, possibly including imagery or themes. The meaning of sex in example 4 is perhaps the most ambiguous since it suggests that "sex" here is something non-tangible, a quality of being or ability to arouse. Variations on the word "sex" include sexual, sexuality, sexy, sexology, sexed, transsexual, intersexed, sexism, sexaholic, and sexploitation. And the plethora of terms containing these words such as sexual addition, sex kitten, sexual history, sex maniac, sex toy, oral sex, anal sex, battle of the sexes, sexual battery, sex change, and sex education demonstrate the range of uses to which the concept is applied. What, then, do we mean by "sex"? I would suggest that the meaning(s) of sex depends on the context in which it is used.

The significance of interpretation of meaning was brought to the fore of public discussion during former President Bill Clinton's 1998 deposition in the Paula Jones case. Following the deposition he stated, "I want to say one thing to the American people. I want you to listen to me. I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky." He performed a clever, but not unreasonable, semantic dance around the issue based on an ambiguous definition of "sexual relations" negotiated by the lawyers. The President and Ms. Lewinsky had, as is now common knowledge, engaged in fellatio and allegedly vaginal penetration with a cigar. Legal experts may continue to argue about whether his actions were "sexual relations" as defined by the lawyers, but no doubt many Catholic schoolgirls would adamantly support the notion that "sex" or "sexual relations" refers specifically to penile-vaginal copulation. To do so ensures their own "good girl" status when they engage in "everything but..." (see Kawanami, 2001, for a similar logic applied by Midwestern girls in the 1950s). Sex is not simply categories of organisms based on

chromosomes, hormones, or genitals, or a category of actions, or a condition that arouses erotic feelings. It is all these and more. In U.S. culture, the concept of sex is linked to political, emotional, moral, economic, and psychological cultural concepts. Though the purpose of this dissertation is not to discuss the meanings of sex in U.S. culture, I mention them to illustrate that the meanings of "sex" in my own culture are complex, context dependent, and somewhat negotiable. They are also meanings that I, and other social scientists, carry with us when studying other cultures, meanings that may or may not actually exist in those cultures.

Meanings of "sex" in Mahasarkham are in some fundamental ways remarkably similar to meanings of sex in the United States. But the intersections of those meanings with other cultural concepts result in very different ways sex is played out and understood in social action.

Background to the Project

This project was carried out between December 1993 and December 1994 in the municipal district (*amphae muang*) of Mahasarakham province. It was funded through a 10-month Fulbright Junior Scholar research grant. I stretched the 10-month grant to 12 months to allow adequate time to collect data. SWU Mahasarakham, graciously agreed to be my host, and my advisor was Dr. Wajuppa Tossa of the Department of Western Languages and the Office of Research and International Affairs.

Fulbright prohibits host institutions from assigning work to Junior Scholars. Regardless, in communications prior to my arrival, I was asked to help the university by teaching English classes. This was not unanticipated and I gladly agreed to teach two classes per semester. However, I was assigned to four and at times taught five, including a weekend course for non-major Master's students (mostly in Thai) and a month-long stint substituting in an English graduate course. To enhance my rather limited research time, I used my classrooms (with permission from the Department) as opportunities to gather data. I am quite sure my experience was not unusual for researchers in Thailand.

Srinakharinwirot University had, in 1994, a total of 2,800 students (undergraduate and graduate) in five faculties and offered certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs. SWU primarily serves Isan though a small percentage of students come from around the country. The university's goals are, and have been, academic excellence with an emphasis on both "local intellect and universal knowledge." The university encourages and supports the conservation of Isan language, arts, and culture. The Northeastern Center for Arts and Culture is located on campus and there are a number of projects and clubs in which students and faculty are involved.

University instructors demonstrate a keen awareness of the need to provide students with educational programs with long-range opportunities. During my stay I participated in the development of programs in tourism and gender studies within the Faculty of Humanities. The university is also responsive to the needs of Thailand. The International Relations office is very active in bringing guest lecturers and students to campus, as well as in assisting instructors in going abroad for advanced degrees. During my stay, SWU was involved in the Smithsonian Folk Life Festival (and organized and sent an Isan group to Washington, D.C.), brought in Fulbright scholars as guest lecturers, hosted a group of study tour students from Drew University in New Jersey, and hosted two Australian students in short-term programs. Students at SWU are very much aware of and in contact with the world outside of Mahasarakham.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. It is, to my knowledge, one of the few studies to attempt to examine a broad ideology of sex in Thailand since the 1960s (Hanks & Hanks, 1963). There has been research on particular groups, especially marginalized ones, and specific aspects of sex and gender such as sexual behavior, family planning, and mothering, but none look at the bigger picture of sex as does this one, though they all are part of the bigger picture.

This study also contributes to the body of research done in the northeast region of Thailand, known as Isan, which has drawn less scholarly attention than have the central and northern regions, and to a lesser degree the South. Thai people share a national culture, but regional, local, and ethnic identities also exist, resulting in some cultural differences within the country. Research that contributes to understanding local cultural differences is important to avoid drawing over-generalized conclusions.

Finally, an improved understanding of the meaning of sex for youth, such as the university students in this study, will aid educators, policy makers, and medical and social workers in creating more effective sex and gender-related programs for this age group. This information may be particularly useful for those working to prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Epidemiological and sociological studies that focus primarily on behavioral aspects of sexuality often lack cultural context. Knowing the social and cultural factors behind behavior is imperative for making accurate comparisons, for example between countries and their response to AIDS (Caraël, Cleland, Deheneffe, & Adeokun, 1992). Behaviors may be the same in two populations, but the reasons for the behaviors may differ. It is important to understand the ideas and beliefs behind behaviors and the decisions that resulted in them. This study provides some context for understanding the results of sociological surveys conducted in this area.

Social Background Against Which Meanings of Sex are Constructed

Students at SWU come largely from Isan, many from village farming families. But they have different social statuses and are in different social positions from their parents and neighbors. Their education level, and thus their potential for employment, exceeds that of fellow villagers, many of whom completed only the sixth grade. Few plan to return to their home village on any permanent basis. Precedent shows that a good number will pass the national teachers' exam and be assigned to positions throughout the country. Others will get government jobs in non-educational settings, and still others will be hired by private businesses in or near Bangkok.

They have been exposed to a wealth of popular culture and social options not available to previous generations. The culture in which they live is much more complex. They are small-town kids navigating a path somewhere between the world of their grandparents and the modern, sometimes foreign world they see in TV shows, movies, books, magazines, and in the big city of Bangkok. Globalization has brought to Mahasarakham cultural knowledge that wasn't present 30 or 40 years ago. Students are exposed to a wide range of, at times conflicting, sexual discourses/symbols/concepts.

Ethnographic literature on Thailand has long noted differences between professed cultural ideals and evidence of actual social behavior related to sex and gender (e.g., prostitution, pregnancy out of wedlock). Thai culture has a remarkably high tolerance for what appear to some outsiders to be incongruities. Girls are supposed to remain virgins until marriage, though groups of young women from rural villages migrate to cities to work in the sex industry. Abortions are illegal, but women can obtain them at the local hospital. It is insufficient to write these examples off as outliers or exceptions, because they occur with some regularity. How do students make sense of them?

For years, these incongruities went relatively unexplored, though more recent research has taken them up as central research issues (Chetame, 1995; Cook & Jackson, 1999; Mills, 1999; Sittitrai, Phanuphak, Barry, Sabaiying, & Brown, 1991; Tannenbaum, 1995; van Esterik, 1989, 2000). One approach to examining these ostensible paradoxes is by distinguishing between "culture" and "practice," or the parallel dichotomy "ideal culture" versus "real culture." Culture, however, is not simply the sum of all ideals: It includes all socially recognized possibilities, including those that are not generally favored. Culture (systems of symbols; shared knowledge) is put into practice (social action) through interpretation. Thus, to gain a deeper understanding of how members of a culture group go from a social rule, norm, or ideal, to a particular behavior, we must learn how they interpret the rule, norm, or ideal. For example, students are in full accord

that abortion is wrong, but also suggest that it's the best course of action in some situations. To make sense of this (since we presume it is sensible to the students), we must first look at how students interpret pregnancy and abortion in different contexts. They are much less accepting of a married adult having an abortion than an unmarried student. A number of values and meanings come into play here that must be understood to know the meaning of students' belief that abortion is wrong. In some cases, no incongruity exists at all, but rather the observer fails to account for the entire meaning in the situation. In other cases, genuinely conflicting discourses are present.

The society in which SWU students have grown up is a highly sexed and sexualized one, though one that also has social rules defining appropriate expression of sex. Students' understandings of sex and its associated concepts are set against a background of various tensions which can be source points for negotiation of meaning and culture change.

One of these tensions is between local Isan (Lao) culture and national Bangkok (Siamese) culture. The area and people living in what is now northeast Thailand are historically and culturally tied to Lao. Local Isan culture historically lacked well-defined sex roles and was relatively open about sexual behavior. During the Isan Rocket Festival, for example, participants enjoyed bawdy sexual banter and explicit sexual imagery. Sex was viewed as a natural part of life and sexual satisfaction was an expectation for both the man and woman in a marriage. People were expected to be discreet, but expression of sexuality was permitted in appropriate contexts. From the late nineteenth century, the meanings of sex dictated by the Bangkok elite, who defined the national culture, were rather different. Women's and men's roles became clearly defined and sexual behavior was relegated to the male domain, resulting in a sexual double standard. But SWU students are part of the nation and this national culture of sex is part of their cultural knowledge. The centrality of Bangkok in the conception of the national Thai identity goes back to the 1800s when Bangkok and its administered areas were referred to as "inner towns" and those

beyond, such as the Lao towns under Siamese control, were regarded as "outer towns" (Breazeale, 1975, p. 32).

Another tension which exists is between tradition and modernity.⁴ At times, it corresponds to the Isan-Bangkok opposition: Rural Isan is conceptually linked to tradition and old ways of life; Bangkok is linked to modern thinking, consumer goods, and urban opportunities. In other contexts, however, the opposition shifts to Thai tradition versus foreign (Western) modernity. Here, Isan and Bangkok are subsumed under a broader Thai culture. The Thai way may be seen as morally superior (e.g., students' disapproval of Western "free sex") or well established and effective (e.g., Buddhism); but in other contexts, the foreign way may be seen as preferable (e.g., the view of some female students about men's behavior). Globalization and the proliferation of mass media have exacerbated the tension between Thai-ness and otherness, creating a mass of alternative ways to interpret values and behaviors. For young people in Mahasarakham, sex communicates meaning about a multitude of concepts, including tradition, modernity, childhood, adulthood, education, obedience to parents, independence, fun, suffering, responsibility, hierarchy, ethnicity, and morality.

Sex and Gender in Mahasarakham

In the 1960s, anthropologists began differentiating between sex as biologically determined and sex as socially influenced by using the term "sex" for the former and "gender" for the latter, a distinction not recognized consistently by larger American society.⁵ This distinction was not widely adopted and the two continue to be used interchangeably in many circumstances. But still, sometimes only one or the other is appropriate. Gender, for example, never refers

⁴ Mills (1990, 1992, 1999) addresses the relationship of tradition and modernity to concepts of femininity among young, female Isan migrants. The conflict her research revealed is one between Northeast "maidenly modestly and virginal beauty" and modern, Western, consumer-oriented "seductive visions of modern womanhood" found in Bangkok (p. 85).

⁵ Take, for example, the Hawaiian Humane Society's use of "gender" on their 2003 intake cards to indicate whether an animal is male or female, or use of the term "sex roles" in anthropology to indicate social activities assigned to males and females.

directly to sexual behavior. And sex never refers to grammatical categories of words. Over the years, sex has increasingly become associated with copulation.

In the academic world, scholars who work in sex/gender studies frequently differentiate between the two (e.g., Butler, 1990;⁶ Cook & Jackson, 1999, p. 3; Fausto-Sterling, 2000; Mascia-Lees & Black, 2000; Rubin, 1984; Sanday, 1981⁷; Suggs & Miracle, 1993). When distinguished in this way, *sex* concerns biological and/or erotic aspects of male, female, and transgenderism. *Gender* relates to the meanings society give to biological sex, often, but not always, mirroring the biological categories. This separation of sex and gender can be helpful from a theoretical and cross-cultural perspective, for example, in addressing the role of biology versus culture in the construction of sex roles, a discussion that peaked in the 1970s, but which continues today (de Beauvoir, 1953; Mead, 1935; Ortner, 1974; Ortner & Whitehead, 1981; Rosaldo & Lamphere, 1974; Schlegel, 1977, 1990). However, since about 1980, gender theorists have increasingly viewed biological *sex* also as a constructed category, recognizing that it is not devoid of cultural meaning (Fausto-Sterling, 2000; Meigs, 1990; Ortner & Whitehead, 1981). The separation of *sex* and *gender*, in and of itself, is culturally biased. It arises from a particular cultural context and is based on the assumption that biology is free from cultural interpretation.

Sex in Mahasarakham is a semantic field that overlaps considerably with my own notions (derived from an educated, white, lower middle class, suburban South Jersey upbringing), but it does not match up exactly. The way in which people in Mahasarakham (and Thailand in general) categorize their world is different. The way in which they interpret and apply those categories is different

In situations in which the anthropologist's culture and the informants' culture have similar concepts, it is very important to thoroughly examine and understand the ways in which those

⁶ Butler does not utilize a sex/gender distinction, but rather analyzes their distinction.

⁷ Sanday makes the same conceptual distinction gender but more frequently uses the term "sex-role plans" to refer to the cultural aspects of sex.

concepts are made meaningful in social practice, in order to flesh out the differences and prevent bias and assumptions from clouding analysis. The differences are sometimes subtle, but significant.

In both the Thai and Lao languages, *phêet* is typically defined as both biological sex and grammatical gender. It is not defined in dictionaries as behavior. Most students, however, first think of sexual behavior when the term is raised out of context. For example, when asked what I was researching, I usually replied, "I am studying about the subject of sex [*phêet*]." Almost everyone initially thought I was studying about (erotic) sexual behavior. There are many terms, both polite and vulgar, to indicate sexual intercourse. Those using *phêet* include *phêetsămphan* (sexual relations) and *rúam phêet* (literally to mix sex/es, or to have sex), both rather polite forms.⁸ One also sometimes hears "*mii sék*," borrowed from the English "to have sex." One time when I was looking through Thai journals in the university library, I found one with a picture of Michelangelo's statue "David," on the cover. A student had written across it in Thai letters, "*sék*." There is noticeable borrowing of English words associated with the domain of sex. For example, the Thai (and Lao) lexicon has no word for sexy. Students in Mahsarakham have borrowed the English word "sexy" and use it to describe something or someone who exudes what we would refer to as sexuality or sexual attractiveness. Perhaps because of that, sexy is most often used to describe things that are modern and/or Western. Of course, their criteria for "sexy" differ.⁹ Even when they use English words, the meanings are localized ones.

⁸ There is a rich lexicon for copulation as well as other sexual behaviors, from the euphemistic to the vulgar. Students did not use vulgar terms in my presence since it would have been inappropriate. It is agreed by most students that men use vulgar terms (e.g., *yét*, "to fuck") more than women, though I was unable to verify this. It can be said with certainty, however, that it is considered *less* appropriate for women to use vulgar language than it is for men.

⁹ A fourth year, female English major exclaimed with delight upon my arrival at the university to pick up my housemate on my motorcycle, "Ajaan, you look so sexy!" I had been working at home and was wearing a loose-fitting, sleeveless, crewneck, cotton shirt and knee-length khaki walking shorts with socks and sneakers. My appearance was not so much erotic as modern and Western. Western femininity, however, is inextricably linked to sexual permissiveness, and consequently my appearance was "sexy."

Phêet is also a way of categorizing organisms and language, as we do in English. There are two primary categories of (human) sex: *phêetyĩng* (female['s] sex) and *phêetchaay* (male['s] sex).¹⁰ These are translated as female and male. These categories are based largely on one's physical body -- some people are born *phêetyĩng* and some *phêetchaay*. Of course, sometimes a person is born with ambiguous genitalia or some other intersexed condition. These people fall somewhere in between or in both categories and are referred to as *kàthæy*, or hermaphrodites. I recall a front page picture in a Thai language newspaper of a child of this type, posed spread-eagled to display the perceived abnormality.

More common in everyday language than *phêetyĩng* and *phêetchaay* are *phûuyĩng* and *phûuchaay*. *Phûu* means "person" and these refer to categories whose criteria are the social roles one plays.¹¹ They are usually translated as girl or woman and boy or man (they are not age restrictive). Normally, people who fall in the category *phêetyĩng*, female, also adopt the social roles of a *phûuyĩng*, woman, and those in the category *phêetchaay*, male, adopt the social roles of a *phûuchaay*, man; but not always. One may be what is conceptually a "male woman" or a "female man" though it is not stated as such - they are also referred to as *kàthæy*. Because students' categories of sexual identity appear so similar to American ones, it is tempting to assume that they convey the same meanings. As this study shows, they do not, at least not exactly.

Though there is no word meaning "gender" in Lao or Thai, students' use of *phêet* and *phûu* in different contexts evidences a linguistic and conceptual differentiation between biological and social sex that is also displayed in social practice. Americans have different terms, but

¹⁰ It is noteworthy that these categories are applied to humans only. Male and female animals are referred to as *tuaphûu* and *tuamia*, respectively.

¹¹ Although another meaning of *phûu* is "male," male is not regarded as the default or root, like it sometimes is believed to be, or is accused of being, in English (e.g., man, woMAN, MANKind). *Phûu* meaning "male" only refers to animals, never to people. It should be noted that *mêe*, the female counterpart to the male *phûu*, also means "mother."

inconsistently differentiate those terms conceptually and show little differentiation in practice. There is, for example, no normal or socially accepted ways to understand and categorize transgendered individuals (who themselves distinguish between the biological body and the social psyche; Fausto-Sterling, 2000, pp. 107-108).

Throughout my study I often use the word *phêet*, instead of sex, to remind us that that we are not talking about the American concept of sex, but rather the students' concept. However, to more accurately reflect use and meanings of *phêet*, when I do use English, I use the term *sex* in reference to erotic sexual behavior, biological categories, and social roles. I also use female and male as glosses of *phêetyĩng* and *phêetchaay*, and woman/girl and man/boy as glosses of *phûuyĩng* and *phûuchaay*. In this way, explanations rely on local linguistic categories for explanatory purposes.

Approach to Studying the Concept of Sex

To describe the meanings students attach to *phêet*, how they divide it into meaningful categories, and how they apply those categories to lived experience, I adopted an approach influenced by traditional ethnographic description, ethnographic semantics, and symbolic anthropology.

Most helpful in clarifying my approach were Michele Rosaldo's *Knowledge and Passion* (1980), a semantic analysis of two Ilongot concepts, which are key to understanding headhunting, and Malinowski's work on the Trobriand Islanders, particularly his semantic study of the language of magic and gardening (1965) and his work on Trobriand sexuality (1929, 1955).¹² I also found the symbolic approaches of Clifford Geertz (1961, 1973) and Sherry Ortner to be very informative, though in my own study I am not dealing so much with antecedent references of specific symbols, but rather representations of meaning through social action and social

¹² Malinowski's (1929) *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia*, though more on topic with this study, is a straightforward descriptive ethnography, of remarkable detail at times but lacking the intensive analysis of meaning found in *Coral Gardens* (1965).

relationships. Because human social action conveys shared meanings to the social group, it is symbolic in a broad sense.

To effectively address the research question "What does sex/sexuality mean for SWU students and how is it expressed in their social lives?" I looked at sex (*phêet*) in terms of both conceptual ideology and performance. It is at the intersection of ideology and performance where contested areas of culture are negotiated, so it is necessary to look at both to understand the range of meanings we encounter. Both Rosaldo (1980) and Malinowski (1929, 1955) focus on meaning as evidenced in verbal discourse and experienced in social action.

To understand Ilongot headhunting, Rosaldo delves into the Ilongot construction of emotion. Headhunting is both an expression of and response to emotion, primarily passion (*liget*). *Liget* is closely tied to knowledge (*beya*), which controls and shapes the expression of *liget*. As she explains, passion and knowledge for the Ilongot are similar to the English concepts, but they are not exactly the same. Passion, sometimes translated as anger, contains some elements of anger, but belongs to a "unique semantic field" (1980, p. 22). To get at the underlying meaning(s), she examines sentences in which the terms are used, as well as the social processes and activities they describe.

In my previous research on domestic prostitution in Chiang Mai (DaGrossa, 1989), I described the situation and was able to partially explain how, in a culture which emphasizes female self-control and virginity before marriage, teenagers volunteer themselves or are sent by parents to be prostitutes. But my analysis was incomplete, largely because I didn't pay enough attention to the meaning of sex (both sexed social roles and erotic and reproductive behaviors) for the people involved in prostitution, particularly indirectly related values and beliefs. In this study, I also initially sidestepped this fundamental issue in favor of focusing on sexual behaviors. But I later realized that before I could grasp the meanings in students' sexual behaviors (let alone find an effective way to learn what they are), I needed to understand more about their conceptual

domain of sex. Rosaldo's (1980) explanation of passion and knowledge are keys to understanding the meaning of headhunting for the Ilongot. In my study, I attempt to explain key concepts which help outsiders understand sex for university students in Mahasarakham.

Although this is not a symbolic study in the way usually meant in anthropology, it draws on the work of Clifford Geertz (1961, 1973) and his student Sherry Ortner (1973, 1974; Ortner & Whitehead, 1981).¹³ Geertz (1973) sometimes uses the term "symbol" in a broad way as anything that conveys shared meaning about some other concept, object, action, emotion, or relationship. Human behavior is "symbolic action" (Geertz 1973, p. 10) in that it conveys meanings that are understood by the social group. A symbol here is anything that conveys collectively understood direct or associated meanings. Ilongot headhunting does not represent passion (*liget*). But headhunting has an association with and conveys information about *liget*. One might even say that *liget* is the reason for headhunting, and so an understanding of *liget* is essential to understanding headhunting. In this dissertation, I use the term *concept*, rather than symbol, though I maintain that it functions much as symbols do for Geertz. Headhunting and *liget* are related symbolic concepts because they each convey meaning about the other in contexts in which they are associated.

Cultural concepts are subject to individual interpretation, but in general are collectively imbued with meaning -- that is, they are culturally constructed. They are "produced, perceived, and interpreted" by social actors (Geertz, p. 7) who in turn produce them to be perceived and (re) interpreted by others. Because of this, they have the ability to develop new meanings. As contexts change, meanings change. It is a regenerative process that can both reinforce and reconstruct aspects of culture, thus, the "making" of sex is part of the "making" of culture, to borrow a phrase

¹³ Ortner also subscribes to practice theory (1989; see Bourdieu, 1977, de Certeau, 1984, Giddens, 1984, Sahlins, 1981, on practice theory). There is some overlap between symbolic, semantic, and practice theory approaches since cultural meanings are expressed through speech, nonverbal communication, and social action.

from Ortner (1996). It is a common observation by Thai and non-Thai alike that cultural change is taking place around the domain of sex. Culture change involves the acquisition of new concepts and/or new meanings associated with existing concepts. Different meanings are not only produced over time, but over social space. People in different social positions may have different interpretations of the same concepts since each views them from his or her own particular perspective, limited by his or her position in the social organization. Thus, in cultures where men and women occupy different positions within the culture, each may understand sexual concepts such as *male* and *female* differently, at the same time that broader cultural meanings exist.

The meaning of cultural concepts, whether objects, actions, emotions, or relationships, can only be understood in relation to other cultural concepts and categories, for this is how they make sense to people within the culture (Ortner & Whitehead, 1981). In Rosaldo's study, headhunting does not exist separately from passion and knowledge and must be understood as it relates to them. Malinowski (1965) describes how Trobriand gardening activities are intertwined with magical practice and meaning. For Ortner, symbols (i.e., concepts) of sex do not exist in isolation from symbols of, for example, prestige, wealth, or virtue. Social actors understand them in relation to each other as they "are articulated through social behavior" (Geertz, 1973, p. 15). Some connections between cultural concepts are more obvious than others, which is why it is important for ethnographers to observe concepts in social context. Separating cultural concepts from their social context results in a meaningless collection of unrelated items. They must be studied in relation to the social events in which they occur.

A symbolic (and in this case semantic) approach to sexuality is efficacious because it is "particularly powerful in dealing with the tangled domain of gender problems" and directs the dialogue away from (our own) naturalistic assumptions (Ortner & Whitehead, p. ix). In my original study of domestic prostitution in Chiang Mai, my analysis was constrained by my culturally biased assumptions, particularly about sex and morality. A conceptual approach, based

on an exploration of the domain of sex, has allowed me to understand both prostitution and student sexuality better. This approach also limits the temptation to look for gender determinants, single factors in a cultural system that allegedly account for statuses of gender.

Through an examination of the conceptual domain of sex, related concepts, the social actions in which they are invoked, and the contexts in which individuals in different positions communicate them, we can understand how social actors, in this case university students, make sense of their sexed world.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 gives background to the study, describing Mahasarakham and Srinakharinwirot University in greater detail. Mahasarakham and the University have changed since the study was done. The University has added a second campus in another district of the province and the student population has increased. New commercial, governmental, and residential buildings have been erected throughout the city. I have not returned there to witness these changes; I have received this information from friends at the University and from the Internet. The province continues on a course of modern development as planned by the provincial administration. This has certainly resulted in greater cultural complexity, though meanings of sex and concepts associated with sex have probably not changed a great deal during my nine year absence. The description and analysis presented here I believe apply today.

The literature review in Chapter 3 is grouped by research focus: history, household organization, religion, marginal groups, and sexual behavior. These topics cover a large part of the relevant research done in Thailand. It is important to note that there are differences between the Northeast and other parts of Thailand, so it should not be assumed that features found in a village outside of Bangkok are also found in Mahasarakham. However, the dominant Bangkok culture permeates the entire country so many of these non-Isan studies are relevant and applicable.

Chapter 4 details the methodology of the study. A truly mixed-methodology was used with the bulk of data coming from participant-observation, formal and informal interviews, students' class writing, and survey questionnaires. Utilizing a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was quite valuable in that different research techniques resulted in different kinds of information, which when considered together give a much richer picture of the meanings of sex for students. The mixed methodology also helped to highlight assumptions made by the researcher, confirm accurate understandings of the students' interpretations, and point out areas that require further exploration. Methodological problems are discussed and include problems with the research methods themselves, as well as problems arising specific to my situation as a researcher and teacher.

Chapter 5 is an analysis of primary categories of sex. I first examine *male* and *female* as major categories of sex, describing their similarities and differences. I then flesh out other categories of sexual identity, including gays, lesbians, and transgendered people. The meaning of each category is explored from the perspectives of students who position themselves within and outside the categories.¹⁴

Chapter 6 is devoted to the concepts that help us get at the meaning of sex for students in Mahasarakham. *Mobility* and *modernity* affect everyone in Isan. The movement of men and women to find jobs away from their home villages has had profound impacts on many aspects of life, not the least of which is sex and sex roles. *Sexual discourse at a national level* is heavily influenced by the government and other elites in Bangkok. The meanings government agencies and their representatives attach to sex are powerful and have immediate and profound effects on how people conceptualize sex. Laws and public policy provide written statements about sex that carry with them the authority of the State. Public health agencies are longstanding authorities on sexual behaviors. Schools are charged with the task of providing students the information they

¹⁴ To my knowledge, I spoke directly with no lesbian students, though I bring in other research.

need to be successful citizens. However, perhaps the most effective purveyor of sexual meaning is the mass media, some of which is controlled by the government. Movies, television shows, music, and magazines provide countless images for students to interpret. More traditional expressions of and influences on sex include festivals and celebrations. They give a historical sense of the role of sexuality, but also reveal some very modern aspects of sex. Incorporated in all aspects of social life are three values that are discussed in this chapter: hierarchy, *jay yen* (cool-heartedness), and social harmony. Other values, such as modesty, are more obviously related to the concept of sex, and are mentioned elsewhere in the dissertation. I cover hierarchy, *jay yen*, and social harmony in some detail precisely because they are more easily overlooked.

Understanding how they impact sex is necessary to understand how students' concept of sex differs from my own. Finally, an understanding of sex is not complete (at least in Thailand) without giving attention to *religion* and *moral action*. Although Buddhism says very little directly about sex, it structures moral thought and action in Mahasarakham and so is essential to understand sex, particularly in social contexts. It is also necessary to understand how students interpret morality and moral action in order to see how sex, especially sexual behavior, is different in Mahasarakham than in the US, although the meanings overlap.

The focus of Chapter 7 is how meanings of sex are expressed in social relationships. It focuses on students' roles in the family and among friends. They are primarily sons, daughters, brothers, and sisters and these roles have the greatest significance for most students. But I also describe students' views of husbands, wives, mothers, and fathers, for university students are approaching the age of marriage and have given thought to it. I also discuss relationships that have some romantic component or long-term possibility, primarily those in which the participants put themselves or their partners into the categories *fæn* (explained in the chapter), boyfriend, or girlfriend. I describe the qualities they desire and avoid, and to a limited degree, sexual behaviors.

Chapter 8, Conclusions, summarizes the findings of this study and some of the more salient points. Students at Srinakharinwirot University have been sexually enculturated in a world that is both locally traditional and globally modern. Their concept of sex is broad and complex. It is insufficient to talk about traditional Isan or Thai culture as the source of their information, for they have been exposed to a far wider range of cultural concepts. Their culture is a blend of local, national, and international, traditional, and modern.

In this dissertation, I describe key concepts related to sex for university students in Mahasarakham and expound in areas where they differ from my own. Like Malinowski, Rosaldo, Geertz, and Ortner, I am looking at meaning and concepts. This is a study of the semantic field we call "sex" in an attempt to fill in contextual meaning so we know what we're saying when we talk about it in Mahasarakham.

CHAPTER 2. MAHASARAKHAM, THE EDUCATION PROVINCE

Mahasarakham is located in the center of the Northeast region of Thailand. Though small in area, it is home to seven colleges and one university, hence its nickname, the "education province." Mahasarakham is one of the less affluent provinces in the country, and there are few big city distractions for the many students who call it home, either temporarily or permanently. The *muang*, or municipal, district of the province has the appearance of a small town rather than a city, with one main road lined with provincial government buildings, banks, and shops, and a surrounding "downtown" area. In the more rural provinces, the *muang* is typically the most developed area, usually the governmental and business hub of a province. Mahasarakham sees few foreigners save for guests of the university, a few U.S. Peace Corps volunteers, and a handful of missionaries.¹ There is little impetus for the public to learn English and so little is spoken beyond the borders of the university. However, people there are receptive to foreigners, especially Americans, who are likely to hear "hello" and sometimes greetings along the lines of "hey, babe" (which a young boy told me he learned from an English song) from various locals. It is, overall, a clean, quiet, easy-paced town.

History

This dissertation describes the meaning of sexuality in a thoroughly modern context. However, to understand sex in present-day Thailand, it helps to place it in some historical context. It is particularly important here to understand the relationship between Isan and Siamese Thai. Though unfamiliar to most foreigners, Mahasarakham has a history whose length and significance are intimated by its frequent mention in ancient Lao/Isan literature and folktales. Lao folktales combine elements of myth, history, and lessons for living. Remnants of this colorful and sometimes grand past remain in the form of religious artifacts, partially reconstructed ruins, and

¹ Since this research was completed, Mahasarakham University has actively sought to increase the number of foreign scholars at its campuses.

old temples. Much of Isan's history is gleaned from oral tales since the only written records exist on deteriorating palm leaf manuscripts, except for printed histories propagating the ideology of the Kingdom of Thailand published in Bangkok.

In Kantarawichai district at Wat Putthamonkol (Putthamonkol Temple), there is a standing Buddha image that dates from the Dvaravati period² and is highly revered by Mahasarakham people.³ The Chi River, the largest natural water source for the province, is mentioned in several folk epics, as are local villages: "A village, Chiang Hian, about 5 miles from the town of Mahasarakham, is actually mentioned in the tale ['Phadaeng Nang Ai']"⁴ (Tossa, 1990, p. 1).

The land under Mahasarakham has at various points in history been part of the Lao, Khmer, and Siamese empires, and has been impacted upon by a number of outside polities including Funan, Chenla, Dvaravati, Khmer, Sukhothai, Lanna (northern Thai), Lan Chang (Lao), and Ayudhaya (in approximate chronological order), though it remained relatively autonomous (Keyes, 1987; Rogers, 1996). People of the region today are descended from Tai,⁵ Mon, Khmer, Indians, Chinese, and Euro-Americans (Wyatt, 1982, p. 1). Evidence of Indian influence appears in about the 4th century A.D. (Rogers, p. 58), probably brought by traders. Buddhism, which thoroughly permeates the culture, came to the region somewhere around the 7th century. It spread throughout the region, eventually combining with local animistic beliefs and practices and firmly entrenching itself in the daily life of the people.

² The Dvaravati period existed from the 6th to 11th centuries when the Mon dominated the central region of what is today Thailand. The Mon brought elements of Indian culture to the area.

³ Legend says it was built by Thao Linthong to redeem his sin for killing his father, the ruler of Kantarathirat. At Wat Suwanawas, Thao Linthong erected another standing image known as Pra Yun to redeem the sin of killing his mother, Nang Buathong.

⁴ "Phadaeng Nang Ai" (pronounced *phaa deeng naang aay*) is an Isan folk tale about a pair of star-crossed lovers (a popular theme in Isan and Thai literature).

⁵ Tai refers to the culturally and linguistically related peoples who spread out over mainland Southeast Asia starting about 1000 years ago. It includes the Thai, Shan, Laotians, Lue, Black Tai, and so forth (Wyatt, 1982, p. 2)

Lao people moved into the region over a period of several hundred years beginning in about the 14th century (Rogers, 1996, p. 152; Stuart-Fox, 1997, p. 12). By the 15th century, Isan had become part of the Kingdom of Lan Chang, whose capital was Luang Prabang, in what is today Laos (Wyatt, 1982, p. 82; Rogers, pp. 166-167). In the next century the capital of Lan Chang was moved to Viang Jan (Vientiane) to protect it from the Burmese and in response to changing interests in the region (Stuart-Fox, p. 12). At this time, Siam and Lan Chang made an agreement delineating each kingdom. This agreement was marked in religious ceremonies by each side (Breazeale, 1975, p. 3). Lao kings of this time were devout Buddhists who actively promoted the religion. Isan remained part of Lan Chang until the late 1700s when military invasions by two Siamese armies forced the Lao into a new agreement giving them principality status. They remained, however, to a large degree independent. Chaophraya Chakri (the leader of one of the armies) later ascended the Siamese throne to become Rama I (King Yod Fa Chulalok, reign 1782-1809) of the Chakri dynasty (Wyatt, p. 145). In the late 1700s, King Rama I had returned the Siamese government and laws to a more consciously Buddhist orientation which had been lost during previous reigns (Rogers, 1996, p. 189). He redefined the King as benevolent and paternalistic, an image that continues today. Rama I's reign is generally regarded as the turning point for Thailand towards a modern nation. It was also at this time that "the authorities in Bangkok" became interested in the outer areas of the kingdom and began increasing control in the region, mainly through deals struck with local lords (Rogers, p. 190).

After the death of Rama II (King Loet La Nabhalai, reign 1809–1824), Anuvong, tributary ruler of Viang Chan, made a final attempt to take back Lan Chaang land and repatriate Lao people (Breazeale, 1975, 8-9; Stuart-Fox, p. 14-15). The Siamese responded and the Anuvong retreated. The area now known as Isan was well under Siamese control a short time later after Siam promised protection to local rulers in return for taxes and manpower. Siamese leaders sought to fortify the eastern provinces and increase the power of Bangkok by bringing

Lao people across the Mekong River and resettling them in what is now Northeast and Central Thailand (Wyatt, 1982, p. 171). New cities were created and Siamese influence there increased.

Though the Isan area was part of Lan Chang for centuries, resulting in a large influx of Lao,⁶ in reality, local farmers, were probably relatively unaffected by the turmoil of the governing kings. Even after Siamese took control, local ruling families governed the region until the end of the 19th century (Wyatt, 1982, p. 160). People of the area were ethnically identified with the Lao across the Mekong River,⁷ but in practice their political identification was with the local cities and the lords who controlled them (Cohen, 1991, p. 68-69). The King's formal rule over the region was minimal.

Throughout the 1800s, Western pressures and influence increased. Western influence on both the Siamese nation and the northeast region grew significantly after the ascension of Rama IV (King Mongkut) to the throne. He was an intellectual who was deeply interested in the "scientific" mind of the West and actively cultivated relationships with Westerners.

During the latter part of the 19th century, King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) began to transform Thailand into a modern nation state (see Bunnag, 1976, for detail about this period). The Minister of the Interior, the King's brother Prince Damrong, was increasingly concerned about the area after Siam was forced by French colonialists to give up control of the area east of the Mekong River. In an effort to consolidate and unite the nation, Damrong responded by dividing the country into five main administrative circles, which further divided into small units. The local lords maintained their status during a transition period, but soon lost power and influence to short-term bureaucrats appointed from the court at the Kingdom's center (Cohen, 1991, p. 70-71). It was at this time the region acquired the name "Isan"⁸ because Damrong

⁶ Even now, more ethnic Lao live in Thailand than in Laos (Stuart-Fox, 1997, p. 15).

⁷ Mekong River is the standard English spelling used by the Tourism Authority of Thailand and other major organizations. The Thai name is pronounced *mĕe (náam) khǒong*.

⁸ Isan is sometimes spelled Esarn or Isarn. It is pronounced *iisāan* and means "northeast" in the Pali language.

refused to refer to the people as "Lao" (Cohen, p. 84). Despite political and educational reform, Isan continued to lie somewhat outside the area of national concern because the central elite saw them as "ignorant and uncultivated, to be treated with contempt" (Breazeale, 1975, p. 268, quoted in Cohen, p. 73).

Chulalongkorn's son, King Vajiravudh (Rama VI, reign 1910-1925), built nationalism by instituting the motto "Nation, Religion, and Monarchy."⁹ The role of Buddhism in the state was transformed from cosmologically legitimizing the King, to representing a national Thai identity. This strengthened national identity made the neglectful treatment of the Northeast more apparent. In the 1930s, dissent in the region was visible.

During World War II, the Free Thai movement in the Northeast waged guerrilla warfare against the Japanese and the Bangkok government that supported them. After the war, Isan representatives began to oppose the central government's economic and political discrimination against the region, and between 1949 and 1952, several key Isan political figures were assassinated. From the 1960s until the 1980s, Isan was a rich breeding ground for communist insurgents. It was more "disaffection with the government in Bangkok and antagonism toward its corrupt and haughty officialdom, than ... a strong identification with the ideology and the goals of the insurgency" that drew Isan people into collaboration with the communist party (Cohen, 1991, p. 76). Attempts to deal with the communist insurgency in Isan militarily failed, so the government turned to economic solutions.

Land in Isan had continued to be subdivided as the population grew, and usable land was increasingly degraded. United States interests in the area led them to channel large amounts of economic aid to the Northeast (and therefore into Thailand in general, which pleased the central government). U.S. monies went toward infrastructure (most famously the Bangkok-Udon portion

⁹ "Nation, Religion and Monarchy" (*châat saasanăa phrămahăakasât*) is an adaptation of the British "God, King, and Country." However, as Cohen (1991) writes, it "probably unconsciously, expresses a fundamental tension in the Thai political structure, as well as its mediation through religion" (p. 69).

of the Friendship Highway which runs to Nong Khai), development programs, anti-communist propaganda, and research (Cohen, 1991, p. 79-80). Of perhaps greater impact were the four U.S. military bases established in the region. Their economic and social effects, both upon creation and termination, were tremendous. The infusion of money and personnel resulted in increases in sex workers and employment (for mostly men) in the mechanical and construction trades which results in an able workforce for international employment. After the US withdrew from the region, the insurgency continued. The central government then instituted more long-range planning (still addressing the economic backwardness of the region). But the politico-economic gap between Isan and the central region continued to grow and contributed to the migration of Isan people to Bangkok in search of wage work. The migrants sent money home, which contributed some to the economy of the region. However, it also increased dependency on Bangkok (Cohen, p. 82). Insurgency in the region all but disappeared after about 1980. Isan continues to experience economic and related social problems.

Geography

At 5,289 square kilometers, Mahasarakham is one of the smallest of Thailand's 76 provinces (KKU, 2002). One can make the trip to Mahasarakham from Bangkok by tour (air-conditioned) or public (not air conditioned) bus in about 7.5 hours. It is also possible to reach Mahasarakham by plane or train via Khon Kaen,¹⁰ followed by a one-hour bus ride.

Mahasarakham province borders Khon Kaen to the west/northwest, Kalasin to the east/northeast, Roi Et to the east, Surin to the south and Buriram to the southwest. It lies on the Korat Plain just above sea level and is without major hills or mountains.

¹⁰ Khon Kaen is the second largest city in Thailand by area.

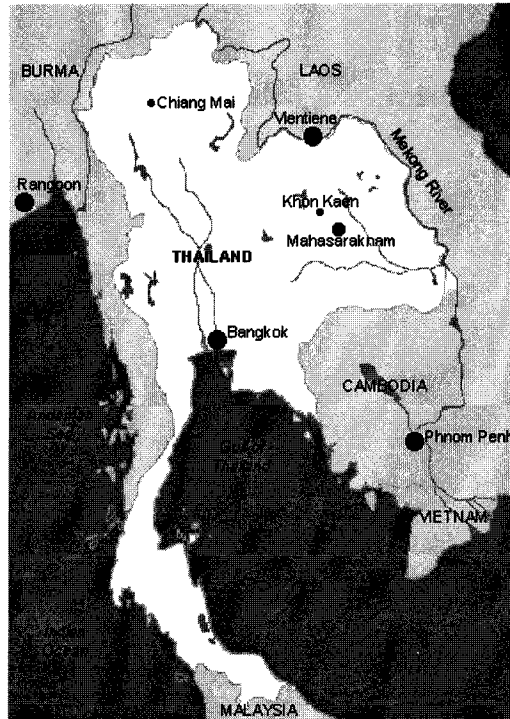


Figure 2.1 Map of Thailand

The climate in Mahasarakham is subtropical and semiarid with three seasons: hot, rainy, and cold. The rains begin toward the end of the hot season in May and fall through mid-October. Rain can be unpredictable (increasingly so due to massive deforestation) and tends to be insufficient for local crops. Come November, the temperatures drop and the rain all but ceases. Days are hot, but the nighttime temperature can drop up to 20 degrees (Fahrenheit). In February, the temperatures begin to rise again. Average daily temperatures can be as high as 93 degrees in April, and as low as 71 degrees in November (Committee, 1994, p. 1-3).

Political Organization

The province is headed by a Governor, a representative of the King, appointed from the central Ministry of the Interior, on rotating schedule of 2-3 years in a post. The position of Mahasarakham governor is usually seen as a light post, so that the incumbent can spend time on other issues and education to make him/herself more eligible for rapid promotions (Lefferts,

2003, personal communication). Each government ministry also has a provincial representative appointed from Bangkok.

The province is divided into 10 *amphæ* (districts) and one *kìng amphæ* (branch district). The *amphæ* are further divided into *tambon* (neighborhoods), and the *tambon* into *mùu bâan* (villages). In the municipal district (*amphæ mưang*), where this research took place, people tend to use either the *amphæ* or *mùu bâan* names to identify places. I did not even know the *tambon* in which I lived until I read it on my first electric bill. Within the *amphæ mưang*, specific locations are often described as being "near X."

The municipal district tends to be the busiest, most densely populated, and most urbanized district in each province. In Mahasarakham, the population of the municipal district is 265 persons per square kilometer, compared to the provincial average of 174 persons per square kilometer. In January 1994, the population of the municipal district was 147,500, with slightly more women than men (Committee, 1994, p. 1-15). It lies around a main strip of businesses and government buildings on Nakhonsawan Road. All of the colleges and the university are located off of this main road. The police station, electric company, water company, main post office and city and provincial offices are all located within a few blocks of the market. Additionally, there is a small branch post office located at the University. There are two movie theaters near the market that show Thai movies and foreign movies dubbed into Thai.



Figure 2.2 Map of Maharakham province

All public services are controlled on a national level from Bangkok and managerial appointments come from Bangkok. Thus, the provincial police are part of a national police force, subject to the control and policies of the Central government. There are one provincial police station and 13 district stations. Police in Thailand have a reputation for corruption and self-serving actions. Since about 1993, they have actively been trying to improve their image by publicly demonstrating less tolerance for corruption. In Maharakham, police do not have a particularly bad reputation among the general public, despite a noticeable difference between "official policy" and actual practice. Indeed, several officers went out of their way to assist with this research. I was interested in learning about sex-related crimes as they might related to students' lives.

Reports indicate that there is little serious crime in Maharakham, and that as of 1992, it was not increasing significantly (Maharakham, 1994, 2-16). By far, the most common crime in

the province is gambling,¹¹ most forms of which are illegal in Thailand (there is a legal lottery), but is a favorite pastime just the same. In general, police do not get involved in any sex-related crimes unless a complaint is filed, and very few are reported.

Health care is overseen by the Ministry of Public Health, which is administered and controlled out of Bangkok and represented locally by the Mahasarakham Provincial Public Health Office. The care facilities in the province appear sufficient to address local needs. The main hospital, part of the national system of public hospitals, is just down the street from the department store and offers adequate general care. In addition, in every district of the province there are health educators, also part of the nation-wide system, and village public health volunteers. There are private medical clinics throughout the district where care can be gotten for a manageable fee. There are three traditional pharmacies and 17 modern pharmacies, purveying western medicine. Drugs, from heart medication to birth control pills, can be obtained easily. There is no shortage of medical information or supplies. The number one disease in the province is respiratory illness followed by digestive disorders and infectious diseases. The number one killer is cancer (all types) followed by heart disease and heart failure, and diseases associated with the liver. AIDS was not a major killer during the time of this study. In 2000, the AIDS case rate in Mahasarakham was 9.26 per 100,000 people, relatively low compared to other provinces in the country.¹² Overall, Thailand has a rather low population growth rate (about .95%) due to the great success of its family planning programs (CIA, 2003). This is true in Mahasarakham, too, though its birth rate is normally slightly higher than the national average. Family planning is one's civic duty in Thailand and the national family planning policy is posted prominently in front of the public health building:

¹¹ There were 770 individuals charged with gambling in 1992 for playing the underground lottery. There is a legal lottery (the only legal form of gambling), though it is reputed not to pay as well as the underground lottery.

¹² E.g., in the Northeast, Khon Kaen province's AIDS rate is 20.82, Loei's is 20.87; and in the North, Chiang Mai's is 27.76, Lampang's is 84.59, and Phayao's is 136.55; in the central region, Nakhon Pathom's is 47.7, Samut Sakhon's is 51.08, and Samut Prakan's is 22.70 (per 100,000 people)

1. Each family should have not more than 2 children.
2. The first child and second child should be at least 3 years apart.
3. Mothers should have their first child when they are not younger than 20 years old.

To practice good family planning is to be a good Thai and most students express a sincere belief that the policy is a beneficial one which they plan to adhere to.

Telephone and electricity availability in the province is quite good, though one may need to go to a neighbor's house to use a telephone. There is a shortage of land lines, but handheld phones are available. When I signed up for a line for the new townhouse I was living in, I was told I was number 56 on the wait list and that there would probably be a 2-year wait. Many people rely on public phones and some stores and private homes offer telephone use for a small fee (usually five baht¹³ per local call).¹⁴ In 1993, 92.2% of homes in the province had electricity. Those who can afford it (mostly businesspersons and civil servants) might also have a gas-heated shower, air conditioning, or a satellite dish. Drinking water is usually quite pure and is carefully controlled at the household level by collecting rainwater, sometimes additionally boiling it.

Economic Activities

Despite increasingly deforested land and salinized soil throughout the Northeast, Mahasarakham remains primarily a farming region. Approximately 75% of the land is used for growing rice and other crops including cassava, tobacco, factory sugar, peanuts, soybeans, jute, vegetable plants, and fruits.¹⁵ but the soil is sandy and lacks organic compounds. Land previously designated for growing rice is slowly being converted to more lucrative crops such as vegetables and soybeans (Committee, 1994, p. 4-16). The best rice producing land is located along the Chi River, as well as along a number of smaller creeks that run throughout the province. These waterways are primary sources of water for agriculture as well as general consumption. To

¹³ \$0.20. At the time of this research, 25 baht = \$1.00 US. This was before the Asian economic crisis of 1996-1997 that significantly weakened the baht.

¹⁴ Since the time of this study, it has become popular for people to set up tables and rent cell phone usage for 2 baht per minute.

¹⁵ Agriculture is the primary occupation of 89.34% of people in the province, however, it accounts for only 28.68 percent of the total value of production (Mahasarakham, 1994, p. 4-4).

increase the water supply, the government has also built a number of water collection and irrigation projects to provide water for the province (Committee, p. 1-11). Both the natural and manmade water systems serve as popular recreation areas for picnicking and swimming. Students enjoy grilling chicken along the Chi River or hanging out with friends, snacks, and a guitar at Kaeng Loeng Chan (a reservoir/park; see Figure 2.3).

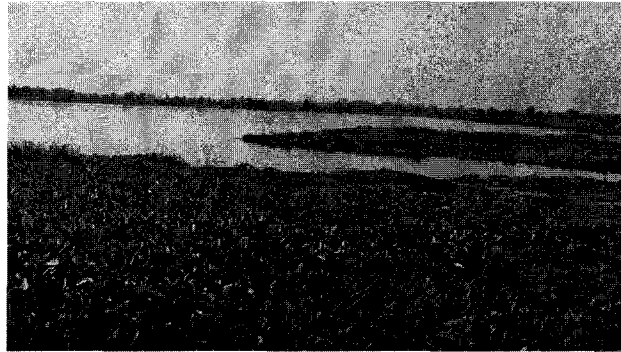


Figure 2.3 Kaeng Loeng Chan

Most of the forested land in Maharakham is located in national reserves. Of the 254,321.25 *ráy*¹⁶ (99,185 acres) of land previously considered forest, 246,062 *ráy* has undergone changes in its condition such that only 8,250 *ráy* remains truly forested, or less than 1% of the entire province. This deforestation is believed to have contributed to the unpredictable weather patterns and long-term drought, exacerbating the already disadvantaged economic situation of farmers.

Maharakham produces only 4.20% of the entire Northeast region's revenue and ranks 12th out of the 14 provinces (Maharakham, 1994, p. 4-1). Growth industries include banking, insurance, real estate, electricity and water, factory production, and construction. Though not listed by the provincial government as a growth industry, education also clearly brings much cash and economic support to the province. Maharakham is very much a "college town." The provincial authorities indicate that Maharakham is changing from an agricultural base to a

¹⁶ 1 *ráy* = 1,600 square meters or .39 acres

commercialized consumer economy. Since completion of this fieldwork, these industries have continued to grow and new houses and businesses stand where there were once rice fields.

Mahasarakham's industry is very small-scale. Some factories don't even have so much as an enclosed building. One just-opened brick factory, owned by an Srinakharinwirote University (SWU) professor, consisted of a large field, basic equipment, and two tarp-covered structures. About a dozen day laborers dug, shaped, and dried bricks out in the open. The total number of factory workers in the province was 5,498, in 2,621 factories (Committee, 1994, p. 4-33). This illustrates how small most enterprises are, and most of these (94%) engage in agricultural-related production, such as rice mills. An additional 4% of the factories produce goods and services for local consumption such as concrete, ice, and bricks (Committee, p. 4-33).

Some household industries have brought moderate economic success to villages. The most notable is textile weaving including cotton, silk, and *phâa khít*.¹⁷ Nong Khuen Chang village, about 11 kilometers from the city, has a successful textile cooperative which has been in place for over 20 years. They produce textiles for sale largely around Isan, but also to Bangkok. Isan is renowned for its uniquely patterned cotton and silk, especially ikat, known as *mátmii*. Silk production is a viable local industry and 194 villages in Mahasarakham grow mulberry trees for use in silk production (Committee, 1994, p. 4-24), the majority for personal use. Silkworms feed only on mulberry leaves, and the silk is spun from the cocoons of the silkworm larvae. Raw silk which is sold is bought by hawkers who come into the villages, or is taken into districts such as Borabue and Wapipathum where there are markets that send to silk factories in Khon Kaen province. In addition, some women produce surplus cloth to sell to local women who don't weave.

Other household industries supporting villages can be found in "Mat Village" (*Bâan Sà* *a*), famous for its reed mats; and "Pottery Village" (*Bâan Mòø*) which has dug, shaped, and fired

¹⁷ *phâa khít* is a supplementary weaving technique that can use silk, cotton, or both.

clay vessels for generations (Lefferts & Cort, 1997). They do these in addition to farming rice. In both villages, the artisans are almost all women. Men take greater responsibility for farming, though each assists the other to some degree. In *Bâan Mồø*, men are proud of their wives' pottery work and help to fire the pots in the evenings.

Cows and water buffalo can still be seen grazing on grasses along the roads of the municipal district. I watched a woman graze her three buffalo in the field next to my house daily.



Figure 2.4 Woman grazing her buffalos

Animals were grazed on the strips of grass fronting the university from dawn until dusk, and on many public grassy areas. The most important animals raised are cows, buffalo, pigs, ducks, and local chickens. The number of animals sent out of the province has nearly doubled in the last 3 years while the number brought in has declined. The amount of meat and leather sent out has similarly increased. There is also much fishing, primarily for family or local consumption.

Tourism is still in its infancy in Isan, and during this research, I encountered no genuine tourists, except for those I invited. Tourism was part of the provincial development plan in 1994, and Mahasarakham's exposure outside of Isan has increased, particularly due to the efforts of Mahasarakham University at which students can now study English for tourism. The World Wide Web has also facilitated the promotion of Isan historical sites and cultural features, especially among tourists who wish to travel off the beaten track.

Schools

Mahasarakham is known as the education province for good reason: In academic year 1993, there were 651 public schools, 15 private schools and 443 other educational facilities. However, the presence of so many educational institutions does not necessarily reflect the educational level of the province. The provincial government estimates that of all school-aged children in the population, only 52.5% were able to enter schools: 98.6% of elementary-aged children, 64.7% of junior high school-aged children, 24.6% of those 15-17 years old who could attend regular high school or vocational school, and 8.6% of those old enough to attend college or university (Committee, 1994, p. 2-6). Improving the educational level of the province is a major component of the provincial government's development plan. (As with all other public agencies, the educational system is a creature of the national government, controlled by the Ministry for Education. All public schools are, fundamentally, controlled from Bangkok and their curricula are set at a national level.) The provincial government recognizes that in order to develop business and industry in Mahasarakham, the populace must be educated at least through high school. Their efforts, and a general belief that education is important in the modern world, have had positive effects. Children in Mahasarakham are more educated than before. Between 1993 and 1995, the number of students estimated to be finishing their education at grade six (the national compulsory minimum) declined, and those finishing junior or senior high school, vocational school, or college, increased. The provincial administration expects this trend to continue through the next several years (Committee, p. 2-7).

The post-secondary schools in or near the city district include Srinakharinwirot University (Mahasarakham University since 1995), Ratchamongkhon College (an agricultural college), Mahasarakham Vocational College, Mahasarakham Technical College, Mahasarakham Nursing College, the Physical Education College, Mahasarakham Teacher's College, Rachaphat Institute (focusing on community development), and Khanasawat School. There is a heavy

concentration of students in the area with over 2,800 at SWU alone (for a breakdown of undergraduate students, see Appendix B).¹⁸

Srinakharinwirot University was originally established in 1968 as the Mahasarakham College of Education. In 1974, it was granted university status as a branch campus of Srinakharinwirot University (also known as Prasanmit because of the location of its main campus) whose administrative center was located in Bangkok. On December 7, 1994, just days before I departed, His Majesty King Bhumibhol Adulyadej approved the Mahasarakham University Act, granting the university independence from the SWU system.¹⁹ The university's goals are, and have been, academic excellence with an emphasis on both "local intellect and universal knowledge." The university has a strong Isan identity and encourages and supports the conservation of Isan language, arts, and culture. The Northeastern Center for Arts and Culture is located on campus and there are a number of projects and clubs in which students and faculty can get involved. SWU primarily serves Isan though a small percentage of students come from around the country. The university staff demonstrates a keen awareness of the need to provide students with educational programs with long-range opportunities. During my stay, I participated in the development of programs in tourism and gender studies within the Faculty of Humanities. The university is also responsive to the needs of Thailand. The International Relations office is very active in bringing guest lecturers and students to campus, as well as in assisting instructors in going abroad for advanced degrees. SWU organized and sent an Isan group to Washington, DC for the 1994 Smithsonian Folk Life Festival, brought in Fulbright scholars as guest lecturers, hosted a group of study tour students from Drew University in New Jersey, and hosted two Australian students in short-term programs.

¹⁸ This number includes undergraduate, graduate, and special program students. With the addition of a new campus in Kantarawichai district (*tambon* Khamriang) and new faculties, the student population has since increased to over 12,000 students (MSU Web site, 2002). There are also two information technology campuses in Nakhon Phanom and Udonthani provinces.

¹⁹ In this paper, the university is referred to as Srinakharinwirot University (SWU). It was its status at the time the research was conducted.

Religion

The majority of Mahasarakham's population is Buddhist, though a small number follow other religions, including Christianity. Thais follow the Theravada Buddhist tradition, typically combined with astrology, magic, and animism. In Isan, as is true in many of the less urbanized parts of the country, magic and animism are especially common. Isan people find no conflict between these supernatural practices and combine elements of each in their worldview.

Traditionally (that is, for several hundred years before the mid-twentieth century), village life centered around the village temple. The central role of the temple inevitably tied people's lives to religious practice; it was a part of every villager's daily life. Modern Isan people, particularly those in more urbanized areas, have disparate levels of participation in religion. Buddhism continues to pervade daily life in Mahasarakham, but in less obvious ways. Giving alms to the monks (one form of "making merit"), for example, is something relatively few people do on a daily basis, mostly elderly women. In the past, it was a part of daily village life, especially for women. Nowadays, those who work nine-to-five jobs are not well represented among those waiting on the side of the streets in the early morning hours to give alms. Few see the monks walk quietly by with their alms bowls, receiving rice, oranges, and other food from devotees. Giving alms is increasingly an activity done on special occasions such as on religious holidays or birthdays. Monks confirm that the number of people coming to temples is much lower than in decades past. Hence, monks are more reliant on themselves than on laypersons to care for their needs and the needs of the temple. The practice of Buddhism has changed in conjunction with new social situations. The way farmers practice Buddhism is different from the way merchants, civil servants, or students practice it. Members of each different group, including different genders, think of themselves as having different potentialities and different goals.

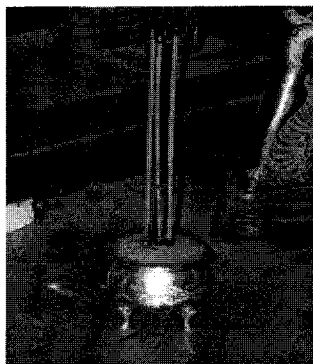


Figure 2.5 Electric incense at Sala Keo Kou in Nong Khai province

Despite changes in religious practice, people in Mahasarakham profess to be devoted Buddhists. A modern, increasingly urban lifestyle has reduced their participation in religious activities, but Buddhist values and worldviews remain strong.

Isan Identity

Isan is, in part, culturally distinct from the rest of Thailand. It shares some cultural features with Laos and Cambodia, as it was at different times part of the Lao and Khmer kingdoms, and most residents speak Thai-Lao (Isan) and a small number speak Khmer. Khmer influence is most noticeable in those areas bordering Cambodia. Mahasarakham is more culturally tied to Laos. Isan dialects vary from area to area, both in pronunciation and vocabulary. People are familiar with the variations and can adapt easily from locale to locale. Isan is spoken in most homes, particularly among families which are more rural, less educated, and/or have a strong Isan identity for whatever reason. It is the language of daily communication and conversation, the "mother" and market language."

Isan people, as descendants of Lao and as citizens of Thailand, frequently refer to the Thai-Lao relationship as "*pen phii nǎong kan*" ([we] are siblings). Generally, Thai see themselves as *phii* (elder sibling) and the Lao as *nǎong* (younger sibling). This symbolizes not only their kin-like connection, but also the superiority of the Thai, for the Thai are nearly always thought of as

the elder (and thus superior) sibling.²⁰ The long-time conflict between Thai and Lao is partly responsible for the ambiguous identity of Isan.

Isan people continue to identify with Lao culture, and other Thai, especially central Thai, likewise identify Isan people with Lao. This means the negative stereotypes and disdain that central Thai have for Lao are also directed at Isan. Ngaosyvathn and Ngaosyvathn (1994) cite a Singapore newspaper article which reported former Prime Minister M. R. Kukrit Pramoj, who in 1989 opposed a pending visit by the Thai Princess to Laos, as saying the Lao were a "barbarian culture" who would not know how to properly receive a Thai princess (p. 3). Isan people are often described in "country bumpkin" type terms. Traditional staple foods, glutinous rice and *plaa dèek* (raw, fermented fish) are also put down by Central Thai, though they remain for Isan people a significant part of their identity. An affirmative response to the frequently posed question, "Can you eat sticky rice?" is likely to elicit happy exclamations. Although glutinous rice has been cultivated all over Thailand, over the last few hundred years, it became associated with the poor – people who require the additional calories to make up for a smaller consumption of expensive meat and vegetables. Furthermore, white rice is eaten with utensils, while glutinous rice is eaten with the fingers, a practice many in Bangkok find uncivilized and unclean. The kind of rice one eats symbolizes not only one's regional status, but also one's economic and social status (Ngaosyvathn & Ngaosyvathn, 1994, p. 17-30).

These disparaging views of Isan may be changing. Some Isan foods, such as *sôm tam* (green papaya salad, also traditionally eaten in the North) have been appropriated by Bangkok and glutinous rice is now popular among foreigners, giving it a boost in status. And though the *kèen*, a traditional Isan wind instrument, was once regarded as primitive, in recent years, Isan music has received national attention. Award winning literature and popular music and films have

²⁰ The people and government in Laos, on the other hand, favor a more neutral description of the relationship as "*bàan kàay huan khiang*," or neighboring countries (Ngaosyvathn & Ngaosyvathn, 1994, p. 1-16).

also emerged from the area, bringing more positive national attention.²¹ Isan people carry with them both a strong cultural pride and feelings of inadequacy and inferiority that have been directed at them by the central government and other Thais, directly or indirectly, for decades. Their consciousness of their national economic and social status has contributed to their disadvantaged position (Keyes, 1983).

Isan people are, perhaps first and foremost, Thai. Because of their Isan-ness, rather than in spite of it, they possess a strong sense of patriotism. As do other Thais, they say they love the King and value good citizenship. All Mahasarakham's people are bilingual in Isan-Lao.²² Central Thai is the official language of Thailand and so is used in virtually all government-related contexts including television, radio, and schools. Most people in Mahasarakham are literate using the Thai alphabet, but not the Lao alphabet. The Isan language is actually Lao, but referring to it as "Isan" conceptually differentiates its speakers from their Lao neighbors, thus contributing to the Thai-ness of Isan people. However, their Isan identity differentiates them from other Thai. These differences within the Thai citizenry confer different statuses. When non-Isan people I encountered in Bangkok learned that I was living in Mahasarakham, the most common reaction was "Why do you want to live there?"²³

Government attention and investment have generally come more slowly to Isan than the other regions. Isan has welcomed it. One SWU professor and proponent of Isan culture told me that Isan people are practical and not afraid of change. They take what is good from other places

²¹ Boontawee's (1976) *Child of the Northeast* won a SEAWRITE award in 1979 and was made into a highly regarded movie. *Møø lam*, a traditional style of Isan music, is now played on national radio and television (Hesse-Swain, 2001). Jira Malikul's film "Mekhong Full Moon Party" (15 Kham Duan 11) was the first to use Isan as its primary language; it was subtitled in Thai (Thongkongtoon, Wiwattananonpong, & Malikul, 2002).

²² I speak Isan very poorly, but had no problem communicating using Thai. Some older people do not speak it clearly, but they can use it fluently.

²³ Northerners, who are viewed more favorably than are Isan people, are not as critical of Isan as central Thai, most likely because Isan and Lanna (the North) are historically connected. Lanna (the northern kingdom) was also taken over by the Siamese, but the transition was eased by alliance-building strategies such as royal marriages.

and leave what is bad. As are most Thai, Isan people are enthusiastic about developing the country. They value progress, modernity, high technology, and the education required to achieve them. Declining agricultural productivity throughout the twentieth century fed a desire for the economic success associated with Bangkok and foreign countries such as the US.

Current efforts to prevent the complete absorption of Isan culture into the national Thai culture have included various projects and programs to revive local arts and create a positive Isan identity. Srinakharinwirot University has done much toward this goal, particularly through the Research Institute of Northeastern Arts and Culture. Also, Dr. Wajuppa Tossa of the Department of Western Languages initiated a story-telling festival shortly after this research was completed. She teaches Isan folktales to her students who then bring them to local schoolchildren. Her storytelling camps have inspired parents and children to take an interest in Isan history and culture. She aims to change the environment of schools to more reflect local language and culture, both to preserve the language and to promote pride in identity. Dr. Wajuppa travels the world telling Isan stories. In 1994, SWU gathered and sent a large contingent of Isan artisans and musicians to the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington, DC. These projects have brought national and international attention to Isan and with it a certain amount of prestige. They have also strengthened a sense of pride in Isan identity.

Modern Mahasarakham

Although the Isan region and people are still thought of by many Thai as undeveloped and unsophisticated, Mahasarakham is in fact a very modern province, that is, if one defines modern by criteria other than the number of department stores and American fast food restaurants.²⁴ There are banks, automobiles, and offices with computers. Theaters show movies from Bangkok and abroad. The university offers degrees in disciplines ranging from educational psychology to food technology. Cellular phones were present in 1994, in even larger numbers

²⁴ Mahasarakham has only one department store, SermThai, and there is no McDonald's or Kentucky Fried Chicken (though there is in Khon Kaen, 1 hour's bus ride away).

now. These signs of modernity are, of course, far more noticeable in the municipal district than elsewhere. Still, even in farming villages, this is not the Maharakham of the students' grandparents.

The Thai government has strived for the last hundred years to modernize the nation. Being modern is not a denial of Thai-ness, but is in itself part of a Thai identity. In Isan, a government policy of modernization and development has been aided by large numbers of young people migrating (often temporarily) to Bangkok in search of work to a) provide for themselves and their families and b) fulfill a desire for improved personal status (Mills, 1999, p. 13). These workers send money home to their families and return to their hometowns for short trips. In addition to money, they bring with them urban desires, consumption habits, goods not available locally, and social problems. There are 19 bus companies that pass through the province to and from Bangkok, including both government busses and private tour busses. Travel between districts and provinces is also facilitated by a tremendous increase in the number of motorized vehicles on the road.²⁵ People in Maharakham are more mobile and exposed to more new things than ever before, and they are having to integrate the new with the old.

²⁵ From 1991 to 1992, the number of registered passenger cars increased by 23%, motorcycles by 25% (Maharakham, 1994, p. 3-4).

CHAPTER 3. OTHER RESEARCH ON SEX AND THAILAND

Sex is not a new topic in anthropology -- Malinowski described in detail *The Sexual Life of Savages* (1929) over 70 years ago -- nor is the position that sexuality is culturally constructed. Mead made the case for variable cultural interpretations of biological sex in *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (1935). Anthropological research in gender and sexuality has increased profoundly since the mid-20th century, stimulated especially by post-women's-liberation-movement interest in a cross-cultural examination of the status of women, family planning programs, and later by the worldwide spread of AIDS.

Through the 1960s, women's perspectives were rarely given in ethnographies (exceptions include Fernea, 1965, Goodale, 1971, Kaberry, 1939, 1952; Leigh-Ross, 1952; Strathern, 1972) and one initial goal of gender research was to add the experiences and viewpoints of women to the existing literature. From the 1960s to the 1980s, the focus shifted to asymmetry between the sexes, both cross-culturally (Chodorow, 1974; Ortner, 1974; Rosaldo, 1974; Sanday, 1981) and within specific cultures (Wolf, 1974; Hoffer, 1974). Other researchers brought attention to women's roles in society (Weiner, 1976) and a few challenged the notion that males are universally dominant (Leacock, 1972; Sacks, 1974). Research in Southeast Asia followed a similar pattern of development.

Studies of gender in Southeast Asia grew slowly, and also began with the addition of women as subjects of study (Firth, 1943; Ward, 1963). The now almost clichéd perception of the "relatively high status of women"¹ in this region was supported by studies on family social structure and economics (e.g., Burling, 1965; Dewey, 1962; Firth 1966; Geertz, 1961; Potter, 1977; Szanton Blanc, 1972). However, little of this research explored gender ideology specifically or in depth. Later studies took a more analytical and critical perspective (Karim,

¹ This "high status" is presumably relative to their Asian sisters in India, Japan, and China, but its criteria were undefined.

1995; Ong, 1987; Stoler, 1977; Tan, 1974; P. van Esterik, 1982). Several studies in Thailand examined how Buddhism informs gender ideology, especially the status and roles of men and women (Hanks, 1962; Keyes, 1984; Kirsch, 1975, 1982; Tambiah, 1970, 1976; Van Esterik, 1982). While recognizing that Thai women do, indeed, enjoy higher status than women in many other cultures, these studies affirmed that Thai women are regarded as being of a lower spiritual status than men. This will be discussed later in this chapter. These researchers laid the groundwork for a theoretical understanding of sexuality in Thailand.

A historical picture of sex roles, sexual meanings, and erotic sexuality must be pieced together from studies that were largely devoted to other, though in some cases related, topics (Andaya, 1998, 2002; Barmé, 2002; Cohen & Wijeyewardene, 1984; Davis, 1972, 1974, 1984; Douglas, 1973; Kaufman, 1953; Keyes, 1975; Mills, 1999; Moerman, 1962; Phillips, 1965; J. Potter, 1976; S. Potter, 1977; Turton, 1972). Historical documents for the most part ignore women, and the lack of literacy among some groups (e.g., Isan commoners) rendered them virtually absent from written history.

Recent studies have provided more extensive information, particularly in terms of sexual behavior. The AIDS epidemic has renewed interest in this area and highlighted its potential impact on the economy and political relations. Sociology and public health have contributed much to the literature now frequently using qualitative research methods (e.g., focus groups, interviews) due to the complexity of the dynamics of sexuality (Ford & Saiprasert, 1993; Havanon, Knodel, & Bennet, 1992; Knodel, Saengtienchai, VanLandingham, & Lucas, 1999; Podhisita, Xenos, & Varangrat (2001); Safman, 1993; Sittitrai, Phanuphak, Barry, Sabaiying, & Brown, 1991; VanLandingham, Saengtienchai, Knodel, & Pramualratana, 1995; VanLandingham, Suprasert, Sittitrai, & Vaddhanaphuti, 1992). This focus on sexual behaviors has been valuable in creating AIDS education and prevention programs and in predicting the spread of HIV. From an anthropological perspective, it is important to understand not only what

people do, but the meaning attached to the behaviors and how they fit into a larger framework of sex ideology.

Historical Influences

Much of what has been written about Thailand pertains specifically to Central Thai culture, or Siamese culture. Siamese culture is the dominant cultural force in the nation of Thailand, and so has mixed with, for example, local cultures in the North and Northeast. Although Isaners are descendants of Lao and the area where they live was part of the Lao kingdom, they are now Thai and currently identify with Siamese history. Their relationship to the Lao culture is somewhat limited to language, the arts, and religion. Unless otherwise noted, the literature is primarily about Siamese culture.

The chapter on Mahasarakham gave a brief overview of the history of the area. It was at different times under the control and influence of the Khmer, Lao (Lan Chang), and Siamese kingdoms. Each of these empires left an imprint on the local culture evidence of which can be found in folktales, archaeological features, and place names. Early Brahmin and Chinese culture left their marks, too, including on views of women (Tantiwiranond & Pandey, 1987). The exact extent to which they influenced sex ideology is not known, for they affected different groups and areas to different extents.

Kabilsingh (1991) notes that Brahminism and early Buddhist teachings (influenced by the politics of Indian society) resulted in social and legal subordination of women. However, women were some of Buddhism's most ardent supporters. Andaya (2002) proposes that Theravada Buddhism's successful spread across Southeast Asia was due in part to the opportunities it gave women to participate in their own spiritual development and community ritual. Women's traditional activities such as food preparation and weaving "became a kind of religious currency that could be 'exchanged' for the expectation of future reward, both spiritual and material" (Andaya, p. 29).

Siamese laws from the 1400s through the mid-1800s treated women as property, owned first by fathers, and then husbands. The situation for women deteriorated somewhat during the turbulent Ayutthaya period (1350-1767), when monarchs had absolute authority, and continued into the 18th century (p. 2-4, 15-16). Women's status improved during the Thonburi (1767-1782) and Ratnakosin (1782-present) periods, when several kings reduced the influence of Brahminism in Buddhism. King Mongkut, Rama IV, after being petitioned by a woman who had been sold into slavery by her husband, declared the old laws unjust and said they treated women like buffalo (Koizumi, 2000, p. 154). The King created new laws which are generally regarded as having improved the legal standing of women, though they did not bring equality to marriages; a woman could still be sold if she agreed to it, and men could still beat their wives, a right abolished in 1935. Koizumi (2000) argues that this is an oversimplification. Although the new law may have increased women's status in some ways, it also served to redefine marriage and the family in a way that further established the King's legitimacy. For example, prior to his proclamation, a slave wife was a category of wife, who had legal recourse if she were treated too harshly. Mongkut's law recategorized her as a slave, not a wife (Koizumi p. 262-263). Furthermore, his changes gave to elite fathers control of children's mate selection and distribution of children upon divorce (Koizumi, p. 263-264).

After the revolution of 1932, when the political system changed from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy, the new constitution gave all Thai women many more rights. Under the new laws, a man could have only one legal wife though women were still the property of their fathers or husbands. Things were surely different in the rural areas where families were dependent on the cooperation of all members. But despite their roles in production and reproduction, they could not become monks. And since temples provided education, these women were left uneducated and illiterate (Tantiwiranond & Pandey, 1987).

People living in trade zones would have had more contact with the Chinese, though as Chinese immigrated to the region, they intermarried with locals and moved farther inland. Chinese descendants are now found throughout Thailand, including the Northeast. Chinese patriarchy is reflected in the five negative characteristics of women: a) easily manipulated, b) always unsatisfied, c) jealous, d) insulting, and e) of lesser intelligence (Kabilsingh, p. 19). Many people in Isan are familiar with them, and some of these qualities, coincidence or acculturation I cannot say, are reflected in students' characterizations of women. Andaya (1998) reports that records from 15th century Siam show the offering of women for sexual relations with Chinese traders as a gesture of welcome (p. 13). A practice of "temporary marriages" developed in which elite Siamese women entered into relationships of varying duration. Though it may seem like these exchanges exploited women, they also brought prestige to the women and their families through the association with the exotic and wealthy outsiders. The relationships, easily forged and easily dissolved, were based on ongoing exchanges of goods and services (Andaya, p. 14-15). However, Tantiwiranond & Pandey (1987) argue that upper class women were treated as agents of the nobles and used to unify the monarch's administration through marriage (see also Koizumi, 2000). These practices created an attitude of political passivity among women who internalized their subordinate position. By the 18th century, these temporary wives were not only from the elite, but also the peasantry.

Andaya (1998) reports that by this time, a double standard had begun to develop. An earlier acceptance of elite men and women entering into beneficial sexual relationships was replaced by an emphasis on female virginity before marriage and male accumulation of wives (p. 17). Concubines began replacing temporary wives which, Andaya argues, further reduced women's autonomy and status (p. 28). Thus, there was a major shift in the perception of women's sexuality in the 18th and 19th centuries. Ironically, this overlapped with an improvement in the legal status of women in Siam.

Historically, the Siamese social training of women "aimed at producing 'good women' who are well-equipped in the traditional 'home sciences'" (Kabilsingh, 1991, p. 13). Women were not thought of as having intellectual ability, but were primarily described as "flowers," an image repeated in modern Thai verse and song. Siamese characterizations of women (and those of men, too) probably did not reach the rural northeast until the late 19th or 20th century.

These changes trickled into Isan from the 1800s on as Siamese influence grew in an attempt to intensify direct control in the region. Siamese culture, law, and politics increasingly imposed on the daily life of the people in Isan. Though many aspects of rural life continued as before, in the 20th century, industrialization, modernization, and the conversion to a cash economy introduced new gendered meanings. As Isaners incorporated a Thai national identity into their own local one, while they recognized the legitimacy of the national agenda even as it related to gender, they maintained an independence that resulted in a number of domains emphasizing women's roles

It is all too easy to fall into the trap of talking about Thai culture as if it were a homogeneous system because of the strong national cultural identity which has been forged out of Bangkok. The nationalist elite culture of Bangkok is part of the culture of modern Mahasarakham, as is the modern global culture that seems to be particularly influential among youth, but it has not completely erased local history and culture.

People in Mahasarakham told me that in traditional rural Isan culture, women and men were more equal than in Thai culture. We can find evidence of this in Isan folk literature (Tossa, 1992) and in textile production and consumption (Lefferts 1992). Isan history and legends are primarily oral, and so their content and meaning were dependent upon the storyteller, the audience, and the context in which they were being told. Some were written on palm leaf manuscripts by monks. But these, too, were dependent in part on the writer for content and

meaning. How they changed over hundreds of years is not known. In recent years, these oral treasures have been put into books, giving them a fixed quality that didn't exist before literacy.

In an examination of women in literature, Tossa (1992) contrasts traditional expectations of Thai women with those of Isan women. Isan women, she argues, were treated more equally to men because they made important contributions to life. In modern times, among both peoples, she says, women are taught that they are validated through marriage. Both cultures have the proverb "A woman is worthy only when she has a husband."² Both have requirements for women relating to being gentle, soft-spoken, and unexpressive. But Thai women face stricter requirements than do Isan women. Tossa suggests that the Thai image of women is built around pleasing husbands because the elite were defining women's ideal character in Thai society. She writes, "Working women ... work as hard as men to survive in the changing society. As a result, these women are not treated as inferior beings and would not tolerate such unequal treatment and inferior status" (p. 8). In Rakow's study of Lao morality tales, she (1992) found the most recurring theme to be "how much a woman is respected for her ability to work -- farming the fields, or weaving, cleaning, and managing the household" (p. 7). Women were valued for their contributions to the family. In rural farming villages, kinship and household and family social organization is a major organizing principle of society.

Household Organization

Arguments for female prominence or complementarity to men in Thailand (e.g., Davis, 1984; Hanks & Hanks, 1963; Turton, 1972; P. van Esterik, 1982) frequently cite the position of women in family organization.³ Family organization in Isan, like that in the North (and other cultures in Southeast Asia such as Laos, Burma, Java, and Iban; Cohen & Wijeyewardene, 1984; Davis, 1972, 1974; Keyes, 1975, 1977; S. Potter, 1977; Turton, 1972), appears matrilineal because

² *phūuyīng jà dīi phrǎ mīi phūa* (Thai); *phūuyīng sī dīi yōn mīi phūa* (Isan)

³ I have intentionally used the word *organization*, rather than *structure*, here because organization seems more dynamic and amenable to change. Structure suggests a rigidity that doesn't describe the Isan household organizational situation.

of the well-documented preference for youngest married daughters continuing to live with the parents (Keyes, 1975; Tambiah 1970, 1973). This is not a rule of descent, but does result in clusters of closely related women in villages. Keyes (1975) reports that villagers reason that because of maternity and infant care, it is better for a woman to be among familiar women.

In terms of division of labor, women were generally responsible for matters inside the household, and men for matters outside the household. Women handled childcare, child rearing, food preparation, weaving, care for domestic animals near the home, housework, and family finances. Men primarily focused on farming and grazing domestic animals and village political affairs. Jobs in the rice fields were also sex-delineated. Some researchers have projected this complementarity onto the general status of men and women, describing it as a balance in the structural dominance of women and ideological dominance of men (Davis, 1984; Hanks & Hanks, 1963; Vaddhanaphuti, 1984).⁴ Both Davis (who did his research in the North) and Hanks and Hanks (who did theirs in the central region) cite a hodge-podge collection of cultural examples to support their position. This is a problem with attempting to tally up status -- the variables one selects determine the relative status differences. Analyses of structural and social dominance (or status) are often tricky since they usually ambiguously define "dominance" (or "status").

Some aspects of family organization suggest male dominance. Husbands and wives are both involved in ownership of land and heading domestic groups, but men are more active in village affairs (Hanks & Hanks, 1963; Keyes, 1975). Tambiah (1973) find a structural inequality between males and females (males superior) in his analysis of parallels between rules concerning eating of animals and marriage (sex). While his analysis is interesting, his approach does not explain how these structural inequalities are understood and played out in real life.

⁴ Most of the studies which put forth this structural-ideological balance have been done in the North. However, the structural organization is similar in the Northeaast as is the public role of men and acknowledgment that the husband is the head of household.

Studies of family organization usually describe in detail roles and relationships of family members. The husband-wife relationship has received far more attention than have either the parent-child or sibling relationships. Like Keyes (1975), most studies focus on social roles as they pertain to marriage. Husbands are typically regarded as the leader of the family. Researchers usually attribute this to their sex, and it may well be, but it is also possible that it is at least in part due to their age, since husbands are usually older than wives. Within the marital relationship, each partner has responsibilities toward the other. The husband's leadership role is tempered by the reality of many dominant wives in Thailand, a great source of material for jokes and cartoons, and according to many women in Isan, a reality.

No doubt the marital relationship is one of great significance as it is the center of reproduction. However, it is unfortunate that much less attention has been given to the roles of sons, daughters, and siblings except in relation to the overall family organization. The role of the son has been characterized as a source of labor, financial support, and ideally, merit (upon ordination). With fewer men ordaining, the question arises as to whether the role of the son has changed. Daughters are caretakers for parents. One way this role has been transformed into social action in a modern context is in the tremendous number of young women who migrate to cities to find work. Most send money home to families (DaGrossa, 1989; Ekachai, 1990; Mills, 1990, 1992, 1999; Muecke, 1989; Phongphaichit, 1982). The marital/parental roles are not the only ones which impact society. More studies of the roles and cultural transformations of sons/daughters and siblings would contribute a great deal to an understanding of sexuality and sex roles.

One of the functions of the family noted throughout Thailand is the regulation of sexuality. There are two primary ways this has been considered in the literature: control of women's sexuality and control of incest. There is little done to of control male sexuality in lay life, but the opposite is true in monastic life (Keyes, 1986). Masculinity is largely defined by two

extremes of sex activity: the monk, who refrains from sex and other worldly pleasures, and the *nák leeng* (rogue, rascal), who embraces sex, gambling, and drinking. Keyes has theorized on this topic, but relies on Buddhist texts to support his position. Unfortunately, he fails to tie the meanings in text to the meaning of masculinity in the daily life and practice of people.

Two different Thai views of the female sex drive have been given in the ethnographic literature. One is that it is strong and almost threatening (Hanks & Hanks, 1963; Thitsa, 1982; P. Van Esterik, 1982) and others that it is weak, and women are indifferent to sex (Muecke, 1992). Presumably, either would justify the sexual constraints placed upon women. However, scholars who have argued that Thai see women as more libidinous (whose view supports the notion of women as more worldly, to be discussed later), offer little evidence from social practice to support their claim. In either case, the social response is controlling women's sexual expression, and there may even be two understandings of libido that emerge in different contexts and on the whole, play off each other.

In many parts of Thailand, including Isan, one function of family spirits was/is to regulate sexuality and marriage (Boontawee, 1988; Davis, 1984). It was believed that sexual improprieties offended the spirits who had to be propitiated. Failure to do so resulted in family misfortune. In the past, there were strict rules about public contact between unmarried and unrelated men and women. Potential suitors were forbidden to touch even the weaving loom of an unmarried girl. And researchers largely assumed these rules were followed. The actual effectiveness of the family spirits for preventing sexual contact was never studied. Evidence picked from the ethnographic literature suggests that they weren't as effective a behavioral regulator as villagers sometimes suggested they were (Davis, 1984; Kaufman, 1976⁵; J. Potter, 1976; S. Potter, 1977, p. 108-109, 117; Tambiah, 1970, p. 18). For example, Sulamith Heins. Potter wrote in a response to a statement in the 1968 Area Handbook for Thailand (Smith, 1968):

⁵ Kaufman's data is considered deeply suspect by some Thai scholars.

They say, for example, "In the Northern Thai region, sexual liaisons may occur before marriage. Elsewhere, however, even the suggestion of physical intimacy is avoided." This is simply not the case. In Chiangmai Village, as I shall call my field site, there is a rigid standard of sexual morality. (p. 11)

But both her own and her husband's (1976) descriptions, there is evidence that sexual activity probably takes place: Young men hope their courting will lead to "something more, short of marriage" (S. Potter, 1977, p. 108); men's status is increased among their peers if they seduce many women (S. Potter, p. 108); there are pre-marital pregnancies (S. Potter, p. 109); if a young woman does sleep with a man, she must tell her mother in order to placate family spirits with propitiatory offerings (S. Potter, p. 117); and in the single example of courtship given by J. Potter, both the man and woman have multiple sexual partners. These suggest that the rigid ideal sexual standard is less rigidly applied in real life and that cultural mechanisms are in place to deal with these behaviors precisely because these behaviors occur with some regularity.

Less has been written about incest in terms of an analysis. Tambiah (1970) detailed the incest taboo in a village in Udonthani province (in the Northeast). Marriage was forbidden across generations and between blood siblings. First cousin marriages were not considered incestuous (i.e., forbidden), but were believed not likely to succeed. Incest violation does not seem to be a preoccupation of people in Mahasarakham nor has it been reported much in the literature.

Traditionally, there were two structural centers of village life: the household and the temple (Kaufman, 1976; Moerman, 1962). With the development of a cash economy and wage labor, and especially with increasing migration to cities, the structural and social significance of the temple has changed, though Isaners continue to formulate their worldviews around Buddhist cosmology and notions of magic and power. An understanding of how Isaners interpret and apply Buddhism in their everyday lives is necessary for understanding the meanings of sex. The next section describes some of the literature on sex and Buddhism in Thailand.

Significance of Buddhism

Thailand has the largest percentage of population who identify as Buddhist of any country in the world, commonly reported at greater than 90%.⁶ Buddhism is a part of the national identity (e.g., the motto and representation on the national flag "Nation -- Religion -- Monarchy"). Its long-time influence in the region is undeniable. And, because supernatural beliefs so often provide a framework for a culture's worldview, many scholars looked to Buddhism for an explanation of Thai gender ideology. Discussions of Buddhism have tended to rely on texts and theory rather than what it means to the people who practice it in everyday life (Tannenbaum, 1996, p. 190; see, e.g., Keyes, 1983; Spiro, 1970; Tambiah, 1968, 1970). But there are certain major metaphysical concepts about how life works that are understood in similar ways by Thai Buddhists.

The universe is an inherently hierarchical place. Above earth are many realms of heaven and below the earth are many realms of hell. The heavens, earth, and hells are occupied by various beings who are ranked hierarchically based on their karma. Karma (*kam*) is conceived of as the consequence of all actions (and intentions). Actions that are good or moral (*bun*) accrue positive karma, and actions that are bad or immoral (*bàap*) accrue negative karma.⁷ The sum balance of these two results in one's karmic position. Through cycles of rebirth, beings move up or down through the cosmic hierarchy based on their karma. The highest place of enlightenment is nirvana (*nippaan*). This is the state achieved by the Buddha, total detachment from the world and worldly concerns. Scholars agree that this is not the goal of laypersons in Thailand. Most hope to reborn in a better human position in the next life.

On Earth, all humans are hierarchically ranked, from the King (who has an almost god-like status) down to movie stars, on down to crippled beggars. Karma is evidenced by one's

⁶ The next highest proportions are found in Cambodia and Burma, Thailand's neighbors.

⁷ Hanks (1962) explains this as operating effectively (merit) or ineffectively (demerit). "Effective" actions are those that reduce suffering and "ineffective" actions are those that increase suffering.

situation in this life. Though it is sometimes said that men are in a better karmic position than women, SWU students do not make such an absolute observation. A wealthy and powerful businesswoman displays higher karma than a poor, powerless farmer. Animals are ranked, too, from elephants, to dogs, down to the lowest form of life, but animals lack the volition humans have to make merit and pass it on. Although karma is not tangible, it is believed to manifest itself in tangible ways, though these can be misleading. Wealth, success, and power all evidence past accumulation of merit, or moral virtue (Mills, 1999, p. 180; Tossa, 1992; Van Esterik, 1989, 2000). But when horrible circumstances befall a beautiful or rich person, it may be explained as a consequence of past actions. Beauty, wealth, and power are just a few of many ways virtue is revealed.

It might seem that Thai Buddhists would be fatalistic in their outlook. But within this life, people can change their position to some degree. Hanks (1962) argues that the concept of mobility is a major structuring principle of Thai life. Understandings of karma give Thai a general acceptance for inequality in life. But one's karmic balance is constantly in flux. This concept of mobility ensures that Thai are not exceptionally fatalistic.

There is an ambiguity in merit in that it can be accumulated through moral behavior or transfer. Karma is the result of one's own actions, but others can affect one's karmic situation through merit transfer. The most often cited example of merit transfer is when a son ordains: The merit accumulated from that action (which is great) is transferred to his parents, especially his mother (Kaufman, 1960, p. 123; Lehman, 1996, pp. 26-27). This is regarded as the greatest source of merit in a mother's lifetime. It is a son's way of thanking and repaying her for the care she gave him as child.

Another way merit is accumulated is through adherence to Buddhist precepts (Lehman, 1996, p. 69).⁸ The five major precepts are a) refrain from taking life, b) refrain from taking that which is not given, c) refrain from wrong-doing in sexual matters, d) refrain from false speech, and e) refrain from intoxicants (Rogers, 1989, p. 127). Precept keeping is admired, but few people do it. A few laypersons, mostly older ones, observe the five precepts daily, but more often it is done on holy days. The most devout followers agree to observe eight, novices 10, and monks 227.

In village society, accrual of merit was primarily thought of as related to specific actions such as ordination, giving alms to monks, and contributing money to build a temple. The emphasis on these specific kinds of actions for gaining merit, however, is giving way to a more general association of merit with moral behavior (Brown, 2001, p. 8-9), particularly among those whose situations prevent them from participating in merit-making activities on a regular basis.

Blessings (Tannenbaum, 1991, 1996) are part of Buddhist culture, but are rarely commented upon by researchers (1996, p. 181). They are frequently given by Buddhist monks, and impart on laypersons safety, health, security, wealth, and success and may, Tannenbaum says, be a way of transferring merit. Blessings are often given in ceremonial contexts, such as weddings and funerals (p. 184). But monks aren't the only ones who give blessings: Parents can bless children when they ask for forgiveness or come to pay respect (p. 184). Blessings are believed to relieve misfortune and bring good things, much as tattoos or amulets do, artifacts that are instilled with power. Tannenbaum states that in everyday Shan (a Northern Thai ethnic minority) life, merit and blessing "are the same sort of thing" (p. 196). She argues for a very strong connection between merit, power, and blessing. Analyses of gender ideology that rely

⁸ Precepts are different from commandments. Commandments are absolute rules to be followed without exception (Thou shalt not...). Precepts are guidelines for behavior (I endeavor to refrain from...)

solely on Buddhist metaphysical beliefs may neglect significant supernatural concepts, such as power (for an exception, see, e.g., Hanks, 1962).⁹

Various authors use "power" to gloss *khǝng* (strong or hard; Hanks, 1962), *kaengraeng* (physically strong; Hanks, 1962), *amnâad* (might or authority; Hanks, 1962), *dèet* (might; Mulder, 1979) or *sàksit* (sacred or magical power; Tannenbaum, 1991). There are many kinds and applications of power, but the common quality of each of these "powers" is the control of people or situations. Power is usually regarded as amoral (morally neutral) because it isn't inherently good or bad; it depends on the user's goals and intentions. Anyone may possess amoral power. If used in a virtuous way, it can lead to accumulation of merit. Tambiah (1985) describes a meditation leader who is not concerned with spiritual salvation (nirvana), but with gaining merit, virtue, and potency in order to change the world. He argues that meditation leads to merit and mystical powers, in this case ability as a curer.

Power exists in unequal distribution throughout the universe (Hanks, 1962; Tannenbaum, 1991, 1996). Buddhas have the greatest power and the beings in the lowest hells the least, further supporting the argument that power and merit are related. Tannenbaum (1996) is clearly writing about *sàksit*, or magical, power rather than might. However, one might draw similar conclusions about strength and might.

Power implies protection. If one has access to power one is protected; if one is protected one has the power or freedom to do as one chooses ... One reason why people need blessings is to protect them from ... dangers. The essence of power is its ability to protect and ward off the consequences of behavior. Power-protection does not cause good things to happen; it passively prevents bad things from happening. (p. 185-186)

Mulder (1979) and Tannenbaum (1991) see the quest for merit¹⁰ and the quest for power in Thai society as complementary. They interpret it as a perfect marriage between Buddhism and

⁹ Although not about Thailand, Anderson (1972) gives a very clear explanation of power as understood in Java. Though the concept is not identical, this reading helps to better grasp the Thai understanding of power.

animism. Tannenbaum specifically addressed Buddhism's influence on gender ideology arguing that power is the primary force shaping gender ideology. In their discussions of Buddhism and gender Kirsch (1982, 1984), Keyes (1984), and Van Esterik (1982) did not incorporate the notion of power, perhaps because it does not fit well in their analogy of worldly attachment:supernatural detachment::women:men. It is a somewhat serious omission given that notions of power are evident in the everyday supernatural practices and beliefs of people throughout Thailand.

Amoral power appears to be of greater concern to men who appear to more often seek out protective amulets and tattoos (Davis, 1984; Hanks & Hanks, 1963; Spiro, 1970, pp. 274-275, on Burmese; Tannenbaum, 1991, on Shan). Women are believed to be destructive of power, and so are unable to accumulate it. Contact with women's skirts, for example, is believed to reduce the power of certain amulets.¹¹ Women are not allowed in certain parts of the temple because it is where some of the most sacred events, events handled by male monks, take place. Tannenbaum further argues that at a practical level, women have little interest in accumulating magical power because it is not relevant to their concerns. Unfortunately, she does not explain how this relates to the social relations between men and women. Nor does she explore how individuals act and interact in relation to power. Women do have an interest in supernatural power in particular contexts such as at times of illness and when seeking love, though this may not be true among the Shan that Tannenbaum studied. The negative power (i.e., the power to destroy power) that she accords women, even things symbolizing women, may be a very useful idea to consider when looking at Thai sexuality. It may be that men and women relate to power differently, or that there are different forms of power based on the experiences of men and women.

¹⁰ Mulder uses the term *khuna* (or *khun*) to describe this quest for merit. *Khun* is a term that means goodness or virtue. Following a path or virtue brings merit (*bun*).

¹¹ Women's menstrual blood is a potent destroyer of magical power. I have been told that soldiers sometimes use menstrual blood or vaginal fluid (similarly destructive of power) on their guns to counter protective magic practiced by their enemies.

The different experiences of men and women are perhaps what led Keyes (1977, 1984) and Kirsch (1982, 1985) to describe an association of women with worldly concerns and men with the otherworldly.¹² Their analyses of Buddhist views of gender were more similar than different, but reflected different emphases. Keyes (1977) observed that "...the essence of femininity is nurturance, the essence of masculinity is potency" (p. 132). Female images associated with the earth, such as the rice and earth goddesses, reinforce this. Women, the earth, and rice, all have nurturing qualities. Men's potency is expressed in the ability "to fertilize [the Earth and women]...to govern others...and to reject the world [through ordination]" (p. 132). In "Mother or Mistress but Never a Monk" (1984), Keyes outlined images of gender expressed in certain Buddhist texts. He presented three dominant images of women: nurturing mothers, passionate lovers, and impassionate mistresses. The most dominant image is that of mother because it is tied to religious assumptions and thus is more convincing.¹³ He argued that Buddhism doesn't relegate women to an inferior status and both sexes face the same problems and have the same opportunities. Men, too, are burdened by worldly concerns because of their involvement in administrative and political matters. The sexes are differentiated by natural attributes, but neither has a naturally greater propensity for salvation, though they do follow different paths to get there.

Kirsch (1982, 1985) explained sex differences in a similar way, but by relating Buddhist values to social roles, rather than symbolic images. Women do not have access to the highest Buddhist position (monk); they must be reborn as men first (a point argued against by Kabilsingh, 1991). A woman achieves her greatest source of merit through "giving" a son to be ordained. A man achieves his through ordination (p. 27). Women's connection to and expression of religion is

¹² This loosely parallels the nature/culture binary (Ortner, 1974), which was largely discredited in the 1980s. Penny Van Esterik (1982) also subscribes to the worldly-otherworldly dualism. But, she says, it describes a feminine and masculine metaphor only, not real people.

¹³ It should be reiterated that Andaya (2002) suggests that the role of the mother in religious life was a major part of the attraction of Buddhism to Southeast Asian women.

through the world. This, he goes on, helps us understand why Thai women have traditionally played such an active role in the economy, and men in religious and political matters. They are religiously disadvantaged, but not spiritually inferior.

Both Keyes' and Kirsch's approaches suffer the same primary weakness: They oversimplify the relationship between men and women. Kirsch also noted two flaws in Keyes' approach: Buddhist texts are not the same as how Buddhism is practiced in everyday life, and texts cannot be "read" out of context. The main text used by Keyes was a story told primarily at ordination ceremonies. Kirsch interprets the story to be about the value of ordination, not the "qualities of men versus women" as Keyes had suggested. Texts must also be situated historically, understood in the contexts in which they were created. Buddhism and many popular Buddhist texts (e.g., Jataka tales) originated in India. Kabilsingh (1991) described their historical context in good detail. They were recorded by monks in the interest of monks. As Thai adapted Buddhism to their own situation, they tended to minimize the religion's patriarchal aspects. Kirsch and Keyes carefully avoid concluding that women are spiritually inferior to men, though they don't commit to them being quite equal (as Hanks and Hanks, 1963, do since both are subject to suffering and both are free to pursue the path of enlightenment).

Buddhism and power influence sex in Thai society inasmuch as they influence most all aspects of life there. Gender constructions cannot be reduced to supernatural concepts, or abstractions from Buddhist texts, without neglecting equally influential aspects of secular life. As applied in daily life, it organizes the big picture rather than specific behaviors. The underlying Buddhist moral order, one based in the concept of karma, puts much of the responsibility for determining what is moral and what is immoral on the individual (Keyes, 1987). And so we find strong social norms juxtaposed with people who find their place in society on the margins.

Marginal Types of People

Moving away from macro-level explanations of gender to an examination of narrower, marginalized groups refocuses attention from the social norm, to the social anomaly. This has proven very revealing and allowed researchers to reflect more critically on norms and ideals of sexuality.

Studies of socially marginal categories of women such as Buddhist nuns (e.g., Brown, 2001; Kabilsingh, 1991), meditation teachers (e.g., J. Van Esterik, 1982), spirit mediums (e.g., Irvine, 1984; Morris, 1994), and prostitutes (e.g., Andaya, 1998; DaGrossa, 1989; Ghosh, 2002; Muecke, 1989; Peracca, et al., 1998; Phongpaichit, 1981, Thitsa, 1980; Truong, 1990) and their clients (Ford & Koetsawang, 1991; Maticka-Tyndale, Elkins, Haswell-Elkins, Rujkarakorn, Kuyyakanond, & Stam, 1997; VanLandingham, et al., 1995), moved toward focusing on expressions and constraints of sexuality among those who fall outside the social mainstream for their sex. Male marginal types have been less studied, though scholars have begun to look at male prostitutes (e.g., McCamish, Storer, & Carl, 2000; Snell, 1995), transgendered men (e.g., Matzner, 2001, 2002; Totman, 2003), and gay men (e.g., Jackson, 1989, 1995).

Women have found religious leadership roles within the existing religious social organization, primarily as Buddhist nuns (*mêechii*) and meditation leaders. Buddhist nuns do not hold a particular spiritual status (the most experienced *mêechii* is inferior to even the newest monk), but their general spiritual status is regarded as higher than other laypersons because they have religious knowledge. They are typically older women, but both Brown (2001) and Van Esterik (1982) describes *mêechii* who decided to "go forth" as a young women. Van Esterik says that younger women are viewed as running from something when they reject roles as wives and mothers to devote themselves to religion. Brown (pp. 34-35) described the politics of the status of *mêechii*, particularly in relation to the *sangha*, the national assemblage of monks. Despite their formal limitations, *mêechii* are

gaining influence in a fast-changing society. By dedicating themselves to Buddhism, these women obtain freedom, places to live, friendships to foster, religious meaning, and sometimes formal education. By remaining single and cultivating a role outside of the usual expectations for women, they develop useful perspectives. (Brown, p. 137).

Taking a different route to spiritual growth, a few female meditation teachers have developed large, devoted followings, primarily in the Bangkok area (J. Van Esterik, 1982). Despite their influence, they are not considered threatening to monks, men, or women because, J. Van Esterik (1982) argues, they fall so far outside normal women's social roles. The *sangha* generally emphasizes scholarship over practice, and so does not usually concern itself with meditation.¹⁴ Women meditation teachers are not interested in challenging the established order and roles of monks. Further, these women teach from different texts than do monks, so do not presume to engage in monk's activities. Their elite followers respect the women because they facilitate a new and beneficial way of incorporating Buddhism into modern city lives.

Spirit mediums, intermediaries between the human and spirit world, are found throughout Thailand (see Irvine, 1984, for a description of mediums in Chiang Mai, and Tambiah, 1970, pp. 271-277, for mediums in the Northeast). They provide physical and spiritual healing and give advice. Spirit mediumship is strongly associated with females; most are women and a small number are *kàthæy*,¹⁵ transgendered males (Van Esterik, 2000, p. 44).¹⁶ Throughout Thailand, spirit mediums express some kind of sexual ambiguity or fluidity. Irvine describes the spirit mediums in Chiang Mai as entering into a masculine space in identification with the spirit's maleness. Some deny menstruation, and refrain from sexual activity, emphasizing the sacred and

¹⁴ *Phrá thudong*, ascetic monks who roamed the forests and countryside practicing meditation, are an exception. See Kamala Tiyavanich (1997) for a detailed description of the plight of *phrá thudong* in the twentieth century.

¹⁵ Irvine interprets their possession as a way of mitigating the social stigma attached to being *kàthæy*. There is no way to prove or disprove this.

¹⁶ In the Northeast village where Tambiah (1970) did his study, there are two levels of mediums: chief mediums and "subsidiary" mediums. The former are almost always male, but the majority of the latter are female (p. 282-283). Female mediums speak in male-like voices, and male mediums speak in female-like ones.

supernatural. Women are regarded as "weak-souled" (*khwǎn òøn*), and so are, as Tambiah says, "more effective hosts" (p. 283). *Kàthæy* are considered to have women's souls, and so they, too are effective hosts for spirits.

Spirit mediums can develop large followings and if so are rewarded well (financially and/or materially) for their services. Because of this, some regard them as profiteers (Irvine, 1984). I visited a very successful *kàthæy* spirit medium in Chiang Mai. His possessing spirit (*jǎw*) was female and his voice become higher and more feminized while possessed. He cured people of illness, helped people with matters of love, and even advised numbers for the lottery. One follower was so pleased with the medium's assistance that he gave him a pickup truck. Spirit mediumship is a role through which women and *kàthæy* can gain social status and wealth. But unlike *mêechii* and women meditation teachers, it relies on mainstream sex ideology for its legitimacy.

One of the most studied male or female marginal groups in Thailand is female prostitutes. The bulk of studies began in the early 1980s and increased remarkably with a growing concern about AIDS and child prostitution (e.g., DaGrossa, 1989; Ghosh, 2002; Lyttleton, 1994; Muecke, 1989; Odzer, 1994; Phongpaichit, 1981, 1982; Podhisita, Pramualratana, Kanungsukkasem, Wawer, & McNamara, 1994; Peracca, et al., 1998; Tannenbaum, 1995; Truong, 1983, 1990). Evidence of prostitution is documented as far back as the Ayuthayan period (1350-1767; Barmé, 2002, p. 5). It is not a new phenomenon, but its meaning for society and the women involved has most certainly changed over hundreds of years.

Andaya (1998) makes a convincing case for the connection between "temporary wives" of the pre-modern trading days and modern prostitutes. The relationship of the temporary wife (a woman who takes up short-term relationships with foreign traders), she proposes, was one of prestige. These women were not from the poor and impoverished, but were of some means. Only later when it was transformed by a new political climate did it become stigmatized, regarded as a

form of prostitution. The existence of the temporary wife did not preclude the existence of prostitutes. It was more a change in terminology and categories of women.

The boom of studies of prostitution in Thailand, which started in the late 1980s, initially looked at explanations for its prevalence. Some of the reasons given are the belief in men's greater sex drive, status associated with multiple female partners, poverty, and the obligations daughters have toward their parents (DaGrossa, 1989; Lyttleton, 1994; Muecke, 1989). These, when combined with modern social and economic conditions, particularly a cash economy, materialism, and consumerism, have created a situation ripe for prostitution.

Many, of not most, prostitutes send money home, though not always to starving families. Their money allows their families to pay for education for siblings, medical care, and donations to temples, in addition to televisions, VCRs, and appliances, things that evidence success for the family. Through their work, they contribute to their families' status.¹⁷ Those who do this, says Muecke (1989; see also DaGrossa, 1989) are regarded as good daughters. But those who make too little money or who don't send it home are seen as bad. A prostitute's ability to provide for her family mitigates the stigma normally associated with her job.¹⁸

There are at least two kinds of prostitution that are driven by different factors. Foreign-oriented prostitution is a multi-million dollar industry, a vital part of tourism, which for several decades has been Thailand's largest earner of foreign exchange. The clients are primarily foreigners, most tourists (Odzer, 1994; Phongpaichit, 1981, 1982). Odzer's 1994 study is one of the most recognized and describes the life of prostitutes working in Patpong, a famous sex district in Bangkok. Another kind of prostitution that generates less money, but is more widespread I refer to as domestic prostitution. The clients of these prostitutes are non-elite Thai men, though

¹⁷ Lyttleton (1994) describes regional differences in prostitution. In the Northeast, agents who procure girls are uncommon and the prostitutes themselves are uncomfortable bringing their money home to put on display, as is done in the North (pp. 261-261).

¹⁸ Peracca et al. (1998) found that the social stigma attached to prostitution is mild enough so as not to seriously limit a woman's chance for marriage.

the prostitutes may be Thai, hill tribe, or other minorities. The bars, restaurants, and brothels associated with domestic prostitution can be found throughout the country in virtually every small town, and according to some studies (e.g., Lyttleton, 1994), even villages. Women engaged in domestic prostitution usually earn less money and often do the work for fewer years (DaGrossa, 1989). When Thai men talk about going to prostitutes, this is the kind to which they refer.

The role of the prostitute runs counter to many aspects of ideal femininity in Thailand, and especially in more rural areas, which tend to be more sexually conservative, at least on the surface. But prostitutes also fulfill some of their obligations (e.g., to family) and personal goals (e.g., economic independence). Prostitutes also benefit other women by diverting the sexual energies of men away from their wives and girlfriends. There are both positive and negative understandings of prostitution. This will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 7.

Sexual Behavior

Information on the history of sexual behavior in Thailand is sketchy at best. Several scholars have managed to piece together histories for specific groups (Andaya, 1998, on prostitutes; Jackson, 1995, on male homosexuality). Despite a general matter-of-factness about sex (Phillips, 1965), it is not a matter appropriate for public show or personal revelation. Sexual behavior has been mentioned to some degree in most ethnographies, but usually in passing or in the context of social ideals. But Thai ethnographers (indeed, most ethnographers) have resisted doing research focused on sexuality, despite the casualness with which they offer off-handed comments and assertions of sexual norms.

Obviously, the privacy of the behavior makes it exceedingly difficult to study. But there has been some success, to varying degrees in both anthropology and sociology. Thai males are freer with this information and have "less to lose" than do women. The most convincing studies of women have been on married women who are allowed and expected to engage in sex, though talking about their own experiences is somewhat inappropriate and thus remains a challenge for

researchers (e.g., Knodel, VanLandingham, Saengtienchai, & Pramualratana, 1996).

Jamornmarn (1982) studied post-marital behaviors of couples of reproductive age and found it difficult to discuss sexual behavior with her informants (p. 2). This continues to pose a challenge. The importance of learning about youth sexuality came to the fore in the early 1990s, but was suggested much earlier than that (Muangman, 1979).

More and more Thai scholars are studying sexuality head on, not only in anthropology, but also in sociology, history, and literature. In 1995, the conference "Gender and Sexuality in Modern Thailand" was held at Australian National University in Canberra. *Genders and Sexualities* (1999), edited by conference organizers Nerida Cook and Peter Jackson, is one result of this meeting. It is a collection of articles by some of the most contemporary researchers of the topic. Through a multi-disciplinary effort, a clearer understanding of sex ideology in Thailand and its relationship to politico-economic factors and social change is developing.

It is recognized by Thai researchers that Thai men have more sexual contacts than Thai women, as men's sexual behavior is more socially condoned. There is a prevalent belief that men require more sex and of a greater variety than women (Knodel, Saengtienchai, VanLandingham, & Lucas, 1999). Wives generally prefer that their husbands engage in sexual relationships with prostitutes rather than non-commercial sex workers (Saengtienchai, Knodel, VanLandingham, & Pramualratana, 1999), because they pose less of a threat to the family and the men's responsibilities towards the family. Men engage in a substantial level of sexual risk behaviors that puts both them and their female partners (e.g., wives, girlfriends) at risk of contracting HIV (Sittitrai, Phanuphak, Barry, Sabaiying, & Brown, 1991).

In the interest of curbing the spread of HIV, several survey-type studies were done to determine risks to the Thai population (Havanon, Bennett, & Knodel, 1993; Knodel et al., 1999; Sittitrai, et al., 1991; VanLandingham, Suprasert, Sittitrai, & Vaddhanaphuti, 1992). National surveys have been effective at gathering sexual data on large numbers of people across the

country, though it is not possible to know to what extent the data reflects reality. They have provided excellent information that has been used to create AIDS education campaigns. And, indeed, the rate of HIV infection has fallen since AIDS awareness campaigns were implemented (Phoolcharoen, Kumnuan, Sittitrai, & Brown, 1998). Surveillance studies on specific groups (e.g., people in urban areas, soldiers, adults, men, prostitutes, pregnant married women) provide information on groups determined to be at especially high risk and repeated administration of surveys to these groups assists in monitoring the spread of HIV (AIDS Epidemiology Group, 1999; Xenos, Pitaktepsombat, & Sittitrai, 1993).

Some studies enhanced survey data with in-depth information obtained from focus groups and interviews (Havanon, Knodel, & Bennett, 1992; VanLandingham, et al., 1992). These have shown that many men and women are unaware of the sexual "networks"¹⁹ created by their behavior that facilitate the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. The acceptance by married women that their husbands visit prostitutes increases their own risk of infection, especially if the men are inconsistent with condom use. In 1991, Havanon et al. found that men in the central region still believed the HIV status of a prostitute could be determined by observing her general health and appearance (p. 15). This kind of misinformation abounds throughout Thailand. In 1991, between 13 and 22 percent of Mahasarakham's prostitutes were infected with HIV (Havanon et al., p. 2).

Sexual behavior appears to be affected by other factors, such as drinking. Perhaps it should not be surprising that other behaviors that enhance masculinity are associated with sexual activity. VanLandingham, et al. (1992) found a strong association between drinking alcohol and visiting prostitutes. Safman (1993) also suggests that drug and alcohol use are associated with increased use of prostitutes (p. 9). Increased alcohol consumption was also associated with

¹⁹ *Sexual networks* refer to "patterns of sexual activity with two or more partners, whether concurrently or serially" (Xenos et al., p. 104).

decreased consistency in condom use. Another factor affecting sexual behavior is social class. Those of higher socio-economic class become sexual active later (VanLandingham, et al., 1992).

Male homosexual behaviors have not been adequately studied. VanLandinham et al. (1992) reported that 10% of clerks and 17% of soldiers reported having had sex with another man, but they do not provide information about the context or meaning of these relationships. Thai men who identify as both gay and straight are known to engage in male-male sex but there is very little in the literature on the latter group. More gay and lesbian studies in Thailand are now being done.

Peter Jackson's work on male homosexuality in Thailand is unprecedented (1989, 1995, 1999). Thai society has a history of tolerating homoerotic behavior while disapproving of it. Gays and *kàthoey* do not conform to normative social roles and so are considered abnormal. Despite a reputation as a "gay paradise," Jackson (1995) concludes that being gay is still deeply stigmatized in Thailand. However, male-male sexual activity is not always, or even often, considered "having sex" (1995, p. 54-55). Thai regard same-sex sexual activity differently from inter-sex sexual activity. Homoerotic behaviors, therefore, is not always tied to a homosexual identity. This will be discussed further in Chapters 5 and 6.

Women's sexuality, particularly outside of a marriage context, is not well documented. There appears to be strong social pressure for women to remain virgins until they marry, or at least until choosing a permanent mate. Knodel, Saengtienchai, VanLandingham, and Lucas' (1999) found that virginity was a desirable, but not required, quality. And, when one considers the sum of the literature it appears that virginity is not always maintained until marriage.

Tambiah says that sexual relations without marriage are not prohibited in the Northeast (1970). Davis (1984) reported that most girls in a Naan (northern Thai) community are not virgins when they marry. J. Van Esterik (1976) writes that girls in a village in Chiang Mai sometimes tell young men that they are virgins, when they are not (p. 107). Although it has been suggested that

increasing female sexual behavior is at least partially related to modernization, elaborate social procedures for handling sexual transgressions suggest that it happened often enough to warrant such procedures. In the Northeast, there were traditionally three ways for a couple to marry: "One, the man asks for her, and there is a wedding ceremony. Two, they run away together. Three, *châu sǎaw*"²⁰ (Boontawee, 1988, p. 87-88). In the Northeast, women's sexual activity is permitted in the context of a committed relationship, one that is expected to lead to marriage.

Thai generally believe that women's sexual desire is more tempered than men's, and extramarital sexual activity is completely unacceptable (Knodel et al., 1999, p. 111). Sexuality and reproduction are considered natural and desirable for married women, and fertility and reproduction are less sensitive topics for them. Thailand has had phenomenal success with family planning campaigns since the 1960s. Mougne (1978) suggests that traditional beliefs, social organization, and work patterns, as well as new demographic and environmental factors have facilitated this acceptance, rather than challenging it. She conducted a demographic analysis using anthropological tools (detailed questionnaires, extended interviews, surveys, participation, and observation) to reveal not only behaviors, but the cultural processes involved. Women repeatedly show a certain practicality associated with sexual behaviors. However, Burnright and Leoprapi (1975) found in a sample of married rural women, that over 20% had never discussed birth control with their husbands. This may not necessarily be because it is an embarrassing topic, but more likely because birth control is a female domain and the women would have no reason to consult their husbands.

Although sexuality among youth, especially girls, has always been discouraged, there is evidence that it has also always been present. In more recent years, it has become an issue for researchers. Anderson (1986), Muangman (1979), and Chompootawee (1988) studied adolescent

²⁰ *Châu sǎaw* is an option for marriage, usually opted for by those too poor to have a formal ceremony. The man spends the night in the woman's bed and in the morning they ask forgiveness from the family and the family's ancestors.

sexuality in central Thailand and found a higher prevalence of sexual activity than previously thought. Social standards for both male and female sexual behavior are changing due in part to fear of AIDS, a desire for modernity, and increasing mobility. This is most noticeable among the young. Among men, social restrictions on sexual activity appear to be increasing somewhat. The threat of AIDS has resulted in a decrease in the utilization of the services of prostitutes (VanLandingham et al., 1992, p. 8, 10), especially among the educated youth. While having sexual experience is still regarded positively for young men, sex with prostitutes is increasingly considered foolish, thus limiting their actual opportunities for sexual activity. Young women, on the other hand, have more opportunities to engage in sexual activity. The desire of men to have "safer" sex (i.e., with wives and girlfriends rather than prostitutes) puts more pressure on women to be sexually active. Women are living farther from their families for work and school, resulting in increasing loneliness and fewer eyes watching out for their virginity. The image of the modern woman is also strong; sexuality is part of that image.

Changing values associated with modernity have contributed to an increase in sexual behaviors (Soonthornhada, 1995; Whittaker, 1999). Sex roles and behavior are increasingly affected by factors such as consumer power, education, and the need for cash income. They also result in people migrating to other areas for education or work. Lyttleton (1999) found that villagers in Khon Kaen (Isan) are in agreement that young people are more likely to have pre-marital sexual relationships than previously, primarily due to increased opportunities away from family. Unmarried young people are more often out of their parents' sight. Lyttleton points out that mobility is facilitated by access to motorcycles (also Ford and Saiprasert, 1993, p. 10). Young men and women can ride into town or to another village on their own. When a male and female ride together, it gives them an opportunity to sit close and even touch each other.

Men consistently prove more forthright than women with information about sexuality in Thailand (e.g., Ford & Saiprasert, 1993). And while women may talk about sexual behavior in

general, they are less likely to talk about their own sexual experience. There is still a strong double standards regarding sexuality: Men are expected to express theirs and women are not, except in the context of marriage. Overt sexual expressions (in appearance, attitude, or behavior) are looked down upon. Young men have only to gain, and young women only to lose, by having sex. It is a male domain. Young women engage in sexual relationships primarily to keep a boyfriend (Ford & Saiprasert).

It has been found that sexual behavior refers to heterosexual behavior for Thai youths (Jackson, 1995, p. 54-55; Soonthornhdada, 1995, p. 2). Most Thai do not consider same sex sexual behaviors (touching, kissing, even oral sex and anal sex) to be sex. So behaviors between same-sex individuals are not particularly offensive, and do not define the sexual identity of the participants. Young people are known to engage in such behaviors. Boys seek emotional and physical affection from other boys since girls are inaccessible to them. This kind of behavior is part of some friendships and is something some boys do just for fun. There are very few studies of Thai lesbians. Chetame (1995) cites only one other study of which she is aware. The acceptance of *lên phũan* (literally, play a friend), a euphemism for affectionate, physical, contact between two women, has facilitated the closeting of lesbians. The normality of same-sex contact conceals relationships of greater passion.

From the literature, a picture emerges in which, in general, young men seek sexual experience (largely from commercial sex workers) and young women avoid it. Anecdotal evidence, however, suggests that rates of male-female sexual behavior among youth occurs, though research has yet to demonstrate this convincingly.

Current Directions in Research on Sexuality

Studies in the last decade examining broader aspects of sexual ideology in real-life contexts have contributed to a greater understanding of gender in everyday life in Thailand (e.g., Jackson, 1995; Mills, 1999; Tannenbaum, 1995, 1999; van Esterik, 2000). These have moved the

focus of anthropological discourse on gender in Thailand away from the relative positions of men and women to the meanings and possibilities of sexuality in Thailand. This approach allows us to consider a whole range of sexual meanings under the singular rubric of Thai sexuality. Changes in the way we examine sex in Thailand have been encouraged by trends in the larger literature on sexuality. This includes greater attention to sexual categories, the relationship between gender and class, and the effects of modernization on gender systems.

Henrietta Moore has criticized the western tendency to divide the world up into dualisms, which may or may not exist in other cultures (1993, 1994). Some groups' categories of sexuality are more fluid, or simply different than that. Anna Meigs' research (1990) among the Hua of Papua New Guinea is instructive to those who would consider biology the ultimate sexual classifier. The Hua classify people by genitalia, but also by the amount of *nu*, a kind of life essence, in each person. People gain or lose *nu* over their lifetime, changing the gender category to which they are assigned. Literature on "third genders" abounds and also represents a departure from the exclusive male/female binary (see, e.g., Andaya, 2000, on *bissu*; Herdt, 1994; Nanda, 1998, on *hijra*; Roscoe, 1993, 1998, on *berdache*). Anthropologists must move beyond their own dualistic cultural understanding of sex in order to effectively examine sex in any culture.

Research is also moving into complex analyses of relationships between gender, class, ethnicity, and politics (see, e.g., Enloe, 1989; Ong, 1987). Sex is understood and lived through these discourses and cannot be extracted from them without affecting its meaning. Identity is a complex tangle of all one's statuses in all one's relationships.

Finally, the processes of globalization and modernization have stimulated social change around the world. Their effects on systems of gender are typically profound (see, e.g., Bauman, 1991; Mills, 1990). Migration has brought the modern world to even small, rural communities. Some aspects of culture change are obvious, but others are less so. The very existence of long-

held cultural symbols obscures the constant reinterpretation being applied to them in their rapidly changing context. Even the most powerful, enduring symbols may acquire new meaning.

CHAPTER 4. THE RESEARCH

Ethnographic methods have had little success at discovering sexual behaviors that are in most cultures of a sensitive nature and are carried out in private. In cultures or contexts where sexual behaviors carry risk of social disapproval, the likelihood of obtaining reliable first-hand or even second-hand information is slim. In Mahasarakham, erotic sexual expressions abound, but primarily in a non-personal sense. One's own sexual behavior is usually a private affair that is not discussed openly or directly. Discussions of sex are socially permitted as a topic, but individuals are not inclined to reveal information about their personal performances. Men are somewhat freer with this information, but its accuracy may be questionable, especially if offered over whiskey or in the presence of other men; they are prone to joking and boasting. Casual public contact between a man and woman, if suggestive of a physical relationship, is frowned upon, though casual contact between same-sex individuals is acceptable to the extent of holding hands or draping arms around waists or shoulders.

I combine qualitative (participation-observation, interviews, journals) and quantitative (surveys) research methods to obtain a more nearly complete picture of sexuality, both erotic and non-erotic aspects. I was ultimately unable to determine the extent of students' sexual behavior, though I learned a great deal about their beliefs and attitudes. Thus, this dissertation focuses on those the meanings they assign to sexual behaviors, roles, images, categories, and value and how those are communicated through students' behavior and relationships. This ultimately was probably a good thing. As Bancroft (1997) writes, "Before starting to measure sexual behavior, one needs to understand the meanings associated with it, meanings which vary considerably from culture to culture" (p. xi).

Informants

About 75% of undergraduate students at SWU come from Mahasarakham and other Isan provinces, and the remaining 25% come from the central, northern, and southern regions. Nearly

all have recently completed senior high school¹ and are continuing their education straight through. A handful of students helped out at home (farming or with the family business) or attended a technical or other college before transferring to the university. Although many young Thai men historically spent a period in the monkhood, I know of only one student who came to SWU after ordaining. In general, SWU students represent some of the brightest and most hardworking youth in Isan.

As in the US, college years are a time of transition between childhood and adulthood. However, Thai students still refer to themselves as children (*dèk*), but are no longer under the watchful eye of parents. Yet, they are not quite on their own as parents are usually responsible for them financially. It can be a very lonely and frustrating time, especially for those who are still adjusting to living away from their parents.

SWU has undergraduate and graduate programs. Graduate students are much less homogeneous; many are professionals with careers and families. Their social roles relating to sexuality are quite different from those of undergraduates, though they, too, are social actors operating in the same setting. One young, male graduate student was a wonderful resource on categories of sexuality and male-male sexual behavior. This study focused on undergraduate students who study for four years to obtain BA and BS degrees (see Appendix B for student numbers).

My affiliation with the Department of Western Languages and my duties as an instructor contributed to an over-representation of English majors as informants. I noticed no critical differences between English majors and students in other majors in either interviews or surveys. However, it is possible that differences were present and if so, they would have been most present in the journals and other classroom data, since this relied exclusively on English majors and were

¹ *mátthayom tœn plaay*

conducted in English. At a minimum, they have a more extensive English vocabulary, including sexual vocabulary, than other students.

The study is not limited entirely to students. Social action is conducted in the context of social relationships. While many social relationships involve other students, others do not. Further, the social actors involved mutually negotiate social action. It is important to understand the context and meaning of the social relationships in which students develop as sexual social beings. Informants included family members, teachers, public health workers, doctors, nurses, friends, students at other schools, monks, police, department store clerks, and video-store owners, among others. They are all conveyors and constructors of sexual concepts with whom students negotiate sexual meanings.

The SWU student body is all high school graduates, most from Isan. There are equal representations of males and females, unlike for example, the Vocational College (mostly females) and the Technical College (mostly males). SWU students have a reputation for being good students, not troublemakers. They are generally regarded as being more serious academically than students in the other schools.² This is mere observation and was not measured or tested in any way.

Research Assistants

Ten SWU students assisted me with the research: Bee, Loi, Jim, Um, Tung, Ole, and Man (females), and Wan, Sun, and Add (males). All but three were English majors, and all but two were fourth year students. Most helped with translation, helped write the survey, and served as general cultural guides and informants. Tung, a fourth-year female English major, was a most skilled and helpful interviewer and accompanied me to villages and to Bangkok to gather data. She was probably unusual in her comfort level and interest in this topic. Her father works for the public health office in another province and so her experience with the subject matter and with

² Students at the Teacher's College are also known to be serious students. Any difference in reputation is probably due to SWU's greater prestige as a university.

research in general was greater than that of other students. She also had the vocabulary (both Thai and English) to deal with the topics in a mature and professional manner. Other assistants provided excellent translations of texts and typed (in Thai) tape transcripts.

I asked them to contribute as much as their schedule allowed. In general, our agreement was that I would help them to practice their English and teach them research skills in exchange for their assistance. They were, however, paid for some tasks, such as translation. Some lost interest after a few months, but five stuck with me throughout the research. I gave each a mini-cassette recorder as a thank you gift (a symbol of their time as a researcher and a neat and useful item they probably never buy for themselves). I also wrote each a letter of reference.

Research Methods

The methodological orientation of this study sits at a crossroads of research tradition, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Since qualitative and quantitative research approaches can present two different perspectives on sexuality, a mixed methodology was used in this study to maximize the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of each. Dyson (1992) says that quantitative research can "help furnish ideas as to how to go about collecting quantitative material" (p. 10). Qualitative data, likewise, can inform surveys, particularly in their design. The two are complementary and necessary for a complete understanding (di Mauro, 1997, p. 4-5; Dyson, p. 10). The primary data-collection techniques used were participant-observation, formal and informal interviews, a survey questionnaire, and in-classroom performance and writing.

I did not conduct any focus group discussions. Focus groups, which rely on data gathered through guided closed discussions, seem to be an effective qualitative method for studying sexuality. Focus groups are increasingly employed in research in Thailand and seem to have had good success (Ford & Saiprasert, 1994; Hesse-Swain, 1992; Knodel, Saengtienchai, Vanlandingham, & Lucas, 1999; Lyttleton, 1999; Soonthorndhada, 1995; VanLandingham, Supresert, Sittitrai, & Vaddhanaphuti, 1992). I eliminated focus groups from my methodological

repertoire because I was unable to be trained in doing them while in the field. Focus groups must be handled very systematically; otherwise the information generated is nothing more than a guided group discussion. I held several group discussions.

Participant-Observation

Participant-observation is a time-consuming but ultimately very valuable research tool. It is a way to verify that people do what they say they do and it provides an opportunity to learn aspects of culture and social behavior about which informants are less consciously aware. It is superior for documenting public social behavior, relationships, and interactions. It is, however, limited to observable situations. The researcher must infer private behaviors from the way they are talked about or from other public evidence of them. Information may or may not reflect actual behavior, even when reported by an individual allegedly involved. Both problems of memory and a desire to shape or reshape past events can render information inaccurate, though not necessarily unmeaningful. It is naive for a researcher to assume that public discourse accurately reflects private behavior, particularly when the topic is a highly sensitive one, consequential to the actors involved. The discourse itself is of course valuable, but is insufficient as conclusive evidence of private behavior.

In this study, participation-observation was limited to students' public performances. Interactions between the sexes were particularly revealing. I spent time at dormitories and the areas around them, the university, markets, movies, the department store, athletic fields, bars, restaurants, and parks. I also visited temples, hospitals and clinics, and the police station that provided insight into some institutional influences on sexuality. Discourses generated by social institutions (Buddhism, schools, state, law, media, medicine) are almost always gendered and express political interests in sexuality. Public institutional discourse and interpretations of it were relatively easy to observe. The Thai nationalist agenda, like that in many countries, is highly

gendered as are the institutions it encompasses. SWU students are immersed in nationalist (i.e., elite central Thai) imagery and discourse as the university is a public, government run institution.

Interviews

Informal, unstructured, and semistructured interviews were used to collect in-depth, personal, and complex information from different individuals about their interpretation of cultural knowledge and own experiences. Interviews were conducted with most anyone who was willing to talk. Pre-arranged interviews were usually semi-structured by a pre-written set of question. Most were conducted with individuals, usually with a research assistant present who help with translation and general understanding and participated in the interview process. With permission, I recorded pre-arranged interviews on mini-cassettes, some of which were transcribed. Informal interviews were not recorded, and I wrote down information in my notebook, usually after the fact since I never knew when opportunities would arise. On a trip to Kalasin province to interview an expert weaver for the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, we stopped at a temple where an effeminate monk was making beautiful arrangements for a *baay sǐi sǐu khwǎn*, which is a common ceremony. I took advantage of the opportunity to ask him some general questions about Buddhism and sex as well as about his own creative talents.



Figure 4.1. A monk at a temple in Kalasin province creates a spectacular *baay sǐi* arrangement

Interviewees belonging to difficult-to-find groups such as gay students were found through snowball sampling. The first gay student I spoke with about being gay was a friend of a research assistant. After his interview, he spoke with others who were willing to also be interviewed. I interviewed very few students about their own sexual practices. The gay students I interviewed, however, were remarkably forthright about their sexuality, including behaviors. Though I did not directly request information about their own specific behaviors, informants sometimes volunteered it. Most of my questions elicited information about the general views and behavior of gay students. This was a challenge throughout the research: How specific can one be, how personal can one get without driving the informant away or destroying rapport? We always erred on the side of caution, sacrificing data to maintain the relationship.

The majority of interviewees were found through convenience sampling. In addition to students, I interviewed educators, doctors, monks, parents, elder people, public health workers, researchers, and teachers. Interviews were generally semi-structured, and we always approached an interview with a set of guide questions. In situations where taking notes was not possible or would have been out of place, my research assistant(s) and I made joint notes afterward. My assistant Tung and I traveled to Bangkok to visit a gay bar. We wanted to know if the perception of gay bars reflected the reality. We did not bring notebooks to the bar, but spent about an hour and a half talking with the young men who worked there (many from Isan). We returned to our hotel and wrote down everything we could remember. Between the two researchers, we were able to recount much of the conversations. Had it been only myself, I do not think my notes would have been very complete or reliable, due to memory loss and language issues.

One difficulty with sensitive topics is that interviewees may feel vulnerable when revealing information that is regarded as potentially embarrassing or harmful. As a teacher, I had an obligation to my students to protect them and look out for their well being. To maintain our

relationship, I could not put them at risk. Thus, I relied heavily on third party information (garnered through interviews and journals) about sensitive issues such as sexual behavior.

The researcher's sex is an issue in research on sexuality. It is generally recommended that females interview females and males interview males. I refrained from initiating discussion of highly personal information in one-on-one situations, so the relevance of my gender was, I believe, minimized. Few females revealed any information about sexual behavior though some males did. Thai males are not as sexually restricted as Thai females and face fewer risks in talking to interviewers about their sexuality, whether the interviewer is a man or a woman. Being an American further reduces the negative effects being female might have on males' responses.³ Most students believe that adult Americans (and younger ones, too) are already sexually experienced.

Regardless of the topic discussed, the sex of the individuals in a researcher-informant relationship is relevant because in Mahasarakham (and Thailand) gender matters. That said, I detected no hesitancy on the part of either males or females to respond to my questions. I had both male and female research assistants, but my most regular interview partner was a female student. She served not only as a language verifier/translator, but also as an interview guide, suggesting appropriate directions. That I was interested in the topic of sex did not seem to shock people. There are several reasons for this. First, Thai view foreigners as being more sexually active, and I was told many times that in America there is "free sex" but not in Thailand. Surely, people assumed that I, too, practiced "free sex" at home. I did my best not to reinforce this idea in appearance or action. Second, sex is not a taboo topic in Mahasarakham. Sexual jokes, references, and images are commonplace. Sex is regarded as a normal part of life and as long as the conversation is not personal, talk about it is not discouraged. Third, the educational campaigns on birth control and AIDS have made sex and talking about sex a positive thing. Birth control is now

³ I believe the same would be true for any western woman.

regarded as a natural concern of reproductive age adults. And all good citizens, whether 5 or 85, have a responsibility to know how HIV is transmitted and how to prevent it. Posters hung around town illustrate the ways HIV is spread in Thailand. It is not hard to get people to talk about sexuality; it is hard to get people to talk about their own (erotic) sexual behavior.

Interviews with students focused on ideas and interpretations of sexual concepts. I avoided truly sensitive topics so as not to alienate informants, unless of course they introduced them into the conversation. I attempted to make the interviews, even semi-structured ones, as conversation-like as possible to minimize the inherent inequality in the interviewer-interviewee relationship. A researcher can rarely ascertain that an informant has been entirely accurate in his or her descriptions and explanations. One way to validate information is to collect it using another research method.

Survey Questionnaire

The greatest strength of surveys is their analytic potential. They are an effective means to reach a greater number and variety of people than can be done using ethnographic techniques. Further, they can be handled anonymously and thus have proven useful for gathering sensitive information. A survey questionnaire was administered to 289 students, about 240 at Srinakharinwirot University, the rest at the Teachers' College, the Vocational College, and the Technical College.⁴ Ninety complete responses were returned from SWU and these were used in this study (there were 1,473 undergraduates at the time of the survey). Responses from outside SWU (21 surveys) and those that were incomplete (11 surveys) were not considered in tabulations of data.

The survey questionnaire was distributed to a reasonably stratified, semi-random sample, not a probability sample. I attempted to get an equal representation of males and females in each year (first through fourth), with a larger number of first and fourth year students so as to

⁴ I briefly considered comparing data from different schools.

maximize the between-group variance, if there is any related to year of study. I expected fourth year students to have somewhat different perspectives than first year students because of their different experiences. I also tried to find students from different majors, only sometimes obvious upon approach. Over the course of a week, I wandered around different parts of campus, approached groups of students, introduced myself, and asked if they'd be willing to assist me by completing a survey about sex. I approached groups rather than individuals, because if I found that if I could get one or two in a group to agree, more from the group would usually follow. I made a note of students' sex, year, and major.

My research assistants and I designed the questionnaire. I wrote most of the original questions (in English) guided by my assistants' input, particularly in selecting appropriate options for multiple-choice questions (e.g., list of sexual behaviors). We then translated the questions into Thai, and then back again into English, to see what kind of semantic transformations had occurred. Any that were too far from the meaning of the original were reconsidered and rewritten. Discussion among the research assistants was lively and a decision was usually reached by consensus. Difficult issues included choosing words most students would understand (e.g., "*øøøøøøl sék*" versus a Thai description) and phrasing things so as not to offend or embarrass respondents. Research in the US has found that a lack of understanding of vocabulary in questionnaires can have a significant effect on responses (most notably resulting in a reporting of "0" frequency of the activity) and that ability to understand sexual vocabulary differs for different ethnic and age groups (Binson & Catania, 1998).

The questionnaire was composed of a cover note and three sections of 89, 60, and 90 questions. It was, in retrospect, too large. I consider myself lucky to have received 90 responses. It may have also been difficult to follow, since the format of the questions varied and some questions contained multiple parts. My assistants estimated that it probably took most students 30-40 minutes to complete. It was anonymous, and students were instructed to return the

questionnaires to boxes placed about campus (covered cardboard boxes with a slot cut in the top); there was little chance of a respondent being identified his or her questionnaire.

The questionnaire could have been significantly improved. I pilot-tested it only on my research assistants, due to time constraints. Doing a test run on students who were not familiar with it probably would have highlighted unclear and poorly worded questions, and weeded out ones that elicited little helpful information. It would have also been informative to hold discussion groups (possibly formal focus groups) as a follow up to the questionnaire to help flesh out some of the more unclear or contradictory responses (e.g., "having sexual relations" does not include prostitutes unless specifically stated).

Questionnaires and surveys are useful for studying the relationship of variables in diverse populations where scientifically drawn samples are important. They are also useful in more interpretive studies and have been used extensively in certain domains that have traditionally relied heavily on quantified data (e.g., kinship, ecological anthropology, psychological anthropology, medical anthropology). Because they are anonymous and can be done in private, there is a certain appeal to using them to obtain data, particularly when one is dealing with a sensitive topic. They are also useful for obtaining quantifiable information on the population as a whole, including background information (home province, age, number of siblings, economic class, etc). Conducting anthropological research in an urban setting is difficult and traditional ethnographic techniques don't always work as well as they do among smaller, more homogeneous groups. It makes good sense to borrow research techniques that were designed to elicit data on large, heterogeneous groups of people. The standardized nature of questionnaires also allows one to conceivably use the data for comparison with other populations, that is, if the data are believed reliable. While I believe much (not all) of the information from the survey questionnaire to be accurate, I strongly suspect that my sample is not representative of the student population at SWU. I will discuss this further in the next section.

General Methodological Problems and Limitations

The most obvious limitation with research of sexuality, especially erotic sexuality, is that much of the social action of interest is conducted in private, and can't be observed. Many other aspects of sex, such as division of labor and family roles, are observable to at least some degree. Although some anthropologists have called for researchers to learn about sex and validate their findings through participation in sexual behaviors with informants (e.g., Bolton, 1992), this is not an approach that would, in my opinion, go over well in Mahasarakham. In a culture that has very specific rules about sexual behaviors, it would be difficult to find a socially acceptable way to engage in sex (besides marrying a local, which would provide only limited experience). Anthropologists have a tradition of not revealing their sexual involvement with informants. There are many reasons for this including potential embarrassment and negative professional repercussions. That a researcher's participation in this aspect of social life brings into question his or her motives, character, or professionalism, demonstrates that the "power of the ethnographer is a definite and perhaps even causal factor in describing and explaining sexual conduct" (Herdt, 1999, p. 30).

It is not possible for an anthropologist to assume the role of a local in a sexual relationship, given that (a) s/he isn't one and (b) s/he isn't equipped with enough knowledge (at least initially) to act like one. To turn sex, already a politicized collection of actions, into a research exercise, compounds the political nature of it to such a degree that one might consider it completely altered. The situation in which the researcher would be participating would not be a "natural" (i.e., native) one and thus s/he could never be sure the experience is representative of that of the natives. But this does not necessarily invalidate the exercise. What it reveals about the meaning of sexuality for both the native and the researcher may be useful for understanding the researcher's cultural interpretation. Kulick & Wilson (1996) have called for anthropologists to discuss their sexual experiences with locals, both for descriptive and reflexive value. Rabinow

(1977) did this in his account of his fieldwork experiences in Morocco. Though his central focus was not sexuality, he includes descriptions of encounters with Berber prostitutes because they influenced his understanding of the culture and himself. The absence of (American) anthropologists' sexual experiences is probably evidence of their significance, rather than insignificance. The meaning anthropologists assign to these experiences keeps them from discussing them. Conversations had with musicians, transactions made in markets, and hunting excursions are all readily revealed. Sexual experiences are usually not. They are private, personal, and most often off the record.

When fieldwork becomes personal, anthropologists cease to be objective. But fieldwork is always personal, and objectivity is a fallacy. Ethnography is an interpretation of interpretations. This need not be a weakness of the approach. But the validity of ethnography is strengthened by some reflexivity by the researcher. The meanings I assign to sexuality greatly influenced the way I carried out my research and the way I understood sexuality in Mahasarakham. However, I also became aware of changes in my own understandings through my interactions with my informants. Despite an awareness of my own biases, I frequently caught myself trying to understand a students' view from within my own cultural framework. This was an ongoing struggle for me in the field.

The goal of any research venture is to achieve a greater understanding of something, in this case how students understand sexuality and interpret it in their own lives. Qualitative and quantitative methods take different paths towards this goal, and reveal different kinds of information.

Although I suspect that respondents to the survey were entirely representative of the population of students, the information is still valuable.

Quantitative measurement can increase the effectiveness of anthropological description by increasing reliability; increasing comparability; retaining negative cases; expressing intracultural diversity; increasing the precision for theoretical propositions; and increasing the power of statistical tests. (Johnson, 1978, p. 43)

Johnson's point about retaining negative cases is particularly pertinent to studies of sensitive topics. In situations where there is strong social agreement about how things should be, it is all too easy to write off the few exceptions or extreme views or behaviors we encounter as insignificant anomalies. But it is valuable to understand how they fit into the social fabric. In quantitative research, less common answers can be found less significant in analysis, but they cannot be ignored entirely. Including quantitative techniques in an anthropological study may contribute to making the study more believable.

Surveys also have weaknesses, one of the most notable of which is decontextualizing issues, which brings the extent to which they reflect real life into question. In this study, this is demonstrated in the questions about abortion (see Appendix M). In the clearest question, "Is abortion a sin?" 67% of all respondents said it is, even given the option of answering "in some cases." Two question later, when asked "Who should consider an abortion?" 92% responded that people who have been raped should, and 93% responded that people who are HIV positive should. Providing greater context elicits responses that better reflect how students experience real life. Decontextualization is what makes surveys quick and efficient tools for collecting data. But it is also one of their weaknesses, and researchers must be aware of its effects.

Surveys may accrue sampling and non-sampling errors. Conclusions can only be drawn about a population, based on a sample, if the sample is representative of the population (bad sample = unrepresentative data = bad conclusions). It is presumed that a sufficient sample drawn randomly from the population will be representative. However, the reality is that a perfect random sample is rarely possible. Researchers are not able to compel their informants to participate, so informants may self-select out of the research. In less sensitive research where the topic and questions asked are non-threatening to the respondent, this may not be a significant problem. But in research about highly sensitive topics, questions are potentially threatening to the respondent and there is a greater chance that individuals will refuse to participate.

Participation in a survey on sexual behavior in Thailand, for any student who is sexually active, requires the respondent to publicly (even if anonymously) admit something that by should not be publicly acknowledged. This is especially true for women for whom sexual behaviors can result in a loss of status. Obtaining a representative sample on such topics is a challenge. Based on information collected through interviews and the literature, I believe that the respondents to my survey questionnaire are not representative of the population of students at SWU regarding sexual experience.⁵ Of all female respondents (56), it appears that only three may have had sexual intercourse and this is not certain because they did not respond consistently to questions relating to experience. This finding is in conflict with other data collected which suggest that at least some female students are living with male students, have had abortions, have had affairs with teachers, have been commercial sex workers, and have had sex with their boyfriends. Possible explanations for this include (a) the sample was not large enough, (b) respondents did not respond accurately, and (c) only non-sexually active females responded. Also, although surveys were distributed to near equal proportions of males and females, more females returned it than males (62% vs. 38% of respondents).

Non-sampling errors occur in such instances as non-response, measurement bias, respondent errors, researcher bias – which are often interrelated -- coding errors, and computer-processing/calculation errors. Non-sampling errors are generally reduced through improved questionnaire design, data editing, and by making statistical adjustments for non-response. Although non-sampling error is often larger than sampling error, measurement of most non-sampling error is difficult or impossible.

Respondent bias includes a number of problems such as misunderstanding questions, misreporting information due to perceived privacy issues, and memory error (if the information

⁵ Xenos et al. (1993) encountered a similar situation during a pretest of a survey in southern Thailand. No respondents reported engaging in premarital intercourse. This was solved by changing the setting from classrooms to the respondents' homes. Students in my own study were already free to take the survey questionnaire home (and were encouraged to do so).

related to a previous period). It is known, for example, that in the United States, adults frequently underreport sexual activities on surveys (Turner, Miller, & Rogers, 1997, p. 39). This is an even greater concern in Thailand, particularly among females, who (in both unmarried and married contexts) are expected to give the impression of conforming to social ideals. Cantania (1997) describes the effect of developmental and gender issues on responses (p. 431). Thai are known to sometimes give bogus responses in surveys (see Lyttleton, 1999, Bilmes, personal communication), making the questions less personal and more about students in general or students respondents know, may have been less intimidating. It also, of course, changes the focus. Allowing students to respond in pairs or groups, may have also made it more fun, and increased the likelihood of thoughtful responses, though this, too, would have required eliminating sensitive questions directed at the respondents. Using self-administered questionnaires, rather than interviewer administered questionnaires appears to reduce underreporting of sensitive behaviors (Turner et al., p. 41-42). Of course, respondent bias is also an issue in ethnographic research.

Measurement bias is present any time a technique fails to measure what it says it is measuring. This, too, can result from a poorly designed questionnaire. For example, in this study, questions that began "If you have ever done X..." seemed to confuse students who gave answers, even though elsewhere they indicated that they had never done X. Students' understanding of the meaning of some questions also sometimes seemed to differ from that of the researcher and research assistants. For example, a few male students indicated in some questions that they had never had sexual relations (*mii phêtsămphān*), but they also indicated that they had gone to prostitutes (*pay thīaw sŏopheenii*). This particular example brought to our attention the use of different categories for sexual behaviors with different categories of people (i.e., sex with girlfriends or friends and sex with prostitutes). Sex with friends and sex with commercial sex workers is regarded differently. Sex with commercial sex workers does not, apparently, constitute

a sexual relationship.⁶ My failure to account for this in the survey calls into question the meaning of some of the students' answers; it does not seem that the survey reported on what it was intended to report on. Because the survey had noticeable sampling and non-sampling error, I have treated the data more as I would treat qualitative data. Consequently, it was only tabulated and no statistical analysis was done.

Researcher bias can emerge at any point in the research and can be difficult to mitigate. If the researcher is uncomfortable with the subject matter, that discomfort can find its way into a questionnaire or interview thus affecting the response (Giarni, Olomucki, & De Poplavsky, 1997). Use of polite or euphemistic language to spare the respondent (or interviewee) researcher-perceived potential embarrassment may have the unintended effect of creating an ambiguous question which can, consequently, generate inaccurate or misleading data. One may become aware of such a problem if the data obtained in the question contradict other data, or if the data generated do not make sense in the context of other data about the population. During interviews (whether in surveying or ethnographic research), the researcher's intonation, stress, and facial expressions maybe betray an alleged neutral position in relation to the topic.

The strength of qualitative research methods is their effectiveness at providing information on the subjective and experiential. Participant-observation, interviews, and life history all produce tremendously rich, detailed, emic-oriented pictures of a culture. Traditionally, ethnographers have relied on a few key informants. Although these individuals are certainly "experts" about their own culture, their interpretations are biased by their own experiences and their understandings of researcher expectations and their self-representations. Qualitative research sometimes gives excessive attention to odd cases, thereby inadvertently suggesting they are more "normal" or common than they actually are. Or, the researcher may ignore or write off odd cases,

⁶ It is also possible that students literally "went to a prostitute" but did not have sex there. Men often go to brothels in groups and not all men sleep with the sex workers. The expression *pay thiaw sōopheenii* is normally used to mean "have sex with a prostitute."

giving a false impression of homogeneity. The likelihood of qualitative error is higher in research on sensitive topics, particularly ones that are not readily observed. This study makes an effort to redress this by drawing on information obtained in the anonymous, self-administered questionnaire.

One limitation that all researchers face doing fieldwork is their role in relation to the community they are studying. Beyond consuming time, my role as a teacher was constraining to my role as a researcher. It affected the way students viewed me, the way they related to me, and certainly the way they responded to my questions. However, it was not an insurmountable challenge and in some ways facilitated the research.

Thailand is a ranked society: Everyone is informally⁷ ranked in terms of status in relation to everybody else. One always spontaneously calculates her status relation to whomever she is dealing with. This determines the way people greet, how close to the head one's hands are held during a *wây*,⁸ the way one addresses the other, and the verbal and nonverbal language one chooses to use. For those in extremely high status roles such as monks or royalty, there is even special language. Different words are used for the same action carried out by people of different status categories. Regarding eating, laypersons *kin* or *thaan*, the King and Queen *sawăy*, and monks *chăn*. Age and gender are also key factors in determining one's place in the social hierarchy. This is especially evident in the way that kin terms (which reflect age, gender, generation, and/or lateral side of family) are expressed in non-kin relationships. Good friends may call each other by their nicknames, or they may use the kin terms *phii* and *nóong* (elder sibling and younger sibling, respectively). Depending the age difference, an older woman may be

⁷ Nowadays, ranking is done informally and is so internalized that it appears almost to be subconscious. But ranking was at one time formalized in the Siamese legal code. In the 15th century, King Borommatrailokanat ("King Trailok") defined in the law a complex and specific hierarchy that assigned to every Siamese citizen a status expressed in units of *sakdinaa* ("field power"). Slaves were ranked 5 while the ranking of the nobility started at 400. High government officials were 10,000 (Wyatt, 1982, 73).

⁸ *Wâay* is the common greeting throughout Thailand in which one puts his palms together and raises them to chest or head level, depending on the status of the person one is greeting.

phii, *náa* (mother's younger sibling), *páa* (parent's elder sister), *mêe* (mother), or *yaay* (mother's mother). Thus, one is constantly calculating one's status in relation to others, and though it is usually not a conscious process, violations or serious miscalculations can result in embarrassment or insult. In a general sense, men have higher status than women. But other status markers are often more important for determining relative status overall, and no single marker can be accurately read out of context. For example, when younger male *ajajaan*, even the president of the university, encountered *Ajaan* Chana, a single, female, full professor in her 60s, they regularly showed tremendous respect and deference to her, both in their speech and gestures. Indeed, age is almost always more significant than gender.⁹

Because of the many factors contributing to status, one's status is context-specific. To my students, I was *Ajaan* Pam (professor); to my neighbors I was *nóøng* Pam (younger sibling; they were a little older than I, but still of the same generation); to some young people in my neighborhood I was *phii* Pam (elder sibling); to the children I taught English to, I was *khruu* Pam (teacher); to my friend's niece and nephew I was *náa* Pam (parent's younger sister); to monks, I was simply another layperson (or sometimes even *faràng*, westerner). In any case, my role as an SWU instructor afforded me immediate respect from most townspeople. Teachers, who were historically monks, receive special attention in Thailand.¹⁰ The term *ajajaan* is used not only for a teacher with a degree, but as a title of respect for a highly learned person. It is, for example, used for learned and respected monks, abbots in particular. *Ajaan* recognizes not simply a personal accomplishment (e.g., having a master's degree), but the sharing of knowledge with the community. Having a degree and teaching at the university made me immediately valued.

⁹ One exception to this is in a marriage where the wife is older than the husband. She may refer to him as *phii* (elder sibling) although he is technically not older. This reflects the preferred relative age difference and spousal roles, with the husband as leader of the household. However, she may also call him by his name or nickname.

¹⁰ *Wáy khruu* is an expression which means to pay respects to one's teachers. Every school has a *Wáy Khruu* day to honor the teachers. Artists and writers often *wáy khruu* before start a performance or new work.

My status was further enhanced by the fact that Thai are rather fond of Americans. Reluctantly, I realized that the people of Mahasarakham held the belief that in some way, Americans were better (richer, more developed, more modern, more powerful) than they.¹¹ This esteem was for the most part genuine (however misled I thought it); the status I was granted for being American never seemed to be given grudgingly or with resentment. I felt my presence was appreciated and welcomed.

As an instructor, I was able to use much of my class time to gather research data. The department head allowed me to focus my class activities on topics related to sexuality. Although my position as a teacher created an immediate status differential (probably greater than "researcher" would have) it put me in a position of intimacy with the students. University teachers in many ways fill the void created by the absence of parents. Teachers at SWU function as academic instructors, as well as also advisors, supporters, and nurturers. They commonly form close bonds with students in sometimes parental-like relationships.¹² I knew of instructors who hired poorer students as house cleaners and paid them well, although the service wasn't needed. Teachers at SWU take care of their students; they watch out for their academic, emotional, and financial well-being. Thus, my role as instructor actually gave me the opportunity to get closer to them. They watched my house when I went out of town; they played with my dog, Gratip, and brought her snacks; and they came to ask me questions, both academic and personal, outside of class.

The main drawback to being an instructor at the university, however, was of my own doing. I did not allow myself to socialize too much with the students on an individual basis. As a

¹¹ The people in Mahasarakham like many things about American, but not the reputation Americans have for casual sex ("free sex" they call it). There is an assumption that casual sex is very normal for Americans, both men and women. This can create some difficulties for American women. Those who are not interested in the advances of Thai men hoping for a sexual relationship must be exceptionally careful of their public verbal and nonverbal communication, and take care for their safety. Those who are interested must keep their exploits secret (and make sure their partner(s) does, too) or risk tarnishing their reputation.

¹² I was told that teachers also sometimes enter into extremely un-parent-like, sexual relationships with students.

professional policy, I try to refrain from actions that might be construed as favoritism toward particular students, so I limited my participation to group activities such as picnics. I often visited the entertainment establishments they frequented and encountered them there. Most of my participation in students' lives occurred in public or more privately in a professional (as teacher or researcher) context.

Despite the limitations discussed, this study shows that qualitative and quantitative methods, when utilized together, can complement each other in a way that strengthens the findings of each, ultimately resulting in a more complete understanding of the topic under study. Further, incorporating non-traditional methods, such as free-thought journals, into the design adds yet another dimension, one in which the informants exercise greater control over the direction and content of the information being shared.

CHAPTER 5. PRIMARY CATEGORIES OF SEXUALITY

Among students at SWU,¹ there are two primary categories of *phêet*: *phêetyĩng* (literally woman's sex, or female) and *phêetchaay* (literally man's sex, or male).² I use the term "primary" here specifically because it suggests primacy in terms of both importance and structure. Students in Mahasarakham understand male and female are two naturally occurring categories of both humans and animals,³ though here we consider only the meanings associated with the human categories. *Phêet* has both biological and social meanings, so *phêetyĩng* and *phêetchaay* do, too. Beliefs about the biological reinforce and are reinforced by the social.

Students interpret and explain much about sex in relation to these two cultural categories, though in actual practice, one doesn't hear the terms used very often. When speaking of the sexes, students usually use the words *phûuyĩng* and *phûuchaay* (female person, or women/girl, and male person, or man/boy). These terms are also not rigidly tied to biological sex (as woman and man tend to be in the USA), though in most instances they are. In other words, it is conceptually possible for a *phêetchaay* to be a *phûuyĩng* and I know of at least one instance where a *phêetyĩng* lived life as a *phûuchaay*. Before I discuss intermediate (or intersexed, or third gender) categories, let's consider the meanings of *male* and *female* for SWU students.

Key Categories: Male and Female

As concepts, male and female convey many, many meanings depending on context. But students also have some strong ideas attached to *male* and *female* that are fairly consistent across contexts.

¹ From this point on, I am talking specifically about students at SWU, though they share many of these ideas with other members of their culture.

² The Lao word for male is the same (*phêetchaay*) and the word for female has different tone (*phêetying*).

³ As mentioned previously, Thai linguistically differentiates sexes for humans and sexes for animals. Also, it should be mentioned that monks are theoretically not human and therefore may warrant their own category of sex, though I would tend to disagree.

Physical Bodies

One's body conveys information not only about one's biological sex (*phêetyĩng* or *phêetchaay*), but also one's gender (*phûuyĩng* and *phûuchaay*). Males and females are physically differentiated, mainly by their reproductive and muscular systems. Males have a penis and scrotum and females have female sex organs: labia, clitoris, and vagina. Normally, males adopt men's social roles and females adopt women's social roles. Masculinity and femininity are further demonstrated through the active shaping of the body, which projects particular meanings to others. And, when they aren't successful at shaping their bodies, they sometimes express their desire for change verbally or otherwise, conveying similar kinds of information. Femininity is demonstrated by a petite build and a general softness. Masculinity is demonstrated by strength and muscular development. Bodily appearance is more significant for women than for men and is part of a general concept of beauty. Masculinity is enhanced more by social action and social role than by bodily shape or facial appearance, though a firm, muscular (but not excessively developed) build is desirable. Students' consciously reinforce sexual dimorphism through their choice of physical activities.

Women by and large do not want large muscles and limit their participation in activities that build muscle. Defined musculature is considered masculine and unattractive to women. Several women students specifically said to me that they did not want to do aerobics or run because they were afraid of getting "big legs." Sports are very popular at the university and students are fit and healthy overall. Men are particularly avid playing *tàkrôøw*,⁴ basketball, baseball, and soccer players. But women are infrequently seen playing these sports. Their

⁴ *Tàkrôøw* is a Southeast Asian game played with a woven rattan ball. There are two main styles of the game: hoop *tàkrôøw* and net *tàkrôøw*. In hoop *tàkrôøw*, players encircle a hoop suspended high in the air, bouncing the ball off various body parts. Net *tàkrôøw* is played on a court and is similar to volleyball, except no hands or lower arms may be used.

preferred athletic activities are volleyball and jogging.⁵ Volleyball involves more skill than strength, and jogging is known to reduce weight (a concern of many young women).⁶

This does not mean that female students are prohibited from playing non-traditional sports, though socially they may experience discouragement. My own experience was that female students discourage female participation in "men's sports" more than male students. Students are non-confrontational in general and do not impose direct restrictions on who can participate. Women do not seem very interested in playing soccer, baseball, *tàkrôøw*, or basketball. This was confirmed by my own experiences. To offset the sleepiness I often felt from the heat my first year teaching in Thailand, I made it my routine to jog or play sports every evening, usually accompanied by my 8-year-old neighbor, Tao. On only a few occasions did we have any luck recruiting women to join us in a game of basketball. We usually played alone or with men. Later, during this research, my housemate,⁷ Laura, and I decided to learn to play *tàkrôøw*. The *tàkrôøw* coach, Ajaan Boon, an anthropology teacher and acquaintance of mine, invited us to join him and his team at practice. We tried not to interfere with the experienced players and usually practiced off to the side by ourselves. Ajaan Boon offered us advice and demonstrated techniques. No one seemed interested in or surprised by our attempts to learn this men's sport. Two or three times, some of our English students joined us. Boys usually knew at least the basics, but the women were as unskilled as we though a few said they had played with siblings when they were younger.

The body is seen as a product of nature that should be accepted and must be dealt with. Students express very low levels of dissatisfaction with their bodies, though women have a few more complaints than men. Beauty has been one measure of a woman's worth for a very long

⁵ Students sometimes play tennis, but the tennis courts are primarily occupied by teachers.

⁶ Doctors in Mahasarakham told me that abuse of laxatives, as a weight loss method, is a growing problem particularly among teenagers. There is national concern with slimness, fed by media (movies, television, magazines) images coming from within and outside Thailand.

⁷ I shared a townhouse for a couple of months with a 22-year-old Chinese-American woman who was teaching English at SWU. Then I was given a puppy and so moved into a larger, more Thai-style house not far away.

time, especially in the central region (Van Esterik, 1989). As was mentioned earlier, unlike Siamese culture, Isan culture traditionally emphasized women's skills over physical beauty in their appeal as wives, though it was never a non-issue. Siamese culture, however, has for at least 150 years emphasized women's physical beauty as the main criterion by which they should be judged. Among students, beauty is associated with the female body and both men and women consider female bodies more beautiful. As Daeng (2nd year female) wrote in her journal, "The women's body is very beautiful. The women are suave, neat, and nurturing."

Women are strongly encouraged to take care of their appearances in traditional literature, song, and modern media. Beauty is not only aesthetically pleasing, but reflects the merit of the person, and thus is one indicator of morality. Physical beauty is a reward for merit accrued in past lives; physical unattractiveness is, likewise, punishment for past sins. Beautiful features include slender bodies, pale unblemished skin, shiny hair, and a graceful manner. Beauty pageant standards, increasingly based on Western contest preferences, also now suggest that height and large breasts are desirable features of women.

Both men and women view the female body as more attractive. It is more beautiful, sexier,⁸ and more fragrant than the male body. Males are not normally smelly or dirty (Thai in general are exceptionally hygienic), but sometimes they become that way as a result of working and playing hard. Female bodies are purer, more *bøørisùt*.⁹ In addition to being less sexually active (and thus literally more "virginal"), females do not abuse their bodies with tobacco and alcohol to the extent males do.

Even menstruation, a source of defilement and pollution in many cultures, carries relatively benign significance for the students in everyday life. Menstrual blood is believed to

⁸ Female bodies appear to be much more of a stimulus for men, than men's bodies are for women. Female students almost never commented on men's bodies, but did appreciate a handsome face. Female students overwhelmingly see eyes as the sexiest feature on men, followed by lips. Of below-the-neck body parts, men's shoulders were viewed as sexiest.

⁹ pure, innocent, virginal, unblemished

have the ability to negate the power of magical objects, but it is not perceived as dirty or polluting. Menstruation is natural and normal and is considered feminine, in that it demonstrates femaleness. It is neither something to be feared nor celebrated; it simply is a fact of life. Menstruating women are not considered unclean or impure (provided they otherwise continue their normal bathing habits). Girls unabashedly purchase large quantities of sanitary napkins¹⁰ in the presence of friends of both sexes. I observed young men purchasing them (presumably for friends or family members) along with their laundry detergent, snacks, and drinks at Sermthai department store.¹¹

This matter-of-fact approach to bodily functions carries over to some extent, to sexual desires and behaviors. Sex is natural and necessary and is a positive thing in appropriate contexts. But while sexual behaviors are regarded as normal and natural, they are also constrained and controlled by social rules of propriety.

Sexual Feelings

Based on literature and reports by locals, Isan culture traditionally recognized women's sexual needs and it was one of a husband's duties to satisfy them. In my research, however, I noted a strong tendency in Mahasarakham to minimize women's sexual needs and interests. This may be a result of Siamese influence, which I would argue, has traditionally maximized the significance and strength of men's sex drive and played down women's.¹² SWU students express somewhat different beliefs in different contexts. At a cognitive level, such as when asked directly, they recognize that both men and women have very strong sexual feelings (*khwaam tâøng kaan*

¹⁰ In Mahasarkaham, only sanitary napkins are sold. Both male and female students know about tampons, but they are not widely available.

¹¹ There is only one department store in Mahasarakham, Sermthai. Shopping at Sermthai is a popular activity for students. Other small groceries are scattered about town, but students prefer Sermthai for its size and selection of most goods.

¹² There is not much consensus in the ethnographic literature on male and female sexual desire. Some have written that the dominant Thai view is that sex is primarily for men's pleasure and women aren't really interested and don't enjoy it (Muecke, 1992). Others have said Thai view women as having greater sexual appetites (Hanks & Hanks, 1963; Thitsa, 1982; P. Van Esterik, 1982).

thaang phêet). In the questionnaire, the majority of students reported that male and female sexual feelings are the same or similar. However, in their writing and in conversations, students associate males with strong sex drives, strong sexual feelings, and strong sexual needs. Most attribute this to male nature. In some instances, it seems as though they think the male sex drive is uncontrollable.¹³ But some students, even some of those who say males are naturally highly sexed, believe this can be changed if ideas held in Thai culture change. A few students claim that men are more highly sexed because they can be; society has built-in systems and support for facilitating male sexual behavior. Men stand mostly to gain (status, sexual variety, experience) through sexual behavior. Outside of marriage, women mostly lose (status, reputation, trust, self-esteem). Some female students complained about the sexual double standard to which men's and women's behaviors are held:

In Thailand the men can have a lot of wives, but women can't have a lot of husbands. If the husband have a lot of wives the people will say it is smart, but when the woman have a lot of husbands the people will say that it is bad thing and immoral. It have a lot of thing not fair for women in Thailand. (Journal entry, Bua, 2nd year female)

Men are socially permitted to express their sexual feelings and act upon them in a limited range of contexts.¹⁴ One previously acceptable target of men's sexual energies was prostitutes. They are widely available and relatively inexpensive. But for these young people, who grew up during the national AIDS campaign, visiting prostitutes is no longer seen as harmless. Students are wary of the risk of disease. Those who regularly visit brothels are looked at as foolish. And if they have girlfriends, they are seen as uncaring for putting their girlfriends' health at risk. A second reason visiting prostitutes is no longer as acceptable is because it violates a new understanding of monogamy. Loyalty to one's spouse used to mean that a woman would have no

¹³ More than handful of students told me that if prostitution were stopped, the number of rapes would increase. Men would have no release for their sexual urges and resort to raping women.

¹⁴ Men can be described as promiscuous, too (e.g., *sōmsōon* describes a promiscuous man or woman). Promiscuous women are often described as *phūuyǐng rāan* (a lustful woman, woman who makes passes).

other sexual relationships, and that a man would have only one wife. Ideally, the man would keep no minor wives, but even these might be tolerated if a man adequately provided for both families. Men have always been permitted to have multiple sexual partners, even lovers if they didn't divert family resources. Monogamy, in a strict sense meaning only one sexual partner, is a fairly new concept in Thailand. It emerged as a part of the national AIDS campaign, and is based on a Western marriage ideal to which students have been exposed in movies and television shows. This stricter understanding of monogamy is increasingly talked about. It is a fairly radical departure from previous beliefs about fidelity and imposes much greater restrictions on men's sexual behavior. It is desirable, particularly to young women, but few express confidence that their future partners will adhere to it.

For most young men, a strong sex drive is natural to their kind and sexual experience enhances their masculinity. So some still see prostitution as a legitimate and viable option with no harm resulting if precautions are taken (i.e., condom is used). Further, there are a small number who continue to believe that if they are strong and healthy enough, HIV will not infect them.¹⁵ Some girls, too, continue to support prostitution as a way of protecting their own chastity. Even though students intellectually acknowledge a similarity between men's and women's sexual feelings, the cultural meanings around them emphasize the male sex drive over the female.

The Heart/Emotions

Men are understood to be more naturally emotional and expressive than women. They initiate courting and dating and express love more. They display anger. They are more humorous. Females are said to have more self-control, including control of displays of emotion. Female students feel they must suppress their emotions. This is difficult for some when they are interested in a young man or when one is interested in them. A social emphasis on maintaining

¹⁵ At the beginning of the AIDS epidemic in Thailand, many people believed that the health of an individual could be known by observing his appearance. Sick people looked sickly. It was not for several years after the AIDS campaign was underway that this understanding of health was discredited, at least regarding HIV and AIDS.

harmony and avoiding extreme emotions, especially in public, places limits upon the extent to which men express themselves. But because they are believed to tend to this naturally, they are given more leeway. This may help to explain why females are regarded as more polite, and expected to be more polite.

Students also believe that women are more *jayðøñ* (yielding, weak, easily influenced, literally "soft hearted"). They are often referred to in this way. It is rare to describe a man as *jayðøñ* except as an insult, intended to emasculate. The quality of *jayðøñ* is generally not a positive trait. It is perceived as a primary weakness of women, though in a way it also suggests femininity, since by comparison it makes the non-*jayðøñ* male seem more masculine. *Jayðøñ* is similar to *khwǎñðøñ* (easily frightened, literally "soft-souled"), another quality associated with females. In common use, *khwǎñðøñ* is used to indicate timidity whereas *jayðøñ* suggests a kind of impressionability. A person who is *jayðøñ* is easily misled. Since both are found in women's character, women are in need of protection and leadership.

One might think that being *jayðøñ* would also render women more given to emotions. But this is not the students' perception. In observation and experience, I noticed no difference in expression of emotion between men and women, if drunk men are discounted. Drunk men can be very emotional, but their behavior is attributed to the alcohol, rather than any natural temperament.¹⁶ The social tolerance for men's activities such as drinking may partly account for students' belief that men are more emotive than females. They have this kind of opportunity in which to do it. Women have no such socially accepted opportunity.

¹⁶ An Australian high school student studying in Mahasarakham described to me a fight that broke out in the bar Texas while she was there. This is the antithesis of maintaining social harmony, a strong value discussed more in chapter 6, and under normal circumstances would be absolutely unacceptable. However, the bar workers and other witnesses dismissed it because the boys involved were very drunk. This response by observers is itself an action promoting social harmony, since to criticize the boys would invite further conflict.

Intellect

Sex does not carry any special meaning about intellect. That is, there is an equivalent range of intelligent and unintelligent people in both sexes. But it is interesting to note that those few students who believe there exists a difference in overall intelligence were women who thought that men were naturally more intelligent. I observed little which suggested that one sex is valued more for its intellectual ability than the other. Intellect is more of an individual quality.

One skill that may not be perceived as directly related to intellect, but is a skill of the brain, is speaking. Isan women are perceived as better speakers. This is both a positive and negative thing. In *mǒlam* performances, one style of which involved bantering between a man and woman, the female *mǒlam* often seems the cleverer of the two and the male *mǒlam* sometimes struggles to keep up with the woman's verbal sparring. Women speak well, but they are also overwhelmingly seen as more talkative and gossipy. Whether women actually gossip more is something that should be left up to empirical study, though Isaners certainly think so. I personally was unable to detect any noticeable difference in the quantity of gossip generated by men and that generated by women; Isaners of both sexes seem to enjoy gossiping.

Male and female are two primary categories of sexuality, reflected in social life as the categories man/boy and woman/girl. SWU students understand much about sexuality in relation to or through these categories. The sexed world is also understood in relation to these categories. Each carries meanings derived from associated imagery and experience. However, male and female are not absolute categories. Infants born with ambiguous genitalia, for example, have elements of both -- physical manifestations of both male and female. But even those born with clearly defined male or female genitalia can fall into intermediate categories. There are more than two kinds of sexual identity, but they are all described in relation to the "normative" male and female.

Intermediate Categories? *Kàthəy, Kee, and Thəom -Dii*¹⁷

Western understandings of homosexuality cloud cross-cultural discussions of homoeroticism and sexual identity. Homosexuality in Western discourse is primarily about behavior and sexual attraction, which define sexual identity. In Thailand, sexual behavior is almost irrelevant to a discussion of sexual identity.

A "homosexual" (identity) is distinguished from a "heterosexual" (identity) in Thailand not by specific sexual behaviors, but by sex role, sexual preference, and lifestyle. Heterosexual men (*phūuchaay thĕĕ*, literally, "real men") may engage in same-sex behavior and remain straight. Heterosexual women may engage in same-sex behavior and remain straight. This is facilitated by a certain amount of ambiguity in physical and emotional affection demonstrated in same-sex friendship. Same-sex friendships sometimes include a physical element and even infatuation.

Friendships are very complex and students recognize many levels of friendship, from acquaintance-type friends to friends who would die for you.¹⁸ But deep friendships are rare. In Khon Kaen, one hour from Mahasarakham, a mass male bonding ceremony called *phūuk siaw* (Isan for "to bind good friends") is held each year in November or December at the annual silk festival. It symbolizes the binding of two individuals in a lifelong friendship. I never observed a *phūuk siaw* ceremony, nor did any students report on participating in one. Jackson (1995) writes,

In Thailand most men expect to obtain their most reliable and intimate psychological and emotional support from other men, rather than from wives or girlfriends. The male-female relationship is not as idealized in Thailand as in the West, and physical intimacy between men, as an expression of friendship, is less threatening to Thai men than to Western heterosexual men. (p. 53)

Friends provide students with emotional support and physical affection. This is even truer for unmarried women whose access to physical affection is limited to females and family. Same-

¹⁷ I have left English-derived Thai words in their transcribed spellings rather than using the English word in order to emphasize that the meanings are different, though the words are the same.

¹⁸ The deepest and most valued friends are known as *phūan taay*, literally "die friends," or friends to the death.

sex contact carries far less social stigma than it does in the United States. Students freely walk hand in hand or embracing around campus and around town. There are limits, however. No one should be seen, for example, kissing anyone of any sex in public. And male-female public contact is strongly discouraged. But contact that happens in private, though perhaps socially inappropriate, has few negative consequences if handled discreetly. It is well known that sometimes same-sex friendships develop into physical relationships. This is thought to be quite harmless if the participants do not become full-time lovers.

Stories about female students forming physical relationships with other females are familiar to nearly all students and several second-hand examples were recounted to me. Female-female intimacy is called "*lên phũan*"¹⁹ and this term is also occasionally applied to lesbians (people who *lên phũan*). According to Chetame (1995, p. 3), it is an old term and was used to describe the behavior of the King's concubines in the Ayuthaya period. It is regarded as fairly common and harmless behavior among girls, something they will grow out of when they are mature.

At a male gay bar in Bangkok, I learned some of the "servers" have wives and children or girlfriends. For most, it is just a job, not a lifestyle. The servers fawn over customers, suggestively touching them and flattering them. Some perform in the "Cabaret" and "Gay Fucking Show" which my research assistant and I declined to watch.²⁰ The men receive a bar salary and 300 baht to have sex with customers after work (after 2:00am). Even the "straight" ones do this. "Dancers" (they stood onstage in underwear shifting their weight from one foot to

¹⁹ *Lên phũan* is understood to mean "have sex with friends." Friends here are friends of the same sex and sex here may be any sexual behavior, not necessarily involving penetration.

²⁰ The bar boys encouraged us to stay and watch for our research, but neither my assistant nor I wanted to. The acts themselves do not bother me, though admittedly, their public display does. It is not something considered appropriate in either my own or Thai society. I do not believe it would have contributed to my research, and I did not want to be a part of the sexual exploitation of others.

the other in a vaguely dance-like step) performed throughout the evening and at the end of their songs, *wai*-ed the club's spirit house, which was to the right of the stage, then the audience.²¹

As Wirasit, Brown, and Virulrak (1991, described in Jackson, 1995) found, same-sex sexual acts are not regarded in the same way as male-female sexual acts. For some, they do not even count as "sex" (p. 54-55). The authors surveyed almost 3,000 Thai men and women about the meaning of "having sex" (*rûam phêet*). Male and female responses were very consistent. Nearly everyone considered penile-vaginal intercourse as "having sex." Less than half included male-male anal intercourse, one third included male/female oral-genital contact, and less than one quarter included male/male oral-genital contact. The survey did not include questions about female-female contact. As Jackson sums it up, "Much homoerotic contact in Thailand, even involving orgasm, is not regarded as 'really having sex.'" (p. 56). Penetration seems to be one criterion for "having sex." Another is that it involves both sexes. *Rûam phêet* literally means to "join the sexes" which linguistically suggests heterosexuality. In practice, it is used for both heterosexual and homosexual intercourse, but a different choice of words may have resulted in different responses. On the other hand, *rûam phêet* is a common expression and the Wirasit et al. respondents' interpretation of it as excluding homosexual behaviors may indeed mean that these behaviors fall into a different category, perhaps even one which "doesn't count."

In my own study, male students reported that straight men sometimes fool around with other men for fun, for variety, or to just to try it. Although it is not something they brag about, neither is it something about which they are ashamed. It has no bearing on their masculinity, particularly if the man takes the insertive sexual role.²² Any person may occasionally engage in

²¹ I am curious to know if the performers in the Gay Fucking Show do the same. I did not ask this question at the time.

²² Similarly, Parker (1985, 1992) reports that in Brazil, heterosexuality and homosexuality are much less meaningful than are "activity" or "passivity" in sexual behavior. "Performance of the active role in same-sex interactions need not call into question an individual's fundamentally masculine identify, while performance of the passive role *is* conceptually linked to notions of femininity and submission" (1992, p. 113).

same-sex (i.e., homosexual) sexual behavior; it does not necessarily indicate sexual identity, nor does it threaten masculinity or femininity. The term *homosexual* can be very misleading and confuse the issues when applied to Thai situations. In Thailand, it most accurately describes a person who has a consistent preference for emotional, social, and sexual relationships with members of the same sex. But it also implies a person who rejects normal male and female social roles (i.e., husband, father, wife, mother), though this is not always the case.

The concept of bisexual has been introduced to Thailand. Students are aware of it, and some use the term "*bay*" (from bisexual) to describe people who are attracted to both sexes,²³ though they have some difficulty explaining exactly what this means. No doubt, there are some individuals in Thailand who are equally attracted to men and women. This is different from engaging in sex acts with a person of the same sex, since it suggests a preference (in the case of a *bay*, an equal preference for men and women). In this research, although a few students mentioned the category *bay*, it was never in reference to any particular person or situation. Two explanations are that in Mahasarakham, people either fail to identify *bay*, or there are no *bay*. The former explanation is more likely since *bay* (especially male *bay*) could comfortably fulfill their expected social roles, while also engaging in sexual activities with people of their same sex. In Mahasarakham, sex behaviors are not equated with sexual identity or even sexual preference. The next sections explain the meaning of *kàthæy*, *kee*, and *thøøm-dii*, as categories of sex and their relationship to *male* and *female*.

Kàthæy: Male Women

The word *kàthæy* is an indigenous one and *kàthæy* are documented in Thai society at least back to the 1800s (Jackson, 1995, p. 192). *Kàthæy* is used in both Thai and Lao and

²³ . "*Sǎa bay*" (bi-tiger) is another word that is used to describe a very masculine bisexual man (Jackson, 1995, p. 61).

originally meant "a male or female hermaphrodite" (Jackson, 1995, p. 194).²⁴ Lao also uses the term *phûu-mêe*, which has an almost identical meaning, though students typically use *kàthæy*. *Kàthæy* are usually thought of as cross-dressing, often colorful, frequently entertaining males who consider themselves women on the inside. *Kàthæy* may also be females who adopt men's roles, though this is less common.²⁵ They are stereotyped in the media and popular culture as hypersexed, loud, dramatic, and rather obnoxious.²⁶ In Mahasarakham, many are quiet, reserved, and polite. *Kàthæy* commonly use feminine language (though some of the louder, more flamboyant *kàthæy* use language that would make a woman blush), including the feminine polite particle ending *-kha*. Some *kàthæy* have sex change operations, but many choose not to. What Westerners would simply categorize "homosexuality" is more complex in Mahasarakham. During an interview, my research assistant continued referring to the interviewee as "*kee*" though the interviewee, a *kàthæy*, explained several times that she is not *kee*. There is no indigenous equivalent of *kee*, it was borrowed from the English "gay," so there is some confusion in the general population as to its meaning. *Kee* are men, take on the social roles of men, and form sexual relationships with other *kee* men. *Kàthæy* are males, take on female social roles, and form relationships with "real men" (*phûuchaay thêe*). Real men are attracted to them because of their character and skills as women. Another expression for *kàthæy* is "second kind of woman" (*phûuyĩ ng praphêet sǎong*).²⁷

²⁴ *Pen kàthæy* (being a *kàthæy*) is the definition of the English word "sexless" in the New Model English-Thai Dictionary (Sethaputra, 1994).

²⁵ I never encountered this situation, nor did my informants ever describe it. However, Lefferts (2003, personal communication) described to me a man in the village in Khon Kaen province in which he did his research. Lefferts had been in the village for a while, when a villager pointed out to him that the man working in the rice fields was a female, a *kàthæy*.

²⁶ The Iron Ladies (Poolvorlaks & Thongkongtoon, 2001), the second highest grossing film in Thai history, is the story of the 1996 national champion men's volleyball team. The team is made up of gay, straight, and *kàthæy* men. Although it both touching and amusing, the humor often comes at the expense of the *kàthæy* and relies heavily on stereotypes.

²⁷ Jackson (1995) speculates that this term reflects the role of the *kàthæy* as an alternative sexual outlet for young men. I think it more likely, and more in line with students' discourse, that it reflects the women's identity and social roles that *kàthæy* adopt.

Noi is a 30 year-old *kàthæy* and SWU graduate student who has had three or four *fæen* (sweethearts) since he was a teenager.²⁸ They have, he says, all been real men. Noi has always had a dream that one day he will have a husband and a rich life as a woman. His ideal man has a large, tall body because Noi is rather small and would like someone who is able to protect him. He must take care of him and be understanding when he needs it. He also wants someone who is sincere and respects him. Noi expresses the same wishes of many female students and hopes some day to be a good "wife" with a good husband.

Noi believes the first cause of his sexual identity was when he was 2 or 3 years old and his mother taught sewing. Her students used to make little skirts for him to wear. Later, his teachers noticed that he was very talented at drama and dance and looked rather feminine, so they encouraged him to dress up like a girl and perform in dramas in the school auditorium. At first his parents thought his tendencies were cute. They didn't think they would continue forever and eventually he would change into a normal boy. But after he got to be 12 or 13 years old, when his body began to change, a boy he liked touched him and he first realized he had feelings for boys. His parents realized they couldn't change him but they didn't approve of it. Noi wanted to be like most men, but wasn't able to be attracted to women. Noi tried very hard to understand himself. He spent much time at the temple listening to sermons and reading until he finally came to grips with the fact that he likes men. He believes that everyone is born pure and is subjected to various experiences; everyone has a good side and a bad side.

A male who displays (*sadæeng òøk*) a feminized appearance and/or manners and believes she is a woman in a man's body is a *kàthæy*. The *kàthæy* described here are not medical hermaphrodites, though they do belong to an intermediate sex category. *Kàthæy* may or may not take hormones or have sex reassignment surgery. They are frequently stereotyped as comical,

²⁸ I use the masculine pronoun "he" for Noi because as a male, he is not permitted to fully adopt a woman's role at school. It is considered inappropriate and would result in some kind of conflict. He dresses unusually, in flowing pants and shirts, but neatly and politely. He also applies cosmetics lightly and speaks in a soft, sweet voice.

caricature-like versions of drag queens. And indeed, *kàthæy* have found a certain amount of success in playing a social role as entertainers. Thailand offers world-class cabaret (transvestite) shows in the cities, and less professional though equally entertaining shows in the smaller towns. *Kàthæy* receive positive feedback for expressing ideas and behaviors that only cross-dressing males could; and people think it's wildly amusing when done in appropriate contexts, such as in shows. However, some *kàthæy* adopt a queen-like character permanently. This kind of behavior sometimes offends the sensibilities of more conservative people, especially more conservative *kàthæy*. There are as many polite, reserved, low-key *kàthæy* as flamboyant ones. *Kàthæy* students dress neatly in the required dark pants and white shirt, and may wear cologne or makeup.

Young *kàthæy* are still learning about themselves. They find a balance in expression between the male role that is expected of them, and the female role with which they identify. One way they express their femininity is through artistic performance and social entertainment. Another is by engaging in and excelling at women's activities. For example, *kàthæy* are known to be very good at sewing, dancing, cooking, and design. Most people admire them for these abilities. But despite their attempts to be normal by taking on normal female roles, they are looked at with profound pity and sometimes disdain by much of Thai society, especially in rural areas.

Kàthæy are not real women in the eyes of most students. As Noi said, "Real women are a sex which has respect, has value ... women are mothers of humans." This inability to be mothers is the most significant difference between *kàthæy* and female women. They identify with roles (wife, mother) they can never fully achieve. A woman's value in Thailand is very much realized in becoming a mother. *Kàthæy* lack this capacity. They are an anomaly: individuals trying to be women in male bodies. But there is no belief that *kàthæy* are inherently sinful or bad. Their condition is most commonly explained as the result of karma: They committed some sexual

impropriety in a past life. They are working off their *bàap* (sin) through their suffering in this life. And surely most students see the life of a *kàthæy* as one filled with suffering.

But if the life of a *kàthæy* is difficult, the life of a *kee*, should his sexual identity be made public, may be more so. *Kàthæy* do not fall within the natural primary categories of sex, but they live within the sexual social framework. Provided they act like good women (i.e., are polite, keep up their appearance, and skilled at women's activities), people understand them as a product of either the karmic system or poor or imbalanced parental role models. It is not a conscious choice made by the *kàthæy*.

***Kee*: Men Who Love Men**

A "*kee*" person is a man who adopts the social roles of a man and who loves and is sexually attracted to other social men. Their appearance, including dress and manners, is like that of the general male population, though obviously that allows for a lot of variation. *Kee* men use the language of other men, including the polite particle ending *-khrap*. If one didn't know a *kee* man well, one probably wouldn't know that he is gay. Ad, a *kee* student, estimates that there are about 30 *kee* students at SWU who "show out" and about another 30 who are closeted.

There are two main categories of *kee* which are defined by the role taken during sex: the insertive (male) role, *kee khing*, and the receptive (female) role, *kee khwiin*.²⁹ Sexually, the *khing-khwiin* division of (literally) sexual labor mimics the male-female roles during penile-vaginal intercourse. There is also *baay-kee*,³⁰ a gay man who can play either role in the bedroom. The literature has depicted the *khing-khwiin* roles as very static. But based on letters written to gay magazines and also anecdotal evidence, it is clear that many *kee* are not so limited in practice and may derive pleasure from either the insertive or receptive role. Regardless, these roles do not appear to extend beyond the interpersonal relationship. *Kee* are men in society and play male roles there. Because of social pressures to conform to normative social roles, *kee* men sometimes

²⁹ from the English "gay king" and "gay queen"

³⁰ an abbreviation form of the English "bisexual-gay"

marry and have children to try to get over their feelings or to create a normal appearance and avoid upsetting their families. There is intense social pressure for *kee* to stay closeted, feigning being *phûuchaay thÉE*, while engaging in secretive same-sex relationships.

Gays fall outside the framework: They are men in men's bodies who defy both men's primary social roles as husbands and fathers and women's roles as wives and mothers/nurturers. Consequently, Jackson says, they are regarded as a "perverted form of manhood" (1995, p. 238). There is a persistent social belief that being *kee* and lesbians (called *thøøm* or *thøøm-dii* and discussed in the next section) is a form of mental illness. This belief, internalized by some *kee* and *thøøm-dii*, has led some to try to change their sexual identity by forcing themselves into normative social roles (i.e., marry and have children).

Very few *kee* come out publicly. This is evidenced by the absence of famous acknowledged gays in Thailand. *Kàthæy* have made names for themselves as fashion designers, make-up artists, and even a few television and movie celebrities, but famous outed *kee* and *thøøm* are virtually unheard of. One *kee* student suggested that people would be very disappointed to know a famous man is *kee*, so coming out would not enhance his career.

Some students know the student Ad is gay because he mostly hangs out with gay friends. But he also has casual friends, both male and female, who don't know he's gay. And, like Noi, he prefers to stay at home in his free time in order to maintain a low profile and focus on his studies. Ad has known he is *kee* since he was a child. Like most *kee* and *kàthæy*, he believes his sexuality is largely a result of his environment. His role model was his mother. Ad hated his father and was afraid of him. But Ad also says that being *kee* is his "nature." Students do not generally blame *kee*, *kàthæy*, or *thøøm* for being what they are, though the idea offends some. Most students describe the cause of these forms of homosexuality as primarily environmental. Phim, a fourth year female student, holds a view typical of students. During a discussion about homosexuality, she said that children who grow up in a bad family situation may be repulsed by it and become

thøøm or *kee* (as Ad did). But when asked if being *kee*, *kàthæy*, or *thøøm* is immoral or not, students commonly respond that their situation is the result of having committed adultery or another sexual indiscretion in a past life. This suggests that they are born *kee*, *kàthæy*, or *thøøm*. In either circumstance, responsibility does not lie with the *kee*, *kàthæy*, or *thøøm* present decisions and behaviors.

Thøøm-Dii: Women Who Love Women

As mentioned earlier, the expression traditionally used to describe female sexual relationships is *lên phưan*, "to play with friends." It is generally seen as harmless so long as the phase of infatuations with girls comes to an end and the individual matures (Jackson, 1995, p. 45).

SWU students don't have as much to say about lesbians as about *kee* or *kàthæy*. This may be because lesbians are less visible, or because women are less powerful and these relationships less consequential, or perhaps both. It is notable that this runs counter to Jackson's (1995) observation, "Thai lesbians face more active resistance to their sexuality than do homosexual men" (p. 71). Everyone acknowledges that there are lesbian students, that is, females who have romantic or sexual interests in and desire relationships with other females. Chetame's (1995) study on lesbianism in Thailand found that the Thai stereotype of lesbians is that they are "counterfeit men" and that they are women who have been rejected by men (p. 2). This, she says, is not accurate.

SWU students typically refer to lesbians as *thøøm*³¹ or *dii*.³² People refer to lesbians in general by term "*thøøm-dii*" or sometimes, just *thøøm*. The latter illustrates the social stereotype of lesbians as masculinized. Chetame reported that Thai lesbians tend to reject the term "lesbian" because of the negative connotations it carries (i.e., that lesbianism is a mental illness that can and should be treated and cured), and prefer *thøøm-dii*. But *létbian* (the Thai pronunciation of the

³¹ from *tomboy*, roughly corresponding to the lesbian category "butch" in the United States

³² from *lady*, roughly corresponding to the lesbian category "femme" in the United States

English word) is sometimes used by SWU students, most notably among English majors, not always in a derogatory manner.

Thøøm express masculine characteristics and show this in their appearance. They often cut their hair into short, masculine styles, and wear pants and t-shirts under their button-down shirts. *Thøøm* may also engage in masculine behaviors such as drinking, smoking, and using male language (e.g., the male polite ending *kháp*). *Dii* are more feminine and are almost impossible to distinguish from other females. In terms of appearance and behavior, *thøøm-dii* relationships mirror heterosexual relationships. It has been said that *thøøm* do not generally partner with *thøøm* and *dii* do not partner with *dii*. As with *kee khing* and *kee khwiin*, it is ridiculous to think that all lesbians conform to these heterosexual-type roles.

Despite the fact that lesbians do not fulfill expected social roles as women and mothers, they don't seem to raise the hostility and disgust that *kee* do. They seem almost inconsequential to most people who typically write off questions about lesbians with comments such as, "Oh, yes. There are lesbians. They live together and don't marry men" as if they are missing out rather than behaving unnaturally or abnormally. More and more women in Thailand are choosing to remain single, whether they are straight or *thøøm-dii*. As long as they can support themselves, and especially if they can also contribute to their parents, women generally find social approval. As the value of economic wealth grows, so the pressure for single people to marry declines since there are a number of economic benefits to staying single. Women have opportunities to gain status in ways other than through their family. This may also create greater social freedom for lesbian couples. However, the pressure for women to marry and have children can be quite strong, especially when women are younger and more so in rural areas.

Because I collected little data on lesbian students besides heresay, I rely on the literature. Chetame (1995) interviewed a villager in Nongkhai Province (Isan) in 1994 about an incident involving a lesbian relationship:

The community didn't accept it and the parents tried to force their daughter to get married. The daughter didn't want to, but didn't know what to do. Finally, she hung herself because nobody allowed her to get married to a woman. The parents didn't care and the neighbors thought that she deserved it and they thought that this kind of person should be extinct from the world. (p. 9)

This incident seems rather extreme given SWU students' relative indifference to lesbians. This story is second hand information, and may be overly dramatized. But at the very least, it reflects the narrator's view that pursuing a lesbian lifestyle violates social norms and may bring about serious social conflict.

Most *thøøm-dii* choose not to come out for fear of parental disapproval (Chetame, 1995). Children's obligations to their parents are taken very seriously. Parents care for children when they are young. Then children must repay their parents and care for them when they are old. This responsibility falls especially heavily on girls. Without a husband, it would be difficult for a woman to care for her parents in rural setting. But with a cash economy and urban opportunities for jobs, there are now other options for women. They do not want to disappoint their parents or cause them worry. So they hide their sexual identity. If they can adequately support themselves, even if single, they will draw little criticism and can continue their relationships as a single woman.

Intermediate Sexualities in Mahasarakham

Despite a reputation for being a haven for gay men, Thai people are in general very unaccepting of gay and lesbian lifestyles (Jackson, 1999, p. 227). They do not oppose *kee* and *thøøm-dii* on moral grounds; Buddhism says nothing against homosexuality. Rather, Thai oppose homosexual lifestyles because they are "unnatural" (*phìt thammachâat*). They do not fit into the "natural" (i.e., dominant) order of society in that they do not accept normative social roles. I specify here, "homosexual lifestyles" because Thai aren't so concerned with homosexual behaviors, as long as the men and women fulfill their "natural" roles in society. *Kàthæy* who conform to normative women's social roles can fit rather smoothly into society, even village

life.³³ Homosexuality is not illegal and public expressions against it are strong, but subtle as long as individuals are closeted. Thus, society demonstrates at one level a tolerance for it and at another, disapproval.

Most outed *kee* and *kàthæy* have experienced some kind of harassment. The harassment is largely verbal, but some is physical. Nu, a *kàthæy* in Borabue district who is not a student, was once hit by a man who said, "Why do you have to be a *kàthæy*?" Nu excused the man's behavior because, Nu believes, the man's parents didn't teach him how to behave properly.

Daeng, a *kee* student, says, "Thai society doesn't approve of gays, not at all ... They [straight men] say not to do this or that only once the men have tried it already." *Kee* students receive little parental support for their sexual identity. Chai says that when he was a child, his parents didn't approve and tried to change him. Many times *kee* students don't even tell their parents.

Students at the university know many of the *kee* students and their individual personalities and accept them. But if they go to the village, people are "*εεntî*"³⁴ and ask, "Why weren't you born a good man?" *Kee* students perceive the villages as being narrow-minded and outdated in their thinking (*hūa booraan*).³⁵ Those who are more educated are more tolerant and understanding. The students believe that those of their age have more freedom than previous generations and that it must have been very hard for older *kee* men.

Success and wealth seem to ease social restrictions about sex roles. For example, several recent, prominent Thai political leaders are rumored to be gay (Jackson, 1995, p. 65).

³³ And as the example given in footnote 22 illustrates, female *kàthæy* who adopt normative men's roles can also fit in.

³⁴ Students use this word meaning "against," borrowed from English prefix *anti*-.

³⁵ As the female *kàthæy* in Leffert's research village demonstrates, villagers may not be as intolerant of homosexuality as they are of nonconformity to established roles.

Coincidentally, General Chawalit Yongchaiyut³⁶ was dining at the Bangkok karaoke restaurant below the gay bar where my research assistant and I were collecting information. There were no women in the restaurant and it was located in a well-known gay sex district, next to the infamous Patpong.³⁷ As one of my students observed (not in response to this particular incident), "People with money can do anything and no one will criticize them." Provided they do not flaunt their behaviors excessively, there appears to be more than a grain of truth to this statement.

The Western understanding of homosexuality has shaped the discourse on same-sex issues in Thailand. It tends to categorize people based on their sexual practices rather than sexual identities, lumping people into two major groups (male and female) each with two subgroups (heterosexual and homosexual). *Kàthæy* have been an established part of the Thai and Isan social order for a long time. In the 20th century, Thai adopted the Western perspective, labeling gays and lesbians as mentally ill, defective versions of the normal male and female. *Kee* have probably suffered most from this attitude, though it has likely contributed to many lesbians remaining closeted. Some students at SWU also reflect this attitude, some more subtly than others. However, the more educated and the more urban experience people have, the more tolerant they are reported to be of *kee*. *Kàthæy* who adopt men's or women's normative social roles draw less disdain. But those who fail to act appropriately for their chosen roles, open themselves up to harassment.

Students often lump *kee* and *kàthæy* together, particularly when they are using English (i.e., talking about "homosexuals" or "gays"). My research assistant did so during her interview with one *kàthæy*, until the interviewee had corrected her several times. This may reflect the influence of Western notions of homosexuality, or it may be that both are sexual oddities. But

³⁶ Gen. (Ret.) Chawalit became Prime Minister in 1996-1997, and later Deputy Prime Minister under Prime Minister Thaksin Chinnawat.. The night of our visit to the gay sex bar, the live sex show was delayed until Chawalit left the restaurant.

³⁷ Patpong is a street in Bangkok, and probably the most famous sex district in Thailand. Although the government has tried to clean up its image by setting up a tourist-g geared night market in the middle of the road, sex shows and (female) prostitutes abound.

putting *kee* and *kàthæy* in a single category because they are both biological males who have sexual relations with biological males ignores the internal sexual identities of the *kee* and *kàthæy* themselves. *Kee* identify with male social roles. *Kàthæy* identify with female social roles. *Kee* men do not identify with the female; *kàthæy* do. *Kee* men are attracted to the same social sex, *kàthæy* to the other. Furthermore, men who are attracted to *kee* men are attracted to the masculine (and thus are also *kee*). Men who are attracted to *kàthæy* are attracted to the feminine (and thus are *phûuchaay thêE*, real men).

With this understanding, one can conclude that *kee* fall within the male realm (except when they are receptive in anal intercourse) except that they do not entirely adopt male social roles (e.g., marrying women, fathering children, visiting female prostitutes). Their position in society is, therefore, ambiguous. *Kàthæy*, however, are more of an intermediate sexual category, possessing elements of both male and female.³⁸ Their bodies are male, but their sexual identities are female. I did not speak directly with any *thøøm-dii*, so I am not able to describe their sexual identity with any confidence. *Thøøm-dii* students are more closeted than *kee* students. This suggests they conform to most normative female roles, at least publicly. However, if *thøøm* (who express masculine characteristics and take on the "male" role in a relationship) believe they possess male identities, then perhaps they should be considered in a category more akin to *kàthæy*. Regardless, a *thøøm-dii* acting on her identity does not conform to all female roles (e.g., marrying a man, giving birth) and, like *kee*, are in a somewhat ambiguous position in society. Figure 5.1 is a visual representation of the sexual categories as understood by SWU students. It is a forced consensus since not every student interprets them in the same way. There are two main aspects to each of the primary sex categories, one based on social roles and social performance,

³⁸ Jackson (1995) argues against this: "However, in developing an etic or external account of kathoey, it is necessary to recognise that such people are, in fact, overwhelmingly considered to be a variety of male, not female, and so are not a genuine intermediate category" (p. 195). They are, he writes, "alternate categories of Thai maleness" (p. 195).

and one based on biology, here primarily meaning genitals since that is how biological sex is determined.

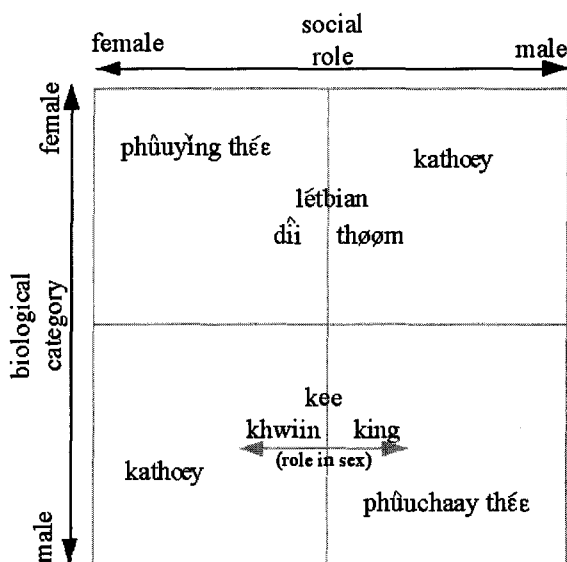


Figure 5.1. Categories of sexuality

Biological and Social Sex

No one is 100% male or 100% female. Each person has characteristics or elements of both. So male and female are not exclusionary categories. At the same time, most people are clearly one or the other as evidenced by their bodies, character, sexual preference, and social roles and they fall into either the top left corner of this figure, or the bottom right corner. *Kàthæy* are biologically male but perform female social roles to varying extents. The Isan word for *kàthæy* is *phuu-mêe*,³⁹ or male-female, suggesting their intersexed status. *Kee* and *thøøm-dii* are more difficult to place on this chart. *Kee* are biological males and *thøøm-dii* are biological females. But there is a societal questioning of the mental status, and many believe they are mentally ill, an idea being directly challenged by *kee* and lesbian organizations. However, because they are not believed to be fully mentally sound, I have oriented them in a more biologically unclear position than real men and real women. *Kee* (both *khing* and *khwiin*) and *thøøm-dii* may express social

³⁹ SWU students more commonly use *kàthæy*.

qualities of the other sex, particularly in language and mannerisms, but much of this is done amongst themselves, and not in public. For the most part, they perform appropriate social roles for their biological gender.

Compared to reports on Thai society in general, SWU students are much more tolerant of alternative sexual identities. *Kee* and *kàthæy* students report few if any problems on campus or with other SWU students. But there are still a few students who are disturbed by non-normative men and women. One male student, after listing qualities of men and women, wrote in his journal, "Men and women are good in their statuses but I do not know why some man want to be a woman and some women want to be a man! Oh! my world." *Kee* and *thøøm-dii* are anomalies, variations on the normative categories of male and female who do not fit neatly into the existing social order. *Kàthæy*, on the other hand, can adopt normative roles and find general acceptance, even in villages.

From the anomalies, the cultural rules become clearer. Conceptually, students differentiate between biological sex and social sex roles (i.e., gender). A biological female who adopts women's social roles is a real woman. A biological male who adopts men's social roles is a real man. A biological female who adopts men's social roles, or a biological male who adopts women's social roles, is *kàthæy*. *Kee* and *thøøm-dii* are less acceptable because they do not fully adopt either set of roles. One's biological sex and social sex need not "match" to fit into Isan society, but one must conform to normative social roles.

CHAPTER 6. OTHER CONCEPTS RELATING TO SEX

Maharakham society is saturated with sex, both in the erotic as well as in the social role sense. The words and images aren't the same as those in the US, but they are everywhere. One might even argue that Isan culture is traditionally relatively very sexual. From folk music to festivals, an awareness of maleness, femaleness, and the social and physical complementary and tension between them has been a part of the social life of Isan people of all ages.

The primary sexual categories of *male/man* and *female/woman*, as well as intersexed categories, have been described in some detail. It is, however, the way they work in conjunction with other concepts that creates what Geertz calls *culture patterns* (1973, pp. 216-217). The meanings of *male* and *female* are subject to re-interpretation when juxtaposed against other concepts in various contexts. The interconnectedness of cultural concepts makes them difficult to tease out in a linear-type format (such as this paper), and an exhaustive discussion is impossible. This chapter explores some of the most recognized and recurring concepts associated with sex, all of which contribute to a strong cultural awareness of sex. Since students' accounts of influences on sexuality largely reflect explicit aspects of culture, latent influences are difficult to ascertain, but can be gleaned from students' social performances, such as verbal and nonverbal discourse, appearance, and actions.

One item on the questionnaire attempted to address conscious influences on sexuality by asking students to rank various influences on their knowledge and understanding of sex (see Appendix H). This question is a fair starting point, but it elicited from the students a particular, and partial, understanding of the meaning of "sex." It appears that students interpreted this question as referring to erotic sex rather than sex roles or masculinity and femininity. The highest ranked responses were magazines, friends, TV, and high school teachers. Religion was ranked lowest overall, followed closely by the government. These responses were consistent with other discussions about influences on ideas about influences and sources of information on sexual

behavior. It is, however, difficult to believe (though possible) that students' understanding of sex is not somehow impacted by, for example, sex-related laws, which dictate legal and illegal sex-related behavior. Laws may not determine the meaning of sex, but clearly they reflect one aspect of the normative social framework in which students go about their lives, national (elite Bangkok,) norms which are part of the Thai identity.

This chapter describes these and other concepts that shape meanings of sex. These concepts are all interrelated, and so the chapter is, somewhat artificially, organized into Modernity and Mobility, Government, Sex Education in the Schools, the Media, Values, and Religion and Moral Action, and Festivals and Traditions. The first four are loosely grouped because they convey conform in various ways to the second dimension in each of the tensions mentioned in Chapter 1: local culture – Bangkok culture, tradition – modernity and things Thai – things foreign. The last three topics are more long established and are loosely tied to the first elements in each tension (i.e., local culture, tradition, things Thai). SWU students are situated historically in such a way that these dimensions of tension are not clearly differentiated except in specific contexts. During an Isan festival, Bangkok culture is contrasted with local culture, but at other times, it becomes part of the students' sense of history and identity as Thai citizens. In other situations, Bangkok may signify modernity, as when juxtaposed with Isan village life. But when juxtaposed with American culture, Bangkok may take on meanings of tradition.

Modernity and Mobility

Lao moved into Isan through migration hundred of years ago. But in the 20th century, a particular patterns of mobility formed that are now very much associated with the Northeast population. Severe, ongoing drought, the need for cash, and the desire for purchasing power have fueled a mass mobilization of socio-economically disadvantaged Thai to seek work in urban areas around Bangkok. Isan is the largest supplier of low-income wage laborers. Mahasarakham and its neighbors Khon Kaen and Roi-Et are among the provinces hit hardest by drought (Raksakul,

1994, Slowing, p. 20). Migration rates have grown so much that the government is investing millions of baht into rural migration deceleration projects.

Migration and Femininity

Mills (1990) conducted research on migration in Mahasarakham in 1989. She reported that labor migration from Isan to Bangkok, the center of modernity in Thailand, had reached such a level as to be the subject of jokes and generalizations. Some of these jokes are sexual, including many about prostitution. Migration has become a regular part of life and culture in the area for both men and women. In the past, migrants were mostly men, but presently, female migrants outnumber male migrants. This continuous movement of people between the rural and urban areas brought an influx of modern goods and ideas to the countryside. Mills argues that although the "modern" experience is bound to cause a re-evaluation of values and goals, the conflicts and stress experienced by migrants (especially females), actually serve to strengthen family ties and may reinforce traditional values. This confrontation of modernity and tradition is more difficult for women as they traditionally had less mobility and more cultural restrictions. As was mentioned in Chapter 5, men have long been permitted to move about and *thiaw*. It was a normal part of male adolescence, though they did not normally travel as far as people do now. Migration is even associated with ordination, a practice existing long before the modern era. Forest monks, for example, led a nomadic life. But female migration is fairly new. Negotiating traditional roles and expectations of young women with the demands of modern society is complex.

Female migrants are motivated by economic needs, obligations to parents (*bun khun*¹), the excitement of Bangkok, and the "drudgery and dirt of farming" (Mills, 1990) The chance to earn money and send it home to their parents is an important way for them to show their gratitude

¹ *Bun khun* is an obligation to a person who has provided some kind of care, protection, or assistance to another. It is not limited to child-parent relationships, though this relationship is inherently imbued with it since parents give children life and care. *Bun khun* can be found in any relationship in which a person is grateful for the goodness or help of another. It involves a deep sense of gratitude that sustains the relationship long-term. *Bun khun* is ongoing and cannot be quantified. In that sense it is not the repaying of a debt (which at sometime would be paid off), but rather a sense of indebtedness.

and respect. But parents have mixed feelings about daughters going to Bangkok. They are proud for their help and income, but they worry for their safety and virtue. There are fewer such conflicts about sons since it is more expected that sons will squander money, take off for days, and indulge in sex, cigarettes, and liquor. Additionally, because daughters traditionally stayed close to home, the loss of a daughter to the city is a loss of labor for the family and a loss of continuity in the village. Daughters, through their caring for parents and regular participation in religious activities, provided connectedness and stability in villages (Lefferts, 2003, personal communication). Young women head to Bangkok in search of wage labor and usually end up in factories, as domestic servants, or in the sex industry. Young men also find work in Bangkok. Many of the taxi drivers are from the Northeast, particularly Roi-Et. Roughly half the taxi drivers I spoke with during my various trips to Bangkok were from Isan, most from Roi Et. Both men and women sometimes end up working in the bars, brothels, and sex clubs of Bangkok and other provinces. Money sent back from city jobs not only goes toward subsistence, but also towards improving status, both the worker's and his/her family's. An article in the Bangkok Post (Raksakul, 1994, Changing) quotes Dr. Preeda Prapertchob of the Khon Kaen Research and Development Institute as saying,

The gap in villages between families who have children working in Bangkok and families who have none is another reason why household heads support their children migrating to the cities....Some families gain a higher income, better living standards and use modern luxury items bought with money from their children. The gap caused by the new consumer culture encourages people's desire to send more and more of their children to work in Bangkok. (p. 21)

The education that SWU students receive ensures them and their families that they won't end up working in a factory or brothel. But, the specter of migration touches students just the same. They are not very far removed from these situations and their sometimes terrible consequences. Many students have friends who have worked in low-paying, big city jobs. Manisa, a second year student, has a friend who was very poor and had to leave school early to work; so Manisa lost touch with her. Later, she heard that the girl had AIDS. When she returned

home, Manisa visited the girl. Her friend contracted HIV while working as a prostitute in a distant town. Third year student Dao took a job in a factory on the outskirts of Bangkok for a summer just for the experience. The work was difficult, paid very little, and many of the women in her factory's dormitory were involved in what Dao viewed as inappropriate sexual relationships with men. She reported that many had sexual relationships, some resulting in unwanted pregnancies and STDs. SWU students, Dao observed, are more responsible and behave in more suitable ways.

Modernity, Economic Status, and Education

Students who come from lower income families value their education greatly and so are committed to succeeding at school. I observed that several of the students who have problems with school are from more economically advantaged families or have emotional and/or family problems that interfere with their studies. My student Pote related to me a scene he witnessed outside his dormitory. A woman was waiting by a car.² When her son came back to the dorm, she dragged him into the car asking him why he didn't register for classes. He replied that he was too lazy and Pote confirmed that the boy does not go to classes and drinks a lot. Pote's comment was, "Why do the poor want to study and the rich don't want to study? Or he is so comfortable or does he not know about the life enough?"

For SWU students, education is their primary pathway to modernity. It exposes them to new ideas, new knowledge, and makes them more marketable in a modern world. Both men and women enjoy the status that comes with a modern image. Speaking about modernization is commonplace in Mahasarakham as both a way of criticizing or commending, depending on the situation. Some of the more common words used to describe concepts associated with modernity are *phátthanaakaan* (progress, development), *khwaam jaræen* (growth, progress), *than samăy* (up-to-date), and *samăy mày* (present, modern[ity]).

² At the time of this study, automobiles were increasing in popularity, but were limited largely to those with more money and those who could access good loans (e.g., civil servants).

Mills (1990) notes the conflicting message about female sexuality received by migrant women. This conflict is also the subject of the short story "Second Nature" by Sujit Wongthet (1985). The image of the "modern woman" includes autonomy, personal income, and children. But the jobs many migrant women take require them to remain unmarried and childless. They see the potential for financial autonomy, but are limited by their low wages, long hours, and job insecurity. Amidst all this confusion and stress, the village and family "represents a moral center" where there are people they love and trust and where they can focus their religious energies. In this way, rural migration reinforces family ties and traditional values by emphasizing the stability villages provide young female migrants.

At the same time, the village also represents that from which the women are trying to escape: poverty, hardship, old-style ways, and boredom. The world beyond the village is believed to be full of opportunities for money, fun, and advancement. The meaning of modern images of sexuality is not so different for educated young women. But their superior social position via their education reduces the inherent conflict. They are much more likely to successfully achieve a reliable job and a family. Where does this leave their relationship with their natal family? I am unable to respond to this question with confidence since the students were years away from this life stage at the time of the research. It is clear, however, that the role of the family and relationships within it have the potential to undergo further change with increasing geographical distance between family members and increased emphasis on individual autonomy.

Modernity and Masculinity

Modern images of masculinity are not as conflicting for young men, particularly for those who take lower paying jobs. The "modern man" is not so different from the "traditional man" except in terms of the kind of provisions he makes for his family. The modern man is expected to provide not only food and shelter, but also a refrigerator, television, VCR, furniture, car, and other luxuries. This is fully compatible and to some degree attainable by the male migrant, though

his purchasing power is limited by the generally low wages earned. He may still participate in masculine-associated activities such as smoking, drinking, gambling, and even womanizing. The ideal for educated males is somewhat different and appears to derive largely from a Western model seen in the media. The modern educated man still provides for his family, but the husband-wife relationship is modeled with a new dynamic. Romantic love, always one of many criteria in choosing a partner, has been given greater significance. Thus, forming relationships with other women, whether lovers or prostitutes, is starting to reflect negatively on a husband. Excessive drinking or gambling are seen as evidence of poor character (most often described as being "selfish"), whether they interfere in providing for the family or not. Further, the idea of the man as head of the family is being challenged, and there is an increasing emphasis on equality, rather than complementarity, between husband and wife. To see men as leaders or superior to women is viewed by many students as thinking in the old way or being outdated (*hũa booraan*), though some of these same students express ideas that maintain asymmetrical relationships between men and women. It should be noted that the stereotype of a domineering wife is a prevalent one, found in cartoons, on television, and in everyday conversation; the extent to which men are viewed as superior or leaders in the household likely varies greatly.

Meanings associated with modernity are closely tied to Bangkok and Western industrialized countries because of their association with technology and affluence. Thus, they are also tied to migration and movement. To study or work abroad is a dream of many students. To study or work in Bangkok or other big city is likely. Many of them plan to go there themselves in search of better jobs than can be found in Isan. Some of them express a fear of what they will encounter, but others who have friends who have made the transition safely are excited about living in the big city – the opportunities, activities, shopping, and new experiences. Isan students, while remarkably proud of their culture, welcome products, ideas, and practices which they think

will make their lives better or more enjoyable. They embrace these kinds of changes, while at the same time hoping to avoid the negative consequences about which they are aware.

Concepts in National Discourse

Modernization and development are national aims that drive many of the Thai government's policies. The national agenda has, for at least seven decades, sought to (re)make Thailand into a modern nation, selecting what each government administration considered appropriate and good from the West, while maintaining the best of traditional values (Winichakul, 1994, p. 3-5). The symbols of modernization, like those of backwardness, Thai-ness, and Western-ness, have changed over the course of different kings and political leaders. This section describes a few images emanating from the government and their meaning for SWU students.

Mass Media and Government Messages

Thai television is loaded with government-sponsored public services messages (PSMs) that address perceived problems such as AIDS, prostitution, and loss of traditional Thai culture. Messages draw attention to issues of public concern and provide some information while quietly reinforcing symbols of elite, Central Thai culture.

One message about AIDS showed two men entering a brothel. One hesitated and the other responded, "What, are you gay?" And they continued in. One developed HIV. The concluding message was, "Don't *thiaw phûuyǐng* - protect yourself." While it draws attention to the risks involved in going to prostitutes, it also highlights the masculine-enhancing aspect of going to brothels and not so subtly emasculates gay men in the process.

Since the late 1980s, Thailand has been aggressive at educating the public about AIDS in radio, television, and print media. People are practically bombarded with programs, posters, and stickers reminding them of the danger of HIV. Channel 11 ran a program called "Life with AIDS" (*chiiwit kàp AIDS*). It provided information on the transmission, prevention, and treatment of

HIV, as well as advice. It showed many pictures of AIDS-related illnesses (graphic pictures are a favorite in the newspapers and on television), but also noted that the symptoms of HIV can't always be seen. This has been an obstacle in AIDS education: convincing the public that a person doesn't have to look sick to be sick.

One presentation featured children with AIDS and the workers who care for them and try to make their lives happy. Many skits featured men engaging in dangerous behaviors. One showed a man in a go-go bar where he gets HIV from a dancer. The doctor tells him not to go to prostitutes because he will get more virus and that he must take care of his health. He doesn't believe he has HIV and continues his lifestyle of drinking and cavorting. His mother and sisters worry about his denial and he eventually develops advanced AIDS. His sister asks him if he believes he has AIDS now and he tells her he sort of does.

The radio, too, plays messages such as "...never in history has there been a disease so frightening, so dangerous..." Information about the transmission of AIDS and how to prevent it is embedded in a set of values that reinforce some aspects of sex identity, while attempting to change others. Pre-existing meanings of masculinity are presented such as drinking and having sex, which are unchallenged. The one masculine behavior the PSMs seek to change is the utilization of commercial sex workers: The new message is that men should not visit prostitutes, or if they do, they should use condoms. Women in the PSMs are nurturing worriers. AIDS messages are not so much directed at them, but meanings of femininity are reinforced just the same. The women in these messages worry, take care of, and endure the behaviors of their husbands, sons, and brothers.

Because of this constant exposure to information about AIDS, students are rather matter of fact when talking about it. Though Isan people were never "prudish" about sex, the need to deal with AIDS has de-stigmatized a part of the public linguistic domain on sexuality. This is not to say that all aspects of the AIDS dialogue would have been inappropriate before, but talking

about applying condoms, particularly to unmarried women, would have been inappropriate in most contexts. Now even fourth-graders have the language and understanding to describe the modes of transmission of HIV as well as how to prevent transmission. But there is evidence that people don't necessarily believe the scientific information and are still acting on previously held false notions. This is not surprising since Mahasarakham has so far had a lower rate of HIV infection and thus the people there have had less direct exposure to AIDS (UNESCAP, 2003). Some television programs have attempted to personalize the disease, make it less of something that happens to other people.

An unusually candid segment of "People Tonight" on World AIDS Day 1994 featured a man with AIDS. The host interviewed both him and his parents and all were very frank about the young man's situation, discussing both health issues as well as the response by society to HIV and AIDS. Individuals living with HIV and AIDS rarely acknowledge their illness in public. Discrimination and fear of those with AIDS are still very strong despite the strong information campaign. Many SWU students, among the most educated in the country, also harbor these feelings:

Although I think I will accept the people who have AIDS, but in fact I don't want to go to see and talk with them. Because I am fear I will have AIDS. [Daeng, 2nd year female, journal entry]

But scientifically correct information is creeping into their general knowledge and they are beginning to believe the data. Manisa, the student whose high school friend contracted HIV while working as a prostitute wrote,

It has been the most fearful disease to me. In the past, I was afraid to go to the public toilets, to drink in the public places and tried to avoid people who had AIDS. When I was in high school, I have learned more about AIDS. I knew that AIDS could not transfer to others by touching or doing things together. The only way to transfer is from blood or sex. [journal entry]

Students are quite knowledgeable about the basics of HIV and AIDS. They all know how it is transmitted (though some fear transmission through casual contact). They know how to

prevent transmission. And they know it is incurable. They have an excellent paper knowledge of AIDS, that is, all the facts given on paper. They don't, however, know how to implement that information in practice, perhaps one source of their continued fear of HIV. They know that condoms prevent the spread of disease. But most don't know how to correctly use a condom (see Appendix P, questions 87-89). The fourth year student's class lecture on AIDS mentioned earlier was the first time most of the females had ever touched a condom. They asked the lecturer how it should be used. It is difficult to imagine them being confident that they can protect themselves against AIDS when they do not know how to use the protection.

Public health concerns are not the government's only motivation for addressing sex-related issues. Some messages are moral statements. One 15-second message had the word "*théeng*" (abort) on the screen. Then it showed a baby in someone's hands and the words "Abort for who?"³ This is a particularly interesting PSM because abortion is illegal in Thailand except when the fetus is the product of rape or when the mother's health is endangered (Thailand Criminal Code section 3, clause 301).⁴ But the PSM did not mention the law. It is instead a moral comment on the choice to abort. And the fact that there is a PSM at all suggests that the number of abortions is significant.

Child prostitution is another topic addressed in the Thai media. It is so extensive that public service messages about it ran daily in 1994. One said, "Love your child, don't let her become a prostitute." All students are aware of this problem and of the international reputation of Thailand's sex industry. The government messages focused on the role of parents in prostitution (rather than, say, government-induced changes in the economic structure). However, most students see the main cause of child prostitution as socio-economic problems: poor farm production, insufficiently skilled people, and a lack of adequate jobs. It is frequently addressed as

³ *thamthéeng pháa khroy*

⁴ In 2001, the national Medical Board proposed to amend the law to include cases where the mother's psychological health or the fetus' health are at stake.

caused by an "other." However, the attention child prostitution has received on television has helped to open a dialogue on the matter.

Public Health & Medicine

Aspects of sex related to public health are handled by the ministry of public health, which has an office in each province as well as local clinics which are open to everyone. Clinics in rural *tambon* (subdistricts) are staffed by trained public health aides. The public health office in Mahasarakham is a busy place. It offers services such as sexually transmitted disease (STD) testing, family planning, HIV testing, and educational programs on critical topics such as vehicular accident prevention. It is responsible not only for these services, but for researching public health issues in the province, and creating and implementing programs to address them. The public health office doesn't often deal directly with university students (though in 1994 they were about to implement a campaign to reduce motorcycle and automobile accidents, the number one killer of young people in the province), but its public service announcements, billboards, and other informational signs are present throughout the community.



Figure 6.1 AIDS awareness poster on the main street in Mahasarakham ("The path to stay safe from AIDS – know the problem of AIDS, reject risky behaviors")

University students don't have much reason to visit the public health clinics. Some come to the anonymous clinic for STD testing, but not many.⁵ They account for only 6% of the people

⁵ An official at the Mahasarakham in the Agency for Disease Control (part of the Department of Public Health) reported that the most prevalent STDs re gonorrhea and syphilis.

who test positive for sexually transmitted diseases at the public health STD clinic (see Appendix Q). It is more common for students to go to private clinics to be tested and treated for STDs. There is little cost difference and private clinics are less conspicuous. Additionally, if a student is able to self-diagnose, she or he can go directly to a pharmacy to purchase medicine over the counter. A wide range of antibiotics and other medicines are available without a prescription in Thailand.

To be seen at an STD clinic is to risk a public admission of sexual activity. This is not as much of a concern for male students as for females. Even once in the clinic, one's anonymity is not guaranteed, despite the printed sign, "Anonymous Clinic." My own experience at the Anonymous Clinic for an HIV test was hardly anonymous.⁶ If students are aware of this, it is likely that very few students would ever consider going to the Mahasarakham Anonymous Clinic if they truly wish to keep their situation private. One clinic nurse speculated that if a student wanted an HIV test, he'd probably go test in another province, such as Khon Kaen, where he'd have less of a chance of knowing someone. The HIV counselor sees very few students at Mahasarakham's clinic.

It is of interest to note that the card one receives after being tested, indicates HIV status in English (a green "nonreactive" or red "reactive"; see Figure 6.2). I did not think to ask about the reason for this, though I strongly suspect the English is regarded as more official, more scientific, and more modern.

⁶ I went to the clinic with one of my female research assistants. I warned her that it may not be fully anonymous and that people might see her there. But she was very curious about the entire process and insisted on going. As we approached the receptionist, she asked who I was, what I do, and where I live, normal questions in the street, but hardly appropriate for maintaining anonymity. The two receptionists discussed my student and me and asked me why I wanted to get tested. Once in the exam room, the counselor asked why I came and my feelings about the possible results, but not much more. He was very interested in this research. After drawing the blood, the syringe was dropped in a yellow solution. Later at the cashier's window, she said "HIV test...40 baht." I returned a week later for the results. They remembered me in the clinic and joked a bit about my results. The counselor called me into the curtained off room to his desk. He wrote down my patient number in a ledger and stamped a green "non-reactive" next to it. On the pages I was able to see, there were only two or three green stamps and maybe ten red stamps ("reactive"). The counselor said that when people come to test for HIV, they are normally fairly certain that they have it.

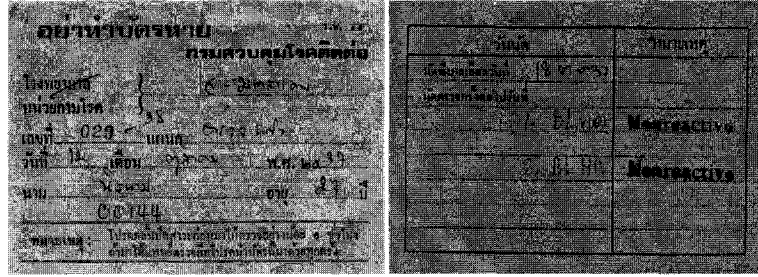


Figure 6.2. HIV status card (front/back)

Education is the public health office's strength. It is through their campaigns that inappropriate or unmentionable topics may become appropriate through necessity and for the good of the people. Isan people are often practical people; if bringing attention to a situation through dialogue is viewed as useful to the region or to the country, they are sometimes able to adapt, particularly if the benefits outweigh the costs.

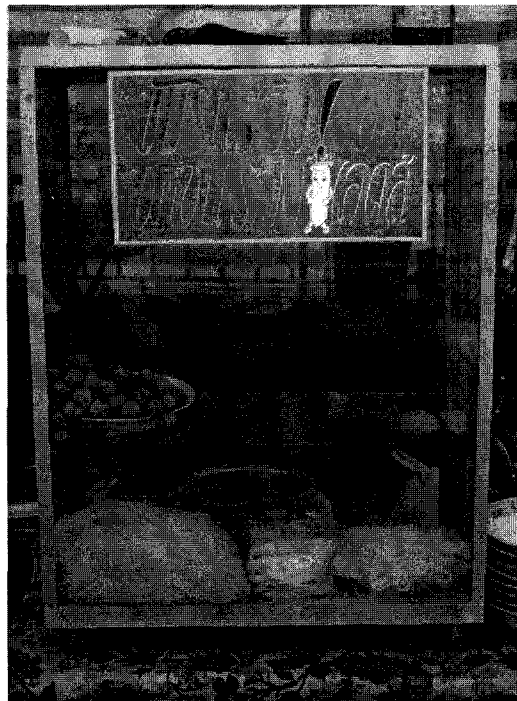


Figure 6.3 "Be careful of AIDS!" sign at a noodle shop on the main road in Mahasarakham.

With proper strategy, the Public Health Department's programs have proven to have a great impact even on sex-related issues such as AIDS. The provincial public health office creates many of its own campaigns and programs. They are, however, compatible with the Central

government's values and understanding of health issues. The AIDS campaign does not challenge dominant meanings of masculinity and femininity, but rather channels them into safer directions.

Government Leaders

National government leaders are largely powerful and typically wealthy men. Their masculinity is manifested not only in their behavior but also in their power. This is not magical or holy power (*sàksit*), but raw, political power (*amnâad*). They are well-known to have multiple wives or girlfriends. They are rumored to still engage in the centuries old practice of giving to and accepting from other leaders, politicians, and businessmen, gifts of women's services. As was mentioned previously, a few top leaders in Thailand's history are/were believed to be *kee* (including more than one prime minister and a king), though this has not been openly acknowledged. Their power seems to more than make up for any negative consequences their questionable sexual identity might have on their masculinity. Government leaders often have military or police connections, both highly masculine organizations, which further ensconce the political leadership in masculine networks. One consequence of this is that fewer women have been drawn to political leadership and those who are face many challenges.

Some of those obstacles include general notions about women and a hostile and corrupt climate. At the time of this study, at the national level women held nearly 5% of positions countrywide (The Nation, 7/8/95, p. C1). The number of women members of parliament steadily increased between 1986 and 1996⁷ and women represent a growing percentage of candidates for parliament (Office of the Prime Minister, 2002). However, very few women were appointed Senators by the Prime Minister.⁸ They have fared even worse at the local level, with females making up only about 1% of sub-district (*tambon*) officials (called *kamnan*) and village heads (called *phûu yàt bâan*) in 1995. Women didn't have the opportunity to be elected *kamnan* until 1982 (Tanaa, 1994, p. 96), though there are a few known cases of women village heads.

⁷ from 12 of 347 to 22 of 393

⁸ In 1998 a new Constitution went into effect that changed the Senators from appointed to elected positions.

Currently, one of Mahasarakham's six representatives is a woman. Women are not politically disinterested. More Thai women are eligible to vote than men, and more actually do (Office of the Prime Minister, 2002).

The lack of a presence of women in political leadership positions is consistent with students' beliefs about sex and leadership. Overall, both male (88%) and female (82%) students believe men are better and more natural leaders (see Appendix F). Additionally, they are better decision-makers (males - 91%, females - 71%) and when it comes down to making a quick or difficult decision, students believe it is better that a man do it than a woman. And, when hypothetically given the choice between choosing between an equally qualified man and women for political leadership, students strongly favor choosing men. Men were more strongly favored for the highest national and local positions (see Appendix G). This is remarkably consistent with actual trends in male and female political leadership, suggesting that the meanings derived from politicians as symbols are in part sexed ones.

Royal Family

King Bhumibol Adulyadej and Queen Sirikit are the most prominent married couple in Thailand and thus serve as an example for the public. They are the ultimate models for Thai not only in terms of sex roles, but also dominant Thai culture: "As a symbol of national unity, the royal family reinforces the primacy of Bangkok as the cosmological, religious, political, and economic center of the nation" (Van Esterik, 2000, p. 8).

King Bhumipol has brought back to the monarchy the image of the King as a paternalistic figure.⁹ The King and Queen have a reputation as being very caring toward the Thai people. Though at one time they presented a very unified and supportive image (and in 1994 this was still true), today it may be less so. They have four children: Princess Ubol Ratana, Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn, Crown Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, and Princess Chulabhorn. HRH

⁹ This image existed during the Sukhothai period, but then disappeared for several hundred years.

Princess Ubol Ratana attended MIT in the United States and married an American from whom she is now divorced. For many years she played a very small role in the duties and activities of the royal family, but now that she lives in Bangkok, her royal activities have increased. She travels the country participation in celebrations, sometimes wearing some rather risqué clothes. Princess Chulabhorn, who dresses in very modern, stylish clothes and who sometimes prefers to give speeches and talks in English than in Thai, is also now divorced.

Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn was conferred with the title of Crown Prince on December 28, 1972, by King Bhumibol, making him heir to the throne. The Crown Prince's reputation in the late 1970s and early 1980s suffered. He demonstrated a lack of interest in public affairs, spending more time womanizing (Keyes, 1987). His first marriage to Princess Soamsawali produced a daughter, Princess Bhajakittiyabha who is now a young adult. After his daughter's birth, he took up with another woman, Yuwatida Pholprasert with whom he had a daughter and four sons. For a while, the Crown Prince attempted to recreate his image through public demonstrations of responsibility and seriousness about his royal duties. In a soap-opera like twist, Yuwatida and her children left for Britain in 1996 with Air Chief Marshall Anand Rodsamkhan (who was posted at the prince's palace), after he was suddenly dismissed without public explanation. This largely resolved a disharmonious situation. The Prince is now rebuilding his image once again with a new, rather *riapróøy* girlfriend, who appears with him in public and on TV.

Princess Sirindhron was conferred with the title Crown Princess by His Majesty the King on December 5, 1977. Although a 1972 amendment to the Constitution allows a female to ascend the throne, it is expected that the Crown Prince will inherit the crown at the appropriate time. Students, as well as others, express great confidence in HRH Princess Sirindhorn's character, abilities, and genuine concern for the well being of the Thai people. Unlike her siblings, her appearance is rather dowdy and she makes no great effort to dress in stylish, modern clothes. In

many ways, she defies the image of an elite, modern woman. But in remaining single and focused on her royal duties, she in some ways promotes it.

It is a crime to defame the King in Thailand, so people refrain from publicly criticizing the royal family. Though students talk only quietly about the personal situations of the royal family, they were clearly displeased by the Prince's past playboy-like behavior, not the behavior of a responsible father, husband, and national leader. Princess Sirinhorn, however, is considered to be a role model by many, both males and females. She is educated, polite, caring, and very supportive of Thai arts and culture.

Mole (1973) observed that Isan people revere the King "in almost a spiritual sense for they seem him as the embodiment of certain divinity or at the very least, one who has earned very much merit in previous existences" (p. 96). Isan people do, indeed, speak of the King and Queen in terms of near worship. That they revere, love, and admire them so much suggests that the royal couple is a strong model, as their children may be. In the royal family, students can see reflected the tension between traditional and modern aspects of sex and family.

Law

Government policy is enforced through laws. Laws both shape and are shaped by social practice, and so do not have absolute meanings. In Mahasarakham, villagers often utilize courts only when other means fail to resolve a problem.

The Civil and Criminal Codes of Thailand clearly describe all legally criminal activities. Some (e.g., murder) are more consistently enforced than others (e.g., prostitution). In Mahasarakham, many transgressions are handled informally or locally, rather than involving the police.

Laws are enacted by the government usually to serve government purpose. Sometimes these agree with public sentiment, sometimes they don't. The family laws describe a very particular elitist family structure that is in some ways inconsistent with traditional Isan family

structures and practices. Under Siamese law until 1935, a woman was a piece of property who could be bought and sold. She was the property of her father if unmarried, or husband if married. She could be legally beaten for correction. The law, however, did not necessarily reflect actual practice (see B. Andaya, 2000, and Koizumi, 2000, for examples). Traditional Isan beliefs and practice would have allowed a woman to leave her husband if he were to beat her or treat her badly. Under the old laws, a husband could have as many wives as he wanted, but a wife was only allowed one husband. Adultery by a wife could be punished harshly, even with death. Upon separation, a husband received 2/3 of the property and the wife 1/3 regardless of what she brought into the marriage. These laws protected the interests of the monarchy and other elite men and probably did not have much impact on villagers, at least not until the advent of mass media helped to spread nationalist ideals.

In 1935, the Civil and Commercial Code Book V on family law ended recognition of plural marriages. Women were legally regarded as people, not property, though the husband could still control his wife's occupation, property, and childrearing. The husband was and continues to be recognized as the legal head of household and can legally make decisions about family residence and maintenance. Until mass communication proliferated, local traditions and local rules in Isan were probably followed more closely than formal government law (Somswasdi, 1994, pp. 7-11). At the present time, adultery remains grounds for divorce for husbands only. Women in Isan fared better than women in Bangkok. Their families looked after their interests and local practices treated husbands and wives similarly. The 1973 Constitution, in place only 3 years before being thrown out, temporarily improved the legal status of women and granted equal rights to men and women. It was one of the most favorable constitutions to women ever in Asia. The 1997 Constitution restored those rights, and, like the 1973 version, clearly prohibits discrimination based on sex.

Current laws relating to family, marriage, and sex are irregularly enforced. Crimes relating to private matters are investigated only if someone makes a complaint. Thai family law requires that individuals be at least 17 years old to get engaged, or if they are underage, they must have the permission of both their mother and father.¹⁰ A couple is recognized under the law as engaged when the man commits to the woman or her family his assets.¹¹ Engagement laws apply to both men and women. Engagement is a contract and once in place is regarded as the first step in marriage, not separate from it. For example, the bride wealth does not need to be returned in the event of either party's death after engagement; it is handled as if the couple were married. Those who share one or more blood parents, or are the adopted children of the same parent, are not allowed to marry. Individuals may only be married to one living person. A woman must wait 310 days after a divorce or after being widowed to marry again for paternity considerations. Any children born during this time are considered her ex-husband's.

The marriage laws are consistent with students' understanding of marriage. However, bridewealth, though still given in Isan, is not required to cement an engagement. Couples have more independence and may simply decide to marry, though approval of the families is very much preferred.¹²

Husbands and wives are required by law (section 1461) to live together and help and care for each other as their abilities and status allow. It is, however, not uncommon for circumstances to require a husband and wife to live apart. If a man or woman is in mental or physical danger he or she has the right to ask to be separated from the danger, and the one who caused the endangerment can be fined by the court. When a marriage is dissolved, each party is entitled to

¹⁰ Illegal early marriages are not generally noted as a problem in Thailand.

¹¹ If either party violates the understanding of the engagement, the other party can void the agreement, and the property must be returned. While attending a wedding in a village in Khon Kaen Province, Lefferts (2003, personal communication) asked about this and was told that if he changes his mind, the groom forfeits the brideprice. If the bride changes her mind, she must repay it twofold.

¹² In the survey, only 15% of male respondents and 4% of female respondents would marry someone who was unacceptable to their parents.

any assets he or she brought to the marriage either before or after, and any assets earned together are split 50-50. Marriage is ended by death, divorce, or court order. A woman may divorce her husband if he has another wife or minor wife,¹³ but a husband may divorce his wife if she has a lover¹⁴ (*chúu*; section 1516/1) . There is a legal expectation of sexual relations as part of a marriage. If a husband or wife have a health situation which makes him/her unable to have sexual relations, it is grounds for divorce (code 1516/10).

The law does not treat men and women equally, especially regarding divorce and expectations of fidelity. Men are legally permitted to engage in extramarital sexual relations as long as the relationship is not construed as an additional family. Women are not legally allowed to engage in extramarital sexual relations. That sex is a legally recognized, even required, component of marriage is reflected in the rape law. A man who forces his wife to have sex against her will commits no crime. The meanings reflected in these laws reflect and reinforce traditional Central Thai notions of sex characteristics and roles. To a large degree, students show similar understandings.

Other laws relating directly to sex concern prostitution and abortion. In 1996, a new Prevention and Suppression of Prostitution Act replaced the Suppression of Prostitution Act from 1960. The new act defines prostitution as "sexual intercourse, or any other act, or the commission of any other act in order to gratify the sexual desire of another person in a promiscuous manner in return for earning or any other benefit, irrespective of whether the person who accepts the act and the person who commits the act are of the same sex or not" (Council, 1996). The previous law specified that the prostitute must be a woman; the new law expanded the meaning of prostitute to include both sexes.¹⁵

¹³ A minor wife is a woman with whom a man lives like husband and wife. That is, the man is fulfilling a social role of husband to her, sometimes but not always including fathering children.

¹⁴ This applies even if only one incidence occurs.

¹⁵ Other changes concerned increased penalties for procuring and child prostitution.

The law is called the "suppression" (*pràap*) of prostitution act because the police and government recognize that it is not possible to eliminate prostitution in Thailand (and perhaps they do not desire to do so), but it is possible to control its appearance. SWU students know this about the law, but when they describe it in English, they say that prostitution is "illegal." Part of this distinction may be in the terms used. The law uses the term *sǒopheeni*, which commonly refers to "direct" prostitutes, or those who work in brothels. There are also dozens of "indirect" prostitutes (call girls, masseuses) in snooker halls and restaurants throughout the municipal district of Mahasarakham, but the brothels are located in the area known as *Fàng Thong*.

Fàng Thong is an area, really one lane, next to the canal near the department store. Small structures, many with corrugated tin roofs and old wooden walls, closely front the street. Men wander, many stumbling, around the area at night. During the day it is relatively quiet. In 1994, there were seven or eight brothels (*sǒong*), each with six to eight prostitutes. Realistically, prostitution laws are enforced only if there is a problem or if someone complains. In one case a 16-year police veteran related to me, a husband took his wife to sell sex in a hotel. They arrested the husband but not the wife because she was forced. The officer explained that the Thai law allows for some flexibility. It allows police to deal with the elements that cause danger or threaten society. He suggested that the real cause of prostitution, poverty, must be dealt with to solve the problem but that it will take time.

The police are familiar with the people at *Fàng Thong*. A detective who is a good friend of a fellow *aaajaan*, offered to take me there since the police cruise the area frequently looking for problems. The police officers were very friendly with the brothel owners and chatted the whole while we were there. During this time, men came to use the services, and the police ignored them. Things carried on as normally as they could with a *faràng* woman visiting.

Another part of the sex-related law is abortion. Abortion is illegal in Thailand except if (a) it is necessary for the health of the woman, or (b) if the pregnancy is the result of rape (section

305). Abortion providers may be punished more severely than abortion seekers.¹⁶ Although it is illegal, it is common and available. One clinic, formerly a private hospital, is run by a doctor primarily for the purpose of providing abortions. Abortions are also provided at the hospital for 1,000 baht per month of pregnancy. A nurse who works at the hospital said that women frequently come in with complications from botched or incomplete abortions (hemorrhaging is especially common) performed by untrained providers. Women sometimes also try to abort using various herbs, poisons, or alcohol. The nurse reported that she sometimes sees student-aged girls. Again, this is considered a private, medical matter. The police do not intervene and would not do so unless a complaint was made.

Students' beliefs are consistent with the police. Students are aware that abortion is illegal, but, as described in brief earlier, feel that sometimes it is the best course of action. The law is an insufficient reason not to have an abortion. Further, that abortion results in the taking of a life (and thus violates one of the five precepts) is not a primary consideration for most. Although 67% of students responded in the survey that abortion is a sin, nearly all thought it was probably the best choice in certain situations. The immorality it seems is determined by the specific circumstances of the individual. Most thought it should be considered in cases of rape (90%) and when the mother is HIV positive (91%), situations in which the outcome was likely to cause profuse suffering. Some also thought it should be considered if the mother is ill (53%), if the mother is a student (18%), if the mother doesn't want the child (17%), if the mother is too poor (14%), and if she has too many children (13%). Abortion is not desirable, but sometimes it results in an improved situation and thus is an appropriate thing to do. Assessing moral value is not based on adherence to absolute rules. It is an analysis of the overall impact of any action. Moral action results in the most possible good coming from a particular situation.

¹⁶ The law on abortion states that a woman who aborts her child or who allows someone to abort her child is subject to up to 3 years in jail, a fine up to 6,000 baht, or both. A person who performs an abortion is subject to up to 5 years in jail, a fine of up to 10,000 baht, or both (code 3, sections 301, 302). If it results in the death of the woman, the maximum punishment doubles.

In general, the police enforce the laws that create immediate public danger. They are very concerned with traffic accidents and violent crimes. Personal issues such as abortion and prostitution don't concern them unless they get direct orders to intervene. During this research (1994), orders came from the Prime Minister's office to eliminate direct brothels, that is, those that sell nothing but sex. So, in a short period of time police saw to it that the brothels of *Fàng Thong* began offering drinks and snacks, too. They were no longer direct brothels. A change in appearance re-categorized the establishments

Sex Education in the Schools

Talking about sexuality is not so much taboo as it is simply inappropriate in most social situations. This carries into the home. Isan parents generally do not teach their children about sex; few students indicated ever learned about sex from their mothers or fathers. Much of what SWU students know about reproduction and sexual intercourse was learned in high school classes and from friends. Under the national curriculum, sex education is scattered in science and health classes.¹⁷ There is no single program of study. Girls learn about menstruation in health/hygiene class (boys are often dismissed from this lesson), reproduction is taught in biology, and morality is covered in religion classes. Now students also learn about AIDS, though it was not part of the school curriculum of the students in this study. Both public and private schools follow the national curriculum, which is created and administered from Bangkok.

Educators teach information appropriate for the age of the student. In *prathöm* 1-3 (approximately grades 1-3), children learn general things about the body and hygiene. *Prathöm* 4-6 classes include information about menstruation (sometimes the girls are separated from the boys for this lesson), body changes, health, and taking care of oneself. *Mátthayom* 1-3, the rough equivalent of middle school, includes health lessons on making friends, mental health, AIDS,

¹⁷ This curriculum was in place from the early 1980s until 2000. In 2000, the national curriculum was revised and the sex education component expanded largely in response to the ongoing AIDS problem. One textbook generated a great deal of controversy as it was considered by many to be too explicit, even pornographic, for Thailand.

caring for pregnancy, and science lessons on anatomy, zoology, and botany. At the time these SWU students were in elementary school, AIDS was not a public issue. But as they went through high school (*máttthayom* 4-6), the national AIDS education campaign became more visible in schools. Now students are exposed to information about AIDS from the youngest grades. In the last years of school, family planning and childcare are covered in health class, and the reproductive systems, pregnancy, birth, growth, and human development in biology. Another component related to sex education comes through religious education in the schools that includes consideration of family, marriage, moral precepts, and manners.

SWU students studied all these things over their years in school. For many, classroom lessons were their first exposure to this information, especially as applied to humans. Coming from a rural environment, students were already exposed to the reproductive practices of animals to some extent. Girls report that school is a very important source of sex knowledge, but it is somewhat less important for boys. But many students told me that they have since forgotten the information they learned in school. At the time they learned it, it wasn't applicable to their lives, so they didn't retain it. The amount and accuracy of students' knowledge about sex and reproduction is limited as confirmed by 10 questions about sex and reproduction included in the survey (see Appendix P). For example, only 23% know when a woman is most likely to get pregnant; 20% know that if a man withdraws, a woman can still get pregnant; and only 19% know that it is possible for a woman to get pregnant during her period. Students' current sources of information are inadequate to allow them to protect themselves against disease and pregnancy should they become sexually active at university. As they grow older and more independent, they want to know this information and additional information such as about sexually transmitted diseases and birth control methods. Several students told me that they are interested in these topics and would like to get good, reliable information. As university students, sexual activity is

clearly visible on the horizon, if it isn't already a part of their lives. They are very receptive to learning about sex-related topics.

A lecture on AIDS, given by a fourth-year student to her classmates, was frank and enthusiastically received. Both male and female students asked and answered questions. As they passed around a condom, they made jokes as well as thoughtful comments and questions. There is no stigma attached to the knowledge associated with sexual behavior, though there are limited contexts in which a discussion can be appropriately initiated. An educational institution or educational context is considered appropriate for non-personal discussions. I will now examine the values associated with the social context of sexuality.

Media

Globalization has spread information rapidly and widely bringing new meanings to even traditional aspects of culture. Mahasarakham culture is now an amalgam of Isan, Siamese, and international concepts negotiated in an increasingly complex social setting. There are various ways of distinguishing between new and old aspects of culture: high culture and low culture, modern and traditional, high culture and pop culture. These dichotomies introduce a distinction that may or may not exist in reality. Even the oldest traditions take on new meanings in new contexts. However, for heuristic purposes, and because students often refer to "modern" things and "old" things, I break my discussion on media into two sections, which I refer to as *classic* and *pop*. Classic includes literature (both oral and printed) that has been of enduring interest to Isan people. Pop includes that which, though widespread, has not yet stood any test of time. This section will focus on media of the pop type.

Students themselves bring attention to the significance of mass media for sharing information and ideas. After friends, magazines, TV, and movies have the most influence on student's ideas about and knowledge of sex. The most popular television programs among SWU

students are talk shows, magazine-type shows (e.g., *Phûuying Yàak Ríu*¹⁸), news, movies, game shows, and television dramas (e.g., *Săam Kák*, *Khâaw Plîak*, *Daaw Phrásùk*¹⁹). In her study of television and youth in Khon Kaen and Mahasarakham, Hesse-Swain (1992, 2001) had similar findings. Nearly all students watch television; it is a very popular pastime. Food shops near the university often have televisions playing music videos and popular shows. Nudity and obscenity are not allowed on Thai television (there is a national censoring board), but most any topic can be talked about (except for criticisms of the King and royal family which are illegal and almost unthinkable). Students are exposed to a tremendous amount of information on all kinds of subjects.

In addition to images of men, women, boys, and girls, which exist in all forms, direct references to sex-related topics are frequent both in shows and in advertising. One drama included a scene where a boy whose mother had died was telling his father that he is afraid the father will get AIDS if he goes somewhere with his sister because the TV said you can get HIV if you "*thiaw phûuying*." Literally this means "go about with females" but it is a colloquial expression for going to prostitutes. It took the father two minutes to explain that it's not just going out with females, but a "special" kind of going out that grown men like to do. Television comedy shows frequently feature skits and routines about Isan people and sex, soliciting laughs based on stereotypes of Isan husbands and wives, prostitutes, and mistresses as uneducated, unsophisticated, and desperate. These kind of scenes both confirm the kind of behaviors that normal men engage in, and instruct young men on how they are expected to behave, addressing the disease itself only peripherally.

Movies, Television, and Celebrities

So far I have discussed sex behavior-related constructions. I will now focus more on sex role constructions including images of masculinity and femininity. Television, magazines, and

¹⁸ Women Want to Know

¹⁹ Three-Way Junction, Unhusked Rice, Venus

radio provide thousands of images for men and women to integrate into their understanding of sexuality. Characters in drama serials, images in commercials, and celebrities all are symbols with sexual meanings. Sex and sexuality in movies is expressed more openly than it is in everyday life, especially in Isan. Students enjoy the fantasy of movies, while at the same time, their images shape students' very real perceptions.

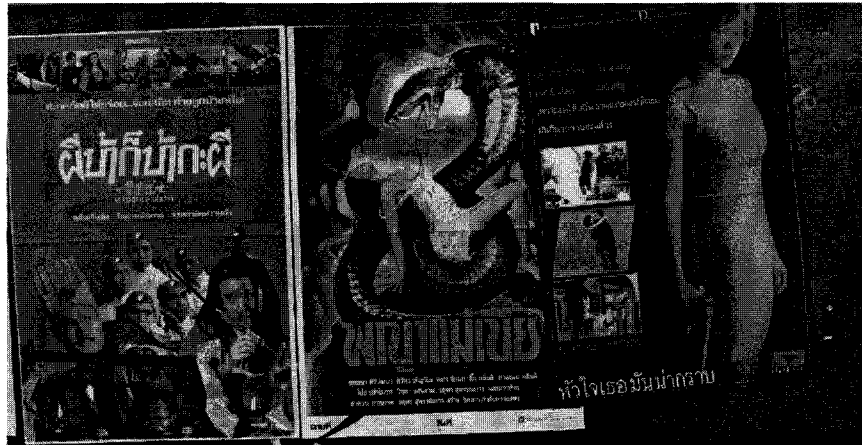


Figure 6.4 Movie posters hung around town display a variety of sexual images.

The effects celebrities have on students is, as far as I know, undocumented, and remains so in this study. But celebrities are role models for young people and no doubt shape the way young people understand the value of various qualities, and affect the way they want to look and be, as well as the way they perceive themselves. I surveyed 44 male students and 43 females students about television, movies, radio, and books (see Appendix E). Their responses were consistent with information obtained through observation and conversations.

Young celebrities' pictures are found in dorm rooms, in restaurants, in bars, in the market, and in shops. Young and old alike have their favorite television and movie stars, many of whom are the same. Celebrities of the kind and scale we see in present day Thailand are unprecedented. For example, a universally adored star during this research was the actor Tongchai McIntyre. His picture was in magazines, in advertisements, and tacked to walls throughout Mahsarakham. As one boy said, "Everyone loves him. He has ability in everything." Celebrities' faces are found on

calendars and in advertisements posted in virtually every food shop, grocery store, barber and beauty shop, and fix-it shop. Thongchai McIntyre ("Bird"), Saksit Taengtong, and "Mew" Lalita Panyopas are among the most popular and admired among students.

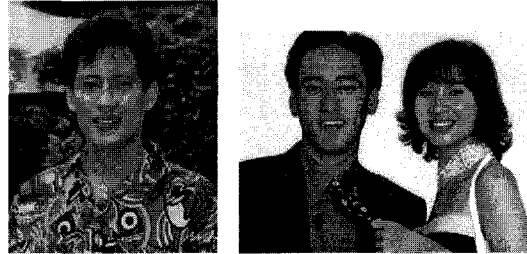


Figure 6.5 Thongchai McIntyre ("Bird"), Saksit Taengtong, and "Mew" Lalita Panyopas

Another star favored more by females was Saksit Taengtong (see Figure 6.5), an actor, model, and soccer player. They liked him because he is handsome, quiet, independent, and *rîapróø*.²⁰ The personality of celebrities is a major source of attraction for students, but more so for females. Girls are drawn to actors and actresses who are not only good looking and talented, but also good role models. They admire stars who have good personalities, have good family situations, are mature, are dignified, or are good parents. Boys also like celebrities who are beautiful, handsome, and adorable²¹ but as often gave specifics about their acting talents, such as their ability to adapt to many different roles. Fewer boys mentioned personal character qualities than did girls. Both boys and girls seem to have higher standards of beauty for women than for men. This will be discussed in a later section as will the fact that many Thai celebrities are of mixed ethnicity.

Watching movies, either on video or in the theater, is a popular pastime for SWU students. Movies are relatively inexpensive (about 20 baht) and new pictures come often. Boys and girls enjoy similar kinds of movies and most like a variety. Comedies are their overwhelming

²⁰ *Rîapróø* is often used to describe females in this dissertation, but also describes males. As with females, *rîapróø* means orderly, proper, and neat. Saksit looks and behaves modestly and politely.

²¹ The word "nâa rák" is frequently translated as "cute" or "lovely." It literally means "makes one want to love it."

favorites. They go to the movies to have fun and relax and these movies are not "serious." Many students were fans of *Khûu Kaam* (Star-Crossed Lovers), a famous novel that was made into a television drama serial and a movie. It is set in Bangkok during World War II and is the story of an ill-fated romance between a Japanese soldier and a Thai girl. Among SWU students, foreign movies are watched (including Chinese and American), but Thai movies are more popular. Girls favor romantic, adolescent, and life stories more than boys, who only outdo the girls in their enthusiasm for nude movies.²² But among the boys, only about 36% said that nude movies are among their favorites. Some girls, too, enjoy nude movies. About 19% mentioned them among those they enjoy in the survey.

The attitude towards nude movies (see footnote 20) is a rather ambivalent one. Media are censored (there is a national censoring board) and nude movies are illegal. Students giggle if you ask them if they watch them. Some do. And they are available in video rental shops and sometimes show at public events. They used to play in the theaters regularly, but stopped after an incident where a brothel burnt down and killed some young girls in the South. (The government tightened up control on many sex-related businesses at about this time.) Nude pictures hang in food shops all around town (see Figure X).²³ The situations in which public nudity is appropriate are few and far between.²⁴ One is in movies and print media. Another is related to beauty pageants and will be discussed later.

²² The Thai word the students most frequently used for these movies is *năng bôo*. They are also referred to as "blue movies" (using the English for "blue") or sometimes "X movies" (referring to the American rating). I have translated it here as "nude movies" because *bôo* is generally used to describe nudity of a sexual nature, or to talk about general nudity (for example of a child) in a teasing way. The calendars of topless women are referred to as *rûup bôo*. So they are not necessarily pornographic, which suggests a higher standard of lewdness (which might be described by the more formal term *laamók* (lewd, obscene, pornographic), which is the term used in the law on obscenity.

²³ One shop owner told me that if she didn't hang a nudie calendar, the customers wouldn't come. A video store owner said the same thing about nude videos: "If I don't keep some, people won't come to the shop. Some will, but few."

²⁴ I have been "flashed" three times in my life, all in Thailand. Two incidents occurred in Chiang Mai. In one case, a naked man stepped out from a field, called to me, and began masturbating. In the other, I was riding in a minibus through the city with my roommate and a young man on a motorcycle riding behind us



Figure 6.6 A typical nude calendar hanging in a snack stand at the Kaeng Lueng Jan reservoir

When I went with some students to see *Khruu Waay Jay Ráay* (Cruel-Hearted Teacher Wai), a funny, family-type movie, at one of the town theaters, the previews included a nude movie. The audience let out a "wooOOOoo!" when the lights went out in the theatre, but not when a panting woman's breasts filled the giant screen. On at least two occasions, nude movies were shown at public events where they set up a big screen, projector, and speakers in the street. Adults and children alike attended. No one was giggling or wooOOoo-ing.

Nude movies are easily rented at any video shop. The renters are usually men (shop owners claim not to rent to children or teenagers) and a few older, married women. One video shop owner had never had a woman customer, but he'd been in business less than a month and customers had to tell him the kind of video they wanted (e.g., Thai, Japanese, *farang* [Westerner]), rather than select it by picture or number. This might be intimidating to women seeking nude movies. Because pornographic videos are illegal in Thailand, corrupt police are able to collect money from shop owners. I was told that a high-ranking police officer comes to the stores each month to collect 1,000 baht. One owner keeps videos throughout the shop with fake names. Customers choose the title they want from a book (numbered through 105 at the time I

unzipped his pants and took out his penis. The third incident was on a beach, just south of Bangkok. I was walking with a female Thai friend and a naked man lying under a boat called to us and was masturbating. None of these occurred in Mahasarakham. I am not aware of this happening to Thai women, and suspect that being a *faràng* woman is a stimulus for these normally very inappropriate behaviors.

looked). Police also rent the videos, sometimes for free as a form of payment. One of the top ranked officers told me that this officer must be doing it on his own as this practice is not allowed.²⁵

Many of the new symbols students are exposed to in Mahasarakham result from globalization fostered through the media. Students are some of the most ardent embracers of the new and the modified. They love Western fashion, music, movies, and sports. One video shop, which carries foreign (i.e., American) videos, rents them largely to educated types such as teachers at the colleges. Students watch fewer videos because of the expense of the equipment, but they are familiar with the stories and watch American videos dubbed into Thai in the main movie theaters in town or at the university. A concept of which Thai speak frequently when talking about the West is "free sex," which they see evidence of in movies, magazines, and TV shows. "Free sex" refers to unrestricted casual sex. They believe this is a cultural norm in the US and that it threatens to diffuse to Thailand. Even Thai males speak negatively about free sex, though I can say from personal experience that some fervently hope American women in Thailand practice it.²⁶ On several occasions I was told that Thai "don't have free sex like Americans do." Though both Thai men and women speak negatively of "free sex," when pressed for examples, the disapproval is primarily directed at women having sex, not men.

There is no single view of sexual relations for SWU students. Sex has many purposes and many meanings. In the case of "free sex," it represents foreignness, a lack of control, and a kind of cultural corruption. In the context of marriage or a committed relationship leading to marriage, it is a natural expression of a physical need and a expression of love, on the part of both the man

²⁵ However, this same officer told me that he is only able to answer my questions with official responses. I am quite confident he knows who collects what money from whom.

²⁶ In Mahasarakham, I was explicitly propositioned by both a student from another college and a SWU professor. While in Pattaya with a large group of students from Thammasat, a good (male) friend from my Chiang Mai University days arranged for me to stay in his room rather than with the female students, unbeknownst to me (resulting in a very heated argument). And at several hotels and bungalows over the years, hotel workers or guests have made sexual advances. In all cases, it seemed to me as though they expected me to be interested in sex with them.

and the woman. Unlike older people to whom I spoke, many students, especially girls, have an expectation of marital sexual monogamy in marriage for the husband as well as the wife. This is a departure from the sexual double standard traditionally applied to married people and may indicate a generational change. Polygyny and philandering have a long history in this area. But SWU students attach to this myriad meanings: assertion of masculinity, a claim to male privileges, indication of boredom, inadequacy of a girlfriend or wife, inequality between the sexes, irresponsibility of men, and selfishness to name several.

Popular Printed Materials

Students report that books, including magazines and newspapers, are the primary source of information and influence on ideas about sex (see Appendix H).²⁷ SWU students are enthusiastic readers and enjoy all kinds of books and magazines. Humorous stories are particularly popular, and cartoons, being both inexpensive and fun, are everywhere. There are many, many magazines available in Mahasarakham on a great variety of topics. News stands offer dozens of titles to choose from. Both male and female students read some of the more popular women's magazines such as *Dìchǎn* ([female] I, 50 baht) and *Sàtriisǎan* (Lady's Journal, 25 baht). The most popular magazines among female students include women's magazines such as *Sàtriisǎan*, *Kunsàtrii* (Lady), and *Dìchǎn*. *Dìchǎn*, for example, is a very thick magazine (the January 31, 1993 issue was 354 pages) with a large number of articles, columns, and advertisements. It is filled with news and pictures of the royal family and socialites, short stories, informative articles (e.g., "Wanting to Make Your Child Smart," "The Balloon Flower"), horoscopes, celebrity stories ("Heart of a Sumo Wife"), interviews with interesting non-celebrity types, fashion articles, and advertisements for a plethora of beauty products and desirable goods to buy. Advertisements (*Sàtriisǎan* has few, *Dìchǎn* has many) tend to reinforce central Thai

²⁷ This may seem surprising considering the amount that American students watch television. However, few SWU students have televisions at school, and their home lives do not revolve around the television, but around school and work around the home.

stereotypes of women, emphasizing physical beauty, motherly and wifely duties, and a modern style. "Modern" images dominate the pages. Thaephtharin Hospital advertises that with new technology they can separate the X and Y sperm to help you get the sex baby you want. An ad for a breast pump shows a picture of a baby contentedly nursing. Relationships are a hot topic in these magazines (e.g., "Stay to Endure or Endure to Stay: Is this all there is to live as a couple?"). *Sàtriisāan* is similar, through perhaps targeted to a less intellectual audience. It contains fashion, some news, poetry, celebrity articles, short stories, travel, crossword puzzle, and the July 2, 1994 issue had a pull-out section for children.

SWU boys read a wider variety of magazines including *Matichon* and *Siamrat*, general weekly news magazines which are also read by some girls. These contain feature articles related to current political, economic, social, and entertainment events in Thailand as well as short stories and poetry. Neither are specifically targeted at men, though they are more popular with male than female students. Males also read specialty magazines on topics such as motorcross, computers, and writing. *Kee* students read some magazines targeted at gays such as *Neon* (12 baht) and *Morakot* (Emerald, 12 baht). They contain articles on gay issues, general interest stories, and entertainment, columns, short stories, pictorials, crossword puzzles, and ads for things such as gay friendly clubs and lubricating gel.

Both male and female students enjoy reading *Dara Phaapphayon* (Movie Star, 10 baht), a celebrity magazine targeted at a young adult audience. Its articles are largely about Thai movies and movie and television stars though there are some bits on foreign celebrities. Advertisements feature products which are appealing to young people and the ads themselves often feature male-female couples. There are also many ads for beauty products which suggests that there the magazine is perhaps more widely read by females. There is a popular column called "Sex: When you have a problem ... come ask ... Dr. Noppaporn ... he'll answer your problem." Dr. Noppaporn responds to a wide range of questions from a young man with large feet that make

buying shoes difficult (answer: there is no way to make them smaller; they are his natural size and he must deal with them) to an 18 year old boy who wonders if the fact that he's slept with 10 or more men is normal (answer: he clearly has a high sex drive and perhaps enjoys looking at large penises) to a pregnant woman who asks if it's dangerous for a pregnant woman to masturbate and if she sometimes wants to watch sex videos if she has a mental problem (answer: it's not dangerous to masturbate as long as you don't put anything inside the vagina and the desire to watch sex videos demonstrates a high sex drive but is not indicative of a mental problem).

Cartoons are a university student staple. Laughs for Sale (*Khǎay Hũa Rồ*) is typical, and popular, cartoon book. Things that are inappropriate are often expressed through humor so cartoons frequently joke about sex and sex roles (especially stereotypes of husbands and wives). Common themes include cheating spouses, controlling or unattractive (in body and character) wives, weak husbands, and attempts at love gone awry.



Figure 6.7 A cartoon playing on the stereotype of an ugly, domineering wife ("Whatever, whatever... take my wallet and also take the picture of your mother and put it in the closet like before." "Oh! My heart's going to give out.")



Figure 6.8 Another sex-related cartoon ("This group of slaves we've brought didn't respect their tribal leader this openly." "They're obviously hiding something.")

The cartoons and magazines students read provide them with an array of sex-related symbols in which various other symbols are used to convey information based on common cultural meanings. Humor is only humorous insofar as the readers have interpretations similar to the producer of the piece. Popular media reveal sexual symbols and some of the meanings shared by members of the culture. These are, for the most part, consistent with the symbols described thus far. Classic works (here referred to as classic media) may reflect a similar consensus on meaning, but are also valued for their lasting significance. They may or may not reflect current values, and may be meaningful specifically because they reflect a different time and/or place. Thus, their significance of sexual symbols shaping students' understandings is uncertain.

Classic Media

When students report that they gain much of their information about sex from books, they are most often referring to books about the physical aspects of sex, such as books on reproduction and family planning. They rarely mentioned classic works of literature when talking about

sexuality, though students are exposed to them (both Central Thai and Isan) throughout their school years. Classic works of literature have found mass appeal, suggesting that large numbers of people in society find meaning in them, though for students the significance of that meaning in terms of sex is minimal, at least at a conscious level.

Literature provides almost as many examples of types of men and women as there are works of literature. To select a few as evidence of an "ideal" would be misleading without considering all possible characters. Isan students are exposed to both central Thai and Isan literature, which sometimes convey different images of men and women. In general, the Central Thai (i.e., elitist, national, emerging from nobility and the Royal Palace) ideal woman has been more specifically defined. The court poet Sunthorn Phuu's famed advice to women is lengthy and detailed. Sunthorn Phuu was teacher to many princes and wrote for Rama III and Rama IV until his death in 1855. He describes a woman who is submissive, obedient, quiet, tidy, attentive, and beautiful. Fulfilling the kind of requirements set forth by Sunthorn Phuu is just not possible for poor, farming women. He is clearly describing women of the nobility, the ideal female social position. But this does not render the work non-meaningful for SWU students. They are very much aware that the qualities about which Sunthorn Phuu wrote were, and in some cases are, associated with women of status in Bangkok. Central Thai culture and its values are not lost on SWU students. It is a large part of their cultural identity and to varying degrees they have internalized its values.

But the images coming from Bangkok, even in literature, are not uniform. One very well-known poem is Jeeranan Phitprechaa's (1973, in Tossa, 1992), "Assertion of the Flower," which focuses on women's potential as active and valued social beings, a direct response to the beautiful, fragile flowers described by Sunthorn Phuu and others.²⁸

²⁸ In nationalistic discourse, women are often referred to as the "flowers" of the country, emphasizing their decorative role and the importance of their beauty. Phitprechaa takes this symbol and reinterprets it, making it active rather than passive.

Woman has two hands
To hold on to the essence,
To strain her muscles in the work force
And not to crave luxuries and clothing.

Woman has two feet
To climb high to her dream.
Standing with them firmly together,
She will not live off anyone's labor.

Woman has eyes
To search for a new life
To find a broader world view,
And not to use them for flirting

Woman has a heart
That is a lasting, blowing fire,
That contributes to the mass' power,
For every woman is a human being.

Woman has a life
That tries to wash away errors with reason,
That esteems her independence and freedom,
And not to provide only sexual pleasure.

The flower has sharp thorns;
It must not bloom to await praise from others.
Rather, it blooms to accumulate
Great fertility for the Earth.

Women's beauty has long been a major preoccupation of Central Thai culture. Women's appearances reflect their value, both social and moral. Phitprechaa has attempted to redefine the criteria by which women are judged. Her focus on action over appearance is more in line with traditional Isan views of women. Damsri (1985, p. 15; also see Gittinger & Lefferts, 1992) argues that literary works in Isan show that Isan society values women's abilities more than beauty and suggests that women who are highly skilled at running a household should be praised and that men should choose a wife based on her household skills, especially cooking and weaving. Isan literature and proverbs almost never suggest equality between men and women in the sense that they have equal access to social roles or that they be judged by identical criteria. However, there is a much greater emphasis on complementarity and partnership between men and women, especially between husbands and wives, such as in the following Lao proverbs:

*Phũa mia nii khon diaw kooy hiiit sùk thúk
yang hûam yâo thanǎom tùm tâw kan*

Husband and wife are like one person; they must love and cherish each other in health, in wealth, and in hardship.

But women's value is often defined in terms of her relationship with men. The following proverb seems to place women in an inferior position:

Phùu yǐng sî dii yâwn mii phũa

A woman is worthy when she has a husband.

Students are familiar with many folktales and often cite proverbs in appropriate situations. However, I rarely heard them cite proverbs about men and women and their value or social roles, except when asked to do so in discussions. There are proverbs about marriage, about sexual behavior, about differences in men and women, about daughters and sons, about mothers and fathers. If there is a point to be made, a proverb can probably be found to support it. As was mentioned earlier, women are now able to realize their familial and social responsibilities while remaining single. A woman with a secure and well-paying job is an asset to her family both financially and socially. Teachers exemplify this. There are many single female teachers at SWU. Students sometimes comment on this in a way that is both teasing and full of admiration. Women have optional routes to social stability and success. This may explain why students rarely mentioned the stories and proverbs that express the value of a married woman.

However, another reason may be that classic literature suggests that Isan people have a more egalitarian view of men and women than do Central Thai. For example, unlike in Central Thai culture (and literature), Isan women are free to leave their husbands if they don't behave appropriately.

The wife is free to leave her husband
when he cannot work hard to earn a living,
when he is not healthy,
when he becomes a drunkard,
or when he cannot satisfy her sexual needs. (Tossa, 1992, p. 12; part of verse)

SWU students reflect this idea and though they may admire a woman who sticks it out with an irresponsible husband (*enduring* is a quality they value in women), they do not fault the woman

who chooses to leave. Their perspective seems to derive from the Isan view rather than the Central Thai one on this subject.

Religious-oriented stories come mostly from India, though because they have been passed down, have taken on some regional variation. Tossa (1992) argues that women are virtually absent from Buddhist texts, including the Indian Jataka tales,²⁹ and that the focus of these is the adventures of men (p. 12-13). Tossa believes the female characters are not intended to be models for humans. But regardless of the intention of the stories, some Thais hold them up in this way. The women who do appear are virtuous and not quite human. Collins (1982; 1998) and Gombrich (1977, 1980), have written somewhat extensively about the Vessantara's (the final human incarnation of the Buddha) wife as a role model for women. The Vessantara Jataka is told every year in virtually every temple. The Jataka tales are well known among SWU students. The extent to which the characters, whether real or fictional, serve as social role models is debatable. They are, however, understood by students to be moral role models, whose lives provide examples of the consequences of moral (or immoral) qualities and action in specific circumstances.

Tossa also identifies what she calls pseudo-Buddhist tales, which "cannot be found in the Sanskrit Mahavastu or the Indian Jataka tales, but the story-tellers claim that these are also Buddhist Jataka tales" (p. 13). One of these pseudo-Buddhist stories familiar to students is *Kalakèet*. *Kalakèet* is a prince and the story involves gods, angels, magic, kings, queens, love lost, love found, plural wives, adventures, several compromises, and a happy ending.

Another popular Lao tale is The Orphan and the Little Ghost (*Kamphráaphĩinóy*). It is the story of a poor orphan boy of great merit. He is disliked by the villagers, but finds friends in

²⁹ Jataka tales were written in the Pali language about two thousand years ago and have been passed down generation to generation. They are primarily stories about the past lives of Buddha, which offer wisdom and serve as guides to moral behavior. There are over 500 Jataka tales.

animals and ghosts. He marries a beautiful girl, Sida,³⁰ who emerges from an elephant's tusk. The king falls in love with beautiful Sida and tries every means to take her from Kamphra, even after his own death. But he failed each time. Kamphra and Sida become King and Queen.

These local stories are not about the Buddha's lives, and are really local folk tales. They are styled after Jataka tales and may be mistaken for Jataka tales because they are sources of moral wisdom. Students' enjoyment of them comes from the action and adventure as well as their historical and cultural significance for Isan people. *Phadaeng Nang Ai* (see Tossa, 1990, for a translation and description), usually told during the Rocket Festival in Isan, is a tragedy about a love triangle between a Khmer prince (Phadaeng) and princess (Nang Ai) and a naga prince (Thao Phangkhi). This story contains elements of abandonment, revenge, reincarnation, secret love, and unrequited love. As the story ends, Nang Ai is waiting to know her rightful husband at the arrival of the next Buddha. This story also is believed to describe the geography and history of the area now known as Isan. The meaning it has as a *model for* or *model of* (to use Geertz's terms) sex roles, characteristics, or behaviors, is exceedingly small, at least in a modern context.

Isan literature is primarily oral and is recited and retold at festivals, celebrations, and in bits and pieces in daily life. Thus, it has had more of a flexible, adaptable quality to it than does much central Thai literature, which was at various times transcribed. Monks did write down some Lao stories on palm leaf manuscripts, which fade and deteriorate over time and must be rewritten (literally and figuratively). Siamese also wrote on palm leaf manuscripts in the ancient past, and their stories would have been subject to the same kind of rewriting. Isan stories, however, continued to change with the culture through modern times since more permanent forms of recording came much later to the region.

³⁰ Sida is similar in name and character to Sita, Vishnu's goddess wife in the *Ramakien*, the Thai version of the Indian epic Ramayana. Sita is thought by many (including SWU students) to epitomize the ideal woman.

Modern literature emerging from Isan has tended to focus on modern problems associated with the declining environment and poverty of the region (e.g., *Child of the Northeast* by Kampon Boontawee; *People of Isan* by Pira Sudham). Both Boontawee and Sudham depict a very practical people focused on survival rather than status or frivolity. The men and women in their stories (based on their own experiences) are poor and determined to survive. The characters in these stories are realistic and reflect the personal characteristics and values of SWU students much more so than do stories coming from Central Thailand. *Child of the Northeast* describes a boy's life during the 1930s, but with a few tweaks, it could be describing a rural Isan village in the 1990s.

The meaning of sex-related symbols in modern Isan novels is typically subsumed by symbols of greater concern, such as poverty and ethnic discrimination. Obviously these are sexed since they affect men and women differently, but sex is a secondary concern.³¹ The cultural patterns revealed in Isan novels relate more to concepts of modernity, tradition, ethnicity, family, and survival than sex and students do not refer to novels when talking about sex roles or sexual behavior, unless directly asked to. Another cultural arena of sexual meaning not voluntarily suggested by students, but whose sexual symbolism is explicit and public, is festivals.

Festivals and Traditional Celebrations

Festivals and rituals are commonly acceptable times for breaking or reversing social norms (Babcock, 1978; Turner, 1982). For Isan people, who are highly conscious of maintaining appropriate appearances, some festivals are a time to lift restrictions that maintain social order and express things that are normally inappropriate. Some Isan festivals, such as *Bun Phawèet*, which honors Vessantara, the penultimate life of the Buddha, and *Bun Bâng Fay*, the Rocket Festival, bring together large numbers of people in a mix of "ceremonial reverence and most

³¹ For example, Sudham's "People of Esarn" (1987) is a collection of life stories about situations specific to men and women in Isan. The taxi driver, prostitute, and monk are all sex-specific experiences, but it's the themes common to them which captivate the reader.

unceremonious irreverence" (Rogers, 1989, p. 104). Throughout Thailand, community festivals are often the locus for courting and sexual repartee. Describing festivals in Ubon, Klausner (1981) wrote, "A young girl not only has the opportunity to go out after dark to attend such a ceremony but to flirt quite openly at the same. Drinking, risqué banter, and even in one case, fighting are condoned and, in a sense, expected" (p. 25). The license allowed is relative to the sexes, and women's behavior is less extreme than men's.

Sǒngkraan, the Thai New Year

Some of the most widely celebrated festivals are Buddhist though they are tied with the agricultural cycle and often laden with secular meanings (Tambiah, 1970, p. 152). The *Sǒngkraan* festival is the traditional Thai New Year held April 13 to 15, at the end of the dry season. *Sǒngkraan* is a time of renewal and cleansing. The major ritual focus is the washing of deceased ancestors' charred bones, saved from cremations. This celebration brings together past and present, with a hope for future generations (Lefferts, 2003, personal communication). People offer alms to the monks and bathe Buddha statues and pour water on monks in a ritual purification. They also pour scented water on their elders' hands to get their blessing. It is a time for making merit and fun. During these three days, people throw water on each other, sometimes gently from a ladle, sometimes from hoses. *Sǒngkraan* is also an excuse to flirt and play. No one is free from the dousing, not even schoolteachers carrying bags of class papers. Boys and girls can douse each other. Groups of young people roam the streets in pickup trucks with barrels of water containing ice cubes or other unpleasant additives to enhance the "fun." As with many festivals in Thailand nowadays, a beauty pageant accompanies the celebration.

Phansǎa, Buddhist Lent

The start of the Buddhist Lent (*khâw phansǎa*), usually in mid-July just after transplanting is done, is celebrated with a candle procession. Ubon province has the biggest candle procession in Isan and many students have traveled there to see the massive wax carvings.

Mahsarakham has its own parade in which ornately carved candles are accompanied by beautiful young women, some in Central Thai dress, others in traditional Isan dress. The university is also represented and my first year teaching there, I walked in the parade with other *aajaan*.



Figure 6.9 Young women and carved candles on a float in a parade in Mahasarkham at the start of Buddhist Lent

Klausner writes that a number of activities were restricted during *Phansãa* in the past (e.g., marriages, building a house; 1981, p. 24), but Tambiah who also conducted his fieldwork in Isan, does not mention this.³² In modern Mahasarakham, construction of new stores and housing does not stop for even this sacred period. Lent lasts for three months and traditionally, many young men chose this time to ordain, returning to normal life at the end of lent, *òøk phansãa*. This is not possible for students, since the academic semester runs through this period.

Bun Bâng Fay, the Rocket Festival

Of a more secular orientation is *Bun Bâng Fay*, held in May or June to induce rain to grow the crops (see Condominas, 1975, p. 262-270, for a description of *Bun Bâng Fay* in Laos). The most well known celebration is in Yasothorn province, but smaller celebrations occur in

³² It should be noted that Tambiah never lived in the village for an extended period of time. He lived in Bangkok and took trips to the village (Lefferts, 2003, personal communication).

villages all over Isan. In Mahasarakham, the officially sponsored (and largest) celebration is held in the fields near Prang Ku, a 700-year-old stupa, in Bân Kwaw, about 13 kilometers outside of the city. The exact origin of *Bun Bâng Fay* is unclear, though it is known this celebration is ancient because it is referred to in the folk tale *Phaa Daeng Naang Ai* one of two stories recited to recall the history of the celebration (Tossa, 1990, p. 55-58). This Isan mythic folk epic is recited at other times throughout the year, but because of its association with *Bun Bâng Fay*, scenes from the story are depicted during the celebration. The villagers bring local rockets (*bâng fay*) to shoot off from bamboo platforms. Villagers believe that firing rockets into the sky is a kind of sacrifice and induces *Phyaa Thĕen*³³ to begin the rainy season on time. The fertility symbolism is evident to most observers. *Bun Bâng Fay* is one of the most overtly sexual festivals of the year.³⁴

Klausner (1989) described the *Bun Bâng Fay* festival in Ubon, another Isan province:

On the day preceding the actual shooting of skyrocketers there is much gaiety in the village with song and dance, drinking, and a great deal of sexual by-play with risqué songs, crude sexual pantomimes, boys dressed as girls and phallic symbols waved about and shot at girls from sling shots attached around the boy's groin. (p. 28).

Entertaining puppet shows are also featured during this celebration. It gives the villagers a chance to have a good time before they go about their separate ways back into the rice fields. The puppets are typically bawdy figures whose appearances are highly sexual. Noiwangkhlang (1994) writes,

Besides creating a fun and hilarious festival in general, one thing that it can't be without is puppet shows that are about sexual intercourse or about sex organs, both male and female, which are especially emphasized on the bodies of the puppets... (p. 65).

³³ *Thĕen* is the Isan name for the Brahmic Lord Indra, who dwells in the heaven called *Daawwáding*. In Central Thai, Lord Indra is called Phrá In.

³⁴ Francis Cripps (1965), in *The Far Province*, his observations during his time in Mahasarakham, describes *Bun Bâng Fay* but does not mention anything sexual, or even fertility-related. It is possible that the celebration was less sexual in decades past, or more likely (based on comments of people there), he did not wish to emphasize this aspect. He did, however, note the drunkenness of festival participants.

Puppet shows staged on trucks similar to floats feature puppets modeled after *mở lam* singers. Microphones resemble penises and the puppets are dressed in flashy clothes. In a performance observed by Noiwangklang, when the female puppet moved to fast music, the audience could clearly see her genitals (1994, p. 66). Puppets also imitate human sexual acts while their handlers recite highly sexualized verse. The image below shows an artists' rendering of a cameraman and camera from which when "clicked," a penis emerges.



Figure 6.10 Drawing of "cameraman" with his puppet "camera" (from Noiwangklang, 1994; a similar trick is described in *Condominas*, 1975, p. 265)

In the context of *Bun Bâng Fay*, these overtly sexual performances are not obscene or lewd. For two days of the year people are free to have fun with normally inappropriate expressions of sexuality. This is a form of standardized role and status reversals as we have in the US at Halloween (Turner, 1982). Noiwangklang sees the festival as having three roles: entertainment, education, and socializing. In addition to everyone getting a good laugh, the highly sexual words and actions of the puppets teach children a bit about sex and sexuality, and now also about AIDS (p. 68). AIDS has been incorporated into virtually all public discourses on sexual behavior.

Mǎø Lam, Isan Performers

Few community festivals take place in Mahsarakham without a *mǎø lam*, performance. *Mǎø lam*, a kind of story-telling folk music, is one of the most popular Isan forms of entertainment. Varieties of *mǎø lam* range from a singing recitation with one male singer, one female singer, and a *khεen* player to large, staged "folk operas." The most popular kind nowadays is *mǎø lam sing*, which features one singer and a small folk band. *Mǎø lam* vocalists are respected not only for their singing talents but also their clever lyrics. They often sing of modern concerns in their lyrics. Chaweewan Damneorn (real name Chaweewan Pantu)³⁵ from Roi Et, a neighboring province to Mahasarakham, performs in the traditional style (story-telling without the flash and glitter of modern *mǎø lam*) but uses her music to send messages to young people about serious concerns, too. At a performance at SWU, her subject matter included songs about AIDS.

Regular Friday night *mǎø lam* competitions are held at the SWU soccer field. Awards are given by sponsors whose products are prominently advertised about the staging area. The female performers wear a variety of costumes, most of which are considered quite sexy (i.e., they are skimpy). Male singers do not dress so provocatively, wearing slacks and shirts.

On one particular night when a *mǎø lam* beauty contest was held, the women were introduced, walked out, and stood on stage to await the crowd's reactions. In general, the shorter the skirt, the louder the "woooOOOooh!" Legs featured prominently and one woman appeared in what can only be described as a *mardi gras* costume complete with a fancy headpiece. Someone in the audience informed me in a somewhat amazed tone that one of the contestants was only 17 years old. Different types of music were played and the women danced. Two middle-aged men (who appeared to be quite drunk – an opinion shared by others in the audience) served as MCs.

³⁵ Ajaan Chaweewan also teaches at the Roi Et Performing Arts College and so is very much in touch with young, rural people. She was named a National Artist in 1994, one of only eight that year, the youngest (48 years old), and only one from the Northeast.

This is not exactly the *mǎø lam* of two generations ago, though bawdiness and crowd-pleasing have always been part of the fun. The glitzy aspect has been present for a long time, a way bringing the modern to the villages, but the emphasis on glitz over performing ability is a modern twist.

Beauty Pageants

Beauty pageants are a feature of many festivals in Isan. The significance of women's beauty, particularly as emphasized in Central Thai culture. Van Esterik has written extensively about issues of women's beauty and beauty pageants (1989, 2000). Preferred physical characteristics of women have, for many generations, included light skin, associated with high status and an indoor (i.e., non-labor) life. Whittaker (1999) extends the symbolism to include participation in a modern lifestyle (p. 58). Beauty pageants are, too, a way for young women to get money and other benefits,³⁶ including notice by men and a way out of the village. The largest pageant in Mahasarakham during my year of fieldwork was at the *Bun Bæk Fáa* / Red Cross Fair, which usually coincides with the start of the rice-growing season, but is now held at different times. It combines a traditional merit-making festival and modern organization. In 1994, it was held in February over three nights on the grounds of the provincial administration building. The governor spoke to open the event and had an air of "official-ness" throughout. The contest was sponsored by Avon and Singh beer³⁷ Huge, lighted, rotating beer cans sat on either side of the stage. There were blinking lights, loud music coming from stacks of speakers, and a crowd of about 500 made up of young and old, men and women. Two hosts guided the pageant: an approximately 50-year-old man and an approximately 35-year-old woman.

The sexual symbolism throughout the contest was intense, with an obviously heavy emphasis on the characteristics of a beautiful woman. The hosts frequently made comments such

³⁶ First place in the pageant described here was 30,000 baht (approximately \$1,200US at the time). Contestants usually have a *phii liang* (trainer) who gets 30% of the winnings.

³⁷ These no doubt symbolize the male and female interests in it.

as, "Look at her teeth! Aren't they pretty? Smile nicely now!" Contestants ranged in age from 17 to 22. The three criteria on which the judges voted were beauty, dress, and heart/mind/spirit. Though the women had a variety of body types they worked very hard at creating similar appearances and the main requirements for being a beauty pageant contestant are height and light skin. All wore push-up bras to create as large a bust as possible, they powdered their skin (including arms and legs) to lighten its appearance, and their makeup and hairstyles were virtually identical. During the contest they wore a sports suit (some wore pumps and short skirts), a Thai-style outfit (including short and sparkley *phâasîn*), and a swimsuit. The images being projected were clearly modern and sexy.

The judges were prominent, well-educated people in the community, including the President of SWU and teachers from the university and high schools. Despite this proper front, there is a less wholesome aspect to the pageants. One audience member's 15-year-old friend was in the pageant using another girl's identity so she can compete (17 is the minimum age). Additionally, the Ministry of Education prohibits students from entering beauty contests and this contestant is still in high school. The friend said no one would report her because with all the makeup and dress, she is not recognizable. Other contestants use different names because once they win they will be unable to enter the same contest again.

Lower level beauty contestants are treated similarly to prostitutes.³⁸ Their dressing room was behind the stage and a policeman friend (local police served as security) allowed me entrance to speak to some of the women. The changing area is not entirely blocked off and the nearly naked contestants are visible not only to the police, but also to spectators standing just outside the area. People comment openly on the women's bodies and the police obviously enjoyed watching them dressing and undressing. One police officer told me, "Never mind; they're used to it."

³⁸ This is not so true about women competing in Miss Thailand, who at that level have achieved a celebrity-like status.

By the final night, the audience appeared to number over 1,000. I ran into several SWU students, though I do not know how many attended in all. The winner walked away with what amounts to nearly four months of a teacher's salary. In beauty pageants, meanings relating to beauty, sex, sex roles, modernity, tradition, education, wealth, and status are played with and played out. Many students see beauty pageants such as this one as good fun. The aspect that seemed to bother students most was the swimsuit requirement. A few students felt this was inappropriate for a contest held during a traditional festival. To them, the swimsuit was a violation in what they perceived of as a traditional context. The swimsuit itself did not offend people so much as the context in which the swimsuit was displayed. Of course to others in the audience, the swimsuit was very much appreciated and perfectly appropriate for a beauty contest because most modern beauty contests require contestants to wear swimsuits. These ideas of context and appropriateness will be discussed now in further detail as aspects of values.

Values

Values are reinforced in various contexts of everyday life. They transcend sex, but have very obvious effects on it. The meaning of any sex-related situation cannot be understood separately from cultural values. Modesty is one fairly obvious value related to sex in Maharashtra. All students are expected to be modest in appearance and behavior. Teachers and students alike must wear sleeved shirts and closed shoes. Sleeveless shirts and open-toed shoes are impolite, and therefore inappropriate, as are bright colors and loud patterns. At home, men may expose all but their genitals and buttocks in appropriate situations such as bathing outside or swimming. Women, however, usually stay well covered from knees to armpits. On a class excursion to a lake, female students wore jeans and t-shirts or long shorts and t-shirts to swim in.³⁹ Three less obvious values that are particularly relevant to understanding sexuality will be

³⁹ This may in part because few students own modern "swimsuits." Most, however, would be embarrassed to wear one since it exposes so much of the body. However, at the pool at the Physical Education College (the only pool I ever saw in Maharashtra), both males and females wore swimsuits. These were largely

discussed here: hierarchy, *jay yen*, and maintaining social harmony. These are interrelated, but for the sake of sorting out their relevance to students' understanding of sexuality, they will be dealt with separately.

Hierarchy

As mentioned earlier, Mahasarakham, like the rest of Thailand, is a hierarchical society. This section will examine the meaning of hierarchy more in depth. In all relationships in Thailand, one must be attentive each person's status. Individuals are constantly evaluating their position in relationship to others and silently, even subconsciously, determining their status differentials. Relative status reflects age, occupation, gender, ethnicity, religious role, political position, and character among other criteria, and so is somewhat situational. Thai society is developing classes, even in the countryside, but this kind of stratification is not referred to here. The hierarchy observed in relationships in Mahasarakham is one of ranking (Keyes, 1977, p 163).

In a social encounter, one quickly and intuitively calculates the relative status of each party, perhaps even through some verbal negotiation. Status and situation are expressed in a number of ways. One may address another by title, name, or kin term. The Central Thai pronouns one uses (I = *dichăn, phǒm, nǔu, chăn, kan, úa*; you = *khun, thæ, kEE, lǔu*) indicate social distance. More formal language and mannerisms reflect greater status difference and greater social distance. The Lao terms *khôoy* (I, servant) and *jâw* (you, master) eliminate some of this status calculating since they politely convey social status but can be used in a wide variety of social situations. Students speaking to close friends (especially those of the same sex) may use the most informal language to reflect greater equality and personal closeness, not unlike the well-documented use of "nigger" among young, black men in the US (e.g., Kennedy, 2002). Young men sometimes use especially crude language in speaking with each other, demonstrating

more serious swimmers. When the hospital sponsored swim lessons for children and adults, I observed that all doctors, nurses, and their families had swimsuits. It is possible that swimsuits are associated with modern swimming pools only.

masculinity, good-natured fun, and equality. Kin terms, which are used frequently to address and refer to non-kin reflect gender, age, and social closeness. To refer to another as "sister," "mother," or "aunt," suggests a kin-like relationship and is normally received warmly and reciprocated when used in an appropriate context.

The hierarchal structure understood in relationships in Mahasarakham has built into it the understanding that with relationships come responsibilities. Those of lower status are expected to show appropriate reverence for those of higher status, which is often reflected in word and action. Those of higher status are expected to take care of, or look after, those of lower status with whom they have formed relationships (Hanks, 1962). As part of the cultural system, patron-client relationships create a network of interdependence. Parents care and provide for their children, who ideally demonstrate obedience and respect, and later in life care for the parents in their old age. In a student-teacher relationship, the student should greet the teacher with a respectful *way*, assist the teacher when possible, and speak exceptionally politely. The teacher, in turn, is expected to educate the student and look after the student's general well being, giving advice and counsel as necessary.

The concept of a hierarchical social order has been reinforced through political and religious institutions. When King Trailok strengthened his control over the Siamese kingdom in the 15th century with the implementation of the *sàkdinaa* system, he formalized an existing cultural hierarchy. Although the *sàkdinaa* system has long since been abandoned, the flavor of it remains. The Thai government is notoriously bureaucratic. Hundreds of years prior to coming under the administration of the Siamese, Isan people were being exposed to the beliefs of Buddhism. Buddhism "is profoundly concerned with ranked statuses and, in fact, with virtually infinitely graded rankings depending upon each individual's particular merit store" (Lehman, 1996, p. 26). The law of karma states that all beings have a total accumulation of merit and demerit that determines their position in life. Isan people incorporate Buddhist beliefs and

animism into a single supernatural worldview. Based on one's karma, he or she may be reborn into one of the three worlds: heaven, earth, or hell. One's specific situation on earth, should one be reborn there, is also determined by one's karma. Although Buddhist texts do not specify this, it is generally believed that merit is rewarded with earthly benefits such as beauty, money, or power. Thus, to a large degree, one's position in life has been determined by his own actions. This understanding of individual responsibility for one's lot makes inequality in society more tolerable.

It also offers a distinct sense of egalitarianism, despite the emphasis on social hierarchy. Everyone in society is responsible for his own status by virtue of past deeds. That is, each is here working out his karmic situation. Everyone has the potential to be reborn an angel or a dog. Thus, despite the extent to which the social hierarchy structures relations, individuals know it is only temporary. Nothing is permanent. This sense of impermanence prevents those in high status positions from getting too comfortable, and allows those facing poverty or misfortune to maintain hope (Hanks, 1962).

Although the hierarchical structure might seem ripe for facilitating exploitation, the value on reciprocity characteristic of patron-client relationships minimizes it. Should either party in a relationship fail to fulfill his roles and obligations, the other may freely leave the relationship. This way of thinking infuses understandings of all relationships.

As was previously mentioned, close friendships are long in the making. Whether the friends are of the same sex or other sex, students have similar expectations of their close friends. Friends are people with whom one can share confidences and from whom one can seek advice and assistance. Friends provide these services for each other and failure to do so can end the relationship. Nit, a second year student wrote about her best friends and roommates:

I live with R--- and T--- at W--- dormitory. We study in the same major. We love and take care of ourself. R-- is kind and generous. She takes care of me when I was sick. And T--- is a adviser. If I have problems, I will ask her We love and understand each other. When someone goes home, she will buy some kanum [sweets] for her friends. If we finish studying, we won't forget relationship between us.

A patron-client structure also characterizes romantic relationships, though they are heavily complicated by emotion. Both females and males see a sweetheart's role and character as being sincere, responsible, understanding, helpful, and good at advising. These are very similar to the qualities valued in close friends. Failure to live up to these expectations may result in a break-up, and sometimes a great deal of drama (see section on *jai yen*).

We can see this concept of hierarchy in the students' understanding of the husband-wife relationship. Even students who express a preference for equal status between husbands and wives often suggest a preference for a traditional Isan division of labor and responsibilities. This would include the husband being responsible for taking care of the family materially and demonstrating good leadership, and a wife being a good homemaker and doing her "duties" (to husband and children) well. Female students often specified the things a husband should not do that would indicate irresponsibility and selfishness: smoking, drinking, gambling, and going to prostitutes. Male students sometimes mentioned these activities as inappropriate for husbands, but to a lesser extent than female did. Wives have typically tolerated these activities as long as they did not interfere with the family's needs. As long as a man was providing adequately for his family, and not diverting too many family resources to his vices, he was fulfilling his role. However, SWU students seem to be redefining the roles of husbands and wives in a way that is not so forgiving. For example, many students, both males and females, consider sexual monogamy part of marital loyalty, a break from past understandings of marital loyalty which focused more on a man's material provisions and a wife's sexual monogamy and caring for her husband. However, in both past and current views of the marital relationship, though the contributions of the husband and wife may differ, as long as the expectations are met, the relationship will likely continue.

Marriage is not foremost in the minds of most SWU students. Their primary social identity, besides student, is that of son or daughter. Even the most macho students grew quieter

and humbler when speaking of their parents. Most students' educations are paid for by their parents (about 87% according to the survey). I did not speak to any student who paid his or her own way entirely though some take extra jobs for extra living money. Students still consider themselves children, dependent on their mothers and fathers. Their primary obligations as sons and daughters are to listen to their parents and respect them, focus on studying, be responsible, and repay their debt of gratitude, *bun khun*, to their parents. Students are discouraged from having boyfriends or girlfriends because it will likely distract them from their studies. But students who can balance both a sweetheart and good grades reveal their relationships openly. There is only shame involved when the relationship interferes with a student's duties to his or her parents. Indeed, several students confessed that they would like to have a boyfriend or girlfriend, but think it is better not to because they fear it would consume their thoughts and they wouldn't study as well.

Some young men plan to ordain as monks after graduation. Traditionally, men did this at the age of twenty. But this is obviously not possible for university students who study from about age 18 to 22. As Wit explained it, "Thai tradition say that Thai men who 20 years old, they should be the priest in order to compensate the goodness of their parents." After this, Wit plans to either become a tour guide or open a small bar with his friends. He plans to divide his salary into three parts: "The first part for my parents, the second part for myself, and another one for me to bank in order to buy a Harley Davidson motorcycle that I love it very much." Although it also is believed to help bring a man to social maturity, ordination's primary significance is in transferring merit to parents.

Students also express strong relationships with siblings. Wan, a fourth year male, described to me his concern for his younger siblings' education. He was very worried that he wouldn't make enough money as a teacher (after graduation) to put them through university. Older siblings take care of younger ones; they feel responsible for their well-being and future

success, especially in terms of education. Yupin wrote thoughtfully in her journal about her brother and how he looks after and protects her. This encourages her to focus on her life and education (part of her responsibility in their relationship).

For most SWU students, relationships with their families are more important than romantic relationships. The responsibilities and duties of the parent-child relationship guide them in their decision-making. Even those students who face difficult family situations, such as Wan, whose mother is depressed over his father's minor wife, often focus on the positive family relationships and their obligations to those family members. Students who do not meet their family's expectations, who disregard their studies in favor of fun and partying, appear somewhat shamed when speaking of their family. I recall a conversation with Tao, an avid drinker with a reputation of being a playboy. When asked about his parents, the normally tough, carefree young man turned quiet and appeared somewhat embarrassed. He was not meeting his obligations as a son and, despite his overtly masculine behavior, had some self-acknowledged shortcomings as a man.

The hierarchical and patron-client aspects of family relationships, and the responsibilities and obligations that go along with them, are a major part of the framework around which students construct sexual meanings. These culturally-structured aspects of interpersonal relationships are primary sources of meaning for students both in terms of sex roles and sex behavior.

Jay Yen

A second value that is important for understanding the meaning of sexuality for students is *jay yen*, or having a cool heart, remaining emotionally detached, calm (Benedict, 1952, pp. 38-39; Klausner, 1983; Mole, 1973). Despite my attempts at "coolness," I was often told "*jay yen yen*" (understood roughly as "calm down"). But this reminder is not reserved for short-tempered Italian-American anthropologists. When anyone gets excited in public, he or she is likely to be

told "*jay yen yen ná*." Having a cool heart is unquestionably a value supportive of social harmony (discussed in the next section).

To have a cool heart means to remain emotionally detached. This includes refraining from expressions of anger, criticism, or other strong feelings that might create conflict or increase feelings of ill will. Having a cool heart ties in with Buddhist beliefs. Buddhism encourages people to take the "middle path," avoiding extremes, including emotions. Ideally, this applies to both public and private life. Realistically, it is adhered to more in public, less in private. On only a few occasions did students ever express strong feelings, especially critical ones, during interviews. When strong emotions are expressed, they are usually quite indirect. But in their class journals, personal reflections written in a foreign language, they were sometimes emotional. Janchai described how her teacher had censored a short play she and her classmates had written. The teacher had felt the story had too much partner-switching going on and that the characters' would get AIDS:

This made us upset. We've lost our self-confidence. First we planed to explain to [the teacher] that we didn't want to indicate sex desire but we would like to show about people's minds. Our play was realistic and psychological not erotic. Finally we think we should not to do. It should be better to choose another play and keep everything in our minds. Maybe it's better... better... this way. (journal entry, 2/27/94)

In this example, even though the students were clearly upset by their teacher's comments, in the end they decided not to further the conflict and simply accepted the teacher's decision. Although I was unable to observe students' private behavior, there is much evidence from their journals and their gossip that people are not so cool-hearted in private, especially when love is concerned. Wattana (2nd year female) reflected on the pain her boyfriend caused her:

He hurt my heart. I don't want to see him talk to other girl but for this week 2 girls come to meet him everyday, so we are quarrel. I tell him that if they come again I will go. His answer make me cry. He said that "You don't love and understand me. you don't care how much I love you but you only say 'I will go' everyday." I love him and I'm a jealous lover. (journal entry, 2/23/94)

Romantic love is only appropriately expressed directly in private, where behavior is given more leeway. Indirectly, it is also expressed in the media and arts, such as in movies, songs, and literature. Students do not seem surprised at displays of passion relating to love gone wrong. A loss of control in this context is almost understood, and makes for very interesting gossip. One student at the Vocational College ingested insecticide in front of teachers and students after his girlfriend broke up with him. In another incident reported to me, an SWU student beat on the dormitory door of another girl because the other girl had allegedly taken a new lover (they were, allegedly, lesbians). Both of these episodes were carried out in public, the first clearly designed to draw public attention. But these displays of extreme emotion, loss of self-control, and totally inappropriate social behavior are more or less understood. Love is seen as one of the most joyful and most painful experiences. It can make people do things they wouldn't normally do. The newspapers frequently run stories illustrating extreme responses to the suffering caused by love. For example, the Daily News (8/9/94, p. 11) ran a story about a 65-year-old man from Buriram who bashed his estranged wife's head in when she was visiting nearby relatives and refused to return to live with him. The Nation reported on 12/7/93 that young Chiang Mai man killed a man and wounded two women in anger because the family of one of the women had forbidden him from seeing her.

These examples of expressions of passion were all carried out by men. Casual observation leads me to believe that the majority of newspaper stories of passion resulting in violence are, indeed, about male perpetrators. Although I never specifically discussed this possibility with students, their understandings of natural propensities of men and women would lead me to conclude that they would agree that violent passion is associated with men.⁴⁰ Students suggested in interviews, surveys, and journals, that men show more emotion than women (see

⁴⁰ However, it is notable that this research took place not long after John Wayne Bobbit's penis was severed by his wife, who allegedly suffered abuse by her husband. Several articles appeared in the Thai newspapers are similar incidents in Thailand. Women, too, may be overcome with passion; but in general they are regarded as having more self-control.

Appendix F). This is in part because women have better self-control,⁴¹ and in part because there are cultural mechanisms in place that allow men more leeway in this area (e.g., the use of alcohol which releases them from some responsibility for control).

Sex, love, and violence are symbolically interconnected by passion. Passion is the opposite of a cool heart. It is inappropriate to display it in public and if expressed, it must be done in private. It is a human weakness and must be controlled. Rape is understood by SWU students as an expression of uncontrolled sexual feeling, rather than an expression of violence.⁴² This is supported by the students' responses in the survey. Rapists are seen as social deviants, that is, violating the rules of appropriate social behavior, including appropriate sexual outlets. They lack control and harm others for their own pleasure.

Table 6.1 Part 3, Question 53, "What are the causes of rape?" (N=90)

	<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%
man's mental illness	69	77%	modern society	24	27%
content of movies/pictures	64	71%	desire for power/control	22	24%
women's modern dress	56	62%	lack of sex	18	20%
family background	34	38%	other	2	2%

The three most widely chosen responses regarding the cause of rape all relate to response to sexual stimuli. The mentally ill man is incapable of controlling his feelings, once stimulated. Sexual movie content⁴³ and women's modern dress are also sexual stimuli. Rape is regarded as fundamentally an uncontrolled response to sexual stimuli. Family background encompasses a number of considerations, two of which are unsatisfactory family situations and poor rearing. Most students believe rape is increasing in Thailand and in Mahasarakham. This is based more on rumor and word-of-mouth than on official statistics. Rape law is enforced, but there are not many

⁴¹ In the survey, 69% of respondents (N=90) indicated that women have more self-control (17% that men and women have the same, and 17% that men have more).

⁴² In the US, rape (non-statutory), has been understood as an expression of power and aggression through sex acts, the primary motivation being power and aggression rather than sexual desire. More students, however, recognized power as a causative factor in *rape* (24%), than in *incest* (3%).

⁴³ The violent content of movies may, in fact, be a factor here, however, it was not one mentioned by students. Their comments focused primarily on nudity and sexual behaviors, particularly representations of "free sex" depicted in movies.

cases in Mahasarakham because most women don't want to come forward, according to police.⁴⁴

This was confirmed by a police officer, who said they handle very few rape cases in Mahasarakham and most involve boyfriends or husbands.⁴⁵ In villages, incidences are rape are sometimes handled informally. In one student's village, a woman was raped by her younger sister's husband while she was sick in bed. Her house was open and he threatened her with a knife. The woman told her parents (with whom she lived) and the family chased him out of the village. They did not call the police.

Clearly, Isan people sometimes display strong emotions such as anger, passion, and disagreement. Few are cool-hearted all the time; if they were, one wouldn't hear "*jai yen yen ná*" so often. It is a reminder not to reveal too much from inside or express too much emotion. Keeping *jai yen* avoids unhappy situations and overt conflict. The next section expands on the meaning of maintenance of social order.

Social Harmony

In Mahasarakham, as in much of Thailand, there are strong values (e.g., patron-client relationships, *jai yen*) promoting social harmony and non-conflict. Ill feelings, criticisms, and displeasure may be expressed through indirect means that do not mar the surface relationships. Indirect approaches convey feelings and opinions subtly, and require some skill to carry out effectively. With an effective indirect expression, the wrongdoer is made aware without losing

⁴⁴ Thai criminal law says it is illegal for "any person to forcibly rape a female who is not his own wife by means of any kind of intimidation, by means of violence, by the incapacitation of the female, or by means of causing the female to understand that the person is someone else. The penalty is 4 years to 10 years and a fine of 8,000 baht to 40,000 baht" (criminal code 9, section 276). Use of a weapon or torture increases the jail sentence and the fine. Rape of a child not yet over 15 years, whether she consents or not, is subject to the same fine as non-aggravated rape. Sexual intercourse with a child not yet over 13 years is punishable with 7 to 10 years in jail and a fine of 14,000 to 40,000 baht, or life in prison. If rape of a child involves torture of the child and was against her will or involved use of a weapon, the punishment is life in prison. The penalties for rape are increased if the victim sustained serious injury or death. If the victim is between 13 and 15 years old and was consenting and the court gives them permission to marry, the perpetrator will not be punished. In the entire country, there are only several hundred reported each year.

⁴⁵ Although the rape law does not acknowledge the rape of wives by husbands, a police officer indicated that in actuality, more cases are recognized by police than are recognized by the law. Many students believe, too, (77%) that a husband can rape his wife, (72%) that a man can rape a man, and (69%) that a woman can rape a man. Their understanding of rape is more inclusive than Thai law.

face or causing social disruption as long as everyone feigns ignorance. Some scholars describe this as an emphasis on *form over content* (Fieg, 1976/1986; Mole, 1973; Phillips, 1965; Van Esterik, 2000). Van Esterik spends a great part of her book *Materializing Thailand* drawing on the metaphor of *kaalátheesà*, or time and place. *Kaalátheesà*, she says "draws attention to the importance of understanding surfaces, appearance, face, masks and disguise as parts of important cultural strategies of interaction" (p. 36). A surface (of a relationship) that is proper or polite results in social orderliness.

One of my most memorable experiences with the indirect approach (or reproach, in this case) came from an older, female, unmarried *aaajaan* with whom I taught. One weekend while wearing knee-length walking shorts and a sleeveless blouse at another teacher's (also female and unmarried) house, she said to me, "My, you look very comfortable today." Confused by this odd comment, I stammered, "Uh, yes. Thank you." My amused friend later "translated" the *aaajaan's* comment informing me that the *aaajaan* was letting me know she disapproved of my attire.

This attention to appropriate display, or surface, was extremely challenging to me, and I regret that I never mastered it. In fact, I don't think I really understood it until many years after returning from the field. In Mahasarakham, the way things look is more important than the way they are, so there exists what a truth-seeking culture might regard as hypocrisy. In Mahasarakham, politeness is valued more than honesty. The *aaajaan's* comment, which annoyed me for a long time, was in fact designed to educate me without causing me to lose face. Appearance and clothing are indicative of moral character. By warning me, she was helping to save me from unintentionally harming my own reputation. Her warning/criticism was cloaked in a harmless, even positive, comment that anyone who was listening would publicly accept as positive (even if privately understanding the subtext).

The distinction between the public and the private (or form and content) allows for a wide variety of private beliefs and practice. And, indeed, there is much evidence that people in

Isan, especially adolescents, were traditionally afforded a wide range of sexual behaviors, though social norms suggested otherwise (van Esterik, 2000; Xenos, Pitaktepsombati, & Sittitrai, 1993). Even today, students who maintain good grades, a proper appearance, and respect for their parents, can participate in serious, even sexual relationships without drawing much attention. A fourth year girl, an exceptional student, spent the weekend in her boyfriend's room because her roommate's boyfriend was going to be up for the weekend. She didn't go to great lengths to hide this (I dropped her off at her boyfriend's house with her things), but neither did she publicize it. And, all the while, she maintained an appropriate appearance in every other way.

Some male and female SWU students live together. My English students wrote about situations they know of in their journals. But, I never interviewed any students in this situation because no one offered to tell me who they are. Several teachers told me they know students are doing this, but they don't know who they are or where they live. Couples living together are strongly disapproved of socially, so both the couples and those who know about them do what they can to maintain an appropriate appearance and ensure social harmony. This puts the anthropologist in an awkward position. To push to learn the "truth" violates codes of social behavior; but to display appropriate social behavior, results in not collecting certain information. I chose the latter given my position at the university and the necessity to keep students' trust.

Gossip potentially reveals truths and thus serves as an informal means of social control (van Esterik, 2000, p. 66). Gossip is a constant threat, especially for girls who face more restrictions on their sexual behavior and behavior in general. One can never be certain who might decide to talk. One girl wrote,

I think some men are covetous, careless, and selfish people. When they like some girls, they want to own them. If they get them, they are bored and they abandon some girls. But it's not important much more than they tell these things to their friends. And then they talk this story fun and joke. But some men are good people. If they love someone they will protect her. (Tu, journal entry)

Boys not sharing personal information with their friends is more important than not being abandoned. It also seems that part of "protecting" a girlfriend includes protecting her reputation, that is, helping her maintain an appropriate public image. People in Mahasarakham for the most part prefer to avoid social conflict. They go along with a public understanding of a situation to maintain harmony, even if in their own mind they might suspect something different. It is considered the right and proper thing to do. To bring about conflict is not considered appropriate action. The next section describes the meaning religion brings to sex and the role of morality.

Religion and Moral Action

The karmic cosmic order provides the basis for morality in Mahasarakham. One's status in this life is the result of his or her past actions. To be suffering is to be working out one's punishment from past demerit. To be successful is to be enjoying the rewards of one's past merit. This is reflected in the often-used expression, *tham dii dây dii tham chûa dây chûa* (do good, receive good, do evil, receive evil).

Because each person's situation is believed to be a consequence of his or her own behavior, people are quite accepting of their status in life and typically don't go to extreme measures to try and change it. Isan students from relatively poor village families rarely envision themselves attaining radically higher status. Their occupational goals are to become teachers, community development workers, secretaries, or company workers in Bangkok. Past SWU students have gone on to do these jobs quite successfully, and I do not mean to deride their career choices. But it does illustrate the social effects of a Theravada Buddhist worldview.⁴⁶ Teachers make it a point to encourage exceptional students to higher goals, including graduate study in

⁴⁶ It is possible and has been suggested to me that students aspire to greater things, but want to refrain from boasting or appearing silly in an interview situation. I do not think that is the case here because students take concrete actions toward becoming teachers, community development workers, secretaries, and company workers. If they do entertain notions of more ambitious careers, they do not appear to act on them.

Bangkok and abroad, because without this encouragement, students may not believe they are capable of it.

This worldview and the moral code associated with it are practical, as are Isan people. One does the right thing because one is one day rewarded for doing it. One is ultimately punished for doing the wrong thing, in this life or in another. Although they enjoy gossip, they generally stay out of other people's business. This maintains social order and is consistent with their understanding of morality; it is personal and so is not the concern of others. Although certain actions are acknowledged as especially meritorious (e.g., building a temple, ordination), Isan people believe that everyday actions count toward one's total merit and demerit accumulation and so every action is a moral choice, but in most cases Buddhism provides general guidelines that must be interpreted for particular cases.

Buddhism and Sex

Buddhism scored lowest of all items in the questionnaire item about influence in ideas and knowledge about sex. Students repeatedly denied that Buddhism shapes their understanding of sexuality. This is most interesting given that several prominent Thai scholars have sought explanations of Thai gender ideology in Buddhism (Keyes, 1977; Kirsch, 1984; Tannenbaum, 1991; van Esterik, 1982). This section attempts to explain the students' perspective on aspects of sex as meaningfully related to Buddhism.

Buddhism offers one explicit statement about sexual behavior (the third precept), and views on sexual identity can only be inferred from Buddhist texts and stories. Precepts are guides to moral living. They lead one toward the ultimate spiritual goal of complete detachment from the world and the suffering associated with it (nirvana, or *nipphaan*). Realistically, however, students don't strive for total detachment; their goals are smaller and more focused on their earthly situation. Most hope to improve their lot in this life or be reborn in a better position: wealthier, more beautiful, more comfortable. Consequently, few students make an effort to follow the five

basic precepts. The few who do are admired for being virtuous; those who blatantly violate them are seen to be of questionable character. Most students fall somewhere in between. Students do not generally interpret the precepts in a strict way. For example, killing should not be done unnecessarily, but some killing is inconsequential, such as squashing mosquitoes.

Likewise, "sexual misconduct" (sometimes translated "improper sexual behavior" or "adultery") has many possible interpretations. There is not unified understanding of the precept among students. Some interpret it as refraining from adultery (sex with another's spouse or sex outside one's marriage), in which case sex with girlfriends, boyfriends, and prostitutes does not violate the precept. Some students interpret it strictly as any socially unacceptable sexual behavior, which of course also varies in interpretation. For one fourth year female, this includes any kind of kissing or inappropriate touching, even between boyfriends and girlfriends. The meaning of the precept varies greatly from individual to individual.

In fact, few students mentioned the precept in discussions of sex and sexual behavior, even when morality was brought up in conversation by the researcher. I usually had to specifically mention the precept to stimulate discussion of it. Students do not make direct associations between Buddhism and sexual behavior, in part because moral action is situational. There are almost no absolute sins. Violation of precepts may result in the accumulation of *bàap* (demerit), but adherence to them is not always the only acceptable course of action. When the alternatives produce worse consequences (i.e., cause greater suffering), it is the appropriate, and moral, choice.

Like precepts, social ideals are sometimes thought of more as guides than absolutes. Although most students expressed the idea that students, especially females, should not have intercourse, 76% of males and 43% of females responded in the questionnaire that they approve of premarital sex if both parties consent to it (see Appendix L). The approval rates were similar (62% and 46%) if the couple plans to get married. Even social rules are guides and as such their

meaning is contextual, and mild deviations are expected. Throughout this research, I found that students do view their sexual behavior, or lack thereof, in only a very general Buddhist framework.

Let's now turn to a consideration of sexual identity and Buddhism. Buddhism in Mahasarakham is clearly sexed in the sense that males and females have different religious roles. Only men can aspire to the highest status spiritual positions (i.e., monks). Women can become nuns, a lay position of little social status and no religious status within the *sangha*, the order of monks.⁴⁷ Nuns usually lead simple pious lives caring for the temple and the monks. Monks ideally adhere to 227 precepts, but the reality is there is much variety in the degree to which monks do this. Many students see this stratification in Buddhism as a reflection of society's differing treatment and value placed on men and women. Others think it is just part of the religious tradition. Most don't seem to give it much thought, which demonstrates how internalized these gender roles are.

But, perhaps this conclusion reflects a Judeo-Christian bias (on the part of this research and others) which emphasizes a prescriptive moral code for gender roles and sexual conduct. What indigenous evidence is there to suggest that Buddhism is a significant shaper of sex/gender ideology?

During an interview with the abbot of a local temple, he seemed genuinely perplexed by my inquiries about the influence of Buddhism on sex and sex roles. He maintained that Buddhism says nothing about being men and being women until I pushed him for specifics. The only

⁴⁷The Buddha established a female order of monks (*bikkhuni sangha*). Thailand has never had a female order of monks, only a male one (*bikkhu sangha*). This puts women who wish to ordain in a nearly impossible position: *Bikkhuni* must be ordained first by the *bikkhuni sangha*, then by the *bikkhu sangha*. There is no *bikkhuni sangha* in Thailand, so the *bikkhu sangha* will not recognize women as being properly ordained, though some have tried (Kabilsingh, 1991, p. 45-46). China, Taiwan, and Korea all currently have *bikkhuni sangha*. There is historical precedent for establishing *bikkhuni sangha* using *bikkhuni* from other countries to give ordination to women. However, the idea of a *bikkhuni sangha* has met much opposition in Thailand. (Note: Because this word is commonly used in English, the popular spelling is maintained here.)

example he offered was an explanation for *kàthæy*. One's position (i.e., situation) in this life, he explained, including sexuality, is a result of past actions. He suggested that being a *kàthæy*, that is, neither completely a man nor completely a woman, might be the result of a past sexual indiscretion such as adultery. About the relative status of men and women, he was somewhat evasive. Everyone will be reborn many times, so one's sex is not so important.

Like the abbot, students don't make a strong connection between Buddhism and sex. Students, except for Buddhist Club members, only occasionally go to temples. Religious ceremonies at the temple are dominated by old people. In villages, especially before motorcycles and cars, the temple was the center of social life. Other institutions and establishments have taken on this and other functions: schools, parks, movies, bars, shops. There is a Buddhist Club at SWU which indicates that the level of interest in and enthusiasm for Buddhism is not shared equally. Data gathered in this research suggest that Buddhism is not a major influence on students' construction of sex ideology and sexual behavior except as it shapes more general values which then influence meanings associated with sex.

An interesting meeting of Buddhism and sex came about in a news item that broke in January 1994 and maintained a media presence throughout the year: a sex scandal involving Phra Yantra Amaro Bhikkhu, a popular monk of Sunyataram Temple in Kanchanaburi. Phra Yantra was accused of having sexual relations with his female followers and prostitutes and of fathering a child. Accusations of this sort have been made against popular monks before and are a particular favorite topic for local and national gossip. Sexual jokes involving monks are also common. Nantita Yanyongyuth, of the Religion for Development Organization, was quoted as saying, "That monks engage in sexual misconduct is an open secret" (Bangkok Post, 1/24/94, p. 32), but one which excites people on both sides of the controversy. Phra Yantra was a sort of celebrity monk. Regardless of whether the accusations were true or not, people understood why women would be attracted to Phra Yantra and why he might be tempted to enter into inappropriate

relationships. The sexual exploits of monks are a staple for jokes and gossip. Phra Achan Poh, the abbot of Suan Mokh Forest Monastery, acknowledged the challenge of controlling sexual desire:

Monks often leave the monkhood when they are in their 40s. Why? Because they are finally discouraged that after all their perseverance, they cannot overcome their sexual desires ... Many give up. Others work on. It is not until one reaches the 60s that the urges finally ease ... And I don't believe things are easier for women. (Ekachai, 1994, p. 29)

Sex is considered one of a monk's greatest obstacles. On the other hand, some people blame the women. Two female students who were very active members in the SWU Buddhist Club believe Phra Yantra is innocent and is the victim of "jealous women." Of what the women are jealous, they couldn't specify, but jealousy is unequivocally considered a weakness of women (see Appendix F). Stories like Phra Yantra's remind students that Buddhism is sexed because it exists in a sexed society.

Students at SWU are minimally aware of any influence Buddhism might have on their understanding of sexuality. If this differs from other groups in Thailand (and I do not know that it does), one explanatory factor might be that SWU students are not involved in (and thus made aware of) Buddhism on a day-to-day basis, as young people might have been in villages in the past. They have been in school full-time most of their lives. They generally don't regularly engage Buddhism and engage in Buddhism in the ways some ethnographers have described. However, it should be noted that even in villages where the temple is the center of social life, temples are a traditional place to meet and court, particularly at festivals. So, in one sense, there exists a traditional positive association between Buddhism, as it is practiced in village life, and sex.

Only about 14% of students reported wearing Buddhist amulets, something once regarded as common practice.⁴⁸ They go to the temple on special days, but not daily. Very few male students have been ordained (only 1 of the 34 male students surveyed); those who have are regarded as very special and exceptionally religious. The first year I taught at SWU, the one

⁴⁸ In casual observation, I noted that fashionable necklaces are more frequently seen than Buddhas and other amulets.

English major who had been a monk for a short period was the affectionate butt of jokes. Even in 1964, a study of the values of central Thai college students (Guskin as referenced in Mole, 1973, p. 47-48) which reported the number of college men who have been or plan to enter the priesthood so low as to be "almost immeasurable." Students obtain little meaning from Buddhism that they consciously apply to their construction of sexuality. Its relevance to them comes largely in relation to its significance in their general worldview. But there is more to religion than Buddhism for SWU students.

Hinduism, Animism, and Magic

Isan people blend Buddhism, Hinduism, and animism as part of their supernatural beliefs and practice. These religious beliefs are also sexed. Amulets assisting in protection and fertility are blessed by, and sometimes created by, monks. Festivals celebrating *mêe phrá thoranii* (Earth goddess or spirit) involve merit-making activities. Students' sometimes distinguish and sometimes blur moral acts (*bun*) and amoral (supernatural) power (*sàksit*) as a number of ethnographers have indicated (see Hanks, 1962; Mulder, 1979; Tannenbaum, 1991). *Sàksit* also means sacred, such as when describing a religious sanctuary. *Sàksit* as supernatural power, however, can be used for moral or immoral purposes. Common amoral *sàksit* is found in love charms and potions (*sanèe*). Buddhist images may also have *sàksit*, though they are blessed with a holy power. *Sàksit* is sexed largely because of the people who handle and use it, primarily males.

One student's grandfather, younger brother, and uncles (in Surin Province) are skilled at making *sanèe*.⁴⁹ His grandfather learned it from many different people including his father. It does not require a special person to make *sanèe*; anyone could it, but he must be well-trained. They make magical lip creams, eyebrow creams, hair tonics, liquids to drink, and charms (*sǎalikkaa*). Tattoos are three times as popular as the other forms. The student once got a tattoo from a monk for 12 baht. He was then forbidden from engaging in certain activities such as

⁴⁹ The student is not learning to make *sanèe* because he is forgetful and to make *sanèe* requires remembering a lot.

mopping the house; those activities would cause the tattoo to lose its power. However, despite having received a tattoo, this student claimed to believe in its effectiveness only about 50-50. Because monks must give the tattoos, women cannot get them.⁵⁰ The charms cannot be shared between people, and must be made for a specific user. They are also not to be played with; they are not toys, but powerful objects. *Sanèe* attracts only people the user likes. The power of the charms comes from the Khmer words used, and is not really related to religion at all according to the student. By virtue of their religious status, monks have access to *sàksit*. It is the access to *sàksit*, not the religious position itself which makes them suitable for making *sanèe*. Herbs are also used in making charms. Some men wear a phallus about their waist which, when they *thiaw phûu yǐng*, makes women like them. The lip cream (*nûat pàak*) is most popular with women. Most people who want charms are village women trying to get back husbands who are womanizers (*jâw chûu*). Recall the student whose father had a minor wife? The family was considering using *sanèe* to entice him back home. University students put less faith in charms than do other villagers, but they acknowledge the possibility that *sanèe* might be of use at some time.

Students believe in spirits, though to varying degrees. Many believe that *phǐi bâan* (also called *phǐi ruan*; 69%), household spirits, and *phǐi jâwthûi* (64%), village spirits, exist to some degree. These spirits are propitiated in special ceremonies by villagers. *Phǐi bâan* can be pleased or offended by household members' behaviors. They usually dwell in the main house post and are responsible for enforcing sexual propriety. But only 6% know of an incident in which the *phǐi ruan* actually punished someone.

One of the most visible spiritual beliefs in Isan, and certainly among students, is *baay sǐi sùu khwǎn* (calling back the spirit) ceremony. Humans have a vital essence, or protective spirit, known as *khwǎn*. *Khwǎn* is formed at birth and dies at death and so is not subject to the laws of

⁵⁰ Women are forbidden from coming into physical contact with monks.

karma. One's well-being depends on one's *khwǎn*. It is possible for *khwǎn* to wander leaving a person vulnerable and weak. *Baay sǐi sǐu khwǎn* ceremonies are held both formally and informally at times of change and mobility such as when people arrive, depart, at marriage, and at ordination. Small white strings are tied around the wrists to keep that person's *khwǎn* in his body. In a sense, they serve as protective barriers to keep the good in and the bad out. At any given time in Mahasarakham, one sees dozens of people wearing new and old *baay sii* strings. The strings are supposed to fall off on their own, so people end up wearing them for weeks or even months. *Baay sǐsǐu khwǎn* is not a sexed concept, and either sex can give and receive the strings. However, formal ceremonies of Brahmic origin are conducted by men. Students are aware of the historical nature of this tradition and seem to find very little, if any, relevance to their construction of sex.

CHAPTER 7. SEX IN SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Through social action, meanings of concepts change and new meanings are revealed. Social action by definition takes place in the context of relationships where the meanings of cultural concepts are negotiated. It is through these processes of negotiation that culture changes. Widespread economic, political, and technological change has impacted all parts of Thai culture, not least those parts that are sexed. This chapter examines sexual meanings in the context of some of the social relationships of SWU students.

The Family

Studies of sex most often focus on reproductive-age adults. Sex, even in terms of social roles, is usually associated in some way with reproductive sex, by the informants and/or by the researcher. But this limitation results in an incomplete understanding of sexuality. Physical and social sexual development begins at birth in all cultures. The sexuality of children, representing but a segment of a lifetime process of sexual development, is of primary importance for broader understandings of sexuality, though children are not reproductive. Teenage and adult interpretations of sex are constructed upon childhood understandings and experiences. Though this study does not examine the meanings of sexuality for children, it is an area that warrants further study. Likewise, the meanings of sexuality for teenagers are not the same as those of children or those of adults. So adult social relationships may or may not reveal much about the meanings of sexual concepts for students. Their activities, relationships, experiences, and interests are different. One major difference is that the primary family roles of SWU students are son, daughter, brother, and sister.

Sons and Daughters

As mentioned previously, SWU students are largely dependent on their parents to pay for their education and in most cases their room, board, and spending money.¹ Only 13% of the students surveyed work while studying, most fewer than 10 hours a week. A small number saved money from previous work in order to help pay for their schooling.² Students are in school because of their parents' generosity, and the sense of obligation to them is strong.³ The majority comes from intact (parents married), rural, lower-middle class Isan families. More than two thirds of their mothers work, most as farmers or merchants. All living fathers work and most are farmers, civil servants, or merchants. Parents invest a great deal of money and hope in these students and their futures.

Relationships within the family reflect the patron-client structure of other social relationships: husbands and wives, parents and children, elder and younger siblings.⁴ Participants in the relationships are expected to fulfill their obligations. But in a family, when an individual doesn't fulfill his obligations, the relationships may not be terminated as easily or in the same way as in non-familial social situations. The ties are more complex and the relationship more difficult to abandon.

Though a husband is considered the leader in a marriage, he has as many obligations to his wife as she has to him. He is given higher status (sometimes more a formality than actuality)

¹ Srinakharinwirot University is a public university, and so is paid for in part by the government. The university is not funded by tuition and endowment. Tuition, though one of the lowest in the country, is still beyond the means of many Isaners.

² During my first year teaching at SWU (1989-1990), I taught a female student from a very poor family who had worked for a number of years after high school in order to pay for her university education. She was about 7 years older than the other students. Several teachers and students expressed admiration for her determination to get an advanced education

³ Students also participate in a patron-client type relationship with the "imagined community" of the Thai nation. Throughout the development of the Thai nation, as an identity and a polity, education has been important. In a sense, SWU students are involved in a patron-client-like relationship with the nation, and will repay their obligation to it through their service as teachers and economic participants, as well as good citizens.

⁴ Hanks (1975) describes the Thai social order as consisting of *entourages*. The family is one such entourage.

with the understanding that he will fulfill his duties to his family. Should he fail to do so, that status can change.⁵ It is important to emphasize that patron-client relationships are ideally reciprocal. The individual of higher status and the individual of lower status depend on each other, thus despite the traditional hierarchical character of family structure, there is usually no dictator. Each participant has some control over the relationship and what happens in it. There are signs that the notion of the father as head of household is weakening, or possibly it has always been more imagined than real. One third of the students view their fathers as the head of the family, as the law and government and many adults do. But 58% consider both parents controlling entities. There is very little difference between male and female students in these views.

The relationship between a parent and child is more enduring by nature than the husband-wife relationship, but, theoretically, a child who was ill-cared for has little obligation to care for his or her parents in their old age. A few students confessed that their fathers' lack of responsibility toward their families and disrespect for their mothers weakened the father-child relationship. These students have as little contact with their fathers as possible. Their sense of obligation to their fathers is small compared to that they have to their mothers whose sacrifices for the family demonstrated their love for their children. The sense of obligation between a parent and child, *bun khun*, is voluntary. Once a child has grown up, there is little parents can do to compel the child to repay the *bun khun*, but most do so willingly and with great happiness.

Though parents have *bun khun* over both sons and daughters, girls have historically repaid their obligation through their activities in the family. For sons, the merit gained through ordination was usually given to one's mother (or parents) and was considered a major source of his repayment of *bun khun*. For some, it still is. Men may ordain at any point in their lives, so the

⁵ While many students said that if their (hypothetical) spouse failed to fulfill his or her obligations, they would leave, this rarely was the case in the accounts they shared of troubled marriages in their own families and villages. Wives, in particular, seem willing to endure suffering in the marriage to keep the family intact. Vessantara's wife, in the tale of the Buddha's human lives, is a classic, long-suffering wife figure.

possibility for accruing this amount of merit exists even if students don't ordain at the age of 20 as many used to. Ordination is anything but ordinary for university students. Young men who go on to college have other things to offer their parents, including financial assistance and status. These same forms of repayment are also available for young women.

Traditionally (that is, for at least the last couple of hundred years) in Isan, the youngest married daughter was most responsible for helping her parents with household labor. The youngest daughter (or last to marry) remained in the parental household with her family to care for her parents. This was the most desired, if not prevalent, residence pattern up until very recently and was true of the students' parents' generation. Nowadays, university educated daughters infrequently return to their natal villages to live permanently. Many have their wedding in the home village, with the couple residing there for 3 days following the marriage. This, in part, fulfills the daughter's immediate obligation to her parents, especially her mother (Lefferts, 2003, personal communication). Their education allows them to find secure jobs with steady income, most of which are located in or near cities. Young people continue to support their parents, but with a greater emphasis on financial support than home labor. And, in the cash economy that now dominates in Thailand, and with farm production continuing to decline, this is the greater need.

SWU students have a strong sense of indebtedness toward their parents. Students, both males and females, whose parents sacrificed more to send them to school (e.g., those with greater financial hardship) seemed to demonstrate the greatest concern for actively caring for their parents and helping as much as possible at home. These were the students who sought out work to earn money and who returned home on holidays to help out with their parents' farms or shops. They attempt to fulfill the traditional duties of children as well as the modern ones.

The most basic sex enculturation takes place in families. Individuals begin forming their sexual identities in the context of the family, as sons and daughters. Family and neighbors are

models for appropriate sex roles. Significant sexual symbols in childhood are not so erotically oriented as sex role oriented. Children learn about their sexuality in the context of relationships with their mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, friends, and neighbors. However, as children approach adolescence, the significance of erotic sexuality grows.

The role of the family in controlling sexual behavior, particularly of females, has been well documented in the literature on Thailand (Donaldson, 1987; Eberhardt, 1988; Hanks & Hanks, 1963; Kaufman, 1976; Keyes, 1984; Kirsch, 1984; Mills, 1990b, 1999; Phillips, 1965; Potter, 1976; Potter, 1977; Van Esterik, 1989; see also Kawanami, 2001, for similarities in Burma). In traditional Isan villages, women lived among groups of their relatives who looked after their well-being and kept a watchful eye on their virtue. Sexual improprieties offended household spirits who punished the family with illness or misfortune unless propitiated. Social mechanisms existed to handle improprieties in acceptable ways. The very existence of these mechanisms suggests that violations of sexual rules were expected. Some ethnographers from 20 or 30 years ago observed that sexual relations without marriage happen and may not have been entirely prohibited (e.g., Tambiah, 1970). Discretion may have been more important than the actual behavior.⁶ An example of this is found in the beloved novel *A Child of the Northeast (Lúuk Iisāan*; Boontawee, 1988), based on the author's memories about life in Isan in the 1930s. The protagonist, Koon, is asked to accompany his favorite cousin, Kamgong, allegedly to get water from a distant well. Her real mission, Koon learns, is to meet with her boyfriend, Tid-joon. An annoyed Koon is sent away to collect chameleons while Kamgong and Tid-joon flirt, kiss, and hug. This happens twice in the story. The parents know what is going on, but say nothing and do not interfere. Readers are told that this is the way love happens. Later, Tid-joon spends the night in Kamgong's bed, forcing a marriage, a legitimate and common form of marriage among poor

⁶ Schlegel (2001) describes Davis and Davis' (1989) similar findings in Morocco where there is strong pressure for girls to keep their virginity and "their good reputations as girls *believed* to have preserved their virginity" (p. 91).

Isaners. Kamgong and Tid-joon's sexual behaviors were allowed because they were appropriately discreet and also because the parents understood they would lead to marriage. Had Kamgong's parents not approved of Tid-joon as a son-in-law, they would likely have interfered to prevent the liaison.

Inappropriate contact between an unmarried or unrelated male and female (which in the past meant any physical contact and nowadays means romantic or sexually oriented contact) was referred to as "offending the spirits" (*phit phit*). The effectiveness of this means of sexual control⁷ may be declining. Most students believe in family spirits to some degree, but few have ever known them to inflict punishment. No student ever mentioned household spirits as a reason students should not have sex.⁸ Students nowadays refrain from sexual activity because they don't think it is appropriate for students and because they do not want to disappoint their parents, not because they fear offending the family spirits. Furthermore, actions that offended the family spirits generations ago (i.e., a boy touching the weaving loom of a girl he liked) are commonplace today. For example, at a dance and party celebrating the university's upcoming change of status, dozens of students and staff participated in ballroom and Latin dances.⁹ Some male-female contact is now regarded as quite harmless and even good fun.

About a third of the students have boyfriends or girlfriends, and many more would like to. They form these relationships for friendship, companionship, fun, and experience. But because they are both children and students, most are discreet and *riapróøy* (in order, appropriately

⁷ Based on a study of adolescent sexuality in the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample, Schlegel (2001) argues that in cultures that restrict adolescent sexuality, the real issue is pregnancy, not purity, and is a way of controlling *who* the girl marries.

⁸ Belief in the power of spirits is not something highly educated Isaners are likely to admit readily. It is entirely possible that some students worry about the consequences their sexual behavior might bring about from household spirits. Regardless, their reluctance to discuss this is evidence that as a behavior control mechanism, household spirits are waning as a mechanism of sexual control. If students don't think they should believe in such things, even if they do, they are not going to be strong propagators of this belief, for example, to their own children.

⁹ One ajaan and his wife enjoyed teaching staff to meringue.

modest) in their public behavior.¹⁰ While at university, students grow increasingly independent and self-reliant. In their first year, they live in on-campus dormitories or at home. By their fourth year, nearly all are sharing houses with friends or living alone in off-campus dormitories. But still, their primary roles are as sons and daughters. And their primary responsibilities to their parents are to be mindful and be conscientious in their studies.

Parents do not want their children to have boyfriends or girlfriends because it distracts them from their studies. Parents, especially those of SWU students, work hard and sacrifice to put their children through school. It is irresponsible and uncaring, therefore, for students to do things that jeopardize their studies. As Manika, a second year female student wrote in her English journal,

I never love....I don't want to lie myself. This is the first time that I have this feeling. I am embarrassed to wait for him by hopeless. [My friend] tells me that it is good to have someone to think of when I feel lonely. I don't want to think about this. I want to pay attention to my studies. Stop here my heart. You have to study hard for your parents. You should not to wast your time with love.

Love can be a strong diversion. Ironically, Manika kept her journal in a notebook with "The Power of Love" printed on the cover and a picture of a couple kissing or hugging at the top of each page. These kind of romantic-themed notebooks are popular among students, especially girls. Manisa (also a second year female) is another student who refrains from forming romantic attachments:

I think I am crazy. I cannot accept myself to have a boyfriend while I am a student (or maybe forever). I have had a crush on many boys, but never have an idea of having them as boyfriends....I have promised myself that I will not have a boyfriend while I am here, because I am sensitive.

It should be noted that Manisa was a top student and fully devoted to her studies. But she was also very popular and had many friends. She was not lacking in a social life. But love consumes particularly large amounts of mental energy for many students and so some avoid it. Those who

¹⁰ Examples of indiscretions will be described later in the section "Dating."

are able to include romantic attachments in their lives without harming their studies often do. And if they maintain a polite, *riapréəy* appearance, they draw little, if any, attention.

Students who go against their parents' wishes do not always do so maliciously. In fact, it is quite common for students to disobey their parents on occasion. A journal entry by Daeng, a second year female student, shows that good children who are good students sometimes engage in activities that are not considered proper:

My family taught me whiskey or beer are bad for health and they order me don't drink them. I agreed with them while I was a child but now, sometime I want to test. Although I will disobey my parents I drink it because they don't know.

Daeng doesn't drink excessively or even regularly. She experimented with beer and whiskey and ultimately concluded that she enjoyed soft drinks more. This is very typical of SWU girls. Some, including Daeng,¹¹ eventually tell their parents what they did; others choose not to, depending on their parents' attitudes toward the behavior. If confessing is likely to make the situation worse, they do not. If it will make the situation better,¹² they may choose to tell their parents about it.

School is a top priority for SWU students. Their parents have invested in their education and it is an opportunity for the students and their families to better themselves. As has been mentioned, many SWU students come from fairly low-income, hard-working families. A university degree improves the students' chances to get a good job and establish a secure future. Because of *bun khun* (obligation), it also helps to ensure a secure future for their parents. I do not mean to overemphasize the material aspects of the parent-child relationship. The patron-client aspect of it are embedded in a deep and abiding love that most children feel towards their parents. For Valentine's Day, Sombat, a second year male, wrote about "the purest love":

Do you know who made you born, took care you when you were baby,
comforted you when you were crying? For this question, it can be words for a
Thai song ... Do you know who it is? Your parents, "they have goodness more

¹¹ Daeng told her mother that she had tried beer. According to Daeng, her mother didn't criticize her but warned her not to drink too much. She thought Daeng should know what alcohol is like.

¹² As in Daeng's situation where she expected her mother to be understanding and comforted by Daeng's decided preference for soft drinks. No similar incident was ever described to me about sex.

than I can say." I have a story about me that can guarantee this sentence. When I was child, I was stubborn. If I need anything, it might O.K. but my family was so poor. One day I saw a jean at the market whose I like it. But my mother didn't have money. Then she tried to work hard and borrowed some money from our neighbor in order to buy the jean that I liked. When she had bought them, I was happy and my mother too but I didn't know how she tried. Later I had just known about jean this from my sister and I had just know her [my mother's] favor was the greatest in my mind and I will keep it forever. I wish everyone love their parents so much and should be compensate when you have chance.

Brothers and Sisters

The Thai (and Lao) terms for siblings, *phii* (elder sibling) and *nóøng* (younger sibling), are gender neutral, but indicative of relative age. As mentioned in the previous chapter, age hierarchy is extremely important in social relationships in Thailand. This is the basis for the age-hierarchy that will be theirs when they marry.

Relationships with siblings are some of the most durable social relationships formed in one's lifetime in Isan. They are not as primary as the parent-child relationship, but are significant nonetheless.

Students develop their personal qualities and characteristics, and their sex identity, largely in the family arena. Under the supervision of their parents, they express appropriate and inappropriate sexed behaviors in juxtaposition to their brothers and sisters. The role of siblings in the development of sexuality is, I believe, of value for understanding sexuality, particularly sex roles. I noted no obvious trends in sibling relationships, but neither did I make much effort in this area. In retrospect, students described their relationships with and feelings for siblings in a wide variety of terms, ones that often parallel their ideas about males and females in general.

Yupin (2nd year female) fondly described how her older brother protected her and took care of her when the lights went out at his dormitory during a storm:

I was so scared to be in a dark. My brother pushed me to go into his room and locked the door. I was glad to know that he cared me and protected me. As you know, that many boxers were in the house, too. My brother was getting older and becoming an adult. (journal entry 2/13/03)

Yupin's brother was expressing qualities of a good man: demonstrating love through leadership and protection. But even more importantly, and easily overlooked by a researcher whose culture emphasizes gender in sibling relationships, Yupin's brother was being a good elder sibling. Elders look after youngers. This incident was valuable to Yupin and inspired her to go "back to study and...try [her] best to get the goals of [her] life."

Other students encountered situations that brought tension to the sibling relationship. But also reflected sexual meanings. Janchai (2nd year female) was reluctant to attend her brother's wedding because she didn't like his fiancé (though Janchai herself described her brother as being "very happy.") The fiancé was "rich and polite but ... not beautiful." Her mother also didn't think the fiancé suitable for her son. Janchai perceived her family as separating (presumably spurred on by this marriage) and wrote, "I don't know whether I'm jealous my brother's girlfriend or not. I just know that I'm not ready to accept his wife" (journal entry 11/14/93). Interestingly, this incident was taking place while Janchai was having problems with her own boyfriend. Sibling marriages are a concern because of the effects the marriages have on the family.

Relationships between siblings, especially between brothers and sisters, reflect sexual meanings in a number of ways. Further, because the sibling relationship is by definition close, and thus personal, siblings may express emotions to each other that might be more constrained in non-family relationships. These relationships have the potential to reveal meanings of sex that are not articulated in other contexts.

Views of Husbands, Wives, Mothers, and Fathers

Whereas in the US sexual relationships are a fundamental part of college life for many students, this is less the case for SWU students (but more so for boys than girls). Particularly for females, sexual relationships are largely limited to relationships with husbands-to-be or husbands. Males may experience sex with commercial sex workers or sometimes non-sex workers, but these relationships are regarded differently from more socially legitimate ones. Students are almost

never husbands, wives, mothers, or fathers, though the meanings of these roles are part of students' larger conception of sexuality. Their experiences in their own families as well as their observations and experiences with others contribute to the meanings they assign husbands, wives, mothers, and fathers. Students have very strong, very similar beliefs about how men and women should be. Further, most students plan to marry at some point, though some young people choose not to marry at all.

Many young women think that marriage increases work and limits freedom, and that if they have their own salary, it isn't necessary.¹³ Young men are less inclined to want to stay single and those who expressed a desire to stay single to me were gay. In fact, one young man worried that if he didn't marry, people might think he was gay or abnormal. So, what are the benefits of marriage according to SWU students?

Of primary importance, marriage is the only socially acceptable context in which to have children. It is also hoped to be a source of companionship and love. Most students talk about love as a basis for a marriage, but most also say that other factors are important, such as "suitability." A husband and wife are more suitable if they have similar educational backgrounds and similar ideas about life. Women, especially, also hope to gain economic benefits through marriage. Ideally, a husband provides for his family and protects his wife and children, creating a safe and secure environment.

The uniformity in students' descriptions of and comments on husbands and wives was remarkable, given their claim that this aspect of society is changing very quickly. In my English students' class seminars, discussions, and debates, they frequently mentioned the changing values of Thai society. For example, 4th year student Panida, the moderator for a panel discussion on "The Attitude Toward Marriage," said in her closing comments, "Now we know that society is

¹³ In 2003, the first Miss Khanthong (Miss Spinster) beauty pageant was held in Bangkok. Contestants are university graduates some over 50 years old. It is a celebration of unmarried women and was created to show that women can be happy without being married.

changed. The young people forget traditional culture." However, it is not clear that traditional ideas about marriage have changed much at all. In many ways, the meanings and symbols associated with marriage appear very similar to those describing the past.

A husband is considered to be the leader of the family, so leadership skills are desirable, particularly for representing the family in public settings. Husbands are expected to be better decision-makers, but they do not have unquestioned control over their wives. It is said that in private, women often make the decisions, though a good wife would never boast of this in public.¹⁴ They create a public image of the appropriate relationship, regardless of what the actual one is like. This public image is also reflected in women calling their husbands *phîi* (elder sibling) regardless of actual age. It is a demonstration of respect, and of the normal or ideal situation in which husbands are a few years older than their wives and therefore more experienced and better equipped to lead the family.

Wives usually become mothers in the first couple years of marriage. A mother teaches her children to be good people. She, too, is to be a good example for them. Her household skills (especially cooking) should be excellent and she should take especially good care of her children, attending to all their needs. She also tends to her husband's needs and advises him to help him to make the best decisions. Mothers should be diligent, gentle, patient, and *riapróoy*, and make every effort to understand¹⁵ their husbands and children. Though few students directly articulated it, the idea of a wife and mother having to sacrifice for her family was fairly strong. The word *ôtthon* was used repeatedly in describing the qualities of wives and mothers, especially those

¹⁴ Indeed, the stereotype of the bossy, loud, controlling wife is a common character in jokes and comics (Costa & Matzner, 2002).

¹⁵ Students frequently mentioned "understands me/him/her/the children" as a desired personal characteristic for people in various roles. To understand someone means to consider be close enough and know them well enough to know their situation and feelings, and be considerate and accepting of them.

whose lives are difficult. It suggests that women are expected to put up with things, tolerate things, and insinuates that these things might cause them some unhappiness.¹⁶

"*Mêe*" is used to address and refer to one's mother and others in mother-like positions. Students are exposed to models of mothers from birth. The same is true for fathers (*phôø*). Good fathers are responsible leaders who take care of their families. They minimize gambling, drinking, and smoking, and maintain a good image for the family. Parental role models are significant early in life and the memories stay with students. Several *kee* and *kàthæy* students related their sexual identities directly to their parents' performances. Poor fathers failed to provide positive role models for their sons. This was also noted by some heterosexual students who said poor parental role models can affect their children's sexual identity.

Mothers are the primary childcare givers in Isan, and women are unanimously viewed as the better childcare givers, but as Table X shows, students do not perceive their mothers as being particularly influential in terms of *phêet*.¹⁷ There is quite a bit of evidence that suggests parents don't talk to their children about physical sexual development or sexual behavior. Only 18% of female students reported that they learned about menstruation from their mothers; most learned about it in school or from books. Some girls' lack of preparedness for menstruation is also evident in their reports of their first reaction to their menses as being scared (34%) or embarrassed (27%). Though menstruation is not a taboo topic in Isan and discussion of it in a general sense is not normally embarrassing; these responses suggest girls are unprepared for its onset. Students' responses on the questionnaire held menstruation in a fairly neutral, even positive, light (normal,

¹⁶ In her study of female sexuality and celibacy in Theravada Buddhism in Burma, Kawanami (2001) describes the mother image as the ultimate symbol of spiritual attachment, and thus worldly suffering. That mothers must suffer is part of their lot in life and also includes enduring sex as a marital duty.

¹⁷ This suggests that students do not include sexual division of labor, or sex roles in the household, as part of *phêet*, and instead are probably thinking more along the lines of sexuality.

natural, shows femininity, inconvenient), something also found by public health researchers.¹⁸

That mothers don't talk about it with daughters, then, is perplexing. Most students claim that their parents do not talk to them about sexual development or behavior. Whether this is to protect the parent (from an uncomfortable discussion) or the child (from losing face) is unclear. To fill this gap, SWU students find the information they want and in some cases need from the TV, magazines, books, and friends.

A father is expected to be a good example for his children and take care of them and his wife, especially in terms of finances and basic needs. A good father is hard working, responsible, and loving. His indulgence in pleasures (smoking, drinking, gambling, sex) should not interfere with his responsibilities toward his family. A generation back, casual sexual relations (especially with prostitutes) would not have drawn too much criticism provided they didn't cut into the family finances and that the illusion of faithfulness was maintained (Packard-Winkler, 1998, p. 191). However, since the spread of AIDS throughout Thailand, the illusion has been exposed (Van Esterik, 2000, p. 184). Visiting prostitutes is considered irresponsible since it puts the health of a man's wife at risk. Especially for female students, emotional and even sexual fidelity is a characteristic of a good husband.

But even nowadays, it is not rare for men to have minor wives (*mia n  y*) with whom they also have children.¹⁹ Students generally disapprove of it and it is something very few students have even considered.²⁰ Historical and ethnographic literature link polygyny with

¹⁸ Periods are an essential part of femininity. Women in Thailand view amenorrhea (cessation of menstruation) negatively. "It was considered not only to be unhealthy but also to have a negative effect on a woman's appearance" (Reproline, 1999).

¹⁹ A relationship with a minor wife is ongoing and may involve another residence and children. It defers first family resources to the new family, which is why it has been largely limited to the rich. If the new relationship creates hardship for the first family, which it often does in Isan, the husband is viewed more harshly.

²⁰ The question "Have you ever thought about being a minor wife or having a minor wife?" (part 1, question 40; choices are *have, haven't, not sure*) was a rather poor question as is evidenced by only 81 of 90 respondents answering. There are at least two interpretations of the meaning. Students may have understood a *yes* answer to mean they have literally thought about it (without indicating an interest). They

wealthy men who are in a position to support multiple wives and families, thus it is associated with status. SWU students, however, have been more exposed to notions of romance and sexual fidelity (through the mass media) as major components of a marital relationship. Polygyny doesn't mesh well with these values. But these are relatively new values, not well supported within the culture, and so are present more individually than socially. Some students have experienced polygynous situations firsthand. Others know friends in this situation, but the shame associated with it, as well as reluctance to air personal family problems made access to them difficult. One young man who was willing to talk described the situation as hard on everyone, especially his mother. He told his story with a serious and pained look on his face.

In Isan, where few are wealthy, the taking of a minor wife is generally viewed as the result of failure on the first wife's part, coupled with selfishness and irresponsibility on the husband's part. Male students tend to assign more responsibility for the situation to the wife and her shortcomings (e.g., boring, not interested in sex, nagging). Female students generally see it as the result of the husband's selfishness and lack of responsibility though some also acknowledge that the husband might also feel bored or unhappy with the major wife. Men are believed to be easily bored (*bhà ngây*) sexually and seek excitement. Minor wives are often younger and almost always described as more physically attractive than the first wife.

There is a general notion that after giving birth, women's sexual attractiveness begins declining and continues to do so for the rest of her life. Informants went so far as to say that parturition, women no longer want sex. Their interest is largely reproductive, so once they have children, sex is useless to them and they let their appearance and demeanor go. I cannot confirm the extent to which this belief is based in reality, but this asexuality of mother-wives is sometimes reflected in student's speech and writing. Even Wan, who was distraught over the problems his

may also have understood a *yes* to mean they would consider having/being a minor wife. However, the lack of affirmative responses (14% of males and 4% of females), suggests that students do not have a strong interest in this.

father's minor wife has brought his family, speculated that his father may have taken up with a younger woman because his mother didn't keep up her appearance and was no longer interested in sex. The idea is perpetuated in public discourse, which gives little attention given to women's sexual desires and very rarely targets male performance except in jokes (continuing the focus on male sexuality). Some students' understandings of sexuality are moving away from this towards a more balanced view which gives importance to both men's and women's sexual feelings. Most students believe that women have sexual desires much like men. But they also recognize Thai society discourages women from expressing them. Thus, like the concept of fidelity, women's sexual needs are not culturally supported at this point in time. The value exists at a largely individual level.

SWU students are exposed to many sources of information that weren't available to their parents or grandparents. Some are being taken and integrated into their understandings of sexuality, such as the idea of marital fidelity and attention to women's sexual response. Students have a few new and developing expectations for their own future roles as husbands, wives, fathers, and mothers. But for the most part, the meanings of these categories are very similar to those of their parents and grandparents. It will be interesting to see how they evolve or stay the same as the students begin interacting in these roles.

Among Friends

As mentioned previously, there are various levels of friendship in Thailand. The closest friends are like brothers and sisters. They are the friends in whom one confides, from whom one seeks advice, and to whom one gives comfort, understanding, and advice when asked. They are the people to whom one can express her innermost feelings, which are articulated to very few people. The closet friends, *phâan sanit* (close friends), *phâan thĕĕ* (real friends), and *phâan taay* (friends to the death), are almost always of the same sex and sexual orientation, and are usually

close in age.²¹ They understand each other and the situations they face. With these friends, students can communicate individual thoughts and feelings, even those that might not be publicly expressable, such as being angry or being in love. This is especially true for girls who are more socially constrained in their expression of emotions. Girls depend on their close girlfriends to help them with romantic and sexual problems. Nit's friend A sought understanding and support from Nit when A's boyfriend got drunk and told his friends that they'd had sex. Another student, Sunee, was contacted by her closest friend because her brother's girlfriend was pregnant and needed an abortion. Sunee made a good effort but was unable to find a clinic to perform the abortion. However, her effort and sensitivity to the situation demonstrated her commitment to helping her friend's brother. Students depend heavily on their close friends for emotional support.

Most students have good friends and casual friends (*phûan kin*) of both sexes. They are not as frank or personal with these friends, but they are an important part of the social circle just the same. Students gain a better understanding of the other sex(es) through these friendships, though it is more public (i.e., constructed for public approval) than personal (i.e., revealing of inner truths). A group of casual friends, such as classmates, usually gives socially appropriate responses to questions and comments. There is rarely a great deal of dissent in groups. They reinforce socially normative meanings of sexuality.

The sexual division between males and females is reinforced through housing arrangements. Dormitories are largely single sex in Mahasarakham²² and a great deal of a students' time is spent working at the dorms, and thus in the presence of others of the same sex. Same sex friendships require less censoring than inter-sex friendships. And, like in other southeast Asian cultures, same-sex affection is socially permissible in public. Girls can be seen

²¹ Distinguishing between levels of friendship is somewhat arbitrary. More students (61% of respondents to the survey) form close friendships (*phûan sanit*) with members of the same sex, although 38% said their close friends are of both sexes. Interviews and journals suggest that students' closest friends are almost always of the same sex.

²² All dormitories at SWU are single sex. Off-campus private dormitories are mostly single sex, but there are some which house both men and women, though not in the same rooms.

walking hand-in-hand or arm-in-arm with their girlfriends. And boys often do the same. These are simple physical expressions of closeness. Most students believe that males and females can be friends,²³ but social circumstances don't provide as much support to those relationships. Platonic friendships between male and female students are not questioned as long as they maintain an appropriate appearance, that is, as long as they refrain from extended or affectionate touching, are polite, and are not alone in private areas.

I found that more older people didn't think that males and females could be close friends. They thought that sexual feelings would always emerge. Girls and boys can't be alone because sexual feelings, and then behavior, are almost inevitable. SWU students are not so absolute in their views. Most (90%) not only believe that males and females can be friends, but that it is a good thing (88%). In modern Isan, male and female students share more experiences and concerns than males and females did in the past. At SWU, they come from similar backgrounds, they are studying in the same classes, and they are seeking many of the same jobs. Despite greater exposure to sexual symbols, in some areas of life, sexuality has become irrelevant (e.g., studying). It is in these areas that males and females find benefits in having friends of both sexes.

Increasing casual contact between males and females challenges the public monitoring of male-female relationships. Romantic or sexual intentions are not clearly differentiated from non-sexual ones. Further, as youth have likely always done, students who are romantically or sexually involved may conceal their relationship by maintaining a platonic presentation in public. Even couples who publicly acknowledge their relationships may offer only vague signs of being a "couple." For a couple and their relationship to be respected, they must maintain a sense of propriety in public.

²³ Nearly all students (90% of respondents) believe that men and women can be friends, while only 2% believe they cannot.

Boyfriends and Girlfriends: *Mii fɛɛn rǎu yang?*²⁴

"Dating" is a fairly new concept in Isan. Some students have adopted the term "date" (*dèet*) because Thai doesn't really have a term to describe the behavior of making an appointment to see someone for romantic-type social purposes. In addition to the word "date," SWU students sometimes also use the term *nát phóp* (arrange a meeting), which normally means to make an appointment, but in the same way can also mean "date." People in Mahasarakham more often use the term *jìip*, which as used by students roughly means "to court" or "to flirt." SWU students see flirting as an action of ambiguous meaning. It may be serious in intention, a kind of love-making (i.e., courting), or it may be simply a testing of the waters (i.e., flirting). Males usually *jìip* females, rather than the other way around, and some are known for seeing how far they can get sexually, without a long-term commitment. This is always a risk, though SWU students who partner with other SWU students have an advantage in that it is a small community and past indiscretions are often learned through the grapevine. Students may also *jìip* in a teasing or joking manner.

In students' grandparents' time and before, men and women married by about age 20. Courtship was carried out through structured behaviors and happened during one's later teenage years just before the expected age of marriage. Courtship was conducted in the girl's house chaperoned by her family or from a distance (through special glances or smiles) in groups and was known as *èew sǎaw*. The most celebrated form of courtship in Isan (and other parts of Thailand, see Donaldson, 1987; Wijeyewardene, 1968) is a humorous exchange of witty repartee between a girl and her suitor in which the girl almost always maintained the upper hand by slinging playful insults at the boy in song or verse (Compton, 1979).²⁵ Clever responses and oral skill by the boy improved his image and attractiveness, and therefore his prestige. As Donaldson

²⁴ "Do you have a *fɛɛn* (yet)?" The meaning of *fɛɛn* is discussed in the next section.

²⁵ This is similar to the exchanges in traditional male-female *mǎo lam* performances, in which the performers engage in flirtatious banter through song (see Compton, 1977, for a description and analysis).

notes in his study of courtship in Chiang Mai, which has a similar tradition, it was a demonstration of ability, particularly among illiterate people. Nowadays with higher education and greater literacy, these skills are no longer as meaningful or prestigious. A university degree or good grades are more impressive status markers.

The age of marriage in Isan is rising as opportunities in work and education become more widely available outside of villages (Van Esterik, 2000, p. 188). Even in the villages, it has gone up as young people delay settling down in favor of pursuing wage labor in Bangkok or other big cities. According to Mills (1999, p. 147-149), 23 is considered rather old to marry by the elder generation in Maharakham villages. SWU students plan to postpone marriage even later, and believe that a good age to marry is between 26 and 30 for a man, and 23 and 26 for a woman. Interestingly, most male students speculate that they'll marry on the lower end of the range, and most female students speculate that they'll marry later than 26, though they have role models if they choose not to marry at all. In the English department at SWU, none of the four female English teachers were married, and two of them were approaching retirement age. A number of students do not intend to marry for a variety of reasons given in the questionnaire:

- "It's a lot of work" (1st year male)
- "If I have a salary, I don't need to" (1st year female)
- "no great burdens, no responsibility...to stay single is better" (1st year female)
- "I don't want to have sex" (3rd year female), "I'm gay" (3rd year male)
- "I think working is better" (3rd year female)
- "living alone is more comfortable" (4th year male)
- "because I'm responsible for caring for my parents, I don't want to marry" (4th year female)

This delay in (or rejection of) marriage results in a number of additional years for courting, during which young people may live away from their families. It is during this time that people date. That is, they pursue courting activities as couples, away from the watch of their families. With the use of motorcycles for transportation, it is virtually impossible for a two people to ride on a motorcycle without touching (Lyttleton, 1999, p. 33). And, depending on how much one likes the person one is riding with, one can sit closer or farther. Motorcycle rides up the long,

muddy roads in and out of villages, or from one village to another give couples ample time to get to know each other. Motorcycle rides also provide students in town opportunities to get close and express affection in public. SWU couples can be seen riding on the main road or around the university, girls almost always on the back of the bikes. The girls' hands are sometimes placed on the boys' thighs, or holding tight around the boys' waists. Dating is courtship to some students and merely a precursor to courtship for others. In general, dating is fun (*sanik*), not serious, though once two people acknowledge that they are interested in each other, it takes on more meaning and a more serious tone. At this point, they *pen fɛɛn kan* (are *fɛɛn* of each other) and are not simply dating. For university students (who are not married), *pen fɛɛn kan* is adequately glossed as "going steady."

However, 75% of students in the questionnaire said that individuals are able to have more than one *fɛɛn* at a time, though 31% disapprove of this. Another 55% responded that whether they approve or not depends on the situation. In keeping with traditional ideas about men and women, more males (88%) than females (67%) said individuals are able to have more than one *fɛɛn* at a time, though both were fairly large numbers. However, being able to do it and having social approval are not the same thing. Though students recognize that people can do this, over one third of students, both males and females, disapprove. For another 45%, their approval depends on the situation.

Further, more males (29%) than females (3%) said that they approved of someone with a *fɛɛn* having sex with another person. When asked specifically about prostitutes, the number of respondents approving jumped to 64% of males and 41% of females.²⁶ These findings were reflected in students' writing and conversations. Overall, many students maintain a consistent

²⁶ It is possible, though not likely, that respondents understood this question literally, that is, to visit prostitutes (without having sex), such as a man might do with a group of friends. However, the common understanding of *pay thiaw sōopheenii* (the phrase used in the question) is to have sex with prostitutes.

value of monogamy and fidelity, but the traditional sexual double standard is very much evident, particularly among males.

The Meaning of FĒEn

FĒEn derives from the English word *fan* (meaning a devotee or admirer). *FĒEn*, despite its platonic English meaning, generally describes a person to whom one is committed romantically, sexually, and/or maritally. *FĒEn* is used to describe a boyfriend, girlfriend, lover, husband, and/or wife. There is no exact Thai equivalent of "girlfriend" or "boyfriend," which even in English are rather vague.²⁷ Further, students do not share the same understanding of *fĒEn*. Some feel it is not an appropriate term for married people to use in reference to each other, though in actuality I often heard it used in that context. When a person refers to his or her spouse as his or her *fĒEn*, it seems to be primarily in one of two somewhat antithetical contexts: a) demonstrating playful adoration such as the kind new lovers feel toward each other, or b) trivializing the marriage, that is, suggesting the relationship is not that significant. There are specific words for husband (*sǎamii* in Central Thai, *phūa* in Isan) and wife (*phanrayaa* in Central Thai, *mia* in Isan) that are more typical. Some feel the use of the term *fĒEn* is only appropriate for those who plan to marry or who are married because it suggests level of seriousness that is not appropriate outside of a marital relationship. Still others use *fĒEn* to describe any admirer, more like the English use.

The most common understanding seems to be that a *fĒEn* is someone who is a close friend, who spends time with you, takes care of you, loves you, helps you, advises you, understands you, and to whom you are sexually or romantically attracted. Thus, the appropriateness of the use of *fĒEn* depends on the context. Students who thought the use of *fĒEn* appropriate only in a married context, also thought serious relationships should lead to marriage:

²⁷ The literal translation of girlfriend is *phūan phūuyǐng*. Back translated, it means "girl friend" (likewise for boyfriend). *Phūan phūuyǐng* normally refers to friends who are girls, rather than girlfriends of a romantic sort. Although I didn't hear it used often, the ambiguity, particularly for those who are familiar with the English "girlfriend," makes it a very good term to use if one wants to maintain a good social appearance.

Fēen, I think, can be many things ... good things ... I don't know if I use it correctly or not ... should help us work, help us with anything ... many things. We should use it after we are married because it is ... more suitable for after marriage I'm trying to get one. [first year, male, arts major]

A few students thought it appropriate only for unmarried couples:

We should use it, I think, before [marriage], because then you care for each other ... if you are married and use it ... you should use it before when you are close and take care of each other. [first year, female, Thai major]

This student's comment has an interesting subtext regarding the meaning of marriage. Some students definitely expressed the idea that the intensity and passion of a relationship wear off after marriage and that courtship is the time for enjoying a relationship. However, overall, more students agreed more with this 21 year-old female English major:

[*Fēen*] means a person who is close to us and loves ... loves us and understand us best of all ... understands and gives help ... you can use it before marriage or after ... can use whether before or after you are married...I have a fan already ... We're very happy. [second year, female, English major]

In sum, most students agree that *fēen* is a person with whom one has a romantic and/or sexual relationship in which there is love, understanding, caring, and some kind of genuine affection. If these components are missing from a relationship, it is not really appropriate for the parties to refer to each other as *fēen*.

"Romance" is an expected component of sexual relationships among SWU students, particularly for females. Several students related stories of girl friends who were duped by unscrupulous boys into engaging in sexual behaviors, typically through false declarations of love. The most obvious exceptions to this observation are relationships with prostitutes.²⁸ But these are rarely accounted for when talking about sexual relationships (*phēetsāmphān*). When students describe their ideal spouses, love is a common quality of the relationship. However, the literature

²⁸ The relationship between a prostitute and client is not expected to be romantic. Both men and women, in fact, value this relationship for its lack of emotional involvement. It is just sex (or for the prostitutes, just a job). Again I reiterate that use of the services of commercial sex workers appears to be quite low among male SWU students and nonexistent among females. According to police, a few female SWU students work as prostitutes (independently rather than at brothels), though I was never able to confirm this.

suggests that love is not always a criterion in choosing a spouse -- "love comes later" as they say. Economic and other practical matters may be given more weight. Historically, this was probably true, though I do believe the case can be made convincingly that romance, that is, passionate love, has a long history in Thailand, in fantasy if not in practice. Regardless, SWU students clearly recognize romance and being in love (*lōngrák*) as a desired part of their sexual relationships. It is an idea that is culturally reinforced in movies, pop songs, teen magazines, and students' own journals. It is an idea that is both modern (as reinforced in pop culture and western culture) and traditional (as recounted in folktales and literature). But the expectation of romantic love and passion in normal, everyday relationships does not seem to be part of tradition, which was more focused on practical concerns such as skills and economic stability.

Activities

Isan culture has a history of limiting the contact between men and women. In the villages, male-female contact is discouraged (Mills, 1999), and even today, men and women infrequently encounter situations in which it is necessary for them to touch each other outside of the family, and very few situations in which men and women find themselves unintentionally alone. In villages, men's and women's tasks were traditionally differentiated in such a way that women were with groups of women and men were with groups of men at most all times outside of the family. This tendency for sexual differentiation in work and play group is found at the university, though much less so than in villages. In classrooms, boys and girls most often sit near their friends and so end up seated in a pattern of small same-sex clusters, particularly among the younger students. Older students display less clustering. There is no separation of boys and girls as groups. Outside of the classroom, the most common sight is same sex groups of 2 or 3 or larger mixed-sex groups. But even a mixed-sex couple would draw little attention for simply walking, eating, or studying together.

Dating/courting/flirting is often done in groups and this is the situation preferred by many SWU students, both because it removes suspicion of inappropriate activities and because it is more fun. Students who *pen fɛɛn kan* travel about town as a couple and with other friends. Because the university situation facilitates the formation of clusters of friends, it is not unusual for a couple to be in their company. There are a variety of activities that provide students opportunities to get to know their romantic interests better.

Few dormitories have cooking facilities so most students eat out. Eating out is also generally more economical for single people in Mahasarakham where a standard plate of food costs 10 *baht* (\$0.40 at that time) and at the campus cafeteria is only 6 or 7 *baht* (\$0.24 - \$0.28). It would be difficult to cook one meal for that, and students do not have refrigerators in which to store food. Eating out is a perfect opportunity to spend time with one's romantic interest because it is very safe -- public, low-risk in terms of gossip -- and enjoyable. Eating is a social activity in Isan and there are plenty of food shops. The nightmarket in Mahasarakham is a bustling place with more than a dozen food vendors cooking made-to-order food for sit down or take out. It is open from about 5pm until after midnight. There are also a number of shops directly behind the university, a short walk or bike ride even for those who live on campus.

Students also regularly visit "Texas" (formally "Texas Country House"), one of two modern (western) bars in Mahasarakham.²⁹ These bars were new, built a few years prior to the research. Modern bars commonly adopt American themes for their décor and activities. Texas is attractive and clean, with a natural wood exterior and a country and western theme inside. The "frontier" style has been adopted by modern Isan folk artists and others wishing to convey a rural identity. There are two large picnic-type wood tables on the front open veranda with benches (see Figure 7.1).

²⁹ The other bar, *Thay Lɯɯ* (the name of an ethnic group, though here with a Central Thai misspelling), is not as popular with students from SWU. It, too, has a rather folksy theme to its décor. There is very little English music at *Thay Lɯɯ*.

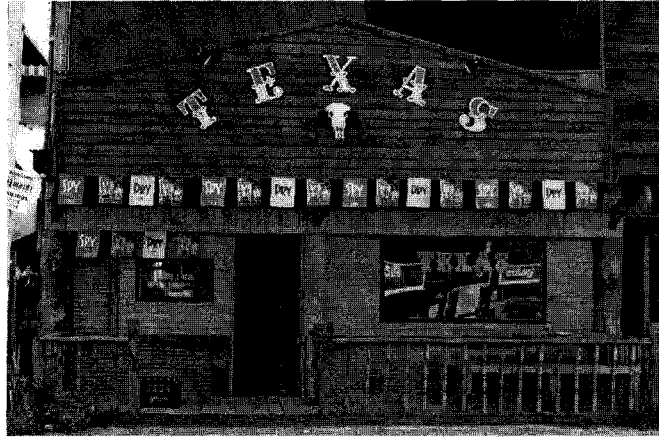


Figure 7.1 Texas, a popular bar on the main road in Mahasarakham

Above the front door is a sign, which says "Texas" and a large water buffalo skull. All writing on the exterior is in English. Through the door one enters a good-sized open room with about 15 tables with chairs. There is a small bar to the immediate left with the kitchen behind it. In the far left corner is a small stage on which local bands play Thai, Isan, and American pop and folk music. The bar owner and band members adore Eric Clapton and above the stage is a poster of him inside a shuttered window frame.³⁰ There are big buffalo horns hanging on one wall and other assorted posters including one of Don Johnson and Mickey Rourke from the 1991 movie "Harley Davidson and the Marlboro Man." A large Converse (sneaker) logo hangs on the back wall of the stage. There are a couple of TVs that play music or other videos when the band is not playing. Texas has a very cozy, and somehow despite the décor, very local feel to it. It is owned and run by young adults for young adults.

³⁰ During the year I spent there, Clapton's "Tears in Heaven" was played at least once each time I was at Texas.

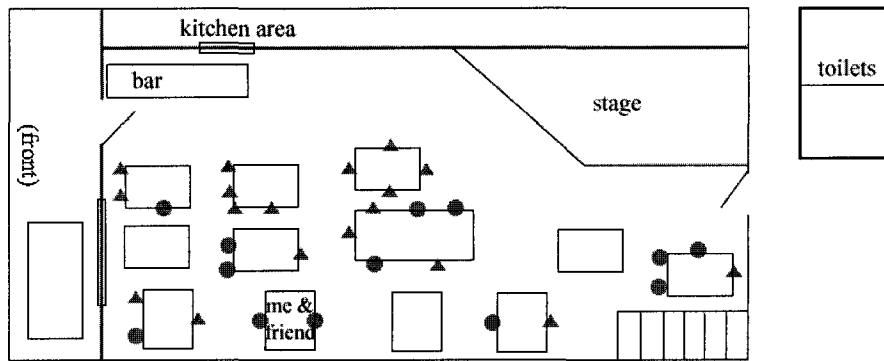


Figure 7.2 Layout of Texas (● = female patron, ▲ = male patron)

The clientele is largely students from the local colleges and SWU and are in their late teens to early 20s.³¹ On a typical night there are about four times more men than women. Figure 7.2 shows the sex of patrons at about 10 pm one Saturday I was there. On this night, there were a few more women than is usual. Women generally come with mixed sex groups, usually their friends or boyfriends. Some women drink whiskey, but most stick to softer drinks, such as beer, orange soda, or Sprite. Some students make a distinction between drinking whiskey and drinking beer. Drinking alcohol is not a particularly feminine activity; and some students consider it unattractive ("not beautiful," "ugly") for them to get drunk, especially in public. I observed few drunk females, especially at Texas. However, it is common to see young men drunk. But even for men, drinking to the point of losing control or passing out is also inappropriate and unattractive. If people "drink a little in order to enjoy together in the party" (2nd year female student) it's not bad. As San (2nd year female) said, "Alcohol is not good, but it's not bad. My friends drink a lot, but they still study." The primary concern is to meet one's responsibilities. If alcohol does not interfere, it is not so serious. Most female students claim their families discourage them from drinking alcohol, but as Nee's (2nd year female) reflection shows, not all families feel the same way:

³¹ There is no legal minimum drinking age in Thailand.

In my family everyone can drink alcohol, except me. Now I don't drink alcohol at all. My father, my brother, and my friend tried to make me drink it, but I don't like it. But I want to know [what it's like] to drink it. But I think I'm too young to drink. So I promise when I'm 20 years old, I will drink whiskey. I will start.

The distinction made between beer and whiskey (the most readily available forms of alcohol in bars) is gendered. Whiskey is stronger and therefore more masculine. Many girls who avoid whiskey drink beer once in a while. Boys drink both beer and whiskey. There is nothing feminine about drinking beer, but there may be elitist associations that make it more acceptable as a drink for females. Whiskey, particularly the Thai brands, is the drink of common men. It is cheap (between 35 and 75 *baht* per bottle) and goes a long way (one bottle is mixed with soda water or coke and can be shared between several friends). It is a relatively cheap high. Men wanting to create an impression of importance and sophistication (e.g., businessmen, those entertaining VIPs) drink expensive imports such as Chivas Regal or Hennessy. Beer falls just to the Chivas side of whiskey. It costs between 50 and 60 *baht* per bottle and because it's not diluted (except by the ice cubes served with all beer in Mahasarakham), one large beer provides only about 4 small servings. The expense and association with foreigners³² give it a somewhat elevated status compared to low-end whiskey. The higher status, foreign/modern image, lower alcohol content, and rumored health benefits make it more attractive to females and when consumed in moderation, do not detract from femininity. This appears not to be conceptually tied so much to sex as to morality. Women are expected to maintain higher moral standards. But this is also a concern of some young men. Kit, a second year male student, wrote in his journal,

I have never drunk [whiskey] and I will never drunk it, too. In the other hands, I sometime drink beer instead. I drink it because I know that it's beneficial. Once, I read a magazine and it told me that if you drink beers suitably (not too much) it will be able to extend your life and make your hair healthy. Whiskey often causes many accidents on the road.

³² Although Singha is a Thai beer, beer itself is an imported concept. The other commonly available brands of beer in 1994 were Kloster (German beer brewed in Thailand) and Carlsberg (Danish beer brewed in Thailand). Since 1994, the beer market has grown which has increased competition.

Kit recognizes the negative consequences of whiskey and wants to avoid them. Drinking is strongly associated with masculinity. Kit may be perceived by his friends as less masculine, but his high moral standards earn him respect in the eyes of many SWU students.

Alcohol is not the only reason students go to Texas. Whether one drinks alcohol or orange Fanta, Texas provides a relaxed setting to get to know and flirt with others. The larger the group, the more obvious fun the patrons generally have. Tables of couples in bars are usually less animated, with less talk, less laughter, and fewer smiles than tables of larger groups. Even students with *fēen* often prefer to go out in groups. This is equally true in food shops.

One other establishment is worth noting because it is one of the more risqué places SWU students frequent. Sparks³³ is the only disco (called *ték*, short for "discoteque") in Mahasarakham. It is located in town, just a bit up the road from the market. Sparks looks like a movie theater from the outside with a lights and "Spark(s)" written in Thai and English (see Figure 7.3).



Figure 7.3 Front entrance to Sparks, the *ték* in Mahasarakham

There is an entrance fee of 50 *baht* and so it is somewhat expensive for local students. One pays the fee and climbs stairs to the second floor where one enters a very large room that has approximately 40 tables with chairs and bar stools. There is a large stage at the far end where bands perform. When bands aren't playing, pulsating Thai pop music is pumped throughout the place. There is a dance floor in front of the stage, but customers also dance by their tables as it

³³ In English it is called "Sparks" but in Thai it is *sabaak*. The "r" is silent and the final "s" is omitted.

can get very crowded in Sparks. Customers are both men and women, but as with the bars, there are more men. Whiskey, beer, and soft drinks are available as are some snacks such as popcorn. Like Texas, people come in small and large groups, but rarely alone. The dim lighting and large crowd allow for greater anonymity than other bars. A police officer confirmed that there are a number of prostitutes at Sparks and that he believes some are students, possibly from SWU.³⁴

Sparks attracts a much seedier element than does Texas. One of my research assistants was sitting outside the club waiting for a friend one night when a man approached her and gave her information to pass on to her friends about where they can get abortions more cheaply than at the hospital.³⁵ This element of danger and the unknown that is associated with Sparks is part of its attraction to students. They do not necessarily want to participate in the socially unacceptable behaviors that go on there, but they are curious about them.

Getting to and from the activities is as much a part of modern courtship as the activities themselves. As mentioned earlier, transportation on motorcycles provides couples a situation in which to engage in courting (flirting) behavior. About half the students own a motorcycle. This is also a fairly "safe" way to test the feelings of another person. When a man or woman offers another a ride, the invitee can decline if s/he doesn't wish to encourage the inviter in his or her pursuit. Alternatively, if the invitee wishes to express interest, s/he may accept the ride and encourage or discourage further interest through body posture and interaction on the vehicle. Those who don't have motorcycles have bicycles, and a very few have cars. Students give each other rides on their bicycles, but it is not as conducive to physical flirtation as is riding on a motorcycle.

³⁴ The police officer accompanied me to Sparks (along with my housemate) the first time I went there. To show me the prostitutes, he had one brought to our table. I chatted with her but did not talk to her about her profession due to the awkward situation.

³⁵ It was in another district in Mahasarakham province.

Sexual Behaviors

Casual male-female contact is no longer considered a violation of propriety. The students giggle and blush when asked to hold hands (e.g., as when playing a game or shaking hands for an English class lesson on Greeting) or engage in other such close contact, but usually only if they don't already know each other. Laughter in such situations draws attention to the questionable behavior and turns it into play so that it is not regarded as sexually meaningful. In class, behaviors that breach traditional social etiquette elicit a "woooOOOOooo" from students, a playful recognition that the action is on the risqué side.

Students are good-humored about love and sex, but are non-demonstrative in public. I never observed a couple kissing in public, but my housemate did. Outside the bathrooms at the *Thay Luu* bar, a student couple (not from SWU) was making out against the wall. In fact, it was so shocking to my housemate, who had gone back to use the bathroom, that she literally ran out to tell me. When I went back, they were no longer kissing, but were continuing to hang on each other in a way that is not normally seen in Mahasarakham.

Rules of male-female behavior in bars are slightly looser than rules in the general public, perhaps as consequence the alcohol more than any real adjustment of values. It was not uncommon to see a young woman with her hand on a boyfriend's thigh or back. Other subtle signs of romantic or sexual interest include sitting close and flirtatious eye contact, much of which could be seen in Texas, *Thay Luu*, and Sparks. Other favorite hangouts include, as mentioned earlier, the nightmarket, food shops, Kaeng Loeng Chan reservoir (see Figure 7.4), various spots around campus, and outside of dormitories.



Figure 7.4 A student couple relaxing at Kaeng Loeng Chan reservoir

It is not possible to know with certainty what sexual behaviors students practice in private. The behaviors cannot be observed and it would be naive to believe that students answered all the questions on the survey truthfully or that the responses are representative of the SWU student population. As was described in the section on the value of social harmony, "truth" isn't particularly important in Mahasarakham or Thailand. It is more important to avoid conflict and keep relationships smooth. There is, therefore, little cultural incentive for the students to respond "truthfully" to surveys. Lyttleton (1999) recalls a group of women laughing about the questionnaires they completed for a group of public health workers about sex. "Some apparently refused to answer, while some answered with the first figure that came into their heads. However, others did give the questions consideration The picture of village women's sexuality that the university students left with was, no doubt, partial" (p. 29). In this study, I can only infer from the bigger picture created by the data what is going on.

The number of sexually active SWU students is unknown and undetermined by this study. Ms. Chawraphan of the Public Health Department speculated that for male and female students, it's about 50% and 10%, respectively. However, only 5% of the female respondents to the survey said they have had sex or would have sex at that time. I strongly suspect that sexually experienced females self-selected out of the survey or simply wrote otherwise. Other evidence

(the experiences and opinions of teachers, police, doctors, nurses, and students) suggests that female SWU students are more sexually active than does the survey. Nearly all of this is anecdotal. Perhaps more important than whether students have actually had sex (one time? ten times? one hundred times?) is what they think about university students being sexually active. Almost half the female respondents and nearly one third of the male respondents said they approve of premarital sex if the couple plans to marry.³⁶ Even more males and only slightly fewer females approve of premarital sex if both parties are consenting. That more males approve of consenting adults than engaged adults appears to be an anomaly, or it may be that respondents considered the possibility that a man could force a woman to whom he is engaged to have sex. Whether students are sexually active or not, it is noteworthy that a significant number find it acceptable, given the right circumstances. In fact, a small number of female students confessed to me that they would sleep with a boyfriend if they had one and were serious about their relationship.

A small number of students choose to live with their *fɛɛn*.³⁷ Couples living together keep their situations rather quiet and prefer that family and teachers not know; so exactly who is living like this isn't obvious. As described by students, the boy often simply stays with the girl in her dorm room, though it also happens the other way around. Couples don't usually rent a room or apartment together. Many students know of someone who is living with a *fɛɛn*. This probably would not cause much fuss were the lovers not students. In the old days, moving in together was enough to establish a marriage. Even today, many couples choose not to register their marriages, though registration is required to render a marriage legal. If a couple publicly lives like a married couple, they are generally considered married. Because students do it privately, it is not recognized even by those who know, as a marriage equivalent. Further, it was explained to me by

³⁶ Xenos et al. (1993) found in their national survey of rural men, that they highly approve of premarital sex if the couple plans to marry, while females were less accepting.

³⁷ Living together is usually referred to as *yùu dūay kan* or *yùu kin kan*. Xenos, Pitaktepsombat, & Sittitrai (1993) found that low numbers of rural Thai young men approve of couples living together.

university instructors that it is inappropriate and a violation of university rules for undergraduate students to be married.

Though this study was unable to determine to what extent students are sexually active, it does shed some light on their attitudes towards different sexual behaviors (see Appendix N). Respondents to the questionnaire were for the most part opposed to non-married couples engaging in any kind of intimate contact, even mouth-to-mouth kissing. For example, only 18% of males and 5% of females approved of kissing deeply (*jùup bèep diuddiium*). Males gave couples greater latitude than did females. No females approved of the touching of genitals or breasts while a few males did. Students find many more behaviors acceptable between couples who are engaged or married. Approximately half of respondents approve of touching genitals and breasts if the couple is engaged. And one-fifth (27% of males, 16% of females) even approve of anal sex (*rúam phêet thaang thawaan nàk*) for these couples. This is significant because anal sex was described as abnormal or unnatural by 92% of respondent -- something they think people don't do, though not necessarily something people shouldn't do. Sado-masochism was not included in the questionnaire and was mentioned by only a few students during the research. Only about a quarter of the respondents said that cunnilingus and fellatio are abnormal.³⁸ Oral sex³⁹ is common in Thai pornographic movies and magazines, though it is possible these reflect viewers' fantasy rather than actual practice. Oral sex poses an interesting hypothetical dilemma in that women's vaginal secretions were traditionally believed to have a negating effect on men's power/potency. Further, as the highest point on the body, the head is the body part of greatest

³⁸ The wording of the three questions from which this information comes was problematic. Part 3, question 3 asked, "Which behaviors are abnormal or unnatural?" There is a distinction between *abnormal* and *unnatural*. Abnormal could be taken as "atypical," that is, most people don't do it. That is not the same as being unnatural which suggests a violation of nature. It also does not necessarily mean that students disapprove of it. However, taken in combination and based on other data collected, the responses to these questions reflect normative social ideas, though not necessarily knowledge of actual behaviors.

³⁹ The survey used the term oral sex transliterated into Thai. My research assistants believed this would be most familiar to most students.

respect; and as part of the lower body, the genitals have much lower status.⁴⁰ Bringing the two in contact, particularly during cunnilingus, would seem to violate these social rules. But no male ever mentioned this as a concern and a few who talked about it expressed enthusiasm about it.

Anal sex carries a stigma that oral sex does not based on two factors: a) anal sex is associated with *kεε* and *kàthæy*, and b) anal sex is known to be riskier for transmission of AIDS than is oral or vaginal sex. However, because sexual identity is only minimally tied to sexual behavior, the first factor is less of a consideration than it might be in a culture in which sexual identity is largely defined by sexual behavior. Additionally, I would suggest that when students describe anal sex as abnormal, it is an appropriate social response and accurately describes society's view of it. However, this does not mean they disapprove of it or would not do it themselves. Even students who have tried anal sex are not likely to respond in a positive way. They aren't necessarily lying or misleading, but are behaving as good Isaners, giving socially appropriate answers.⁴¹ This study is not, therefore, able to say whether students actually have or have not had anal sex or oral sex, but it does reveal the social attitudes towards them. Further, anal sex is reportedly a more common male-male behavior than male-female behavior. Relatively few students who responded to the survey were gay (probably only 5) or lesbian (maybe 1). However, in other venues, gay males reported that many males (gay and sometimes straight) have engaged in anal sex on at least one occasion. This is another possibility -- that students dismiss singular or infrequent experiences entirely when reporting on behavior.

Masturbation (self-stimulation) is believed by most students (70% of respondents) to be usual behavior. Male students clearly have more experience with this sexual activity, and most

⁴⁰ In daily life, Thais are highly conscious of the position of the head. Adults touch each others heads only in very close relationships or in required contexts (e.g., at a hair salon). One also never steps over another since that would place one's feet above the other's higher body parts. Further, when passing a seated person of higher status, one normally stoops to lower one's head out of respect for the seated person.

⁴¹ Unreliable information obtained from interviews and survey is not unique to this study or this topic. It is, however, likely that the more sensitive (i.e., culturally inappropriate) the topic, the more likely the informants' information will be unreliable, particularly when the information cannot be verified through observation or conversations with others.

masturbate at least a few times a month. Far fewer female students reported self-stimulation (73% responded that they never do it). There was no indication that this lower female rate of behavior was due to any negative connotation in particular: Students do not speak of masturbation as something shameful, sinful, or abnormal. However, male masturbation is a more talked about topic; boys joke about it with their friends. There is some common social knowledge about male masturbation -- that it is done and how it's done (the euphemism "fly a kite" suggests the movement). Females do not have much exposure to information about female masturbation (often euphemistically referred to as "gathering flowers" or "going fishing"). I never heard girls mention it unless specifically asked. This lack of information may fail to stimulate curiosity and sexual self-exploration. Males believe people masturbate to relieve stress (81%) and because it feels good (33%). Females too believe it relieves stress (69%), but also that it is instinctual (33%). This would further explain why fewer females masturbate. The male sex drive is believed to be stronger, thus the instinct to satisfy one's sexual urges on one's own would be stronger in males.

Sexual behavior still seems to be very much a male domain. Though students focus on female sexuality (its expression rather than repression) more than previous generations, their knowledge, understanding, and support of it are much less than that of male sexuality. One sexual realm in which women have had control is birth control. Among married people, contraceptives, because most are used by women, are a women's domain. The most popular forms are tubal resection, IUD, daily pill, Norplant, injection, and vasectomy. Vasectomies are being promoted by the government because they are easier and cheaper than tubal resection, but men worry that the operation will affect their sexual ability. There are no educational programs about birth control for students. Family planning in Thailand is concerned exclusively with families. Also, the dynamics surrounding the use of birth control by students are different than for married people. Students do not view contraception as a woman's domain. They overwhelmingly think

that both parties should be responsible or that it depends on the situation. Pharmacists report that the methods most purchased by students are (a) condoms, (b) daily oral contraceptives, and (c) 1-hour pills. They would, of course, not be able to comment on use of withdrawal as a form of birth control; this is the third most popular method students would choose for themselves (preceded by condoms and daily oral contraceptives). Birth control is not an embarrassing topic because "it's a normal topic for humans so we can protect and plan our lives" (1st year female). But their knowledge of it is insufficient to allow them to protect themselves against pregnancy. This is an area of concern. Although students do not appear to be highly sexually active, many are willing to in the right circumstances. So although the student population is not a sexually active one, it has the potential to be, especially in the context of serious relationships.

Mate Selection

Talking about romantic partnerships is difficult, not the least because relationships are so complex and fluid. Students distinguish between dating, flirting, and courting, but a relationship can take on a new status without a clear transition, or even agreement by both parties. Students date to find friends, for fun, to relax, to have new experiences, and to solve problems. But these relationships are usually treated more as friendships, albeit sometimes special friendships. Most students (92% of respondents to the survey) claim they date. About half have *fēen*. Choosing a marriage partner is much more serious. There is a distinction made between the people students date and those they want to marry. The people students choose to date are not all potential marriage material. As a fourth year male said, "the people you date are for fun; the person you marry must have more responsibility than the people you date." Others seem to agree:

"... you are trying people when you date; the person you marry is forever." (1st year male)

"...the person I marry must be a leader, an adult. I still have a lot to learn about the opposite sex." (1st year female)

"The people you date are not as sincere. The people you date are normal friends." (2nd year male)

"I usually date friends. I don't want to marry them. I am not able to have sex with them." (3rd year male)

"...for fun...for love...[the people you date are] more like friends" (3rd year female)

However, the qualities students look for in boyfriends and girlfriends are similar to the qualities they would look for in a husband or wife. Some student relationships move from dating to courting. Several of my own students later married classmates. Their relationships began as classmates, moved into friendships, then flirting/dating, and ultimately marriage, for many just a year or two after graduation. Few students plan on marrying this early. Students generally think it is best for females to marry in their mid to late 20s and males to marry in their late 20s to early 30s.

Desirable/Undesirable Qualities

The qualities students value in a potential mate show definite differences in ideals for men and women as was discussed in "Views of Husbands, Wives, Mothers, and Fathers." Students also made a distinction between the people they *dèet* (see "Boyfriends and Girlfriends") versus those they might marry. However, when English majors were asked about their ideal "girlfriend" or "boyfriend," the qualities they described were very similar to those of ideal wives and husbands. It seems the word *dèet* connotes a non-serious situation, whereas at least in some instances, using the English "boyfriend" or "girlfriend" indicates something more akin to a long-term partnership. Even *phâan chaay* and *phâan ying* (literally boy friend and girl friend) seem to evoke ideals very similar to ideal husbands and wives.

Beauty is frequently mentioned in Thai literature about desirable qualities, especially for women. It is emphasized less in Isan literature, but still appears with great frequency. Theoretically, beauty is a product of one's merit: One who is born with natural beauty earned it in past lives; one who is born without, earned that, too. But nowadays one's beauty can be improved through various cosmetics which in some ways has raised the expectation for all, and in other ways has evened the playing field. Regardless, beauty remains to some degree a measure of one's

moral worth (Van Esterik, p. 105). Radiant beauty is evidence of morality in women, and men to a lesser extent.

While all students admire a beautiful or handsome person, there is an element of mistrust, too. If a lover is too beautiful or handsome, s/he will be appealing to other people and may not be loyal. As Bua (2nd year female) wrote,

Many times I have a crush on a handsome boy. I always think I don't want to marry a handsome boy because I think a handsome boy doesn't honest with his girlfriend. So if I have a boyfriend, my boyfriend maybe isn't handsome, but he isn't a dandy person...He is a responsible, kind person and loves only me.

Although boys put greater emphasis on appearance in their writing and in speech, and girls downplayed the significance of appearance, both males and females ranked it at about mid-level in the survey.⁴² The most important qualities were almost the same for males and females, though in slightly different order (see Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 Important characteristics in a girlfriend/boyfriend, ranked in order of importance (1 = most important; see Appendix J for the entire question)

<u>important to males</u>	<u>important to females</u>
1. good person	1. good person
2. responsible	2. responsible
3. loyal / fun (tied)	3. loyal
4.	4. takes care of me
5. takes care of me / kind (tied)	5. loves me / kind
6.	6.
7. loves me	7. intelligent
8. good body	8. fun
9. virgin	9. good body
10. intelligent	10. doesn't drink
11. pretty	11. doesn't smoke
12. good looking	12. good job
13. good dresser / doesn't drink (tied)	13. good looking
14.	14. good dresser
15. doesn't smoke	15. virgin
16. same hobbies	16. rich
17. good job	17. same hobbies
18. rich	18. not poor
19. hard working	19. hard working
20. same nationality	20. same nationality
21. not poor	21. good reputation
22. good reputation	22. pretty

⁴² *Sūay* is used much like "pretty" is in English. One doesn't normally describe men as *sūay* which explains why females ranked it last. Both people and things can be *sūay*.

After observing couples together, I realized that students have very different standards of beauty. As mentioned earlier, beauty, particularly women's beauty, has long been of great importance in elite, Central Thai culture (see Van Esterik, 2000, p. 129-161, for an analysis of the connection between gender, beauty, and the national agenda). The current national standard of beauty (described by Van Esterik as the "Miss Universe standard"), perpetuated in the popular media and through beauty contests, is "shoulders broader than hips, a long neck, straight rounded arms, legs in proportion to hips, straight feet, hair suited to face, long fingers, clean nails, straight back, and breasts not too large or too small ... twenty years old, at least 160 cm. tall, and near the golden proportions 33-22-35 inches" (Van Esterik, p. 142). Light skin and good teeth are also required. Female students take this standard to heart in evaluating themselves. However, many very average-looking girls are apparently pretty in their boyfriends' eyes. As the ranking in Table 7.1 indicates, beauty is only moderately important.

Responsibility is one quality that is emphasized much more when discussing spouses than when discussing boyfriends, girlfriends, or dates. In interviews and conversations, it was mentioned more frequently in relation to men, though males and females ranked it equally high in the questionnaire. On average it was ranked number two (see Table 7.1) by males to describe ideal girlfriends, but only one student mentioned it in a similar open-ended question.⁴³ The stereotypes of men and women are that men tend to be irresponsible, and women are responsible. So, although being responsible is an important quality in a girlfriend for male students, they don't often bring it up in conversation because it is, to some degree, assumed to be true. However, when prompted, male students confirmed that it is important.

Poor is not a desirable quality, but since most people in Isan are poor, it is a relative quality. A bumper sticker on an Udon-Ubon bus read, "*Mia tǐng phrǎ jon*" (My wife ran away because I'm poor). There is a general desire among students to improve their economic situations.

⁴³ Part 1, Question 38, A good girl friend has what personality, habits, and duties?

This is a reasonable expectation and students suggest that economic situation figures prominently in their mate selections. Security and stability are important, not great wealth. No one was willing to marry someone who was jobless. Economic status, or economic potential, are greater for mate selection than for date selection.

According to the survey responses, age is important. Women expect to marry a man who is older, and men expect to marry a woman who is younger. This reproduces the elder-younger sibling structure (*phii-nóong*) with the husband as the elder, and is the social preference in Mahasarakham and throughout Thailand. The elder is expected to look after and protect the younger, as the husband is expected to look after and care for his wife and family. The relative age preference fits with other values. Those who go against this preference are not criticized though an inversion of relative ages of a man and woman will arouse some humorous comments. I attended the wedding of a teacher who married a man 10 years her junior -- very unusual. They are both very attractive, have similar educational and career backgrounds (he is also a teacher), and outside of their relative ages, seemed a highly appropriate match. At the wedding I was surprised at how few comments I heard about their ages -- only one or two mild teases. More common are marriages between people of the same age. This situation, too, fails to conform to the social preference, but among university students occurs with some regularity since students become close to their classmates. Because husbands are the leaders in a family and because age is important in determining status, questions of status are simplified if the leader is also the elder. It is very tidy, clear, and appropriate that the husband be older. To be otherwise is not wrong or unheard of; it just does not fit as neatly into the existing social structure.

In general, the qualities one looks for in a boyfriend or girlfriend or spouse are the qualities that make a person better all around. People want to be with the best person they can, weighing all criteria and weighting those which are more important. Students' criteria sometimes differ from their parents' criteria.

Role of the Family

Few Isaners practice arranged marriages, and probably never did, at least formally. But families were traditionally responsible for negotiating brideprice and marriage. However, children have always had significant influence over their parents' negotiations since they had the option to elope should their parents not go along with their choice of mate. These days, children choose their own partners with varying degrees of parental intervention. Parental approval of a mate is more important for girls than boys. Only 12% of boys would not marry someone their parents didn't approve of. The other 88% are split between marrying them anyway and not being sure. One quarter of girls would not marry someone of whom their parents did not approve, one quarter would, and 50% are not sure. Although parental involvement in mate selection continues to be important, historically in Isan there have always been acceptable ways for a couple to marry without parental consent. The most common was to elope: A man came to his beloved's house in the middle of the night, got her, and they left. Upon their return, they would ask forgiveness from the girl's parents, pay a brideprice and carry on normally. Also, as was described earlier, a man could simply sneak in and spend the night in the woman's bed, forcing a marriage. Most students who want to marry also want a marriage ceremony and hope very much for the approval of their parents. Brideprice in Isan is called *khâa sĭnsòət*. *Khâa sĭnsòət* is also sometimes referred to in Thai as *khâa nom* or *khâa nâam nom*, and means the price of the mother's milk. It is very much perceived as paying the parents (especially the mother) for all the care given to their child. Throughout Thailand brideprice is still given in various forms. The groom's family is expected to pay for the wedding, which nowadays is sometimes a large and expensive affair. Sometimes the groom's family gives money or goods directly to the couple rather than to the bride's family since many couples nowadays take up neolocal residence away from the bride's family, though they are commonly married in the bride's village or town and stay there for a few days.

It is understandable that girls would be more concerned about their parents' approval of their betrothed since daughters typically stay to care for aging parents, the youngest remaining permanently. The actual number of girls who fulfill this obligation is fewer than in the past. SWU produces many teachers who are assigned to schools away from their family homes. Physical obligations of care may convert to financial if circumstances require it. In the modern cash economy, money is more important than labor to the elderly.

Parental approval of a spouse, though desired, is no longer as important as it once was. The transformation of the economy and greater exposure to foreign practices has transformed the interests and to some degree values of parents and children in the childrens' choice of spouse. Parents will still be dependent on children for assistance, primarily financially. Children, however, are less dependent on their parents as they gain marketable skills and earning potential through their education. Most will live and work away from their parents, so while parental approval is desired, it is not necessary to live a happy life.

This chapter has shown that the meanings students attach to sexuality are expressed and negotiated in the context of social relationships, most significantly those with family, friends, and romantic partners. Though students talk about radical changes in the behavior and ideas of young people relating to sexuality, the ethnographic evidence shows that SWU students retain many traditional ideas about sex and sexuality.

Relationships within the family have not so much changed as they have adjusted to new social and economic contexts. Children are still very much obligated to their parents, though available avenues of repayment of the obligation have changed. Financial support is increasingly given rather than moral (merit) or physical (labor) support. Students remain highly committed to and involved in their families' well being.

Through friendships at the university, students regain some of the help and care they lose when they move away from their families. Teachers also serve as parental substitutes, but close

friends provide the intimacy and understanding of the family. Groups of friends are little social groups and through them sexual identities are socially reinforced.

Romantic attachments, though potentially distracting for students, are nonetheless a part of student life. Students who *dèet* usually do so in groups. These relationships are more like friendships though they can grow more serious. This is one of the major departures from past cultural practice. Males and females have much closer platonic relationships now than in the past. They do not perceive a constant threat of sexual impropriety and believe they learn a lot from mixed-sex friendships. Students who are involved with a single person in a rather serious or intense way usually refer to themselves as *fèen*. These are committed relationships, which are expected or hoped to lead to marriage. Even within these more serious relationships, incidences of sexual behavior appear to be low though they are more permissible as long as they are kept private.

The desirable qualities of boyfriends and girlfriends are very similar to the desirable qualities of husbands and wives. These are very much in keeping with a traditional ideology in which men and women had complementary roles in the home and village. The family has had to relinquish some control over students' sexuality and thus choices of spouse. Geographical distance, potential economic independence, and an increased emphasis on marrying for love have resulted in a greater desire for personal choice of mates. However, students' commitment to their families continues to ensure that parents will be taken care of in their older years, despite the changing socio-economic context.

CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSION

Sex is so fundamental to the Western world view, we sometimes fail to consider other interpretations, especially when the concepts seem so similar. This becomes a much more difficult task for U.S. anthropologists as globalization brings to the world Western images and ideas about sex, some of which are rejected, others of which are integrated into local cultures. But even when integrated, the concepts take on new meanings. How they are integrated and what they mean in new cultural contexts depends on how they are married with preexisting and other incoming concepts. Sex is a challenging aspect of a culture to study because it is broad, pervasive, and so seemingly "natural." These qualities, which render it challenging, also make it vitally important to understand if one want to understand much about a culture at all.

The achievement of this study is, I believe, its successful articulation of an extremely broad and culturally integrated concept, *phêet* (sex) in Thailand. Rather than distracting the reader with overly simplified "answers" to the question What is *phêet*?, it arms the reader with a variety of information to allow the reader to begin to understand *phêet*, at least from the social and cultural position of university students in Mahasarakham, in different contexts. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, this study revealed what students in Mahasarakham mean when they talk about *phêet* and how they chop the concept up into meaningful categories, meanings that emerge in relation to other concepts.

Isan students' understandings of and relationships to concepts associated with sex likely differ from students at, for example, Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok or Chiang Mai University in the North. Isan students speak a different language, have their own festivals, eat different foods, look different, face different kinds of stereotypes and discrimination, have grown up among a people culturally and historically connected to both the Lao and Siamese, and are oriented differently to the dominant central region. It cannot be assumed that their world is sexed in the same way as all Thais; research must be done to investigate the similarities and differences.

This is a first step for sorting out the meanings of sex in Northeast Thailand, and a step towards future regional comparisons in Thailand as a whole.

SWU students are in a transitional phase of their lives, in the process of taking on the responsibilities of adults. Male and female students experience life differently. Not only do they have different interests and face different situations, but the expectations placed upon them differ. Sex-related expectations are not limited to families, where much socialization takes place, but come from many different sources, including the local social environment, the university, Bangkok, which dominates Thailand's economic, political, and cultural discourse, and abroad. These sources are sometimes in agreement and other times in conflict. It is in these loci of tension that students have the most room to negotiate their own (individual) meanings, and here where at a societal level much culture change takes place. To get at the meanings of *phêet*, this study explored different aspects to the concept as well as related concepts that contribute to an understanding of it, particularly those that appear to be incongruous.

The Complexity of the Cultural Construct *Phêet*

The concept *phêet*, though easily defined in a Thai-English dictionary ("kind, sex, gender in grammar," Sethaputra, 1994) is much more complex in social practice. It refers to sexual behavior, two categories of humans (*phêetyǐng*, female sex, and *phêetchaay*, male sex), and less directly to social categories. The more commonly used sex-related categories are *phûuyǐng* (girl/woman) and *phûuchaay* (boy/man). In most instances, *phûuyǐng* and *phûuchaay* mirror the biological categories *phêetyǐng* and *phêetchaay*, but there is some flexibility. A person may be *phêetchaay* and *phûuyǐng*, that is, biologically a male, but socially a girl/woman. Many *kàthœy* are like this. Likewise, a person may also conceptually be a *phêetyǐng* and a *phûuchaay*.

It has been shown that SWU university students recognize and distinguish between *sex* (categories sorting physical bodies) and *gender* (categories sorting social roles) both conceptually and linguistically. They do not, however, have words that correspond to the terms *sex* and *gender*.

This caused some difficulty for this researcher: How to get students to talk about the social aspects of sex without redefining *phêet* for them? Usually, I resorted to explanations that in essence did define the concept (e.g., What about being a man and being a woman? How do these relate to *phêet*?). However, students seemed comfortable talking about gender, even when I'd said I was interested in learning about the topic of *phêet*. Most Isaners' biological and social sex are the same, and this is considered the preferred situation, the norm, so *phêet* invokes both meanings, indirectly if not directly.

Because of the preference for *phêetying* (females) being *phûuying* (girls/women) and *phêetchaay* (males) being *phûuychaay* (boys/men), intermediate categories (*kàthæy*, *kee*, and *thøøm-dii*) are socially criticized, even though socially recognized. *Kàthæy*, *kee*, and *thøøm-dii* are most criticized when they most stand out and challenge the existing social order, that is, cause social disharmony. The stereotype of *kàthæy* as being loud, overtly sexual, and comedic, with sexy, modern clothes, lots of makeup, and coiffed hair is an example of the kind of intersexed person who does not fit into the existing social order. Neither men nor women should act like this in social settings. *Kàthæy*, whether males or females, can fit in if they adopt either the normal social roles of men or women. Indeed, male *kàthæy*, were often described as excelling at women's activities such as cooking, sewing, and designing. Acceptance of *kàthæy* who fully adopt an existing social role does not require community members to make adjustments to their social order.¹ Since *kàthæy* cannot reproduce, the only relevance of their biological makeup is in relation to sexual behavior, a private matter. Surely community members may discuss or joke about it, but that is probably true for any scenario people see as unusual or interesting.

Additionally, some students assume that in sexual intercourse (with men), the male *kàthæy* has

¹ The *thøøm-dii* relationship may also be acceptable if each party fully adopts a different social role (i.e., one the man's role, one the women's). A *thøøm-dii* relationship, played out socially as a man and woman, may do this. I am unable to do more than speculate since I did not speak to or know of any *thøøm-dii* in Mahasarakham.

the receptive role, mirroring the copulatory role of a woman, further reinforcing the *kàthæy*'s social status as a woman.

Kee and *thøøm-dii* find less social acceptance than do *kàthæy*, because it is difficult for them to both be "out" and fit into the social order. Many, even some SWU students, consider *kee* and *thøøm-dii* mentally defective. Jackson (1999) writes,

Based on a masculine-feminine binarism, the Thai sex/gender order is maintained so long as a male upholds his status through the performance of masculinity, or conversely, if he abandons his masculinity and assumes the feminized status of *kathoey*. (p. 239)

Kee and *thøøm-dii* are sexually ambiguous in terms of social roles, not in terms of biological or erotic sex as in the US. Sexual behavior, because it is private and does not define sexual identity or preference, is secondary to social performance. Adherence to existing public social roles, some of which can be quite flexible, is much more important. The inability to resolve the daily life practices of *kee* and *thøøm-dii* with existing social categories creates confusion and social conflict. Closeted *kee* and *thøøm-dii* may be able to maintain the appearance of "real men" (*phûuchaay thêe*, males who adopt men's social roles) and "real women" (*phûuyǐng thêe*, women who adopt women's social roles), and thus reduce social conflict and hostility, by marrying and carrying on same-sex relationships outside of their marriage. Others find less clandestine ways to accommodate their relationships. *Kee* and *thøøm-dii* encounter criticism when they *sadæeng øøk*, that is, publicly show that they are *kee* or *thøøm-dii*. Jackson (1999) describes this as "an unspoken but almost universally understood ethic of 'don't ask, don't tell'...an open secret amongst family, work colleagues, and heterosexual friends" (pp. 237-238). As long as they adopt normative gender roles, social conflict is minimized.

Maintaining social harmony includes maintaining social order. So examining those who fall in between or outside "normal" categories can help to clarify what exactly the social order is. This is why, although relatively few students are *kathoey*, *kee*, or *thøøm-dii*, I spend a great deal of time discussing them. Sometimes the rules become clearer when they are broken. Although

SWU students and the SWU community in general believe they are more tolerant and understanding of *kee* (and *thøøm-dii*) than less educated, less cosmopolitan people, there is still a marked disapproval expressed for *kee*, which is conveyed in indirect comments (e.g., putdowns of men who are not acting masculine enough by suggesting they may be "*kee*"). And though I did not knowingly speak to any *thøøm-dii*, they were mentioned primarily in negative contexts (e.g., the student screaming at her alleged lover's door in a jealous rage).

Changes in the social structure and economy have increased opportunities for *kee* and *thøøm-dii* to live comfortably without having to adopt traditional social roles. More highly educated *kee* and *thøøm-dii* are able to live self-sufficiently without a traditional spouse, because their livelihood depends on cash, not traditional cooperative labor. With good, stable jobs, they can also continue to take care of their parents, providing them with the cash necessary to survive in modern society (more pertinent to women than men). Further, the wealth and status that comes with a professional job, elevates the individual, regardless of sexual identity, to a higher status. I heard many times from many different people that having money helps people forgive one's transgressions. As Nuu, a *kathøey*, explained, if you have money, people will say that whatever you do is good. These same changes in the social organization and economy have also increased opportunities for "real" men and women to redefine their traditional roles. Economic self-sufficiency allows one to meet one's family and social obligations and become an adult, without the experience of marriage, children, remaining with one's parents, or ordination, though of course these things are still desired by many students. Although marriage is still considered by most to enrich and complete life,² there is much less pressure to marry imposed on individuals who are self-sufficient, particularly if they are also able to contribute to their parents' well-being.

² Students frequently use the term *sømbuun* to describe their hope for married life. *Sømbuun* means fully supplied, replete, complete, healthy, perfect, abundant, rich, fertile (Haas, 1964, p. 522; Sethaputra, 1994, p. 883). Marriage is thought to make life richer and more complete, largely through parenthood. This notion is carried to some degree toward other species. Dogs and cats are often not spayed or neutered until after having at least one litter (or never at all) because some feel that to fix them would deny them a natural part of their life's fulfillment.

If they are able to care for their parents, regardless of their marital status, they are fulfilling a primary obligation of children. Both male and female students have more options for fulfilling their roles as men and women.

Comparing Men and Women

This brings me back to the primary categories of male and female and their respective social forms, men and women. Students maintain some very strong ideas about differences between men and women. Some of these differences serve to exaggerate male and female bodily differences (further suggesting the conceptual interrelatedness of sex and gender).

Physically, men are stronger and harder. Women are weaker and softer. Playing up these characteristics has the effect of making one more feminine or masculine, differences that are reinforced by text and images in magazines (Costa & Matzner, 2002), movies, and on television (Hesse-Swain, 1992). Women's bodies are maintained in part by refraining from hard, physical work. Traditionally, women were and continue to be assigned tasks that, though sometimes backbreaking (e.g., transplanting and harvesting rice), do not so much require muscular strength as stamina. Men's bodies are maintained and enhanced (in terms of masculinity) by engaging in physical activity in both work and recreation. Whether socially- or self-imposed, these socially rewarded behaviors serves to reinforce beliefs about other differences between men and women.

It should be noted that the difference between men's and women's bodies do not appear to indicate asymmetric status. If anything, students spoke more highly of women's bodies. Women's bodies are seen as more attractive, cleaner, and more fragrant than male bodies. Neither the male nor female body is superior -- they are simply different, serving different purposes.

Although both male and female students concurred that there is no overall intellectual difference between men and women, they feel very strongly about certain qualities associated with one or the other sex. These beliefs have consequences on the kind of activities and jobs appropriate for each sex. Students' understandings of how men and women (or tend to be)

supports the existing division of labor. For example, women are characterized as having more self-control (and display this in their behaviors) but are also believed to be naturally more *jayòøn*, or impressionable and easily influenced. Because women are *jayòøn*, they are not good decision-makers and require protection and leadership. This is a common explanation for why there are few top level women politicians, bus and taxi drivers, and doctors.³ Women's *jayòøn* qualities make them unsuitable for these occupations that require making quick decisions and taking charge; men are not so *jayòøn* and so are more suitable leaders, both in the family and in society.

The Social Context and Meanings of Sexual Behavior for Men and Women

In Mahasarakham, young men and women grow up against a background of various expressions of relative gender balance and imbalance. The tensions between Isan and Bangkok, tradition and modernity, are evident. These are not usually uncomfortable tensions which force one to choose sides, but rather tensions which allow one to move back and forth depending on the situation.

Village life, in which most SWU students grew up, is neither puritanical nor highly sexualized, at least in comparison to the US. In Isan villages, boys and girls grow up rather openly, sometimes sharing a bedroom with their parents (who are discreet in their sexual activities), watching animals mate and give birth, and listening to stories of human love and passion. At festivals, such as *Sōngkraan* (New Year) and *Bhun Bāng Fay* (Rocket Festival), they are exposed to and educated about sexuality as they listen to sexual banter, see neighbors prancing about with wooden phalli, and watch puppets simulate copulation. Sexual expression is something that has an appropriate place and time, but is a normal part of everyone's life.

In even mildly urban settings such as the small municipal district of Mahasarakham, sexual expression is more extensive, in part because it is commercialized. It is used to market products and is displayed more widely than in villages. Calendars featuring nude women hang in

³ In actuality, there are a number of women doctors in Mahasarakham, though they are concentrated in obstetrics/gynecology and pediatrics, fields dealing with women and children.

food shops, courtesy of various sponsoring companies. Chicly dressed, well-coiffed men and women in suggestive poses advertise products from perfume to eating utensils. Misty illustrations of couples making love (female breasts and all crotches concealed) accompany romance stories in women's magazines. And men can pick up *The International Magazine for Men* by Penthouse, which includes both information on men's fashion and provocative photographs of nude women (though no shots of exposed crotches as in the US version).

The meanings the mass media and government attach to sex are powerful, in some circumstances accepted, in others contested. SWU students reject elements that threaten their views of appropriate lifestyles, such as references to casual sex ("free sex"). At the same time, they seem to integrate elements of what they perceive as sophisticated and modern into rather traditional roles as sons and daughters.

The cultural rules about sexual behavior in Mahasarakham, on the surface, seem relatively straightforward and further reinforce the categories men and women. Women are expected to demonstrate self-control in all ways. They are expected to refrain from sexual activity outside of marriage, or at least outside of a commitment to marriage. Men are permitted, if not encouraged, to wander, quite literally in their teenage years and figuratively after that, gathering experience, including sexual experience. Until HIV struck Thailand, both girlfriends and wives tolerated men visiting prostitutes because of the belief that men require greater variety and quantity of sexual activity. Men's lives are stressful and sex is a form of stress relief. The spread of HIV has triggered a rethinking of this attitude because of the health risks associated with it, risks that are made abundantly clear in television ads, on posters, and in educational pamphlets.

The concept of sexual monogamy is now developing in Mahasarakham as something of value for both men and women. For women, it was always the social expectation. For men, it is something quite new. Multiple sexual partners, before and after marriage, has historically served to enhance masculinity. Except in the monkhood, sexual restraint is not expected of men. As the

concept of monogamy creeps into the cultural body of knowledge, it has the potential to affect husband-wife relationships in both positive and negative ways. If women benefit from monogamy (e.g., more attention, greater sexual satisfaction), it could contribute to a redefining of sex ideology. If women see it is greater sacrifice to satisfy their husbands, then it may add more stress husband-wife relationships.

Isan culture now includes the belief that sexual pleasure is a male domain and sexual relationships are largely for the benefit of men. Much public discourse, probably influenced by ideas from Bangkok, plays down women's sexual desires, emphasizing women's interest in reproduction, rather than erotic stimulation. So, once a woman has had children, she has no real use for sex and it becomes a chore. Women who think like this are quite amenable to their husbands' visiting prostitutes or seeking sexual satisfaction outside of the marriage. There is evidence that historically Isan culture recognized that wives, too, have sexual needs. Proverbs and folktales state that it is a husband's duty to fulfill his wife's sexual needs. Nowadays, the idea of sex being primarily for the enjoyment of men is being challenged, primarily in western-influenced mass media and among the more highly educated. However, even some SWU professors who believe scientific studies of female physical sexual response, continue to contribute to the discourse on women's disinterest in sex for pleasure.⁴ Students, too, reflect this perspective to some extent in their discourse. However, students of both sexes seem hopeful that they will have enjoyable sexual relationships with their future spouses.

Although there is some ambiguity, sexual experience tends to improve the status of men and worsen the status of women. A nurse at the anonymous clinic explained it this way: "The woman [in a relationship] wants to be his last, the man wants to be her first." Her comments are fairly consistent with SWU students' attitudes and behaviors, though SWU men don't appear to be

⁴ This may not be hypocritical. Women may be recognized as having sexual desire and response, but that desire and response may fail to be stimulated, either intentionally or unintentionally. This is an issue beyond the scope of this particular study.

as sexually active as males in the general Thai population. The nurse went on to explain that more highly educated people understand that sexual behavior is controllable. The students, despite their education and only in part because of their inexperience and age, are not fully convinced of this, nor are some of the SWU faculty -- some of the most educated people in the province. The idea that men require a great deal of sexual release and variety is still very strong, as is the idea that women have far less desire and interest in sex. Masculinity and femininity are tied up in each, respectively, which puts men and women in difficult situations.

Because men typically gain status by initiating and engaging in sexual behaviors and women typically lose status by doing so, female students must carefully weigh the consequences of their actions when considering entering into any kind of romantic or sexual relationship. Men are potential predators precisely because they have little to lose by trying -- whereas even the implication of a sexual relationship can severely damage a woman's reputation. But of course, all men are not sexual predators, and SWU men appear more conscious than most of maintaining a good reputation, albeit a masculine one.

The difference in meaning of sexual behavior reinforces an emotional asymmetry. Female students are more cautious in romance whereas males are given more leeway in expressing emotion. Among SWU students, men usually express a romantic interest first, but only after ascertaining with good certainty that the girl returns the feelings. But men, too, are limited in how expressive they can be. Extreme emotions are not appropriate, particularly negative ones (e.g., anger, sadness). Emotional control avoids social conflict.

In a study of young, urban, educated, Vietnamese women, Soucy (2001) describes how the ideology of romantic love, conveyed through mass media, has strengthened a waning patriarchal Confusian gender ideology as well as a traditional emphasis on the older brother-younger sibling relationship (similar to the *phũ-nàng* relationship in Thailand). Despite twentieth century reforms that empowered Vietnamese women, it is now seen as romantic for

women to be sweet and submissive and let their boyfriends make decisions about activities. This is a concept worth examining in Isan. Although Isaners have a literary history that includes tales of romantic love, in practice, romantic love has been less important than other considerations in marital relationships. Passion is something sought by men (and women, with less social toleration) outside of marriage, though whether this is the same or different from romantic behavior or love is not clear. Students use the borrowed word "romantic" with some regularity, suggesting that it is a new concept, or perhaps an older concept that has taken on new meanings.

Young men and women at Srinakharinwirot University are coming of age in a culture that doesn't openly tell them how to do that, a culture that sometimes presents them with conflicting models and discourses. The messages, many of which are presented in the mass media and come from Bangkok, are particularly inconsistent for women. On the one hand, young women are presented as being modest, virginal homebodies, devoted to first their parents and then their parents, husband, and children. On the other hand, they are also shown to be modern consumers who are fashionable, sexy, and independent. There is also a hint of traditional Isan sex ideology which values women's home and craft skills such as weaving and cooking. Increasingly, Isan women are also exposed to role models who choose not to marry and give birth, an image in direct conflict with the traditional model.

Young men, too, face ideological tensions between traditional and modern. One noticeable difference is the small number of university-educated men who ordain. Ordination transforms men from unripe (*dip*) to ripe (*suk*). A man's spiritual value is elevated when he ordains. Upon leaving the monkhood, men are considered more learned and are more respected. The significance of ordination is marginalized in the image of a modern man, whereas in the past it was a key part of masculinity. This begs the question, how is maturity now marked in a young man? Graduation? A job? Marriage? Ordination at a later point? It would be valuable to follow up

with SWU students to learn at what point they consider themselves mature adults and what events and experiences transformed and marked that new status.

There is no similar systematic transformation for girls. In both historical and modern times, the major socially-recognized life transformation for women seems to be giving birth. But it is not referred to in the same raw-ripe terms as the male transformation in monkhood.⁵ Further, there is no spiritual significance in giving birth, nor is the status change named; a woman simply becomes a "mother." Even women who have never given birth can be called "mother" in social relationships by age-appropriate individuals. Giving birth is perhaps more a life-fulfilling event than a life-transforming one.

Modern adolescence does not deviate drastically from the old. Boys are still given greater mobility and license to experiment, and girls are watched more carefully closer to home. But the pursuit of education may actually limited boys' freedom and changed some of their attitudes while expanding girls' freedom.⁶ Girls are permitted to travel distances to study and in doing so move farther from their parents' control. Boys who continue their studies at universities and colleges must carefully balance play and study. Their responsibilities as a student prevent the kind of ribald play that young village men engage in.

University culture may reduce some status differences in the gender ideology of young men and young women, bringing them closer to a common ground. SWU student have a greater number of acceptable options for expressing masculinity and femininity than did Isaners in the past, though their social roles remain traditionally distinct and complementary.

⁵ This contradicts Keyes (1977, p. 158) who seeing the act of "lying by the fire" as transforming a woman from unripe to ripe (or cooked, in this case). Traditionally, a woman spent the 30 days following giving birth to lying next to a fire in her home. This helped her to recover, the heat specifically helping her body to heal and reshape the uterus. I don't agree with the comparison to ordination because the woman is actually transformed at the birth and the only linguistic designation is "mother," used as fictive kin term even for women who have not given birth.

⁶ This is similar to the point that Mills (1999) makes about Isan women gaining freedom when they travel to Bangkok to work in factories.

Phêet in the Social Order

SWU students are remarkably "good" young men and women. There appear to be relatively few outliers in terms of conforming to ideals related to being men and being women at this stage in their lives. Most express great respect for their parents and a strong desire (backed up by performance) to do well in school. They show appropriate respect for those of higher status and in general are quite neat and modest in appearance and behavior. They are pursuing degrees to improve their chances at finding a good job so they are able to take care of themselves and their family.

The restrictions separating men and women in their home lives are lessened at the university due to the normal, everyday activities associated with being a student. Modern conveniences, such as bicycles and motorcycles, further facilitate contact. Additionally, students see value in forming friendships with members of the other sex, as companions, study-partners, and advisors. Mixed sex friendships usually do not draw attention if the friends are conscientious of appearance. That is, as long as students keep their time together public, are open about their friendship, and are not physically affectionate, their relationships are socially accepted. However, since many a couple conceals their love as friendship, people are always on the watch for signs of a romance. Though it is considered a demonstration of bad character, gossiping is common. Because of this, everyone is aware of attentive eyes and thus is highly conscious of appearances, even those who blatantly challenge social rules. Students who have *fĕĕn* (sweethearts) must make an extra effort to appear polite and orderly if they want to maintain a good reputation in the community.

Students date for fun and companionship. Dating is most commonly done in groups and may involve meals, movies, picnicking, or sometimes visiting a bar. Even students who have a *fĕĕn* most often go out in groups. It's more fun than going out as a couple and it protects the couple from potential gossip.

Sexual behavior is extremely personal and hidden from public knowledge. Those aspects of sex that are considered private (e.g., erotic behavior) are not well documented in the ethnographic or other literature for Isan youth. Although sexual behavior is considered a natural and necessary part of human life, one's personal sexual behavior is generally not considered an appropriate topic for public revelation or discussion. Further, because students are discouraged even from forming romantic-type relationships, they are reluctant to speak (or write) about their own sexual behaviors. The data obtained in this study suggest that most girls are not having sexual intercourse. Some are, in almost all cases with boyfriends. I was told of a few alleged cases of female students having affairs with male teachers. I did not attempt to validate this information, though I consider it fairly reliable. There were also alleged incidences of students selling sexual services. Neither of these last two situations is normal, typical, or socially acceptable, but they happen.

The number of boys who have had sexual intercourse is surely greater, though students perceive an overall decrease in male interpersonal sexual behavior. As one fourth year male related, when he was a sophomore, more male students were going to prostitutes. By senior year, they decided it wasn't a good idea because of the risk of AIDS. As it has gradually come to be viewed as something foolish, the number of students participating appears to have declined.

Regardless of this study's inability to determine students' actual sexual behavior, their willingness to enter into sexual relationships in certain situations (e.g., if in a serious relationship with plans to marry) is significant. I would argue that this is the perfect time to provide sex education, especially for females in this group. They are not yet for the most part sexually active, but are seeking relationships in which they would consider engaging in sexual relations. Information on birth control, disease prevention, and reproductive health is highly relevant to them at this point in their lives and they are receptive to it. Despite the inappropriateness of discussing one's own sexual behavior (and the embarrassment that might accompany it), being

informed about this very normal part of life is seen as a positive thing. It is not improper or immodest to want to know about sex and related topics.

Students are encouraged to be modest in appearance and behavior. The expression most used to convey this is "*rîapróøy*." There is no English word that conveys all the nuances of *rîapróøy*. Something that is *rîapróøy* is orderly, neat, tidy, in place. That is, the *rîapróøy* thing is as it should be. Students are supposed to be neat, polite, and modest. But the greater determinant of whether someone is *rîapróøy* is his or her public social behavior. Of course, ideally one's private behavior is also socially appropriate. But private behavior is not so much the concern of others. A student may engage in inappropriate behaviors (e.g., drinking, sex), and if it is kept private, still maintain a *rîapróøy* appearance. Private acts are largely regarded as one's own business, the consequences of which will be enjoyed or suffered by the individual.

It is important to comment on the role of morality, particularly in sexual behavior, because the Isan application of morality to real life is somewhat different than in mainstream U.S. culture. U.S. culture formulates rules about right and wrong, and to break one of these rules is wrong, a sin, to commit an immoral act. Culturally, the rules tend to be absolute, though individual practice may show different interpretations of the rules. Among SWU students, right and wrong are not so black and white. In Mahasarkham, as in most of Thailand, moral codes are inseparable from the cosmological order, which is based in Theravada Buddhism. In short, one's good deeds will be rewarded and bad deeds will be punished, in either the present or a future life. Individuals' souls are reborn over time into many different lives in which their karmic past is worked out. One cannot escape past deeds and one's present situation is, to a large extent, attributable to them.

This moral order says little about specific behaviors, so a great variety of behaviors can be understood to be moral in context. Morality is tied to everything one does, not adherence to or violation of specific codes. Further, sex is no more inherently a moral issue than is studying or

distributing food. Right and wrong, accrual of merit (*bun*) or demerit (*bàap*), are the consequence of one's action in a particular context.

Despite the third precepts⁷ which says to refrain from sexual misconduct, there is no consensus as to what that means. It is variously interpreted as adultery, illicit sex, sexual misconduct, and erotic behavior. Many students believe this applies to married people only. As one male student informed me, premarital sex "is not in conflict with the Buddhist precepts because if you aren't married, it isn't adultery [*phitpràweenii*]." Morally, an individual's behavior only impacts that individual and so the moral concern is not so strongly shared by the group, though the behavior's impact on the social order is. Socially, an individual's behavior impacts others to the extent that the behavior causes suffering and affects the relationships between the individual and others. The effect it has on relationships (with parents, with teachers, with friends) is minimized by discretion and keeping up a good appearance.

A strong value on maintaining social harmony greatly impacts how students deal with sexual behavior. Ideally, because all their attention should be put into their studies, students should not form, and thus be distracted by, romantic relationships. Their education is an investment in the status of their family; most study as much for their parents as for themselves. As was mentioned, the reality is that a fair number of students do have *fèen*. Those who can maintain top grades with a boyfriend or girlfriend generate little discussion or criticism, as long as they get good grades and otherwise act fittingly. Students who appropriately handle extra-curricular activities (e.g., relationships, jobs, computer lessons) demonstrate maturity and an ability to handle multiple responsibilities. While I would not go so far as to suggest that students in romantic relationships are somehow more highly regarded than students who refrain from relationships, they are, I believe, admired for their ability to handle so much so well. Failure to

⁷ It is worth repeating that precepts are not commandments (such as the Ten Commandments of Christianity). The Ten Commandments were ordered by God based on his authority. Precepts are issued on advice; they are guidelines that one may make an effort to follow. Few laypersons claim to follow even the first five.

meet one's obligations as a son or daughter and student causes conflict, particularly with parents. But students who meet their obligations and act appropriately, cause little, if any conflict.

To understand sex, one must also understand social hierarchy, particularly patron-client relationships. The social roles of men and women are embedded in social relationships, which are in many contexts, gendered. For university students, their roles as sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, are the most significant. In them, we see the patron-client dynamic: between parents and children, and between older siblings (*phii*) and younger siblings (*noong*). Children have an obligation to their parents, called *bun khun*. Parents care for their children who later repay the obligation by providing for their parents. University students, because of the sacrifice many parents make for their educations and because of their potential to earn a good living, are embedded in this relationship of obligation. The *phii-noong* relationship is especially relevant to understanding sex and gender, I think, for two reasons. First, it is the earliest peer relationship individuals experience, whether with actual blood siblings, cousins, or fictional kin. Second, it is the model for the husband-wife relationship. When spouses or lovers use kin terms, they use *phii* and *noong*. And though this study did not study the *phii-noong* relationship in depth, it is a topic I'd like to take up at some point in the future.

Implications for the Future

University students migrate out of Mahasarakham to find work, often in Bangkok, or, if they become teachers wherever their assignment takes them. University educated people are not as easily exploited as other migrants and most will likely settle into career-track positions with the government or with private companies. Many will achieve a higher standard of living than other Isan people, and will have their own house, family, and modern conveniences. But their goals are not so different from other Isan migrants with whom they share some common traits. The students in this study plan to give back to their families, financially and in other ways. They plan to take care of their parents as much as they are able since their parents sacrificed for their

rearing and education. In the past this was mainly a responsibility of daughters, but sons at the university express nearly as strong a desire to repay their parents after graduation by taking care of their economic and material needs.

Although the data for this study are now 10 years old, the concepts described here do not appear to have changed much, a conclusion I base on more recent studies and my own ongoing dialogue with people in Mahasarakham. The introduction of new images and ideas about sex continues, challenging students to rethink their understandings of sex in general. Students are both advantaged and disadvantaged by this. Conflicting information sometimes forces them to choose sides (e.g., between Isan-ness and Bangkok-ness), but the choices and opportunities open to them are greater than for their parents. Education is a major route to economic security in an increasingly cash-based economy, and economic security is a route to choices. Newfound statuses, however, impact on family relationships, and consequently sex ideology, particularly as it related to gendered social roles.

SWU students have been enculturated to worldviews both rural and urban, Isan and Central Thai, educated and uneducated, traditional and modern, Thai and foreign. To what extent has the mixing of cultures affected the meanings of sex in Mahasarakham? There is no "key" to understanding the concept of *phêet* among university students in Mahsarakham. Although they are a fairly homogeneous group in terms of background and experiences, their constructions, interpretations, and applications of concepts and categories of *phêet* are amalgamations of a wide array of information from a variety of sources of cultural knowledge. To successfully *damnæn nay chiiwít* (proceed in life), they "read" all the cultural knowledge with which they are presented in their experience. They interpret it and apply it in social action in ways that minimize social conflict and maximize individual and familial gain.

The family remains a central concern for students, and their roles in it are the most important ones at this point in their lives. To make sense of the sexed world in a way that also

makes sense to others involves complex negotiation of meanings, at the foundation of which are their roles as student-sons, student-daughters, brothers, and sisters.

Research on the role of sexuality in family relationships is very much needed to understand the meanings of sex for Thai youth. These studies must be done among different groups in Thailand to allow for regional and other kinds of comparison. To facilitate comparison as well as in depth, experiential understandings, it seems highly desirable to utilize both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in that research, particularly innovative methods (like the journals in this study) that might help to get at sensitive issues, such as female sexual behavior. Researchers might also consider heeding di Mauro's advice to consider that

Efforts to enact a more positive research agenda would significantly help to promote a much-needed view of sexuality not as a source of problems and risks but as a domain of well-being and human potential (di Mauro, 1997, p. 4)

Much sex research has been motivated by a need to address social or health problems. Research framed in this way cannot hardly help putting some informants/respondents on the defensive. In Thailand, and other cultures emphasizing "face-saving" and the importance of social harmony, approaching studies of sex and sexuality from a more positive orientation may result in greater cooperation, both in participation and in willingness to provide accurate information.

APPENDIX A. TRANSCRIPTION OF THE THAI LANGUAGE

A Note on Language & Transcription

Lao is the primary language spoken in Mahasarakham. It is often called "Thai-Lao" or "Isan." Thai (sometimes called Central Thai) is official language of Thailand and the language of all government institutions. My relationship with SWU students was through the university, so Thai was the language we used to communicate. Even most non-student informants spoke Thai or a combination of Lao and Thai with me. In Isan, Lao is often referred to as "Isan" and is normally written (when it's written at all) using the Thai writing system. Few Isaners are literate in Lao.

Thai and Lao both belong to the Tai family of languages which most likely originated in southern China. They are close to cognates and so often the difference between the two is a matter of tonal pronunciation or vocabulary. They are both tonal languages. There are five tones (mid, low, rising, high, falling) though the pronunciation of Thai and Isan tones differs. Thai has 20 phonetically distinguished phonemes for 44 consonants (plus two obsolete ones), and short and long versions of nine different vowel sounds, plus three diphthongs. Most consonant phonemes correspond to the primary sound of English letters. *Kh*, *th*, and *ph* represent aspirated sounds. *K*, *t*, and *p* represent unaspirated sounds. vowel sounds are indicated in this paper by a double letter (e.g., *plaa*). There are only six final consonant sounds: m, n, ng, k, p, and t. Other consonants in the final position assigned one of these six sounds.¹ Transcription in this paper uses the final sound, rather than the final letter to aid in pronunciation.

There is no difference between singular and plural words, so Thai/Isan words used in this dissertation are not pluralized when used in English sentences. There is no capitalization or punctuation. Words in sentences are not spaced; they are contiguous or grouped at the writer's discretion. However, to assist with pronunciation and readability, transliterated words in this text are separated by spaces.

¹ For example, aakàat (อากาศ), meaning "air," has an *ʔ* (/s/) as a final consonant, but it is pronounced /t/.

Transcriptions in this text are written according to the chart in this appendix. All transcriptions of Thai and Isan language words are italicized. Because students infrequently used Isan when speaking with me or around the university, few Isan words occur in this paper. All words are Thai unless indicated in context.

Tone Markers

tone transcription	tone	Thai example	example transcribed	meaning of example
none	mid tone	ปลา	<i>plaa</i>	fish
à	low tone	ไก่	<i>kày</i>	chicken
ǎ	rising tone	หมู	<i>mǔu</i>	pork, pig
á	high tone	เนื้อ	<i>nǐa</i>	beef
â	falling tone	กุ้ง	<i>kúng</i>	shrimp

Vowels

A single vowel indicates a short sound. A double vowel indicated a long sound.

phoneme	sounds like (short/long)	example short	short transcribed	example long	long transcribed
a	not	พระ	<i>phrá</i> (monk)	บ้าน	<i>bâan</i> (house)
ɛ	mat	แพะ	<i>phé</i> (goat)	แม่	<i>mêɛ</i> (mother)
e	bet / bay	เต็ม	<i>tem</i> (full)	เท	<i>thee</i> (to pour)
i	bít / tree	คิด	<i>khíd</i> (to think)	สี	<i>sīi</i> (color)
ø	bought	เกาะ	<i>kò</i> (island)	ขอ	<i>khǎø</i> (to ask for)
o	note	คน	<i>khon</i> (person)	โต	<i>too</i> (grown up)
u	boot	จุด	<i>jút</i> (dot)	ดู	<i>duu</i> (to watch)
ʘ	the German ü	ผึ้ง	<i>phûng</i> (bee)	คืน	<i>khûun</i> (night)
œ	mid, central, unrounded vowel	เทอะทะ	<i>thé'thá</i> (ungainly)	เดิน	<i>dæn</i> (to walk)
ay	trite	ใน	<i>nay</i> (in)	--	--
aw	cow	เรา	<i>raw</i> (we)	--	--

Consonants

phoneme	sounds like	Thai consonants
k	ge <u>k</u> o	ก
kh	co <u>kh</u>	ข, ค, ฆ
ng	ki <u>ng</u>	ง
j	jo <u>j</u>	จ
ch	chi <u>ch</u>	ฉ, ช, ฌ
s	so <u>s</u> e	ซ, ศ, ส, ฌ
y	yo <u>y</u>	ญ, ย
d	do <u>d</u>	ฎ, ฏ
t	sto <u>t</u>	ฏ, ฐ
th	to <u>th</u>	ฐ, ฑ, ฒ, ณ, ฑ, ฒ, ฒ
n	ne <u>n</u>	ณ, น
b	ba <u>b</u>	บ
p	spo <u>p</u>	ป
ph	po <u>ph</u>	ผ, ฝ, ภ
f	fu <u>f</u>	ฝ, ฟ
m	ma <u>m</u>	ม
r	re <u>r</u>	ร
l	le <u>l</u>	ล, ฬ
h	ha <u>h</u>	ห, ฮ

**APPENDIX B. NUMBER OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT SWU IN 1994
BY YEAR, MAJOR, FACULTY, AND SEX**

1st Year

Faculty →	Education			Technology			Science			Humanities			Social Sci.			TOTALS			
	Major↓	M*	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Elem. Ed. BE	5	26	31																
Art Ed. BE	15	10	25																
Social Studies BE	11	24	35																
English BE	4	9	13																
Thai BE	3	21	24																
Sci. - Math BE	2	10	12																
Sci. - Chemistry BE	5	24	29																
Sci. - Biology BE	7	23	30																
Sci. - Physics BE	22	6	28																
BioTech. BS				13	15	28													
Food Tech. BS				6	14	20													
Statistics BS							15	18	33										
Biology BS							9	25	34										
Chemistry BS							4	16	20										
Applied Physics BS							18	5	23										
English BA										6	32	38							
Thai BA										3	23	26							
Arts BA										22	7	29							
Community Dev BA													19	16	35				
TOTALS	74	153	227	19	29	48	46	64	110	31	62	93	19	16	35	189	324	513	

*M = male; F = female, T = total

2nd Year

Faculty →	Education			Technology			Science			Humanities			Social Sci.			TOTALS		
Major ↓	M*	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Elementary Ed. BE	13	20	33															
Social Studies BE	6	13	19															
Thai BE	6	18	24															
Art Ed. BE	12	14	26															
English BE	3	7	10															
Sci. - Biology BE	7	12	19															
Sci. - Physics BE	13	6	19															
Sci. - Math BE	0	7	7															
Sci. - Chemistry BE	9	16	25															
BioTech. BS				6	12	18												
Food Tech. BS				4	8	12												
Statistics BS							18	13	31									
Biology BS							9	12	21									
Chemistry BS							9	9	18									
English BA										9	22	31						
Thai BA										3	20	23						
Community Dev BA													11	8	19			
TOTAL	69	113	182	10	20	30	36	34	70	12	42	54	11	8	19	138	217	355

*M = male; F = female, T = total

3rd Year

Faculty →	Education			Technology			Science			Humanities			Social Sci.			Total		
Major ↓	M*	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Elementary Ed. BE	14	22	36															
Social Studies BE	7	20	27															
Art Ed. BE	10	3	13															
Thai BE	6	15	21															
Sci. - Biology BE	5	6	11															
Sci. - Chemistry BE	10	11	21															
BioTech. BS				7	8	15												
Food Tech. BS				11	17	28												
Chemistry BS							11	5	16									
Statistics BS							9	9	18									
Biology BS							6	11	17									
Thai BA										4	16	20						
English BA										7	21	28						
Community Dev BA													9	17	26			
TOTAL	52	77	129	18	25	43	26	25	51	11	37	48	9	17	26	116	181	297

*M = male; F = female, T = total

4th Year

Faculty → Major↓	Education			Technology			Science			Humanities			Social Sci.			Total		
	M*	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Elementary Ed. BE	13	28	41															
Art Ed. BE	5	5	10															
Social Studies BE	9	13	22															
Sci. - Biology BE	6	10	16															
Sci. - Chemistry BE	5	15	20															
BioTech. BS				11	14	25												
Food Tech. BS				18	12	30												
Statistics BS							17	13	30									
Chemistry BS							11	7	18									
Biology BS							8	13	21									
English BA										7	27	34						
Thai BA										1	20	21						
Comm. Dev. BA													5	15	20			
TOTAL	38	71	109	29	26	55	36	33	69	8	47	53	5	15	5	116	192	308

*M = male; F = female, T = total

Summary Totals by Faculty, Year, and Sex

	Ed.		Tech.		Sci.		Humanities		Social Sci.		TOTAL
	M*	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
1 st year	74	153	19	29	46	64	31	62	19	16	513
2 nd year	69	113	10	20	36	34	12	42	11	8	355
3 rd year	52	77	18	25	26	25	11	37	9	17	297
4 th year	38	71	29	26	36	33	8	47	5	15	308
TOTAL	233	414	76	100	144	156	62	188	44	56	1473

*M = male; F = female, T = total

PERSONAL SITUATION

- 17 Before you entered college/university, what were you doing first?
___ at home doing nothing ___ studying in high school ___ working out of the house
___ working at home ___ studying at college/univ ___ ordained
- 18 Where do you live while studying now?
___ school dormitory ___ rent a house with friends ___ private dormitory (alone)
___ live with parents/family ___ private dormitory (w/ friends) ___ other _____
- 19 How much money does your guardian give you to use per month? _____ baht/month
- 20 Do you have a job? ___ have ___ don't have
- 21 If you have [a job], how many hours do you work per week? _____ hours/week
- 22 How much money do you make per month? _____ baht/month
- 23 Do you study anything outside of your school (for example, computer typing, etc.)
___ study (_____ hr/week) ___ don't study
- 24 Do you have the following things or not?
___ stereo cassette ___ bicycle ___ telephone ___ television
___ VCR ___ motorcycle ___ CD player ___ car
-

FRIENDS AND CONFIDANTS

- 25 Your closest friends are friends ___ of the same sex ___ of the other sex or ___ of both sexes
- 26 Men and women can become friends without sexual feelings ___ can ___ can't or ___ unsure
- 27 Having friends of the other sex is ___ good ___ not good or ___ not important
- 28 In your family you are closest to who ___ grandfather ___ father ___ brother ___ aunt
 ___ grandmother ___ mother ___ sister ___ uncle

SEX ROLES

- 29 A good man has what characteristics, habits/disposition and duties? _____

- 30 A good woman has what characteristics, habits/disposition and duties? _____

- 31 A good husband has what characteristics, habits/disposition and duties? _____

- 32 A good wife has what characteristics, habits/disposition and duties? _____

- 33 A good father has what characteristics, habits/disposition and duties? _____

- 34 A good mother has what characteristics, habits/disposition and duties? _____

- 35 A good son has what characteristics, habits/disposition and duties? _____

- 36 A good daughter has what characteristics, habits/disposition and duties? _____

- 37 A good boyfriend has what characteristics, habits/disposition and duties? _____

- 38 A good girlfriend has what characteristics, habits/disposition and duties? _____

- 39 Why do men have minor wives? _____
- 40 Did you ever consider being a minor wife or having a minor wife? ___ have ___ haven't ___ unsure
- 41 Why? _____
- 42 Did you ever go out on a date with a married person? ___ have ___ haven't
- 43 Did you ever think about being the lover of a married person? ___ have ___ haven't ___ unsure

MALE and FEMALE

- 44 In the following list, check (✓) the most appropriate blank in your view. Between men and women. are the following things the same, similar or different or do you not know?

	same	similar	different	don't know
body	___	___	___	___
feelings/mind	___	___	___	___
intellect	___	___	___	___
sexual feelings	___	___	___	___

- 45 Between men and women, are the following body systems the same or not?

	same	different	don't know
digestive system	___	___	___
muscular system	___	___	___
reproductive system	___	___	___
nervous system	___	___	___
digestive system	___	___	___
circulatory system	___	___	___

- 46 In general, are men or women more endowed with the following abilities and if one is more appropriate for one sex than the other, write a check (✓) under nature or society depending on the cause of the difference.

	men more	women more	same	because of	
				nature	society
shows emotion	___	___	___	___	___
capable	___	___	___	___	___
intelligent	___	___	___	___	___
sexy	___	___	___	___	___
have sexual desires	___	___	___	___	___
decision-making	___	___	___	___	___
responsible	___	___	___	___	___
self-control	___	___	___	___	___
leadership	___	___	___	___	___
caring	___	___	___	___	___
patient/enduring	___	___	___	___	___
fearful	___	___	___	___	___
gossips	___	___	___	___	___
dejected	___	___	___	___	___
shows love	___	___	___	___	___
generous	___	___	___	___	___
confident	___	___	___	___	___

soft-hearted/weak	___	___	___	___	___
selfish	___	___	___	___	___
sincere	___	___	___	___	___
talkative	___	___	___	___	___
polite	___	___	___	___	___
good sense of humor	___	___	___	___	___
good speaker	___	___	___	___	___
resourceful	___	___	___	___	___
keeps one's word	___	___	___	___	___

47 In the following occupations, which are more appropriate for men (write an "m"), which are more appropriate for women (write a "w"), which are appropriate for both sexes ("b").

___ accountant	___ architect	___ sales manager
___ salesperson	___ electrical engineer	___ electrical engineer
___ secretary	___ clerk	___ bartender
___ head cook	___ hairstylist	___ tailor/seamstress

___ soldier	___ laborer	___ carpenter
___ taxi driver	___ elementary teacher	___ secondary teacher
___ university professor	___ doctor	___ nurse
___ child care giver	___ hotel manager	___ car salesperson
___ police officer	___ guard	___ lawyer
___ bus driver	___ dee jay	___ postman
___ phys ed teacher	___ cleaner	___ ob/gyn

48 Will Thailand improve or decline if men and women have equal rights?
 ___ improve ___ decline ___ not sure

49 If a man and a woman have equal education, skills, and experience, which would you choose in each of the choices given below? (Write a "√" in front of ? if you don't know.)

	man	woman	?		man	woman	?
Prime Minister	___	___	___	Member of Parliament	___	___	___
Governor	___	___	___	Village Head	___	___	___
Store Clerk	___	___	___	Homemaker	___	___	___
Secretary	___	___	___	Police Officer	___	___	___
Dentist	___	___	___	(Body) Guard	___	___	___
University President	___	___	___	University Teacher	___	___	___
Elementary Teacher	___	___	___	Parent	___	___	___
Doctor	___	___	___	Childcare Giver	___	___	___
Friend	___	___	___	Soldier	___	___	___
Saangtaw Driver	___	___	___	Nurse	___	___	___

SEXUAL INFLUENCES

50 Of the following, which has the most influence on your ideas and knowledge about sex? Rank them from 1, 2, 3... (1 has the most influence).

___ parents	___ government	___ literature	___ siblings	___ friends	___ magazines
___ religion/monks	___ el. teachers	___ TV/radio	___ h.s. teachers	___ other	_____

51 From (these) sources of information on sex, please rank them from the most influential to the least influential (number 1 is the most influential)

___ science book	___ teachers	___ monks	___ mother
___ older siblings	___ pub health workers	___ romance books	___ movies

___ prostitutes ___ boyfriends/girlfriends ___ newspapers ___ TV dramas
 ___ TV documentaries ___ grandparents ___ friends ___ doctors
 ___ nurses ___ magazines ___ other _____

52 How old were you when you understood the meaning of the following words? If you still do not understand, write an "X" in the blank.

age	age	age
___ menstruation	___ sexual intercourse	___ ejaculation
___ male sex organ	___ masturbation	___ female sex organ
___ condom	___ "oral sex"	___ birth control
___ orgasm	___ "clitoris"	___ scrotum

 (53-56a, for women)

53a How old were you when you began menstruating? _____ years

54a Who was the first person you told? _____

55a How did you feel? ___ frightened ___ no different from before ___ embarrassed/shy
 ___ proud ___ felt like an adult ___ other _____

56a How did you learn about menstruation? _____

(53-56b, for men)

53b How old were you when you first ejaculated? _____ years

54b Why was the first person you told? _____

55b How did you feel? ___ frightened ___ no different from before ___ embarrassed/shy
 ___ proud ___ felt like an adult ___ other _____

56b How did you learn about ejaculation? _____

ABOUT THE BODY

57/58 Which body parts are erogenous? (Everyone answer both questions.)

57 For men

___ eyes ___ shoulders ___ thighs ___ neck ___ stomach ___ genitals ___ tongue
 ___ back ___ anus ___ lips ___ buttocks ___ ears ___ breasts/chest ___ hands

58 For women

___ eyes ___ shoulders ___ thighs ___ neck ___ stomach ___ genitals ___ tongue
 ___ back ___ anus ___ lips ___ buttocks ___ ears ___ breasts/chest ___ hands

59 Which body parts are sexiest on a woman?

___ eyes ___ neck ___ arms ___ stomach ___ buttocks ___ ears genitals ___ hands
 ___ feet back ___ mouth ___ shoulders ___ hips ___ back ___ nose ___ chest
 ___ legs ___ lips ___ hair ___ genitals ___ other _____

60 Which body parts are sexiest on a man?

___ eyes ___ neck ___ arms ___ stomach ___ buttocks ___ ears genitals ___ hands
 ___ feet back ___ mouth ___ shoulders ___ hips ___ back ___ nose ___ chest

legs lips hair genitals other _____

61 Which body parts do you keep covered in public?

cleavage chest breasts back neck buttocks stomach navel
 sex organs thighs calves shoulders other _____

62 What do you wear when you sleep at night? _____

63 What do you wear when you bathe? _____

64 Which items describe the body of a woman (write "W" in front of those items) and which items describe the body of a man (write "M"). If the item describes both women and men, write "B" in front of that item.

strong beautiful pure soft disgusting
 smells bad smells good natural confusing respected
 sexy clean dirty other _____

65 Do you like your body? like don't like

66 If you could, would you want to change any part of your body? want to don't want to

67 If you want to change, what do you want to change? _____

68 What is your best body part? _____

69 What is your worst body part? _____

70 Do you feel embarrassed about your body? _____

71 Why? _____

72 Is showing love the same for women and men? same not the same unsure

73 Is sexual arousal the same for men and women? same not the same unsure

74 Does orgasm feel the same for men and women? yes no unsure

75 Have you ever seen a naked body of the other sex?

have seen in person have seen in a picture never

76 Why do people have sex? Rank them in importance from 1-5.

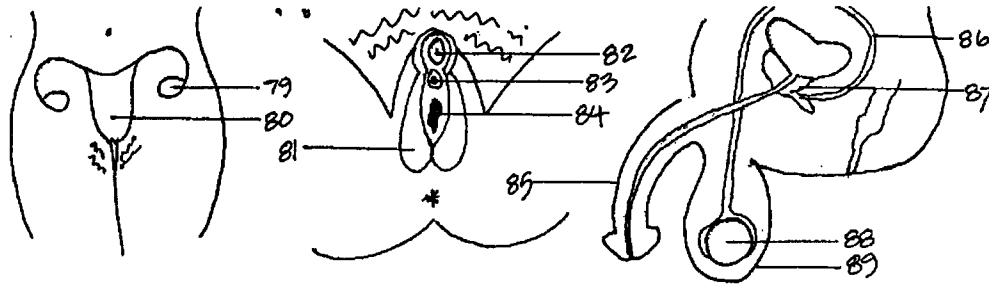
for reproduction show love sexual desire
 to consummate marriage to relax other _____

77 Do you understand menstruation? understand don't understand

78 Menstruation is a thing that is

good inconvenient no different than normal not good
 normal wonderful shows femininity dirty
 necessary pure has influence natural
 other _____

Insert the names you know according to the numbers



79 _____	85 _____
80 _____	86 _____
81 _____	87 _____
82 _____	88 _____
83 _____	89 _____
84 _____	90 _____

SURVEY PART 2

Survey # _____

MATE SELECTION

- Arrange in order the characteristics that are important to females and males (number 1 is most important).

___ kind	___ is a good person	___ fun	___ virgin	___ doesn't drink alcohol
___ pretty	___ good looking	___ loyal	___ good body	___ responsible
___ rich	___ dresses well	___ doesn't smoke	___ takes care of me	___ same nationality
___ intelligent	___ likes same hobbies	___ has good job	___ has good reputation	
___ not poor	___ works hard	___ loves me	___ other _____	
- Do you want a husband or wife with the same traits? ___ same ___ not the same
- If not the same, which are different? _____
- If you have a girlfriend/boyfriend why do you date?

___ I have never dated	___ to find a friend	___ to save money
___ for fun	___ so I don't have to be alone	___ to gain new experiences
___ for sex	___ for relaxation	___ to help each other w/ problems
	___ other _____	
- Are the people you date different from the people e you want to marry? ___ different ___ not different
If they differ, why? _____
- Are the people you have sex with different from the person you want to marry?

___ no, they have the same traits	___ some things are different
___ yes, they are different	___ I have never had sex
- Do you have a *fan*? ___ I have ___ I don't have
- You have how many *fan* (including at present)? ___ people
- You would/will marry a person with the characteristics (write a " " if yes)

___ poor	___ less educated	___ is handicapped	___ has AIDS
___ different religion	___ has been a prostitute	___ has no job	___ different nationality
___ is not pretty/handsome	___ has bad habits	___ is younger	___ is older

- ___ is already married ___ has a child(ren) ___ parents don't approve of
- 10 If you decide to have sexual relations, you will... (write a "✓" if yes / "X" if no / "?" if you are unsure)
- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| ___ ask her/him if s/he is [HIV] positive | ___ have an AIDS test first |
| ___ ask her/him if s/he has any diseases | ___ sometimes won't mention AIDS |
| ___ ask her/him if s/he has had an AIDS test | ___ use birth control yourself |
| ___ ask her/him if s/he is using birth control | ___ use a condom |
| ___ sometimes won't talk about birth control | ___ won't ask anything |

DATING AND MARRIAGE

- 11 Who initiates courting? ___ men ___ women ___ both
- 12 Do you believe in family spirits? ___ believe ___ don't believe ___ believe some
- 13 If you believe, have [your] family spirits ever punished anyone for inappropriate sexual behavior?
 ___ punished ___ haven't punished ___ don't know
- 14 If your parents don't like your sweetheart, would you still marry him/her?
 ___ marry ___ not marry ___ don't know
- 15 If you have a fan, what do you call him/her?
 ___ real name ___ nickname ___ elder sibling ___ younger sibling ___ other _____
- 16 What age is appropriate for marriage? ___ years for a man ___ years for a woman

17 At what age do you think you will marry? ___ year ___ won't marry ___ don't know

18 If you won't marry, why _____

19 Which behaviors do you think most dating couples do?

- | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ___ talk sweetly | ___ have sexual relations | ___ hug |
| ___ hold hands | ___ sit closely | ___ masturbate each other |
| ___ kiss softly | ___ rest head on one's lap | ___ touch each other's bodies |
| ___ "oral sex" to woman | ___ make out | ___ make eyes at each other |
| ___ anal sex | ___ "oral sex" to man | |

20 Which behaviors have you engaged in with a sweetheart, or which would you if you had one?

- | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ___ talk sweetly | ___ have sex relations | ___ hug |
| ___ hold hands | ___ sit closely | ___ masturbate each other |
| ___ kiss softly | ___ rest head on lap | ___ touch each other |
| ___ "oral sex" to woman | ___ make out | ___ make eyes at each other |
| ___ anal sex | ___ "oral sex" to man | |

21 Write "1" in front of the behaviors which you approve of before marriage. Write "2" in front of behaviors which you approve of for couples who have a plan to get married. Write "3" in front of behaviors which you approve of for married couples. Write "4" in front of behaviors which you don't approve of at all.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ___ talk sweetly | ___ have sexual relations | ___ hug |
| ___ hold hands | ___ sit closely | ___ masturbate each other |
| ___ kiss softly | ___ rest head on one's lap | ___ touch each other's bodies |
| ___ "oral sex" to woman | ___ make out | ___ make eyes at each other |
| ___ anal sex | ___ "oral sex" to man | |

22 You approve of having sexual relations before marriage in which situation(s)?

- ___ the couple is in love ___ the couple has a plan to marry

- 36 Which do most student couples use? Rank those they use from most to least (number 1-3)
- | | | | |
|---------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| ___ condom | ___ Norplant | ___ herbs | ___ pills |
| ___ injection | ___ I am homosexual. | ___ I don't know. | ___ withdraw |
| ___ IUD | ___ one-hour pill | ___ abortion | |
| ___ rhythm | | ___ other _____ | |
- 37 If you have had sexual relations before, have you ever talked about birth control with your partner?
- ___ have ___ haven't ___ sometimes ___ I've never had sex ___ I am homosexual
- 38 Do you use birth control? ___ use ___ don't use ___ sometimes ___ I've never had sex.
- 39 If you have had sex without using birth control, how did you feel?
- | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| ___ worried during sex | ___ worried after sex | ___ no feelings |
| ___ wanted to get pregnant | ___ free | ___ other _____ |
- 40 Which birth control methods have you used before?
- | | | | |
|---------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| ___ condom | ___ Norplant | ___ herbs | ___ pills |
| ___ injection | ___ I am homosexual. | ___ I don't know. | ___ withdraw |
| ___ IUD | ___ one-hour pill | ___ abortion | |
| ___ rhythm | | ___ other _____ | |
- 41 If you have had sex before, which birth control method do you like the best (choose 1 answer)
- | | | | |
|---------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| ___ condom | ___ Norplant | ___ herbs | ___ pills |
| ___ injection | ___ I am homosexual. | ___ I don't know. | ___ withdraw |
| ___ IUD | ___ one-hour pill | ___ abortion | |
| ___ rhythm | | ___ other _____ | |
-
- 42 Which types of birth control also prevent disease?
- | | | | |
|---------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| ___ condom | ___ Norplant | ___ herbs | ___ pills |
| ___ injection | ___ I am homosexual. | ___ I don't know. | ___ withdraw |
| ___ IUD | ___ one-hour pill | ___ abortion | |
| ___ rhythm | | ___ other _____ | |
- 43 Who taught you about birth control?
- | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| ___ school/teachers | ___ friends | ___ doctor/nurse | ___ books | ___ sweetheart |
| ___ parents | ___ siblings | ___ package instructions | ___ other _____ | |
- 44 Have you ever talked about birth control with friends? ___ have ___ haven't
- 45 Is the topic of birth control embarrassing? ___ yes ___ no
- 46 Why? _____
- 47 Why do you think some students don't use birth control? _____
-
- 48 Which do you think of condoms as preventing more?
- ___ preventing pregnancy ___ preventing disease ___ preventing both
- 49 If you have ever used condoms with your partner, what do you think about condoms?
- | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| ___ bothersome | ___ reduces worries | ___ makes me feel safe |
| ___ reduces sexual sensation | ___ difficult to use | ___ not natural |
| ___ no problems using | ___ have a bad smell | ___ I've never used condoms |
- 50 If you have gone to a prostitute(s), did you use a condom?
- ___ never ___ sometimes ___ every time ___ I've never gone
- 51 If you have had sex with someone, you used condoms
- ___ never ___ sometimes ___ every time ___ I've never gone

- 52 If you have used condoms, have any ever broken or torn?
 have haven't I've never had sex
- 53 A student couple is living together, if a pregnancy occurs who takes responsibility?
 man woman both depends on the case
- 54 If a pregnancy occurs while both are students, who is to blame?
 man woman both depends on the case
- 55 Is abortion a sin? sin not a sin sometimes
- 56 Abortion should be legal. yes no in some cases
- 57 Which individuals should consider having an abortion?
 students victims of rape people who are HIV+ the poor
 the ill people with many children people who don't want the child other _____
- 58 In a marriage, who usually decides when to have children? man woman depends on the case
- 59 If you or your *fan* were pregnant, what would you do? _____
- 60 Is abortion dangerous? dangerous not dangerous don't know

SURVEY PART 3

Survey # _____

SEXUAL BEHAVIORS

- 1 Which are acceptable behaviors only for lovers who are engaged or married?

<input type="checkbox"/> make eyes	<input type="checkbox"/> make out	<input type="checkbox"/> "oral sex" when woman does it
<input type="checkbox"/> hold hands	<input type="checkbox"/> hug and kiss	<input type="checkbox"/> "oral sex" when man does it
<input type="checkbox"/> sweet talk	<input type="checkbox"/> touch breasts	<input type="checkbox"/> sexual intercourse
<input type="checkbox"/> touch penis	<input type="checkbox"/> anal sex	<input type="checkbox"/> masturbate each other
		<input type="checkbox"/> other _____

- 2 Which behaviors are acceptable only for a couple who is engaged or married?

<input type="checkbox"/> make eyes	<input type="checkbox"/> make out	<input type="checkbox"/> "oral sex" when woman does it
<input type="checkbox"/> hold hands	<input type="checkbox"/> hug and kiss	<input type="checkbox"/> "oral sex" when man does it
<input type="checkbox"/> sweet talk	<input type="checkbox"/> touch breasts	<input type="checkbox"/> sexual intercourse
<input type="checkbox"/> touch penis	<input type="checkbox"/> anal sex	<input type="checkbox"/> masturbate each other
		<input type="checkbox"/> other _____

- 3 Which behaviors are abnormal or unnatural?

<input type="checkbox"/> make eyes	<input type="checkbox"/> make out	<input type="checkbox"/> "oral sex" when woman does it
<input type="checkbox"/> hold hands	<input type="checkbox"/> hug and kiss	<input type="checkbox"/> "oral sex" when man does it
<input type="checkbox"/> sweet talk	<input type="checkbox"/> touch breasts	<input type="checkbox"/> sexual intercourse
<input type="checkbox"/> touch penis	<input type="checkbox"/> anal sex	<input type="checkbox"/> masturbate each other
		<input type="checkbox"/> other _____

- 4 In your class, what percent of male students do you think have done the following things? And if you are a male, have you ever done them?

	%	have	haven't		%	have	haven't
kiss a girl	_____	_____	_____	kiss a boy	_____	_____	_____
touch a girls' body	_____	_____	_____	touch a boys' body	_____	_____	_____
masturbate	_____	_____	_____	receive oral sex	_____	_____	_____
give oral sex to girl	_____	_____	_____	give oral sex to a boy y	_____	_____	_____
have sexual relations	_____	_____	_____	have anal sex	_____	_____	_____
go to a prostitute	_____	_____	_____				

5 In your class, what percent of female students do you think have done the following things? **And if you are a male,** have you ever done them?

	%	have	haven't		%	have	haven't
kiss a girl	___	___	___	kiss a boy	___	___	___
touch a girls' body	___	___	___	touch a boys' body	___	___	___
masturbate	___	___	___	receive oral sex	___	___	___
give oral sex to girl	___	___	___	give oral sex to a boy y	___	___	___
have sexual relations	___	___	___	have anal sex	___	___	___
go to a prostitute	___	___	___				

6 How old were you when you the first time you kissed? ___ years

7 How old were you the first time you had sexual relations? ___ years

8 Is "homosexuality" (desiring the same sex) acceptable for men?

___ acceptable ___ not acceptable ___ not sure

9 Is "homosexuality" (desiring the same sex) acceptable for women?

___ acceptable ___ not acceptable ___ not sure

10 About how many students do you know who are gay? ___ people

11 What percentage of male students do you think are gay? ___ percent

12 About how many students do you know who are lesbian? ___ people

13 What percentage of female students do you think are lesbian? ___ percent

14 Are you gay or lesbian? ___ am ___ am not ___ not sure

15 Are you u bisexual? ___ am ___ am not ___ not sure

16 Is homosexual behavior more a result of biology than environment?

___ biology ___ environment ___ both ___ not sure

17 Are people who are gay or lesbian that way from birth or not? ___ yes ___ no

18 Masturbation is something usual - yes or no? ___ yes ___ no ___ don't know

19 Who masturbates more, men or women? ___ men ___ women ___ same ___ don't know

20 Why do people masturbate?

___ instinct ___ feels good ___ habit
 ___ learn what s/he prefers ___ relax ___ other _____

21 You masturbate how often? ___ every day ___ several times/week

___ several times/month ___ several times/year ___ never

22 Why do you masturbate? ___ instinct ___ feels good ___ habit

___ to learn preferences ___ relax ___ other _____

23 Write numbers 1-3 in front of what you think are the three most common sexual positions (1 means the most common)

___ woman on top ___ sitting ___ standing ___ man on top
 ___ side by side ___ rear entry ___ other _____

24 Which sexual positions have you tried?

___ woman on top ___ sitting ___ standing
 ___ side by side ___ rear entry ___ other _____

25 Is oral sex to a man common? ___ common ___ not common ___ don't know

26 Do most men like it? ___ like ___ don't like ___ don't know

- 27 Do most women like it? ___ like ___ don't like ___ don't know
 28 Is oral sex to a woman common? ___ common ___ not common ___ don't know
 29 Do most women like it? ___ like ___ don't like ___ don't know
 30 Do most men like it? ___ like ___ don't like ___ don't know
 31 Is anal sex (back door) common among homosexuals? ___ common ___ not common ___ don't know
 32 Have you ever tried it? ___ have received ___ have given ___ never
 33 Do most men orgasm during sexual relations? ___ yes ___ no ___ don't know
 34 Do most women orgasm during sexual relations? ___ yes ___ no ___ don't know
 35 What percentage of the time do you orgasm during sex? ___ % ___ I've never had sex.
 36 How do male and female orgasms differ? _____

INCEST AND RAPE

- 37 Have you ever heard any stories about incest? ___ have ___ haven't
 38 Do you know some people who are the victims of incest? ___ know ___ don't know
 39 Who should be blamed? ___ perpetrator ___ victim ___ society ___ other _____

- 40 What is/are the cause(s) of incest?
 ___ lack of sex ___ mental illness ___ desire for power
 ___ "alcohol"/drugs ___ beautiful girl/handsome boy ___ environmental stimuli
 ___ evil heart/mind ___ other _____

- 41 What should a child do if s/he becomes the victim of incest? _____
 42 Who does incest occur most with? ___ girls ___ boys ___ both girls and boys
 43 Who is usually the perpetrator? ___ father ___ older brother ___ uncle ___ grandfather
 ___ relative ___ mother ___ older sister ___ aunt ___ grandmother

- 44 What is rape? _____
 45 Is there a lot of rape? ___ a lot ___ not a lot ___ don't know
 46 Is rape wrong? ___ wrong ___ not wrong ___ sometimes
 47 Have you ever been raped? ___ have ___ have not
 48 If you have, did you tell anyone? ___ told ___ didn't tell
 If you told, who did you tell? _____
 49 If you didn't tell anyone, why didn't you tell? _____

- 50 Have you ever been affected violently mentally or physically? ___ have ___ have not ___ not sure
 51 If you have a chance to rape a woman without getting caught, will you? ___ do ___ not do ___ not sure
 52 Have you ever raped anyone? ___ have ___ have not ___ not sure
 53 What is/are the cause(s) of rape?
 ___ family background ___ modern society ___ modern dress of women
 ___ mentally ill men ___ lack of sex ___ content of movies or pictures
 ___ desire for power/control ___ other _____

SCENARIO At 11.30 PM, a female student from SWU is riding her motorcycle home from Sparks. Her motorcycle develops a flat tire so she must push it from the Kalasin junction to her dormitory. On the way, a strange man appears and walks near her. She asks him to go away, but he doesn't. She doesn't see any other people around. When they get to a dark area, he pulls her away, forces her to the ground and rapes her. She is very frightened and doesn't dare scream for help because he has a knife. She is cut and bruised

but otherwise not seriously injured physically. She leaves her motorcycle and runs home. She does not tell the police or anyone else.

- 54 Do you think this scenario is possible? ___ possible ___ is not possible
- 55 If you were the student, would you do the same or not? ___ do the same ___ not do the same
- 56 If you wouldn't do the same, what would you do differently? _____
- 57 Who is to blame more, the man or the girl? ___ man ___ girl ___ both the man and girl
- 58 Do you think rape is increasing or decreasing in Thailand? ___ increasing ___ decreasing ___ same
- 59 Can a woman rape a man? ___ can ___ can't ___ don't know
- 60 .Is it wrong? ___ wrong ___ not wrong
- 61 Can a man rape his wife? ___ can ___ can't ___ don't know
- 62 Is it wrong? ___ wrong ___ not wrong
- 63 Can a man rape a man? ___ can ___ can't ___ don't know
- 64 Is it wrong? ___ wrong ___ not wrong

65 Which types of charms are you familiar with?

- ___ takrut ___ love-death ___ phrakhumphaen ___ pladkhlik ___ saarikaalinthong ___ plants
 ___ holy oil ___ bees wax ___ luukkrok ___ naangkhwak ___ fangruuprangroi ___ other_____

66 Which types have you used?

- ___ takrut ___ love-death ___ phrakhumphaen ___ pladkhlik ___ saarikaalinthong ___ plants
 ___ holy oil ___ bees wax ___ luukkrok ___ naangkhwak ___ fangruuprangroi ___ other_____

67 Which types have your friends or *their* families used?

- ___ takrut ___ love-death ___ phrakhumphaen ___ pladkhlik ___ saarikaalinthong ___ plants
 ___ holy oil ___ bees wax ___ luukkrok ___ naangkhwak ___ fangruuprangroi ___ other_____

68 If you have charms, where did you get them from?

- ___ mother ___ friend ___ grandmother ___ aunt ___ monk ___ made self
 ___ father ___ sibling ___ grandfather ___ uncle ___ bought ___ other _____

69 Have you ever eaten a food/herb to make yourself sexier or more attractive to others?

- ___ have ___ have not If you have, what was it? _____

70 Have you ever given someone a food/herb to make them feel sexier?

- ___ have ___ have not If you have, what was it? _____

71 Do you think the following ghosts are real?

- ___ phiipop ___ phiikrasue ___ phiiphrai ___ sueasaming ___ phiimaemaai
 ___ kraham ___ phiipoongkhaang ___ phiibaanphiiruan ___ phiimuang ___ phiitaihoong
 ___ phiipraet ___ phiitathangklo ___ phiitakhien ___ phiitaanii ___ phiipaa
 ___ phiipuutaa ___ phiiraiphiinaa ___ phiitaothii ___ phiika ___ phiipop

72 Which types of food or herbs have you eaten?

- ___ Spanish fly ___ Korean ginseng ___ snake gall ___ rhino horn ___ banana
 ___ lion's sex organs ___ bear's paw ___ monkey brain ___ other _____

SEXUAL KNOWLEDGE

73 How many average days does a woman's period last?

- a. 2 days b. 4 days c. 7 days d. 9 days 3. don't know

74 During what time is a woman most likely to get pregnant?

- a. during her period
 - b. 15 days after the first day of her period
 - c. 7 days after the first day of her period
 - d. fifteen days after the last day of her period
 - e. don't know
- 75 Birth control pills are able to prevent the spread of disease. a. true b. false
- 76 If the man withdraws his penis before he ejaculates, can the woman get pregnant? a. true b. false
- 77 Condoms are put on when?
- a. before the penis is hard
 - b. while the penis is getting hard
 - c. after the penis is hard
 - d. after having sex briefly, but before ejaculation
 - e. don't know
- 78 The sex of a child is determined by the a. egg b. sperm c. fate d. don't know
-
- 79 Is it possible to get HIV through oral sex?
- a. it is possible
 - b. it is not possible
 - c. it can, but only oral sex to a man
 - d. it can, but only oral sex to a woman
 - e. don't know
- 80 Birth control pills are taken when?
- a. not less than 3 days before having sex and 3 days after
 - b. not less than one month before having unprotected sex
 - c. starting the first day of having sex
 - d. don't know
- 81 The female condom can be used...
- a. 2 or 3 times until it is worn out
 - b. use only once
 - c. unlimited times as long as it is washed thoroughly
 - d. don't know
- 82 Douching prevents pregnancy. a. true b. false
- 83 If a man hasn't had sex by the time he is 25 years old, he might have health problems, especially about reproduction. a. true b. false
- 84 A woman will be happy the first time she has sexual relations. a. true b. false
- 85 A person who has HIV may feel very healthy and strong. a. true b. false
- 86 Which part of a woman's body has the most sexual feeling?
- a. reproductive organ
 - b. breasts
 - c. clitoris
 - d. labia
 - e. don't know
- 87 With condoms, the size is not important and anyone can wear them all. a. true b. false
- 88 When a man has sex using a condom, is it safe if he withdraws after he's ejaculated and has lost his erection? a. safe b. not safe c. don't know
- 89 The lubrication in condoms is enough every time. a. true b. false
- 90 A woman can get pregnant even during her period. a. true b. false

เพื่อนและตัวปรึกษา

- 25 เพื่อนสนิทส่วนมากของคุณเป็นเพื่อน _____ เพศเดียวกัน _____ ต่างเพศ หรือ _____ ทั้งสองเพศ
- 26 ผู้ชายและผู้หญิงกลายเป็นเพื่อนกันอย่างไรที่ไม่มีความปลอดภัย
_____ ได้ _____ ไม่ได้ หรือ _____ ไม่แน่
- 27 การมีเพื่อนต่างเพศ _____ ดี _____ ไม่ได้ หรือ _____ ไม่สำคัญ
- 28 ในครอบครัวคุณสนิทกับใครมากที่สุด _____ ป้า _____ พ่อ _____ พี่ชายน้องชาย _____ ป้าอ่า
_____ ยาย _____ แม่ _____ พี่สาวน้องสาว _____ ลุง _____

บทบาทด้านเพศ

- 29 ผู้ชายที่ตีมีบุคลิก นิสัย และ หน้าทื่ออะไรบ้าง _____
- 30 ผู้หญิงที่ตีมีบุคลิก นิสัย และ หน้าทื่ออะไรบ้าง _____
- 31 สามีที่ตีมีบุคลิก นิสัย และ หน้าทื่ออะไรบ้าง _____
- 32 ภรรยาที่ตีมีบุคลิก นิสัย และ หน้าทื่ออะไรบ้าง _____
- 33 บิดาที่ตีมีบุคลิก นิสัย และ หน้าทื่ออะไรบ้าง _____
- 34 มารดาที่ตีมีบุคลิก นิสัย และ หน้าทื่ออะไรบ้าง _____
- 35 บุตรีที่ตีมีบุคลิก นิสัย และ หน้าทื่ออะไรบ้าง _____
- 36 บุตราที่ตีมีบุคลิก นิสัย และ หน้าทื่ออะไรบ้าง _____
- 37 เพื่อนชายที่ตีมีบุคลิก นิสัย และ หน้าทื่ออะไรบ้าง _____
- 38 เพื่อนหญิงที่ตีมีบุคลิก นิสัย และ หน้าทื่ออะไรบ้าง _____
- 39 ผู้ชายมีเมียน้อยเพราะอะไร _____
- 40 คุณเคยคิดจะเป็นเมียน้อย หรือ จะมีเมียน้อยใหม่ _____ เคย _____ ไม่เคย _____ ไม่แน่
- 41 เพราะอะไร _____
- 42 คุณเคยออกเดทคนที่แต่งงานแล้วไหม _____ เคย _____ ไม่เคย
- 43 คุณเคยคิดจะเป็นคู่รักกับคนที่แต่งงานแล้วหรือไม่ _____ เคย _____ ไม่เคย _____ ไม่แน่

เพศหญิงและเพศชาย

- 44 ในบัญชีต่อไปนี้เช็ค (✓) ช่องว่างที่เหมาะสมที่สุดในความคิดเห็นของคุณ ระหว่างผู้
ชายและผู้หญิง สิ่งต่อไปนี้เหมือนกัน คล้ายกัน หรือ ต่างกัน หรือคุณไม่ทราบ
เหมือนกัน คล้ายกัน ต่างกัน ไม่ทราบ

ร่างกาย	_____	_____	_____	_____
ความรู้สึก/จิตใจ	_____	_____	_____	_____
ปัญหา	_____	_____	_____	_____
ความรู้สึกเรื่องเพศ	_____	_____	_____	_____

45	ระหว่างผู้หญิงกับผู้ชายระบบร่างกายต่อไปนี้เหมือนกันหรือไม่	เหมือน	ไม่เหมือน	ไม่ทราบ
	ระบบย่อยอาหาร	___	___	___
	ระบบกล้ามเนื้อ	___	___	___
	ระบบโครงกระดูก	___	___	___
	ระบบสืบพันธุ์	___	___	___
	ระบบประสาท	___	___	___
	ระบบหัวใจ	___	___	___

46 โดยทั่วไปผู้หญิงหรือผู้ชายที่จะสามารถมีประสิทธิภาพ ในความสามารถเหล่านี้มากกว่ากัน และ ถ้าอันใดเหมาะสมกับเพศหนึ่งมากกว่าเพศอื่น เขียนเช็ค (✓) ได้ธรรมชาติ หรือ ได้สังคมแล้วแต่สาเหตุที่ทำให้แตกต่างกัน

	ชาย มากกว่า	หญิง มากกว่า	เท่ากัน	เพราะ ธรรมชาติ/สังคม
แสดงความรัก	___	___	___	___
มีความสามารถ	___	___	___	___
ฉลาด	___	___	___	___
เชิดชู้	___	___	___	___
มีความต้องการทางเพศ	___	___	___	___
การตัดสินใจ	___	___	___	___
รับผิดชอบ	___	___	___	___
การควบคุมตนเอง	___	___	___	___
ความเป็นผู้นำ	___	___	___	___
การเอาใจใส่	___	___	___	___
อดทน	___	___	___	___
ขี้กลัว	___	___	___	___
นินทา	___	___	___	___
ห่อเหี่ยว	___	___	___	___
แสดงความรัก	___	___	___	___
น่าใจ	___	___	___	___
มั่นใจ	___	___	___	___
ใจอ่อน	___	___	___	___
เห็นแก่ตัว	___	___	___	___
จริงจัง	___	___	___	___
ช่างพูด	___	___	___	___
สถาพ	___	___	___	___
อารมณ์ขัน	___	___	___	___
พดแกง	___	___	___	___
ไหวพริบ	___	___	___	___
รักษาคำพูด	___	___	___	___

47 ในอาชีพต่อไปนี้ อจขี้นอะไรบ้างเหมาะสมกับผู้ชายมากกว่า (เขียน "ช") อะไรบ้างเหมาะสมกับผู้หญิงมากกว่า (เขียน "ญ") อะไรบ้างเหมาะสมกับทั้งสองเพศ ("ส")

___ สมphony	___ สถาปนิก	___ ผู้จัดการแผนกจำหน่าย
___ คนขายของ	___ วิศวกรไฟฟ้า	___ วิศวกรไฟฟ้า
___ เลขานการ	___ เสมียน	___ คนรับใช้ในบาร์
___ หัวหน้าคนครัว	___ ช่างตัดผม	___ ช่างตัดเสื้อผ้า

- | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| ___ ทหาร | ___ กรรมกร | ___ ช่างไม้ |
| ___ คนขับรถแท็กซี่ | ___ ครูประถม | ___ ครูมัธยม |
| ___ อาจารย์มหาวิทยาลัย | ___ แพทย์ | ___ พยาบาล |
| ___ นักวิจารณ์ข่าว | ___ นักข่าว | ___ เคนเดินโต๊ะ |
| ___ คนเลี้ยงเด็ก | ___ ผู้จัดการโรงแรม | ___ คนขายรถ |
| ___ ตำรวจ | ___ ช่าง | ___ ทนายความ |
| ___ คนขับรถบัส | ___ นักจรรยาบรรณวิทย | ___ บริษัทประกันภัย |
| ___ ครสอนวิฑูษาพลศึกษา | ___ คนทำความสะอาด | ___ สัตแพทย์ |

48 ประเทศไทยจะดีขึ้นหรือจะเลวลง ถ้าผู้หญิงและผู้ชายมีสิทธิและความสามารถเท่าเทียมกัน
 ___ ดีขึ้น ___ เลวลง ___ เหมือนเดิม ___ ไม่แน่ใจ

49 ถ้าผู้ชายและผู้หญิงมีการศึกษา, ใหวนรียบปฏิภาน และประสบการณืเท่าเทียมกัน คุณจะเลือก
 ใครในตัวเลือกดังต่อไปนี้ (เขียน "✓" หน้า ? ในข้อที่คุณไม่ทราบ)

	ชาย หญิง ?		ชาย หญิง ?
นายกรัฐมนตรี	___	สมาชิกสภา	___
ผู้ว่าราชการจังหวัด	___	ผู้ใหญ่บ้าน	___
คนทำงานในห้างสรรพสินค้า	___	แม่บ้าน	___
เลขาเนการ	___	ตำรวจ	___
ทันตแพทย์	___	ผู้คุมครอง	___
อธิการบดีมหาวิทยาลัย	___	คาสตราจารย์มหาวิทยาลัย	___
ครูประถม	___	ผู้ปกครองคนเดียว	___
หมอ	___	คนเลี้ยงเด็ก	___
เพื่อน	___	ทหาร	___
คนขับรถสองแถว	___	พยาบาล	___

อิทธิพลทางเพศ

50 ข้อต่อไปนี้, ข้อไหนที่มีอิทธิพลต่อความคิด และความรู้ในเรื่องเพศของคุณมากที่สุด เรียงลำดับ
 จาก 1, 2, 3... (1 คือข้อที่มีอิทธิพลมากที่สุด)

- ___ พ่อแม่ ___ รัฐบาล ___ วรรณคดี ___ นั้เอง ___ เพื่อน ___ นิตยสาร
 ___ ศาสนา/พระ ___ ครูประถม ___ ที.วี./วิทย ___ ครูมัธยม ___ อื่นๆ _____

51 จากแหล่งข้อมูลข่าวสาร เกี่ยวกับเรื่องเพศ กรุณาเรียงลำดับจากข้อมูลที่มีอิทธิพลมากที่สุด
 ไปน้อยที่สุด (หมายเลข 1 คือ ข้อมูลมากที่สุด)

- ___ หนังสือวิทยาศาสตร์ ___ ครู ___ พระ ___ แม่
 ___ พี่น้องที่อายุมากกว่า ___ พนักงานสาธารณสุข ___ หนังสือรักโรแมนติก ___ ภาพยนตร์
 ___ โสภณ ___ เพื่อนชาย/เพื่อนหญิง ___ หนังสือพิมพ์ ___ ละครทีวี
 ___ สารคดีทางทีวี ___ ป้ายตาขาย ___ เพื่อน ___ หมอ
 ___ พยาบาล ___ นิตยสาร ___ อื่น ๆ _____

52 คุณอายุเท่าไร? ตอนที่คุณเข้าใจความหมายของคำต่อไปนี้ ถ้าคุณยังไม่เข้าใจให้

อายุ	อายุ	อายุ
___ ประจําเดือน	___ การร่วมเพศ	___ การหลั่งน้ำอสุจิ
___ อวัยวะเพศชาย	___ การสำเร็จความใคร่	___ อวัยวะเพศหญิง
___ ถุงยางอนามัย	___ ออร์ลเซ็กส์	___ การคุมกำเนิด
___ จุดสุกษยอด	___ คลิสตอริส (ปมกระสัน)	___ ถุงอณฑะ

(53-56a. สำหรับผู้หญิง)

53a อายุเท่าไรที่คุณเริ่มมีประจำเดือน? _____ ปี

54a ใครที่คุณบอกให้ทราบเป็นคนแรก? _____

55a คุณรู้สึกยังไง _____ กลัว _____ ไม่แตกต่างจากที่เคย _____ อาย
_____ กังวล _____ รู้สึกเป็นผู้ใหญ่ _____ อื่น ๆ _____

56a คุณเรียนรู้เกี่ยวกับประจำเดือนได้อย่างไร? _____

(53-56b. สำหรับผู้ชาย)

53b อายุเท่าไรที่คุณเริ่มมีการหลั่งน้ำอสุจิ? _____ ปี

54b ใครที่คุณบอกให้ทราบเป็นคนแรก? _____

55b คุณรู้สึกยังไง _____ กลัว _____ ไม่แตกต่างจากที่เคย _____ อาย
_____ กังวล _____ รู้สึกเป็นผู้ใหญ่ _____ อื่น ๆ _____

56b คุณเรียนรู้เกี่ยวกับการหลั่งน้ำอสุจิจากไหน? _____

เกี่ยวกับร่างกาย

57/58 อวัยวะส่วนใดที่ไวต่อความรู้สึกทางเพศ (ทุกคนตอบทั้งสองข้อ)

57 สำหรับผู้ชาย

_____ ดวงตา _____ ไหล่ _____ ขาอ่อน _____ คอ _____ ท้อง _____ องคชาติ _____ ลิ้น _____ อื่นๆ
_____ หลัง _____ ทวาร _____ ริมฝีปาก _____ ก้น _____ หู _____ นม/หน้าอก _____ มือ _____

58 สำหรับผู้หญิง

_____ ดวงตา _____ ไหล่ _____ ขาอ่อน _____ คอ _____ ท้อง _____ องคชาติ _____ ลิ้น _____ อื่นๆ
_____ หลัง _____ ทวาร _____ ริมฝีปาก _____ ก้น _____ หู _____ นม/หน้าอก _____ มือ _____

59 ส่วนไหนในร่างกายผู้หญิงที่เช็ดซึลสุด?

_____ ดวงตา _____ คอ _____ แขน _____ ท้อง _____ ก้น _____ หู _____ มือ
_____ เท้า _____ ปาก _____ ไหล่ _____ สะโพก _____ หลัง _____ จมูก _____ หน้าอก
_____ ขา _____ ริมฝีปาก _____ ผม _____ อวัยวะสืบพันธุ์ _____ อื่นๆ _____

60 ส่วนไหนในร่างกายผู้ชายที่เช็ดซึลมากที่สุด?

_____ ดวงตา _____ คอ _____ แขน _____ ท้อง _____ ก้น _____ หู _____ มือ
_____ เท้า _____ ปาก _____ ไหล่ _____ สะโพก _____ หลัง _____ จมูก _____ หน้าอก
_____ ขา _____ ริมฝีปาก _____ ผม _____ องคชาติ _____ อื่น ๆ _____

61 ส่วนไหนของร่างกายที่คุณปกปิดตลอดเวลาที่อยู่ในที่ชุมชน?

_____ ร่องอก _____ หน้าอก _____ นม _____ หลัง _____ คอ _____ ก้น _____ ท้อง _____ สะดือ
_____ อวัยวะสืบพันธุ์ _____ ขาอ่อน _____ น่อง _____ ไหล่ _____ อื่น ๆ _____

62 คุณสวมใส่อะไรเวลาคุณนอนหลับเวลากลางคืน? _____

63 คุณสวมใส่อะไรเมื่อคุณอาบน้ำ? _____

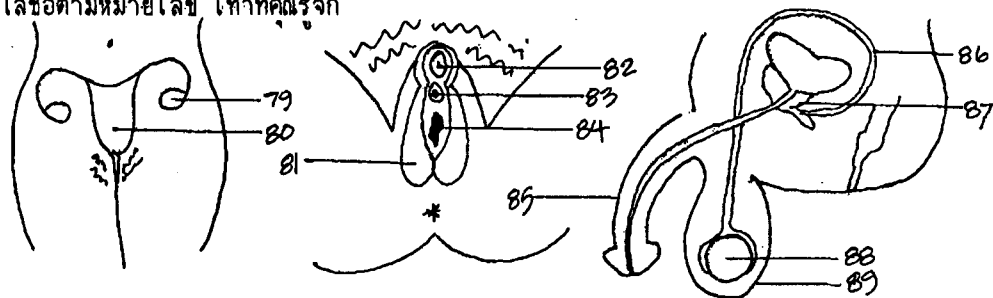
64 ชื่อความใดที่บ่งบอกลักษณะร่างกายของผู้หญิง (เขียน "ญ" หน้าข้อความนั้น) และชื่อ
ความใดที่บ่งบอกลักษณะร่างกายของผู้ชาย (เขียน "ช") ถ้าข้อความนั้นบ่งบอกลักษณะ
ทั้งหญิงและชายให้เขียน "ค" หน้าข้อความนั้น

_____ แข็งแรง _____ สวย _____ บริสุทธิ์ _____ อ่อนหวาน _____ น่ารังเกียจ
_____ กลิ่นเหม็น _____ กลิ่นหอม _____ อารมณ์ดี _____ กังวล _____ มีสัมมาคารวะ
_____ เชื้อชาติ _____ สะอาด _____ สกปรก _____ อื่น ๆ _____

65 คุณชอบร่างกายของคุณไหม? _____ ชอบ _____ ไม่ชอบ

- 66 คุณต้องการที่จะเปลี่ยนแปลงส่วนใดของร่างกายใหม่ ถ้าคุณสามารถ?
 ___ ต้องการเปลี่ยน ___ ไม่ต้องการเปลี่ยน
- 67 ถ้าต้องการเปลี่ยน ต้องการเปลี่ยนส่วนใด _____
- 68 อวัยวะที่ดีที่สุดในร่างกายคุณคือส่วนใด _____
- 69 อวัยวะที่ไม่ดีที่สุดในร่างกายคุณคือส่วนใด _____
- 70 คุณมีความรู้สึกอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับร่างกายของคุณใหม่ _____
- 71 ทำไม? _____
- 72 การแสดงความรักระหว่างเพศหญิงเพศชายเหมือนกันหรือเปล่า
 ___ เหมือน ___ ไม่เหมือน ___ ไม่แน่
- 73 ระหว่างผู้หญิงและผู้ชายการถกกระต้นความรู้สึกทางเพศเหมือนกันไหม?
 ___ เหมือน ___ ไม่เหมือน ___ ไม่แน่
- 74 ผู้หญิงผู้ชายมีความรู้สึกถึงจุดสุดยอดเหมือนกันไหม? ___ ใช่ ___ ไม่ใช่ ___ ไม่แน่
- 75 เคยเห็นร่างกายที่เปลือยเปล่าของคนที่ต่างเพศไหม?
 ___ เคยในชีวิตจริง ___ เคยในรูปภาพ ___ ไม่เคย
- 76 ทำไมคนเราต้องมีเพศสัมพันธ์ เรียงลำดับความสำคัญ จาก 1-5
 ___ เพื่อดำรงเผ่าพันธุ์ ___ แสดงความรัก ___ ความใคร่
 ___ เพื่อทำชีวิตสมรสให้สมบูรณ์ ___ เพื่อการผ่อนคลาย ___ อื่นๆ _____
- 77 คุณเข้าใจเรื่องประจำเดือนไหม? ___ เข้าใจ ___ ไม่เข้าใจ
- 78 ประจำเดือนเป็นสิ่งที่
 ___ ดี ___ ไม่สะดวกสบาย ___ ไม่แตกต่างจากที่เคยเป็น ___ ไม่ดี
 ___ ธรรมดา ___ เป็นสิ่งมหัศจรรย์ ___ แสดงความเป็นผู้หญิง ___ สกปรก
 ___ จำเป็น ___ บริสุทธิ์ ___ มีอิทธิพล ___ ธรรมชาติ
 ___ อื่นๆ _____

ใส่ชื่อตามหมายเลข เท่าที่คุณรู้จัก



- 79 _____
- 80 _____
- 81 _____
- 82 _____
- 83 _____
- 84 _____
- 85 _____
- 86 _____
- 87 _____
- 88 _____
- 89 _____

การเลือกเพื่อนใจ

- 1 เรียงลักษณะที่สำคัญของเพื่อนชายหรือเพื่อนหญิง (หมายเลข 1 สำคัญที่สุด)

___ ใจดี	___ เป็นคนดี	___ สุนกลสวยงาม	___ บริสุทธิ์	___ ไม่ดื่มของมึนเมา
___ สวย	___ หน้าตาดี	___ ซื่อสัตย์	___ มีร่างกายดี	___ มีความรับผิดชอบ
___ รวย	___ แต่งกายดี	___ ไม่เล่นพนัน	___ เอาใจใส่ต่อฉัน	___ มีสัญชาติเดียวกัน
___ ฉลาด	___ ชอบงานอดิเรกเหมือนกัน	___ มีงานที่ดี	___ มีชื่อเสียงดี	
___ ไม่จน	___ ทำงานหนัก	___ รักตัวเรา	___ อื่น ๆ _____	
- 2 คุณต้องการสามีหรือภรรยาที่มีคุณสมบัติเหมือนกันไหม ___ เหมือน ___ ไม่เหมือน
- 3 ถ้าไม่เหมือน ตรงไหนที่แตกต่าง _____
- 4 ถ้ามีเพื่อนหญิง/เพื่อนชาย ที่ไม่คุณต้องการนัดพบกัน

___ ฉันไม่เคยมีนัด	___ เพื่อหาเพื่อน	___ เพื่อประหยัดเงินทางเศรษฐกิจ
___ เพื่อความสนุก	___ ไม่ต้องอยู่คนเดียว	___ มองหาประสบการณ์ใหม่ๆ
___ เพื่อเพศสัมพันธ์	___ เพื่อนักฝัน	___ เพื่อช่วยกันแก้ปัญหา อื่นๆ _____
- 5 คนที่คุณมีนัดด้วย ต่างจากคนที่คุณต้องการแต่งงานไหม ___ แตกต่าง ___ ไม่แตกต่าง
ถ้าแตกต่าง เพราะอะไร _____
- 6 คนที่คุณมีเพศสัมพันธ์ด้วย แตกต่างจากคนที่คุณต้องการแต่งงานด้วยไหม
___ ไม่ พวกเขามีลักษณะเหมือนกัน ___ มีบางอย่างที่แตกต่างกัน
___ ใช่ พวกเราแตกต่างกัน ___ ฉันไม่เคยมีเพศสัมพันธ์กับใคร
- 7 คุณมีแฟนไหม ___ มี ___ ไม่มี
- 8 คุณเคยมีแฟนกี่คน (รวมทั้งปัจจุบัน) _____ คน
- 9 คุณจะแต่งงานกับคนที่มีลักษณะ (เขียน "✓" ถ้าใช่)

___ จน	___ มีการศึกษาน้อยกว่า	___ เป็นคนพิการ	___ เป็นโรคเอดส์
___ ศาสนาแตกต่างกัน	___ เคยเป็นโรคติดต่อ	___ ไม่มีงานทำ	___ เป็นคนต่างชาติ
___ เป็นคนไม่สะอาด/หล่อ	___ มีนิสัยไม่ดี	___ มีอายุน้อยกว่าคุณ	___ มีอายุมากกว่าคุณ
___ แต่งงานแล้ว	___ มีลูกแล้ว	___ ไม่เป็นที่ยอมรับของพ่อแม่คุณ	
- 10 ถ้าคุณตัดสินใจที่จะมีเพศสัมพันธ์ คุณจะ... (เขียน "✓" ถ้าใช่/"x" ถ้าไม่ใช่/"?" ถ้าไม่แน่)

___ ถามพวกเขาว่า เป็นพวกที่มีเลือดนรกหรือเปล่า	___ มีการตรวจโรคเอดส์แล้ว
___ ถามพวกเขาว่า พวกเขาเป็นกามโรคหรือเปล่า	___ บางทีจะไม่พูดถึงโรคเอดส์
___ ถามพวกเขาว่า เคยไปตรวจโรคเอดส์ไหม	___ ใช้วิธีคุมกำเนิดด้วยตัวเอง
___ ถามเขาว่า ได้ใช้วิธีคุมกำเนิดหรือเปล่า	___ ใช้ถุงยางอนามัย
___ บางทีจะไม่พูดถึงการคุมกำเนิด	___ ไม่ถามอะไรเลย

การนัดพบ และ การแต่งงาน

- 11 ใครเป็นคนเริ่มนัดก่อน ___ ผู้ชาย ___ ผู้หญิง ___ ทั้งคู่
- 12 คุณเชื่อว่าในบ้านมีดีเรือนไหม ___ เชื่อ ___ ไม่เชื่อ ___ เชื่อบ้าง
- 13 ถ้าเชื่อ ดีบ้านดีเรือนเคยลงโทษคนที่ผิดกฎทางเพศไม่เหมาะสมไหม
___ ลงโทษ ___ ไม่ลงโทษ ___ ไม่ทราบ
- 14 ถ้าพ่อแม่ของคุณไม่ชอบศรัทธาของคุณ คุณจะยังแต่งงานกับเขา/หล่อนไหม
___ แต่ง ___ ไม่แต่ง ___ ไม่ทราบ
- 15 ถ้าคุณมีแฟน คุณเรียกเขา/หล่อนว่าอะไร
___ เรียกชื่อจริง ___ เรียกชื่อเล่น ___ นี ___ นอง ___ อื่นๆ _____
- 16 อายุเท่าไรจึงจะเหมาะแก่การแต่งงาน ___ ปี สำหรับผู้ชาย ___ ปี สำหรับผู้หญิง
- 17 คุณคิดว่า คุณจะแต่งงานเมื่อมีอายุเท่าไร ___ ปี ___ ไม่แต่ง ___ ไม่ทราบ

- 18 ถ้าคุณไม่แต่งงาน เพราะอะไร _____
- 19 คุณคิดว่าพฤติกรรมใดที่ครีกหันตพบกันส่วนมากจะกระทำ
- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> คยกันภาษาดอกไม้ม | <input type="checkbox"/> มีเพศสัมพันธ์กัน | <input type="checkbox"/> กอดกัน |
| <input type="checkbox"/> จับมือถือแขน | <input type="checkbox"/> นั่งใกล้กัน | <input type="checkbox"/> สำเร็จความใคร่ให้กัน |
| <input type="checkbox"/> จับกันเบาๆ | <input type="checkbox"/> นอนหนุนตักกัน | <input type="checkbox"/> สัมผัสร่างกายของกันและกัน |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ทำออรัลเซ็กส์ให้ฝ่ายหญิง | <input type="checkbox"/> จับอย่างตดตม | <input type="checkbox"/> ทำตาหวานใส่กัน |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ร่วมรักทางทวารหนัก | <input type="checkbox"/> ทำออรัลเซ็กส์ให้ฝ่ายชาย | |
- 20 พฤติกรรมใดที่คุณเคยกระทำกับครีกของคุณ หรือคุณจะทำถ้าคุณมีครีก
- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> คยกันภาษาดอกไม้ม | <input type="checkbox"/> มีเพศสัมพันธ์กัน | <input type="checkbox"/> กอดกัน |
| <input type="checkbox"/> จับมือถือแขน | <input type="checkbox"/> นั่งใกล้กัน | <input type="checkbox"/> สำเร็จความใคร่ให้กัน |
| <input type="checkbox"/> จับกันเบาๆ | <input type="checkbox"/> นอนหนุนตักกัน | <input type="checkbox"/> สัมผัสร่างกายของกันและกัน |
| <input type="checkbox"/> จับอย่างตดตม | <input type="checkbox"/> ทำตาหวานใส่กัน | <input type="checkbox"/> ทำออรัลเซ็กส์ให้ฝ่ายหญิง |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ร่วมรักทางทวารหนัก | <input type="checkbox"/> ทำออรัลเซ็กส์ให้ฝ่ายชาย | |
- 21 เขียน "1" หน้าพฤติกรรมที่เป็นที่ยอมรับก่อนแต่งงาน เขียน "2" หน้าพฤติกรรมที่เป็นที่ยอมรับของครีกที่มีโครงการจะแต่งงานกัน เขียน "3" หน้าพฤติกรรมที่เป็นที่ยอมรับของครีกที่แต่งงานกันแล้ว และ เขียน "4" หน้าพฤติกรรมที่ไม่เคยเป็นที่ยอมรับเลย
- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> คยกันภาษาดอกไม้ม | <input type="checkbox"/> มีเพศสัมพันธ์กัน | <input type="checkbox"/> กอดกัน |
| <input type="checkbox"/> จับมือถือแขน | <input type="checkbox"/> นั่งใกล้กัน | <input type="checkbox"/> สำเร็จความใคร่ให้กัน |
| <input type="checkbox"/> จับกันเบาๆ | <input type="checkbox"/> นอนหนุนตักกัน | <input type="checkbox"/> สัมผัสร่างกายของกันและกัน |
| <input type="checkbox"/> จับอย่างตดตม | <input type="checkbox"/> ทำตาหวานใส่กัน | <input type="checkbox"/> ทำออรัลเซ็กส์ให้ฝ่ายหญิง |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ร่วมรักทางทวารหนัก | <input type="checkbox"/> ทำออรัลเซ็กส์ให้ฝ่ายชาย | |
- 22 คุณยอมรับการมีเพศสัมพันธ์ก่อนแต่งงานที่เกิดขึ้นในสถานการณ์ใด
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ครีกต่างตกอยู่ในห้วงแห่งความรัก | <input type="checkbox"/> ครีกมีโครงการที่จะแต่งงานกัน |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ครีกมีการคุมกำเนิด | <input type="checkbox"/> ครีกทั้งสองฝ่ายต่างยินยอม |
| <input type="checkbox"/> มีความสัมพันธ์ใกล้ชิด | <input type="checkbox"/> ครีกทั้งคู่มีอายุมากกว่า 20 ปี |
| <input type="checkbox"/> อื่นๆ _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> อื่นๆ _____ |
- 23 พฤติกรรมเหล่านี้เป็นที่ยอมรับไหม ถ้าครีกกระทำในที่สาธารณะ
- | | ยอมรับ | ไม่ยอมรับ | ยอมรับ | ไม่ยอมรับ |
|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| ทานอาหารค่ำ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | จับเบาๆ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ไปตบหนึ่ง | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | จับแรงๆ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| พุดจาภาษาดอกไม้ม | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | วางมือบนขาอ่อน | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| จับมือถือแขน | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | วางมือบนหน้าตัก | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| สามกอด | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
- 24 คนหนึ่งสามารถที่จะมีแฟนหลายคนในเวลาเดียวกันได้ไหม ได้ ไม่ได้
- 25 เป็นที่ยอมรับไหม ยอมรับ ไม่ยอมรับ แล้วแต่
- 26 ผู้หญิงส่วนมากเรียนรู้เรื่องเพศได้อย่างไร (ช็กถูก "✓" ได้ไม่เกิน 3 ข้อ)
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> พ่อ | <input type="checkbox"/> โรงเรียน | <input type="checkbox"/> ที.วี./หนังสือ | <input type="checkbox"/> หนังสือ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> แม่ | <input type="checkbox"/> เพื่อน | <input type="checkbox"/> ประสบการณ์ | <input type="checkbox"/> อื่นๆ _____ |
- 27 ผู้ชายส่วนมากเรียนรู้เรื่องเพศได้อย่างไร (ช็กถูก "✓" ได้ไม่เกิน 3 ข้อ)
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> พ่อ | <input type="checkbox"/> โรงเรียน | <input type="checkbox"/> ที.วี./หนังสือ | <input type="checkbox"/> หนังสือ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> แม่ | <input type="checkbox"/> เพื่อน | <input type="checkbox"/> ประสบการณ์ | <input type="checkbox"/> อื่นๆ _____ |
- 28 คนเรียนรู้เรื่องเพศได้อย่างไร เรียนรู้ด้วยสิ่งใด เรียนรู้จากมากไปน้อย (อันดับ 1-3)
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> พ่อ | <input type="checkbox"/> โรงเรียน | <input type="checkbox"/> ที.วี./หนังสือ | <input type="checkbox"/> หนังสือ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> แม่ | <input type="checkbox"/> เพื่อน | <input type="checkbox"/> ประสบการณ์ | <input type="checkbox"/> อื่นๆ _____ |

- 29 เป็นที่ยอมรับไหมถ้ามีเพศสัมพันธ์กับคนอื่น ทั้งๆ ที่มีแฟนอยู่แล้ว ยอมรับ ไม่ยอมรับ
อธิบายเหตุผล _____
- 30 เป็นที่ยอมรับไหม ถ้าไปเที่ยวโสเภณี ทั้งๆ ที่มีแฟนอยู่แล้ว
ยอมรับเฉพาะผู้ชายเท่านั้น ยอมรับทั้งหญิงและชาย ไม่ยอมรับทั้งผู้ชายและผู้หญิง
อธิบายเหตุผล _____

การคุมกำเนิด (ถ้าคุณไม่เคยมีเพศสัมพันธ์กับคนต่างเพศ กรุณาตอบว่าคุณไม่เคยมีเพศสัมพันธ์)

- 31 สำหรับครั้งที่ เป็นนักศึกษา ใครมักจะ เป็นผู้รับผิดชอบในการคุมกำเนิด
ผู้ชาย ผู้หญิง แล้วแต่กรณี
- 32 ในความสัมพันธ์ ใครควร เป็นผู้รับผิดชอบในการคุมกำเนิด
ผู้ชาย ผู้หญิง ทั้งสองฝ่าย แล้วแต่กรณี
- 33 ใครจ่ายสำหรับการคุมกำเนิด
ฉัน คู่รักของฉัน พวกเราไม่ได้ใช้อะไร ฉันไม่เคยมีเพศสัมพันธ์
- 34 คุณได้วิธีการคุมกำเนิดมาจากไหน
ฉันขึ้นมา คู่รักของฉันขึ้นมา พวกเราต่างขึ้นมา
เอามาจากหมอ พวกเราไม่ได้ใช้อะไร ฉันไม่เคยมีเพศสัมพันธ์
- 35 คุณจะใช้อะไรในการคุมกำเนิด (ตอบถึงแม้ว่าคุณจะไม่เคยมีเพศสัมพันธ์)
ถุงยางอนามัย ยาฝังคุมกำเนิด สمنไพร ยาคุมกำเนิด
ฉีดยา ฉันเป็นคนที่ร่วมเพศ ฉันไม่ทราบ การออกมาหลังข้างนอก
ห่วงอนามัย ยาคุมกำเนิด 1 ช.ม. ทำแท้ง
การเลิกมีเพศสัมพันธ์เวลาใช้สก อื่นๆ _____
- 36 คู่รักซึ่งเป็นนักศึกษาใช้อะไรเป็นส่วนมาก เรียงลำดับที่ใช้จากมากไปน้อย (อันดับ 1-3)
ถุงยางอนามัย ยาฝังคุมกำเนิด สمنไพร ยาคุมกำเนิด
ฉีดยา ฉันเป็นคนที่ร่วมเพศ ฉันไม่ทราบ การออกมาหลังข้างนอก
ห่วงอนามัย ยาคุมกำเนิด 1 ช.ม. ทำแท้ง
การเลิกมีเพศสัมพันธ์เวลาใช้สก อื่นๆ _____
- 37 ถ้าคุณเคยมีเพศสัมพันธ์มาก่อน คุณเคยพูดคุยเกี่ยวกับการคุมกำเนิดกับคู่รักของคุณไหม
เคย ไม่เคย บางครั้ง ฉันไม่เคยมีเพศสัมพันธ์ ฉันเป็นคนที่ร่วมเพศ
- 38 คุณใช้วิธีคุมกำเนิดไหม ใช่ ไม่ใช่ บางครั้ง ไม่เคยมีเพศสัมพันธ์
- 39 ถ้าคุณเคยมีเพศสัมพันธ์โดยปราศจากการคุมกำเนิด คุณรู้สึกอย่างไร
กังวลขณะมีเพศสัมพันธ์ กังวลหลังจากมีเพศสัมพันธ์แล้ว ไม่มีความรู้สึกอะไร
ต้องการที่จะแต่งงาน อิสระ อื่นๆ _____
- 40 วิธีคุมกำเนิดชนิดไหนที่คุณเคยใช้
ถุงยางอนามัย ยาฝังคุมกำเนิด สمنไพร ยาคุมกำเนิด
ฉีดยา ฉันเป็นคนที่ร่วมเพศ ฉันไม่ทราบ การออกมาหลังข้างนอก
ห่วงอนามัย ยาคุมกำเนิด 1 ช.ม. ทำแท้ง
การเลิกมีเพศสัมพันธ์เวลาใช้สก อื่นๆ _____
- 41 ถ้าคุณเคยมีเพศสัมพันธ์มาก่อน วิธีคุมกำเนิดใดที่คุณชอบมากที่สุด (เลือก 1 ข้อ)
ถุงยางอนามัย ยาฝังคุมกำเนิด สمنไพร ยาคุมกำเนิด
ฉีดยา ฉันเป็นคนที่ร่วมเพศ ฉันไม่ทราบ การออกมาหลังข้างนอก
ห่วงอนามัย ยาคุมกำเนิด 1 ช.ม. ทำแท้ง
การเลิกมีเพศสัมพันธ์เวลาใช้สก อื่นๆ _____

- 42 วิธีการคุมกำเนิดชนิดใดที่ป้องกันโรคติดต่อได้
 ___ ถุงยางอนามัย ___ ยาฝังคุมกำเนิด ___ สมนไพร ___ ยาคุมกำเนิด
 ___ ฉีดยา ___ ฉันทันเป็นคนที่รักร่วมเพศ ___ ฉันทันไม่ทราบ ___ การออกมหาหลังข้างนอก
 ___ ห่วงอนามัย ___ ยาคุมกำเนิด 1 ชม. ___ ทำแท้ง
 ___ การเลิกมีเพศสัมพันธ์เวลาใกล้ ___ อื่นๆ _____
- 43 ใครสอนคุณเกี่ยวกับการคุมกำเนิด
 ___ โรงเรียน/ครู ___ เพื่อน ___ หมอ/พยาบาล ___ หนังสือ ___ คู่รัก
 ___ พ่อแม่ ___ พี่น้อง ___ คำแนะนำการใช้ยา ___ อื่นๆ _____
- 44 คุณเคยพูดคุยเกี่ยวกับวิธีการคุมกำเนิดกับเพื่อนบ้างไหม ___ เคย ___ ไม่เคย
 ถ้าไม่เคย เพราะอะไร _____
- 45 วิชาเกี่ยวกับการคุมกำเนิดเป็นเรื่องที่น่าอายไหม ___ ใช่ ___ ไม่ใช่
- 46 ทำไม่ _____
- 47 ทำไมคุณคิดว่านักศึกษาบางคนไม่ได้ใช้วิธีคุมกำเนิด _____
-
- 48 คุณคิดว่าถุงยางอนามัยใช้เพื่อป้องกันอะไรมากกว่า
 ___ ป้องกันการตั้งครรภ์ ___ ป้องกันโรค ___ ป้องกันทั้งสองอย่าง
- 49 ถ้าคุณและคู่รักเคยใช้ถุงยางอนามัย คุณคิดว่าถุงยางอนามัยเป็นอย่างไร
 ___ ยุ่งยากมาก ___ ลดความกังวล ___ ทำให้ฉันมีความรู้สึกปลอดภัย
 ___ ลดความรู้สึกทางเพศ ___ ใช้ยากมาก ___ ไม่เป็นธรรมชาติ
 ___ ไม่มีปัญหาจะใช้ ___ มีกลิ่นเหม็น ___ ฉันทันไม่เคยใช้ถุงยางอนามัย
- 50 ถ้าคุณเคยไปเที่ยวโสเภณี คุณใช้ถุงยางอนามัย
 ___ ไม่เคย ___ บางครั้ง ___ ทุกครั้ง ___ ฉันทันไม่เคยไป
- 51 ถ้าคุณมีเพศสัมพันธ์กับใครบางคน คุณใช้ถุงยางอนามัย
 ___ ไม่เคย ___ บางครั้ง ___ ทุกครั้ง ___ ฉันทันไม่เคยไป
- 52 ถ้าคุณเคยใช้ถุงยางอนามัย เคยแตกหรือรั่วไหม
 ___ เคย ___ ไม่เคย ___ ฉันทันไม่เคยมีเพศสัมพันธ์
- 53 นักศึกษาชายหญิง ใช้ชีวิตฉันที่ลามีภรรยา ถ้าเกิดฝ่ายหญิงตั้งครรภ์ขณะที่เรียนอยู่ ใครรับผิดชอบ
 ___ ผู้ชาย ___ ผู้หญิง ___ ทั้งคู่ ___ แล้วแต่กรณี
- 54 ถ้าการตั้งครรภ์เกิดขึ้นในขณะที่ทั้งสองยังเป็นนักศึกษาอยู่ ใครควรถูกตำหนิ
 ___ ผู้ชาย ___ ผู้หญิง ___ ทั้งคู่ ___ แล้วแต่กรณี
- 55 การทำแท้งบาปไหม ___ บาป ___ ไม่บาป ___ บางครั้ง
- 56 การทำแท้งควรจะต้องตามกฎหมาย ___ ใช่ ___ ไม่ใช่ ___ ในบางกรณี
- 57 บุคคลใดควรถูกพิจารณาให้ทำแท้งได้
 ___ นักเรียน ___ ผู้ถูกข่มขืน ___ ผู้ที่มีเชื้อ HIV+ ___ คนจน
 ___ ผู้ป่วย ___ คนที่มลกลมาก ___ ผู้ที่ไม่ต้องการมีลูก ___ อื่นๆ _____
- 58 ในการแต่งงานโดยปกติใครตัดสินใจเมื่อต้องการมีลูก
 ___ ผู้ชาย ___ ผู้หญิง ___ แล้วแต่กรณี
- 59 ถ้าคุณหรือแฟนของคุณตั้งครรภ์ คุณจะทำอย่างไร? _____
- 60 การทำแท้งเป็นอันตรายไหม ___ อันตราย ___ ไม่อันตราย ___ ไม่ทราบ

การปฏิบัติเกี่ยวกับเรื่องเพศ

- 1 ถ้าคนโสดสองคนชอบพอกัน(รักกัน)พฤติกรรมแบบไหนที่พวกเขาทำแล้วเป็นที่ยอมรับ

<input type="checkbox"/> เล่นห เลินตา	<input type="checkbox"/> จับแบบคดคิม	<input type="checkbox"/> ออรัล เช็กส์ที่ฝ่ายหญิงเป็นคนทำ
<input type="checkbox"/> จับมือถ่อแขน	<input type="checkbox"/> กอดจบบก	<input type="checkbox"/> ออรัล เช็กส์ที่ฝ่ายชายเป็นคนทำ
<input type="checkbox"/> พดเกยวพาราสักัน	<input type="checkbox"/> จับนม	<input type="checkbox"/> รจมประเวณี
<input type="checkbox"/> จับองคชาติ	<input type="checkbox"/> รวมเพศทางทวารหนัก	<input type="checkbox"/> สำเร็จความใคร่ด้วยตนเอง
		<input type="checkbox"/> อื่น ๆ _____

- 2 พฤติกรรมแบบใดที่เป็นที่ยอมรับเฉพาะครีกหลังจากการหมั้นหรือแต่งงานเท่านั้น

<input type="checkbox"/> เล่นห เลินตา	<input type="checkbox"/> จับแบบคดคิม	<input type="checkbox"/> ออรัล เช็กส์ที่ฝ่ายหญิงเป็นคนทำ
<input type="checkbox"/> จับมือถ่อแขน	<input type="checkbox"/> กอดจบบก	<input type="checkbox"/> ออรัล เช็กส์ที่ฝ่ายชายเป็นคนทำ
<input type="checkbox"/> พดเกยวพาราสักัน	<input type="checkbox"/> จับนม	<input type="checkbox"/> รจมประเวณี
<input type="checkbox"/> จับองคชาติ	<input type="checkbox"/> รวมเพศทางทวารหนัก	<input type="checkbox"/> สำเร็จความใคร่ด้วยมือ
		<input type="checkbox"/> อื่น ๆ _____

- 3 พฤติกรรมแบบใดที่นักปศุสัตว์หรือสัตวกรรรมชาติ

<input type="checkbox"/> เล่นห เลินตา	<input type="checkbox"/> จับแบบคดคิม	<input type="checkbox"/> ออรัล เช็กส์ที่ฝ่ายหญิงเป็นคนทำ
<input type="checkbox"/> จับมือถ่อแขน	<input type="checkbox"/> กอดจบบก	<input type="checkbox"/> ออรัล เช็กส์ที่ฝ่ายชายเป็นคนทำ
<input type="checkbox"/> พดเกยวพาราสักัน	<input type="checkbox"/> จับนม	<input type="checkbox"/> รวมประเวณี
<input type="checkbox"/> จับองคชาติ	<input type="checkbox"/> รวมเพศทางทวารหนัก	<input type="checkbox"/> สำเร็จความใคร่ด้วยตนเอง
		<input type="checkbox"/> อื่น ๆ _____

- 4 ในห้องเรียนของคุณ นักศึกษาชายกี่เปอร์เซนต์ที่คุณคิดว่า เคยทำในสิ่งต่อไปนี้ และถ้าคุณเป็นผู้ชายคุณเคยทำไหม

		คุณ		คุณ	
		%	เคย	%	เคย
			ไม่เคย		ไม่เคย
จับผู้หญิง	_____	_____	_____	จับผู้ชาย	_____
สัมผัสร่างกายผู้หญิง	_____	_____	_____	สัมผัสร่างกายผู้ชาย	_____
สำเร็จความใคร่ด้วยตัวเอง	_____	_____	_____	ถกทำออรัลเช็กส์	_____
ทำออรัลเช็กส์ให้ผู้หญิง	_____	_____	_____	ทำออรัลเช็กส์ให้ผู้ชาย	_____
มีเพศสัมพันธ์	_____	_____	_____	มีเพศสัมพันธ์ทางทวารหนัก	_____
ไปเที่ยวโสเภณี	_____	_____	_____		

- 5 ในห้องเรียนของคุณ นักศึกษาหญิงกี่เปอร์เซนต์ที่คุณคิดว่า เคยทำในสิ่งต่อไปนี้ และถ้าคุณเป็นผู้ชายคุณเคยทำไหม

		คุณ		คุณ	
		%	เคย	%	เคย
			ไม่เคย		ไม่เคย
จับผู้หญิง	_____	_____	_____	จับผู้ชาย	_____
สัมผัสร่างกายผู้หญิง	_____	_____	_____	สัมผัสร่างกายผู้ชาย	_____
สำเร็จความใคร่ด้วยตัวเอง	_____	_____	_____	ถกทำออรัลเช็กส์	_____
ทำออรัลเช็กส์ให้ผู้หญิง	_____	_____	_____	ทำออรัลเช็กส์ให้ผู้ชาย	_____
มีเพศสัมพันธ์	_____	_____	_____	มีเพศสัมพันธ์ทางทวารหนัก	_____
ไปเที่ยวโสเภณี	_____	_____	_____		

- 6 เมื่ออายุเท่าไรที่คุณมีประสบการณ์ครั้งแรกในการกอดจบบก _____ ปี
- 7 เมื่ออายุเท่าไรที่คุณมีเพศสัมพันธ์ครั้งแรก _____ ปี
- 8 โอโม เช็กชวล (ความใคร่ในเพศเดียวกัน) เป็นที่ยอมรับในกลุ่มผู้ชายหรือไม่

<input type="checkbox"/> ยอมรับ	<input type="checkbox"/> ไม่ยอมรับ	<input type="checkbox"/> ไม่แน่ใจ
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- 9 โอโม เช็กชวล (ความใคร่ในเพศเดียวกัน) เป็นที่ยอมรับในกลุ่มผู้หญิงหรือไม่

<input type="checkbox"/> ยอมรับ	<input type="checkbox"/> ไม่ยอมรับ	<input type="checkbox"/> ไม่แน่ใจ
---------------------------------	------------------------------------	-----------------------------------

- 10 คุณรู้จักนักเรียนที่เป็นเกย์ประมาณกี่คน _____คน
- 11 กีเปอร์เซนต์ของนักเรียนชายที่คุณคิดว่า เป็นเกย์ _____%
- 12 คุณรู้จักนักเรียนที่เป็นเลสเบียนประมาณกี่คน _____คน
- 13 กีเปอร์เซนต์ของนักเรียนหญิงที่คุณคิดว่าเป็นเลสเบียน _____%
- 14 คุณเป็นเกย์หรือเลสเบียนไหม _____ เป็น _____ ไม่เป็น _____ ไม่แน่ใจ
- 15 คุณเป็นไบเซ็กชวลหรือไม่ _____ เป็น _____ ไม่เป็น _____ ไม่แน่ใจ
- 16 พฤติกรรมรักร่วมเพศเกี่ยวข้องกับกรรมพันธุ์มากกว่าสิ่งแวดล้อมไหม
 _____เกี่ยวกับกรรมพันธุ์ _____เกี่ยวกับสิ่งแวดล้อม _____เกี่ยวข้องกับทั้งสองอย่าง _____ไม่แน่ใจ
- 17 คนที่เป็นเกย์หรือเลสเบียนเป็นมาตั้งแต่เกิดใช่หรือไม่ _____ใช่ _____ไม่ใช่
- 18 การสำเร็จความใคร่ด้วยตัวเองเป็นเรื่องปกติใช่หรือไม่ _____ใช่ _____ไม่ใช่ _____ไม่ทราบ
- 19 ใครสำเร็จความใคร่มากกว่ากัน ผู้หญิงหรือผู้ชาย _____ชาย _____หญิง _____เท่ากัน _____ไม่รู้
- 20 ทำไมคนถึงสำเร็จความใคร่ด้วยตัวเอง
 _____สัญชาตญาณ _____รู้สึกดี _____นิสัย
 _____เพื่อเรียนรู้สิ่งที่พวกเขาชอบ _____ปลดปล่อยอารมณ์ _____อื่น ๆ _____
- 21 คุณสำเร็จความใคร่ด้วยตนเองบ่อยแค่ไหน _____ทุก ๆ วัน _____หลาย ๆ ครั้ง/สัปดาห์
 _____หลาย ๆ ครั้ง/เดือน _____หลาย ๆ ครั้ง/ปี _____ไม่เคย
- 22 ทำไมคนถึงสำเร็จความใคร่ด้วยตนเอง _____สัญชาตญาณ _____รู้สึกดี _____นิสัย
 _____เพื่อเรียนรู้สิ่งที่พวกเขาชอบ _____ปลดปล่อยอารมณ์ _____อื่น ๆ _____
- 23 ให้ใส่หมายเลข 1-3 ลงใน 3 ข้อที่คิดว่าเป็นท่าร่วมเพศที่ธรรมดาที่สุด (1 หมายถึงธรรมดาที่สุด
 _____ผู้หญิงอยู่ข้างบน _____ทำนั่ง _____ทำอื่น _____ผู้ชายอยู่ข้างบน
 _____ทำตะแคงข้าง _____เข้าข้างหลัง _____อื่น ๆ _____
- 24 ท่าร่วมเพศแบบไหนที่คุณเคยลอง
 _____ผู้หญิงอยู่ข้างบน _____ทำนั่ง _____ทำอื่น _____ผู้ชายอยู่ข้างบน _____ฉันไม่เคยมี
 _____ทำตะแคงข้าง _____เข้าข้างหลัง _____อื่น ๆ _____เพศสัมพันธ์
- 25 การทำออร์ลเซ็กส์ให้ผู้ชายเป็นเรื่องธรรมดาหรือไม่ _____ธรรมดา _____ไม่ธรรมดา _____ไม่รู้
- 26 ผู้ชายส่วนมากชอบไหม _____ชอบ _____ไม่ชอบ _____ไม่ทราบ
- 27 ผู้หญิงส่วนมากชอบไหม _____ชอบ _____ไม่ชอบ _____ไม่ทราบ
- 28 การทำออร์ลเซ็กส์ให้ผู้หญิงเป็นเรื่องธรรมดาหรือไม่ _____ธรรมดา _____ไม่ธรรมดา _____ไม่รู้
- 29 ผู้หญิงส่วนมากชอบทำไหม _____ชอบ _____ไม่ชอบ _____ไม่ทราบ
- 30 ผู้ชายส่วนมากชอบทำไหม _____ชอบ _____ไม่ชอบ _____ไม่ทราบ
- 31 การร่วมเพศทางทวารหนัก(ประตหลัง) เป็นเรื่องธรรมดาสำหรับพวกรักร่วมเพศไหม?
 _____ธรรมดา _____ไม่ธรรมดา _____ไม่ทราบ
- 32 คุณเคยลองไหม _____เคยยกทำ _____เคยเป็นพ่อกำ _____ไม่เคย
- 33 ผู้ชายส่วนมากถึงจุดสุดยอดใหม่ในขณะที่มีเพศสัมพันธ์ _____ถึง _____ไม่ถึง _____ไม่ทราบ
- 34 ผู้หญิงส่วนมากถึงจุดสุดยอดใหม่ในขณะที่มีเพศสัมพันธ์ _____ถึง _____ไม่ถึง _____ไม่ทราบ
- 35 ในขณะที่คุณมีเพศสัมพันธ์คุณถึงจุดสุดยอดกี่ % _____% _____ผม/ดิฉัน ไม่เคยมีเพศสัมพันธ์
- 36 ผู้ชายและผู้หญิงถึงจุดสุดยอดแตกต่างกันอย่างไร _____

เพศสัมพันธ์ในสายเลือด และการข่มขืน

- 37 คุณเคยได้ยินเรื่องราวเกี่ยวกับเพศสัมพันธ์ในสายเลือดไหม _____เคย _____ไม่เคย
- 38 คุณรู้จักบางคนที่ถูกเป็นเหยื่อของเพศสัมพันธ์ในสายเลือดไหม _____รู้จัก _____ไม่รู้จัก
- 39 ใครควรถูกตำหนิ _____ผู้กระทำ _____เหยื่อผู้เคราะห์ร้าย _____สังคม _____อื่นๆ _____

1 เครื่องสำอางของขลัง

- 65 เครื่องสำอางของขลังชนิดไหนที่คุณเคย
 ___ ตูขกรุด ___ รุก-ขม ___ พระชนแผน ___ ปลัดขลิกล ___ ลาริกาลิ้นทอง ___ วาน
 ___ นามันพราย ___ ขี้ผึ้ง ___ ลูกกรอก ___ นางกวัก ___ ผังรูปผังรอย ___ อื่นๆ _____
- 66 ชนิดไหนที่คุณใช้
 ___ ตูขกรุด ___ รุก-ขม ___ พระชนแผน ___ ปลัดขลิกล ___ ลาริกาลิ้นทอง ___ วาน
 ___ นามันพราย ___ ขี้ผึ้ง ___ ลูกกรอก ___ นางกวัก ___ ผังรูปผังรอย ___ อื่นๆ _____
- 67 ชนิดไหนที่เพื่อนของคุณหรือบุคคลในครอบครัววางสูงเขาใช้
 ___ ตูขกรุด ___ รุก-ขม ___ พระชนแผน ___ ปลัดขลิกล ___ ลาริกาลิ้นทอง ___ วาน
 ___ นามันพราย ___ ขี้ผึ้ง ___ ลูกกรอก ___ นางกวัก ___ ผังรูปผังรอย ___ อื่นๆ _____
- 68 ถ้าคุณมีเครื่องสำอางขลังคุณเอามาจากไหน?
 ___ จากแม่ ___ จากเพื่อน ___ จากยายาย ___ จากป้า ___ จากพระ ___ ที่ตัวเอง
 ___ จากพ่อ ___ จากพี่น้อง ___ จากปตา ___ จากลุง ___ ซื้อมา ___ อื่นๆ _____
- 69 คุณเคยกินอาหาร/สมนไพรที่ทำให้ตัวคุณเช็กซีขึ้นหรือดึงดูดความสนใจจากผู้อื่นมากขึ้นหรือไม่?
 ___ เคย ___ ไม่เคย ถ้าเคย คืออะไร? _____
- 70 คุณเคยให้ อาหาร/สมนไพร กับใครบางคน เพื่อทำให้ตัวเขาเช็กซีขึ้นไหม?
 ___ เคย ___ ไม่เคย ถ้าเคย คืออะไร? _____
- 71 คุณคิดว่าผีเหล่านี้มีจริงไหม?
 ___ ผีปอบ ___ ผีกระสือ ___ ผีพราย ___ เสือสมิง ___ ผีแม่ม้าย
 ___ กระหัง ___ ผีโป่งค่าง ___ ผีข่านผีเรือน ___ ผีเมือง ___ ผีตายโหง
 ___ ผีเปรต ___ ผีตายทั้งกลม ___ ผีตะเคียน ___ ผีตานี ___ ผีป่า
 ___ ผีปตา ___ ผีโรผีนา ___ ผีเจ้าที ___ ผีกะ ___ ผีปอบ
- 72 อาหารหรือสมนไพรชนิดไหนที่คุณเคยกิน
 ___ แผลงวันส่เบน ___ โส้มเกาหลี่ ___ ดั่งเห่า ___ นูอแรด ___ กล้วย
 ___ อ้วยวะเพคสังหโต ___ อั้งตันหมี่ ___ สมองลิ่ง ___ อื่น ๆ _____

ความรู้เรื่องเพศ

- 73 ผึ้งทั้งตัว ๆ ไปมีประจำเดือนกี่วัน?
 ก. 2 วัน ข. 4 วัน ค. 7 วัน ง. 9 วัน จ. ไม่ทราบ
- 74 ช่วงไหนที่ผึ้งจะตั้งท้องได้มากที่สุด?
 ก. ช่วงมีประจำเดือน
 ข. 15 วันหลังจากวันแรกของการมีประจำเดือน
 ค. 7 วันหลังจากวันแรกของการมีประจำเดือน
 ง. 15 วัน หลังจากวันสุดท้ายของการมีประจำเดือน
 จ. ไม่ทราบ
- 75 ขาคมกำเนิดสามารถป้องกันโรคติดต่อได้ ก. ถูก ข. ผิด
- 76 ถ้าผู้ชายถอนอวัยวะเพศก่อนการหลั่งน้ำอสุจิ ผู้หญิงสามารถที่จะท้องได้? ก. ถูก ข. ผิด
- 77 องชายอนามัยควรใส่ตอนไหน?
 ก. ก่อนที่องคชาติจะแข็งตัว ข. ขณะที่ยองคชาติกำลังแข็งตัว
 ค. หลังจากที่ยองคชาติแข็งตัว ง. หลังจากมีเพศสัมพันธ์ได้สักครู่, แต่ยังไม่มีการหลั่ง
 จ. ไม่ทราบ
- 78 เพศของเด็กทารกจะตัดสินใจได้จาก ก. ไข่ ข. อสุจิ ค. โขชะตา ง. ไม่ทราบ

- 40 สาเหตุของการมีเพศสัมพันธ์ในสายเลือดคืออะไร
 ___ขาดเพศสัมพันธ์ ___ป่วยทางจิตใจ ___ต้องการอำนาจ
 ___แอลกอฮอล์/ยา ___กลัวสวย/หม่นหมอง ___สิ่งกระตุ้นจากสภานแวดล้อม
 ___จิตใจชั่วร้าย ___อื่น ๆ _____
- 41 เด็กควรจะทำอย่างไรถ้าหากว่าเขา/เธอ ตกเป็นเหยื่อของเพศสัมพันธ์ทางสายเลือด

- 42 เพศสัมพันธ์ในสายเลือดเกิดขึ้นมากใน ___ผู้หญิง ___ผู้ชาย ___ทั้งหญิงและชาย
- 43 โดยปกติใครคือผู้กระทำผิด ___พ่อ ___พี่ชาย ___ลุง/อา ___ป้า/ตา ___ญาติ
 ___แม่ ___พี่สาว ___ป้า/น้า ___ย่า/ยาย
- 44 การข่มขืนคืออะไร _____
- 45 การข่มขืนมีมากไหม ___มาก ___ไม่มาก ___ไม่รู้
- 46 การข่มขืนผิดไหม ___ผิด ___ไม่ผิด ___บางครั้ง
- 47 เคยตกข่มขืนไหม ___เคย ___ไม่เคย
- 48 ถ้าเคย เคยบอกใครไหม ___บอก ___ไม่บอก
 ถ้าบอกบอกใคร _____
- 49 ถ้าไม่ได้บอกใคร ทำไมคุณถึงไม่บอก _____
- 50 เคยได้รับการกระทบกระทั่งอย่างรุนแรงทางด้านจิตใจหรือร่างกายไหม
 ___เคย ___ไม่เคย ___ไม่แน่ใจ
- 51 ถ้าคุณมีโอกาสข่มขืนผู้หญิงโดยรู้ว่าไม่ลجبคุณจะทำไหม ___ทำ ___ไม่ทำ ___ไม่แน่
- 52 เคยข่มขืนใครไหม ___เคย ___ไม่เคย ___ไม่แน่
- 53 สาเหตุของการข่มขืนคืออะไร
 ___พื้นฐานทางครอบครัว ___สังคมสมัยใหม่ ___การแต่งตัวสมัยใหม่ของผู้หญิง
 ___ผู้ชายที่ป่วยทางจิต ___ขาดการมีเพศสัมพันธ์ ___เนื้อเรื่องในภาพยนตร์หรือรูปภาพ
 ___ความต้องการอำนาจ/ควบคุม ___อื่น ๆ _____

บทเรื่องตัวอย่าง เวลา 23.30 น. นักเรียนหญิงจาก มคว. กำลังขี่มอเตอร์ไซด์กลับบ้านจากสพาร์ตรถของเธอเกิดขยงราวตั้งนั้นเธอต้องจ้งจากสามแยกถนนลินตันไปยังถนนของเธอรหวางทางมีชายแปลกหน้าปรากฏกายขึ้นพร้อมกับเดินเข้ามาใกล้เธอ เธอขอร้องให้เขาออกไปห่าง ๆ แต่เขาไม่ทำ เธอมองไม่เห็นใครอยู่แถวนั้นเลย เมื่อเดินไปถึงที่มีคนเขาฉุดเธอ และบังคับให้เธอนอนลงบนพื้นและข่มขืนเธอ เธอกลัวมากไม่กล้าส่งเสียงร้องขอความช่วยเหลือเพราะเธอมีมิดเธอกฎทำร้ายจนมีแผลลลอกปอกเปิก แต่ไม่กล้าส่งเสียงร้อง เธอทิ้งรถมอเตอร์ไซด์และวิ่งกลับบ้าน เธอไม่ได้บอกตำรวจหรือคนอื่นอีกเลย

- 54 คุณคิดว่าเรื่องตัวอย่างนี้เป็นไปได้ไหม ___เป็นไปได้ ___เป็นไปได้ ___เป็นไปได้
- 55 ถ้าคุณเป็นนักเรียนคนนั้น คุณจะทำเหมือนเธอไหม ___ทำ ___ไม่ทำ
- 56 ถ้าไม่ทำ คุณจะทำอะไรที่แตกต่างออกไป _____
- 57 ใครถูกตำหนิมากกว่ากัน ผู้ชายหรือนักเรียนหญิง ___ผู้ชาย ___ผู้หญิง ___ทั้งผู้หญิงและผู้ชาย
- 58 คุณคิดว่า การข่มขืนเพิ่มขึ้นหรือลดลงในประเทศไทย ___เพิ่มขึ้น ___ลดลง ___เท่าเดิม
- 59 ผู้หญิงสามารถข่มขืนผู้ชายได้ไหม ___ได้ ___ไม่ได้ ___ไม่รู้
- 60 ผู้ชาย ___ผิด ___ไม่ผิด
- 61 ผู้ชายสามารถข่มขืนภรรยาเขาได้ไหม ___ได้ ___ไม่ได้ ___ไม่รู้
- 62 ผู้ชาย ___ผิด ___ไม่ผิด
- 63 ผู้ชายสามารถข่มขืนผู้ชายได้ไหม ___ได้ ___ไม่ได้ ___ไม่รู้
- 64 ผู้ชาย ___ผิด ___ไม่ผิด

- 79 เป็นไขได้ไหมที่เชื้อ HIV จะติดต่อทางออร์ลเซ็กส์
 ก. เป็นไปได้
 ข. เป็นไปไม่ได้
 ค. ได้ แต่เฉพาะการทำออร์ลเซ็กส์ให้ฝ่ายชาย
 ง. ได้ แต่เฉพาะการทำออร์ลเซ็กส์ให้ฝ่ายหญิง
 จ. ไม่ทราบ
- 80 ขาดควรรักษาเวลาไหน
 ก. อย่างน้อย 3 วันก่อนการมีเพศสัมพันธ์ และ 3 วันหลังจากนั้น
 ข. อย่างน้อย 1 เดือนก่อนการมีเพศสัมพันธ์ที่ไม่มีการป้องกัน
 ค. เริ่มกินวันแรกที่ควรมีเพศสัมพันธ์
 ง. ไม่ทราบ
- 81 ถุงยางอนามัยของผู้หญิงอาจใช้
 ก. 2 หรือ 3 ครั้ง จนกระทั่งถุงยางฉีกขาด ข. ใช้แค่ครั้งเดียว
 ค. ใช้ได้ตลอดเท่าที่ยังจะทำความสะอาดได้ ง. ไม่ทราบ
- 82 น้ายาล้างช่องคลอดจะป้องกันการตั้งครรภ์ได้ ก. ถูก ข. ผิด
- 83 ถ้าผู้ชายไม่เคยรวมเพศ จนกระทั่งอายุ 25 ปี เขาอาจจะมีปัญหาทางสุขภาพ โดยเฉพาะเกี่ยวกับการมีลูก ก. ถูก ข. ผิด
- 84 ผู้หญิงจะมีความสุขในครั้งแรกของการมีเพศสัมพันธ์ ก. ถูก ข. ผิด
- 85 คนที่ติดเชื้อเอดส์ยังคงมีสุขภาพแข็งแรง ก. ถูก ข. ไม่ถูก
- 86 ส่วนใดในร่างกายของผู้หญิงที่ไวต่อความรู้สึกทรงเพศมากที่สุด?
 ก. อวัยวะเพศ ข. นม ค. คลิตอริส ง. แคม จ. ไม่ทราบ
- 87 ถุงยางอนามัย ขนาดไม่สำคัญ ทุกคนใช้ได้หมด ก. ถูก ข. ผิด
- 88 ขณะที่ผู้ชายรวมเพศผู้ชายสวมถุงยางอนามัย พอเขาหลังเสร็จแล้ว อวัยวะเพศอ่อนตัวลง เขาถอนอวัยวะเพศออกในขณะที่มันอ่อนตัว จะปลอดภัยไหม
 ก. ปลอดภัย ข. ไม่ปลอดภัย ค. ไม่ทราบ
- 89 น้าหล่อลื่นที่อยู่ในถุงยางอนามัยเพียงพอทุกครั้ง ก. ถูก ข. ผิด
- 90 ผู้หญิงสามารถตั้งครรภ์ได้ แม้กระทั่งช่วงเวลาที่มีประจำเดือน ก. ถูก ข. ผิด

APPENDIX E. SURVEY ON INFLUENCES OF MASS MEDIA ON STUDENTS AT SWU MAHASARAKHAM¹

Purpose This survey was created to examine the views of SWU-Mahsarakham students on various aspects of mass media. It is one part of research on "Sexuality Among University Students in Northeast Thailand" by Ajaan Pamela DaGrossa, a doctoral student at the University of Hawaii.

Note This survey will have no consequences on you or others. Please answer as truthfully as possible.

Part 1 Write a slash in front of the appropriate information for you

Part 2 Answer the questions by filling in all blanks and draw a slash for multiple-choice questions where you can select more than one answer.

Part 1

- Sex female male
- Year first year second year third year fourth year
- Age 16-18 yr 19-21 yr 22-24 yr 25 or more yr
- Faculty Humanities Education Sciences
 Social Science Technology
- Domicile Northern Region
 Central Region
 Southern Region
 Northeast Region

Part 2

1. a. What magazines do you read regularly? _____
 b. What columns do you read regularly? _____
2. a. What newspapers do you read regularly? _____
 b. What newspaper columns do you read regularly? _____
3. What TV programs do you like to watch? _____
4. This year, what TV dramas have you watched? _____
5. a. What radio stations do you listen to? _____
 b. The programs you like to listen to are _____
6. What type of books do you like to read?
 novels romance science
 detective/spy ghost witty
 drama other

¹ This is a translation of the survey. Formatting is retained as much as possible here. It was one double-sided page.

7. What types of cartoon books do you like to read (give the names of the books)?

8. What type of movies do you like to watch (give the titles in the blanks)?

() romance _____ () comedy _____

() nude _____ () teenage _____

() drama _____ () life stories _____

() other _____

9. What singers or musical groups do you like most? _____

10. What advertisements do you like most? _____

11. a. What male celebrity do you like most? Why? _____

b. What female celebrity do you like most? Why? _____

12. What types of pictures do you have in your room?

() views () nudes () children

() art () religious

() singing star () other _____

Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX F. QUESTION ON CHARACTERISTICS OF MEN AND WOMEN

Part 1, Question 46

โดยทั่วไป ผู้หญิงหรือผู้ชายที่จะสามารถมีประสิทธิภาพ ในความสามารถเหล่านี้มากกว่ากัน และ ถ้าอันใดเหมาะสมกับเพศหนึ่งมากกว่าเพศอื่น เขียนเช็ค (✓) ใต้ธรรมชาติ หรือ ใต้สังคมแล้วแต่สาเหตุที่ทำให้แตกต่างกัน

In general, are men or women more endowed with the following abilities and if one is more appropriate for one sex than the other, write a check (✓) under nature or society depending on the cause of the difference.

characteristics strongly associated with men

respondents	ความเป็นผู้นำ leadership (N=90)			การตัดสินใจ decision-making (N=89)			อารมณ์ขัน sense of humor (N=87)			มีความต้องการทางเพศ has sexual desires (N=88)		
	M*	W	S	M	F	S	M	F	S	M	F	S
males	<i>n</i> 30	0	4	31	1	2	25	0	8	15	2	16
	% 88%	0%	12%	91%	3%	6%	76%	0%	24%	45%	6%	48%
females	<i>n</i> 46	0	10	39	2	14	25	4	25	33	3	19
	% 82%	0%	18%	71%	4%	25%	46%	7%	46%	60%	5%	35%
all	<i>n</i> 76	0	14	70	3	16	50	4	33	48	5	35
	% 84%	0%	16%	79%	3%	18%	58%	5%	38%	55%	6%	40%

*M = men more, W = women more, S = same; items may not add up to 100% due to rounding

characteristics somewhat associated with men

respondents	แสดงความรู้สึก shows feelings (N=87)			มั่นใจ confident (N=89)			เห็นแก่ตัว selfish (N=87)			แสดงความรัก show love (N=89)		
	M	W	S	M	F	S	M	F	S	M	F	S
males	<i>n</i> 23	7	3	20	0	13	15	3	15	19	5	10
	% 70%	21%	9%	61%	0%	39%	45%	9%	45%	56%	15%	29%
females	<i>n</i> 25	26	3	23	6	27	26	5	23	24	19	12
	% 46%	48%	6%	41%	11%	48%	48%	9%	43%	44%	35%	22%
all	<i>n</i> 48	33	6	43	6	40	41	8	38	43	24	22
	% 55%	38%	7%	48%	7%	45%	47%	9%	44%	48%	27%	25%

characteristics somewhat associated with men

respondents	มีความสามารถ has ability (N=89)			ไหวพริบ resourceful / astute (N=87)		
	M	W	S	M	F	S
males	<i>n</i> 17	0	17	14	0	19
	% 50%	0%	50%	42%	0%	58%
females	<i>n</i> 18	2	35	13	7	34
	% 33%	4%	64%	24%	13%	63%
all	<i>n</i> 35	2	52	27	7	53
	% 39%	2%	58%	31%	8%	61%

strongly neutral characteristics

respondents		ฉลาด intelligent (N=88)		
		M	W	S
males	n	7	1	25
	%	21%	3%	76%
females	n	6	3	46
	%	11%	5%	84%
all	n	13	4	71
	%	15%	5%	81%

no consensus

respondents		รักษาคำพูด keeps word (N=89)		
		M	F	S
males	n	13	7	13
	%	39%	21%	39%
females	n	15	20	21
	%	27%	36%	38%
all	n	28	27	34
	%	31%	30%	38%

characteristics somewhat associated with females

respondents		หน้าใจ thoughtful / generous (N=89)			จริงใจ sincere (N=88)			สุภาพ polite (N=88)			อดทน be patient / endure (N=89)			รับผิดชอบ responsible (N=88)		
		M	W	S	M	M	F	S	F	S	M	F	S	M	F	S
males	n	4	4	26	5	9	19	7	12	14	21	8	4	12	9	12
	%	12%	12%	76%	15%	27%	59%	21%	36%	42%	64%	24%	12%	36%	27%	36%
females	n	4	18	33	7	22	26	12	23	20	13	34	9	12	21	22
	%	7%	33%	60%	13%	40%	47%	22%	42%	36%	23%	61%	16%	22%	38%	40%
all	n	8	22	59	12	31	45	19	35	34	34	42	13	24	30	34
	%	9%	25%	66%	14%	35%	51%	22%	40%	39%	38%	47%	15%	27%	34%	39%

characteristics strongly associated with females

respondents		ท้อเหี่ยว depressed (N=87)			พูดเก่ง good speaker (N=90)			ช่างพูด talkative (N=88)			การควบคุมควบคุมตนเอง self control (N=90)			ใจอ่อน soft-hearted (N=89)	
		M	W	S	M	M	F	S	F	S	M	F	S		
males	n	5	19	9	3	20	11	3	22	8	6	24	4		
	%	15%	58%	27%	9%	59%	32%	9%	67%	24%	18%	71%	12%		
females	n	5	29	20	2	36	18	9	34	12	7	38	11		
	%	9%	54%	37%	46%	64%	32%	16%	62%	22%	13%	68%	20%		
all	n	10	48	29	5	56	29	12	56	20	13	62	15		
	%	12%	55%	33%	5%	62%	32%	14%	64%	23%	14%	69%	17%		

respondents		การเอาใจใส่ caring (N=90)			เซ็กซี่ sexy (N=87)			ขี้กลัว fearful (N=89)			นินทา gossips (N=89)			ใจอ่อน soft-hearted (N=89)		
		M	W	S	M	M	F	S	F	S	M	F	S			
males	n	2	18	14	2	29	2	0	32	1	0	34	0	1	30	2
	%	6%	53%	41%	6%	88%	6%	0%	97%	3%	0%	100%	0%	3%	91%	6%
females	n	0	47	9	0	47	7	2	46	8	0	46	9	1	53	2
	%	0%	84%	16%	0%	87%	13%	4%	82%	14%	0%	84%	16%	2%	95%	4%
all	n	2	65	23	2	76	9	2	78	9	0	80	9	2	83	4
	%	2%	72%	26%	2%	87%	10%	2%	88%	10%	0%	90%	10%	2%	93%	5%

APPENDIX G. QUESTION ON CHOOSING MEN OR WOMEN FOR DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONS

Part 1, Question 49

ถ้าผู้ชายและผู้หญิงมีการศึกษามา iveau ปรึษา และประสบการณ์เท่าเทียมกัน คุณจะเลือกใครในตัวเลือกดังต่อไปนี้ (เขียน "✓" หน้า ฤ ในข้อที่คุณไม่ทราบ)

If a man and a woman have equal education, skills, and experience, which would you choose in each of the choices given below? (Write a "✓" in front of ? if you don't know.)¹

occupations strongly associated with men ←

respondents	soldier (N=85)			body guard ² (N=86)			<i>sǎongtǎew</i> driver (N=85)			police (N=86)			
	M*	W	?	M	W	?	M	W	?	M	W	?	
males	<i>n</i>	32	0	0	31	0	2	31	0	1	31	1	2
	%	100%	0%	0%	94%	0%	2%	97%	0%	3%	91%	3%	6%
females	<i>n</i>	50	0	3	49	1	3	46	3	4	43	3	6
	%	94%	0%	6%	92%	2%	6%	87%	6%	8%	83%	6%	12%
all	<i>n</i>	82	0	3	80	1	5	77	3	5	74	4	8
	%	96%	0%	4%	93%	1%	6%	91%	4%	6%	86%	5%	9%

*M = would choose a man, W = would choose a woman, ? = don't know

→ associated with men ←

respondents	village head (N=85)			prime minister (N=87)			governor (N=87)			university president (N=87)			
	M*	W	?	M	W	?	M	W	?	M	W	?	
males	<i>n</i>	28	2	3	32	1	1	28	3	3	28	0	6
	%	85%	6%	9%	94%	3%	3%	82%	9%	9%	82%	0%	18%
females	<i>n</i>	39	5	8	35	12	6	30	13	10	27	12	14
	%	75%	10%	15%	66%	23%	11%	57%	25%	19%	51%	23%	26%
all	<i>n</i>	67	7	11	67	13	7	58	16	13	55	12	20
	%	79%	8%	13%	77%	15%	8%	67%	18%	15%	63%	14%	23%

¹ The response choices are arranged on a continuum from those strongly associated with men to those strongly associated with women. Those which were not associated with a particular sex overall are positioned toward the middle of the continuum. Responses with 75% or higher are in presented in bold.

² The Thai wording was poorly chosen. It was *phûupòkkhrǎongkhondiaw* (an individual's guardian), but probably should have been *thahāan prajamtua* (personal guard).

→ less associated with one sex ←

respondents	doctor (N=87)			member of parliament (N=84)			university professor (N=85)			parent (N=85)			
	M*	W	?	M	W	?	M	W	?	M	W	?	
males	n	25	4	5	19	3	10	16	3	13	16	7	9
	%	74%	12%	15%	59%	9%	31%	50%	9%	41%	50%	22%	28%
females	n	22	18	13	19	13	20	16	17	20	23	21	9
	%	42%	34%	25%	37%	25%	38%	30%	32%	38%	43%	40%	17%
all	n	47	22	18	38	16	30	323	20	33	39	28	18
	%	54%	25%	21%	45%	19%	36%	8%	24%	39%	46%	33%	21%

→ associated with women ←

respondents	friend (N=87)			dentist (N=87)			elementary teacher (N=88)			store clerk (N=87)			
	M*	W	?	M	W	?	M	W	?	M	W	?	
males	n	19	6	9	8	21	5	4	22	9	1	30	3
	%	56%	18%	26%	24%	62%	15%	11%	63%	26%	3%	88%	9%
females	n	13	31	9	13	28	12	3	37	13	8	38	7
	%	25%	58%	17%	25%	53%	23%	6%	70%	25%	15%	72%	13%
all	n	32	37	18	21	49	17	7	59	22	9	68	10
	%	37%	43%	21%	24%	56%	30%	8%	67%	25%	11%	78%	11%

→ strongly associated with women

respondents	homemaker ³ (N=86)			nurse (N=86)			secretary (N=87)			childcare (N=85)			
	M*	W	?	M	W	?	M	W	?	M	W	?	
males	n	0	33	0	0	33	0	0	33	1	0	32	0
	%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	97%	3%	0%	100%	0%
females	n	3	48	2	0	51	2	0	53	0	0	52	1
	%	6%	91%	4%	0%	96%	4%	0%	100%	0%	0%	98%	2%
all	n	3	81	2	0	84	2	0	86	1	0	84	1
	%	3%	94%	2%	0%	98%	2%	0%	99%	1%	0%	99%	1%

³ The word *mêebâan* (literally "house mother," homemaker, housewife) is restrictive to women. The word *phôobâan*, the masculine equivalent, means "head of household."

APPENDIX H. QUESTION ON INFLUENCES ON KNOWLEDGE OF SEX

Part 1, Question 50

ข้อต่อไปนี้มี ข้อไหนที่มีอิทธิพลต่อความคิด และความรู้ในเรื่องเพศของคุณมากที่สุด เรียงลำดับจาก]ม /ม -111 6] คือข้อที่มีอิทธิพลมากที่สุด

_____ rjvggj _____ รัฐบาล _____ พรรณคดี _____ พี่น้อง _____ เพื่อน _____ นิตยสาร
 _____ ศาสนา/พระ _____ ครูประถม _____ ที. วี. /วิทยุ _____ ครูมัธยม _____ อื่น ๆ _____

Of the following, which has the most influence on your ideas and knowledge about sex? Rank them from 1, 2, 3... (1 has the most influence).

year	respondents by sex	n	father/ mother	religion/ monks	government	elementary school teachers	literature	TV/ radio	siblings	high school. teachers	friends	magazines	other
1 st	males	10	6.8	<u>9.6</u>	<u>7.4</u>	6.4	<u>7.1</u>	3.1	6.0	4.0	2.3	1.7	--
	females	18	4.3	<u>7.3</u>	6.1	5.3	6.3	3.5	5.0	3.6	3.1	3.6	--
	both	28	5.1	<u>8.1</u>	6.7	5.7	6.6	3.4	5.4	3.9	2.8	2.9	--
2 nd	males	6	<u>7.0</u>	<u>9.6</u>	<u>7.2</u>	<u>7.2</u>	5.8	3.2	6.8	3.7	2.7	2.7	--
	females	8	5.5	<u>8.8</u>	<u>7.8</u>	<u>8.0</u>	6.8	2.7	5.8	4.0	2.7	2.1	--
	both	14	6.4	<u>9.2</u>	<u>7.4</u>	<u>7.6</u>	6.2	2.9	6.3	3.8	2.7	2.4	--
3 rd	males	5	<u>7.6</u>	<u>9.8</u>	<u>8.2</u>	6.0	6.6	2.6	<u>7.0</u>	6.0	3.4	1.4	--
	females	13	4.7	<u>7.6</u>	<u>7.2</u>	6.4	5.8	2.8	5.0	3.8	2.6	2.7	--
	both	18	5.5	<u>8.3</u>	<u>7.6</u>	6.1	6.1	2.7	5.7	4.5	2.9	2.3	--
4 th	males	13	<u>7.0</u>	<u>7.0</u>	<u>7.6</u>	6.7	5.1	2.8	5.3	3.8	2.4	1.8	--
	females	17	3.2	<u>7.5</u>	<u>8.2</u>	<u>8.3</u>	6.7	4.4	4.7	5.3	2.2	3.5	--
	both	30	5.1	<u>7.2</u>	<u>7.9</u>	<u>7.4</u>	5.8	3.5	5.1	4.5	2.2	3.5	--

Note: Mean ranking is indicated. The most influential (≤ 4) are in bold. The least influential (≥ 7) are underlined.

APPENDIX I. QUESTION ON ATTITUDE TOWARD MENSTRUATION

Part 1, Question 78

ประจำเดือนเป็นสิ่งที่

- | | | | |
|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| _____ ดี | _____ ไม่สะดวกสบาย | _____ ไม่แตกต่างจากที่เคยเป็น | _____ ไม่ดี |
| _____ ชรามตา | _____ เป็นสิ่งมหัศจรรย์ | _____ แสดงความเป็นผู้หญิง | _____ สกปรก |
| _____ จำเป็น | _____ บริสุทธิ์ | _____ มีอิทธิพล | _____ ชรามชาติ |
| | | | _____ อื่นๆ _____ |

Menstruation is a thing that is

		sex of respondents		
		males (n=34)	females (n=56)	both (N=90)
good	<i>n</i>	5	16	21
	%	15%	29%	23%
normal	<i>n</i>	14	24	38
	%	41%	43%	42%
necessary	<i>n</i>	6	13	19
	%	18%	23%	21%
inconvenient	<i>n</i>	8	25	33
	%	24%	45%	37%
wonderful	<i>n</i>	0	3	3
	%	0%	5%	3%
pure	<i>n</i>	0	7	7
	%	0%	13%	8%
no different than before	<i>n</i>	0	1	1
	%	0%	2%	1%
shows femininity	<i>n</i>	12	33	45
	%	35%	59%	50%
has influence	<i>n</i>	1	6	7
	%	3%	11%	8%
not good	<i>n</i>	1	4	5
	%	3%	7%	6%
dirty	<i>n</i>	4	6	10
	%	12%	11%	11%
natural	<i>n</i>	17	39	56
	%	50%	70%	62%
other	<i>n</i>	0	1	1
	%	0%	2%	1%

NOTE: Responses with 50% or more are shown in bold.

APPENDIX J. QUESTION ON DESIRED QUALITIES IN A GIRLFRIEND/BOYFRIEND

Part 2, Question 1.

เรียงลักษณะที่สำคัญของเพื่อนชายหรือเพื่อนหญิง (หมายเลข บรรทัด] สำคัญที่สุด)

___ ใจดี	___ เป็นคนดี	___ สนุกสนาน	___ บริสุทธิ์	___ ไม่มีดื่มของมึนเมา
___ สวย	___ หน้าตาดี	___ ชื่อลือดี	___ มีร่างกายที่ดี	___ มีความรับผิดชอบ
___ รวย	___ แต่งกายดี	___ ไม่สูบบุหรี่	___ เอาใจใส่ต่อฉัน	___ มีสัญชาติเดียวกัน
___ ฉลาด	___ ชอบงานอดิเรกเหมือนกัน	___ มีงานที่ดี	___ มีชื่อเสียงดี	
___ ไม่จน	___ ทำงานหนัก	___ รักตัวเรา	___ อื่น ๆ _____	

Arrange in order the characteristics that are important to females and males (number 1 is most important).

___ kind	___ good person	___ fun	___ virgin	___ doesn't drink
___ pretty	___ good looking	___ loyal	___ has a good body	___ responsible
___ rich	___ dresses well	___ doesn't smoke	___ takes care of me	___ same nationality
___ intelligent	___ likes the same hobbies	___ has good job	___ good reputation	
___ not poor	___ works hard	___ loves me	___ other _____	

These are the results arranged in average order of importance for male and female respondents.

important to males	important to females
1. good person	1. good person
2. responsible	2. responsible
3. loyal / fun (tied)	3. loyal
4.	4. takes care of me
5. takes care of me / kind (tied)	5. loves me / kind
6.	6.
7. loves me	7. intelligent
8. good body	8. fun
9. virgin	9. good body
10. intelligent	10. doesn't drink
11. pretty	11. doesn't smoke
12. good looking	12. good job
13. good dresser / doesn't drink (tied)	13. good looking
14.	14. good dresser
15. doesn't smoke	15. virgin
16. same hobbies	16. rich
17. good job	17. same hobbies
18. rich	18. not poor
19. hard working	19. hard working
20. same nationality	20. same nationality
21. not poor	21. good reputation
22. good reputation	22. pretty

APPENDIX K. QUESTION ON APPROVED SEXUAL BEHAVIORS

Part 2, Question 21

เขียน "1" หน้าพฤติกรรมที่เป็นที่ยอมรับก่อนแต่งงาน เขียน "2" หน้าพฤติกรรมที่เป็นที่ยอมรับของคู่รักที่มีโครงการจะแต่งงานกัน เขียน "3" หน้าพฤติกรรมที่เป็นที่ยอมรับของคู่รักที่แต่งงานกันแล้ว เขียน "4" หน้าพฤติกรรมที่เป็นที่ไม่เคยเป็นที่ยอมรับเลย

Write "1" in front of the behaviors which you approve of before marriage. Write "2" in front of behaviors which you approve of for couples who have a plan to get married. Write "3" in front of behaviors which you approve of for married couples. Write "4" in front of behaviors which you don't approve of at all.

behavior	sex of respondents	year			
		1	2	3	4
ทำตาควน้ำใสกัน	males	1.1	1	1	1.1
make eyes	females	2.9	1.1	1.1	1
คุยกันภาษาดอกไม้	males	1.2	1	1	1
sweet talk	females	1.1	1	1.1	1
นั่งใกล้กัน	males	1.1	1.1	1	1
sit close	females	3	1.1	1.1	1
จับมือถือแขน	males	1.4	1.5	1.2	1.2
hold hands	females	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.7
กอดกัน	males	1.7	1.8	1.4	2.1
hug	females	2.2	2	1.9	1.8
จูบกันเบาๆ	males	1.6	1.8	1.8	2.2
kiss softly	females	2.1	2.3	1.9	1.7
จูบอย่างตูดตัม	males	2.4	2.5	2	2.8
make out	females	2.9	3	2.8	2.5
นอนหนุนตักกัน	males	1.4	1.8	1.2	1.5
rest head on lap	females	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.3
สัมผัสร่างกายของกันและกัน	males	1.6	1.8	1.8	1.8
touch each other	females	2.4	2.1	2.1	1.9
สำเร็จความใคร่ให้กัน	males	2.8	2.8	2.4	3
masturbate each other	females	3.1	3.1	3.2	2.9
มีเพศสัมพันธ์กัน	males	2.6	3	3.2	2.9
have sex relations	females	3.1	3	3.2	2.8
ทำออรัลเซกส์ให้ฝ่ายหญิง	males	3.1	3	3.4	3.3
cunnilingus	females	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.1
ทำออรัลเซกส์ให้ฝ่ายชาย	males	3.1	3.3	2.8	3.3
fellatio	females	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.2
ร่วมรักทางทวารหนัก	males	3.3	4	3.4	3.8
anal sex	females	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.4

APPENDIX L. QUESTION ON APPROVAL OF PREMARITAL SEX

Part 2, Question 22

คุณยอมรับกานมีเพศสัมพันธ์ก่อนแต่งงานที่เกิดขึ้นในสถานการณ์ใด

You approve of having sexual relations before marriage in which situation(s)?

	male respondents		females respondents	
	(n=34)	%	(n=56)	%
the couple is in love	13	38%	10	18%
the couple has birth control	21	62%	19	34%
having sex relations with a prostitute	3	9%	8	14%
the couple has a plan to marry	21	62%	26	46%
both parties consent	26	76%	24	43%
both are older than 20 years	12	35%	13	23%
other _____ *	3	9%	11	20%

*Other responses included variations on "don't approve" (2 males, 11 females) and "if parents support it" (1 male, 0 females).

APPENDIX M. QUESTIONS ABOUT ABORTION

Part 2, Question 55.

การทำแท้งบาปไหม บาป ไม่บาป บางครั้ง
 Is abortion a sin? sin not a sin sometimes

		sin	not a sin	sometimes
males (N=34)	<i>n</i>	24	4	6
	%	71%	12%	18%
females (N=52)	<i>n</i>	34	3	15
	%	65%	6%	29%
all (N=86)	<i>n</i>	58	7	21
	%	67%	8%	24%

Part 2, Question 56.

การทำแท้งสมควรจะถูกตักทวงหมาย ใช่ ไม่ใช่ ในบางกรณี
 Abortion should be legal. yes no in some cases

		yes	no	in some cases
males (N=34)	<i>n</i>	7	8	19
	%	21%	24%	56%
females (N=53)	<i>n</i>	13	4	36
	%	25%	8%	68%
all (N=87)	<i>n</i>	20	12	55
	%	23%	14%	63%

Part 2, Question 57.

บุคคลใดควรถูกพิจารณาให้ทำแท้งได้
 Which individuals should consider an abortion?

นักเรียน ผู้ถูกข่มขืน ผู้ที่มีเชื้อ HIV+ คนจน
 ผู้ป่วย คนที่มีลูกมาก ผู้ที่ไม่ต้องการมีลูก อื่น ๆ _____

		males N=33	females N=55	all N=88
students	<i>n</i>	7	9	16
	%	21%	16%	18%
sick people	<i>n</i>	17	31	48
	%	52%	56%	55%
people who were raped	<i>n</i>	30	51	81
	%	91%	93%	92%
people with many children	<i>n</i>	5	7	12
	%	15%	13%	14%
people who are HIV+	<i>n</i>	30	52	82
	%	91%	95%	93%
people who don't want children	<i>n</i>	7	8	15
	%	21%	15%	17%
poor people	<i>n</i>	3	10	13
	%	9%	18%	15%
others	<i>n</i>	1*	2**	3
	%	3%	4%	3%

*child has various diseases; **prostitutes; depends on the situation

APPENDIX N. QUESTIONS ON ATTITUDES TOWARD SEXUAL BEHAVIORS

Part 3, Question 1

ถ้าคนโสดสองคนชอบพอกัน (รักกัน) พฤติกรรมแบบใดที่พวกเขาทำแล้วเป็นที่ยอมรับ

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| ___ เล่นนู้เล่นตา | ___ จูบแบบตูดตัม | ___ ออรัลเซกส์ที่ฝ่าย [sic] หญิงเป็นคนทำ |
| ___ จับมือถือแขน | ___ กอดจูบกัน | ___ ออรัลเซกส์ที่ฝ่ายชายเป็นคนทำ |
| ___ พูดเกี่ยวกับวารสารกัน | ___ จับนม | ___ รวมประเวณี |
| ___ จับองคชาต | ___ รวมเพศทางทวารหนัก | ___ สำเร็จความใคร่ด้วยตนเอง |
| | | ___ อื่นๆ |

If there are two unmarried people who like each other (love each other), which of their behaviors do you approve of?

	males (N= 34)		females (N= 56)		both (N= 90)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
make eyes	25	74%	41	73%	66	73%
hold hands	28	82%	48	86%	76	84%
sweet talk	8	24%	53	95%	81	90%
touch penis	3	9%	0	0%	3	3%
kiss intensely	6	18%	3	5%	9	10%
hug & kiss	9	27%	8	14%	17	19%
touch breasts	4	12%	0	0%	4	4%
anal sex	1	3%	0	0%	1	1%
oral sex by female	2	6%	0	0%	2	2%
oral sex by male	4	12%	0	0%	4	4%
sexual intercourse	3	9%	0	0%	3	3%
masturbate self	6	18%	4	7%	10	11%
other	1*	3%	6**	11%	8	9%

*go about together

** go to the movies, drink, talk politely, study together, kiss cheek, I've never loved anyone

NOTE: Bold type highlights those behaviors approved of by over 50% of respondents.

Part 3, Question 2

พฤติกรรมแบบใดที่เป็นที่ยอมรับเฉพาะคู่รักหลังจากการหมั้นหรือแต่งงานเท่านั้น

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> เล่นหูลเล่นตา | <input type="checkbox"/> จูบแบบดูดเต็ม | <input type="checkbox"/> ออรัลเซกส์ที่ฝ่าย [sic] หญิงเป็นคนทำ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> จับมือถือแขน | <input type="checkbox"/> กอดจูบกิน | <input type="checkbox"/> ออรัลเซกส์ที่ฝ่ายชายเป็นคนทำ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> พุดคุยยาวปราสีกัน | <input type="checkbox"/> จับนม | <input type="checkbox"/> รวมประเวณี |
| <input type="checkbox"/> จับองคชาต | <input type="checkbox"/> ร่วมเพศทางทวารหนัก | <input type="checkbox"/> ล้างใจความใคร่ด้วยตนเอง |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> อื่นๆ |

Which are acceptable behaviors only for lovers who are engaged or married?

	males (N= 34)		females (N= 56)		both (N= 90)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
make eyes	11	32%	23	41%	34	38%
hold hands	22	65%	35	63%	57	63%
sweet talk	12	35%	27	48%	39	43%
touch penis	17	50%	25	45%	42	47%
kiss intensely	23	68%	43	77%	66	73%
hug & kiss	27	79%	46	82%	73	81%
touch breasts	18	53%	31	55%	49	54%
anal sex	9	27%	9	16%	18	20%
oral sex by female	20	59%	23	41%	43	48%
oral sex by male	20	59%	25	45%	45	50%
sexual intercourse	28	82%	41	73%	69	77%
masturbate self	13	38%	18	32%	31	34%
other	0	0%	1*	2%	1	1%

*don't know

NOTE: Bold type highlights those behaviors approved of by over 50% of respondents.

Part 3, Question 3

พฤติกรรมแบบใดที่ผิดปกติหรือผิดธรรมชาติ

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| ___ เล่นหูเล่นตา | ___ จูบแบบดูดดื่ม | ___ ออรัลเซกส์ที่ฝ่าย [sic] หญิงเป็นคนทำ |
| ___ จับมือถือแขน | ___ กอดจูบกัน | ___ ออรัลเซกส์ที่ฝ่ายชายเป็นคนทำ |
| ___ พูดเกี้ยวพาราสีกัน | ___ จับนม | ___ รวมประเวณี |
| ___ จับองคชาต | ___ รวมเพศทางทวารหนัก | ___ สำเร็จความใคร่ด้วยตนเอง |
| | | ___ อื่นๆ |

Which behaviors are abnormal or unnatural?

	males (N= 34)		females (N= 56)		both (N= 90)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
make eyes	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
hold hands	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
sweet talk	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
touch penis	4	12%	14	25%	18	20%
kiss intensely	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
hug & kiss	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
touch breasts	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
anal sex	29	85%	54	96%	83	92%
oral sex by female	8	24%	16	29%	24	27%
oral sex by male	8	24%	15	27%	23	26%
sexual intercourse	0	0%	2	4%	2	2%
masturbate self	1	3%	10	18%	11	12%
other	0	0%	1*	2%	1	1%

*sadism

NOTE: Bold type highlights those behaviors considered abnormal or unnatural by 50% or more respondents.

APPENDIX O. QUESTIONS ON MASTURBATION

Part 3, Question 18

การสำเร็จความใคร่ด้วยตัวเองเป็นเรื่องปกติใช่หรือไม่ _____ ใช่ _____ ไม่ใช่ _____ ไม่ทราบ

Masturbation ("satisfying desires oneself") is something usual - yes or no?

		males N=33	females N=54	both N=87
yes	n	31	30	61
	%	94%	56%	70%
no	n	2	9	11
	%	6%	17%	13%
don't know	n	0	15	15
	%	0%	28%	17%

Part 3, Question 20

ทำไมคนถึงสำเร็จความใคร่ด้วยตัวเอง

_____ สบายตา _____ รู้สึกดี _____ นิสัย
 _____ เพื่อเรียนรู้สิ่งที่พวกเขาชอบ _____ ปลดปล่อยอารมณ์ _____ อื่น ๆ _____

Why do people masturbate?

		males n=36	females n=52	both n=88
instinct	n	8	17	25
	%	22%	33%	28%
in order to know the things s/he likes	n	8	6	14
	%	22%	12%	16%
feels good	n	12	8	20
	%	33%	15%	23%
relieve stress	n	29	36	65
	%	81%	69%	74%
habit	n	3	5	8
	%	8%	10%	9%
other	n	3	6	9
	%	8%	12%	10%

Part 3, Question 21.

คุณสำเร็จความใคร่ด้วยตัวเองบ่อยแค่ไหน

หลาย ๆ ครั้ง/เดือน
 ทุก ๆ วัน
 หลาย ๆ ครั้ง/สัปดาห์
 หลาย ๆ ครั้ง/ปี
 ไม่เคย

You masturbate how often?

		males <i>n</i> =34	females <i>n</i> =51	both <i>n</i> =85
every day	<i>n</i>	6	0	6
	%	18%	0%	7%
several times/week	<i>n</i>	15	1	16
	%	44%	2%	19%
several times/month	<i>n</i>	7	7	14
	%	21%	14%	17%
several times/year	<i>n</i>	4	6	10
	%	18%	18%	12%
never	<i>n</i>	1	37	38
	%	3%	73%	45%

APPENDIX P. CORRECT RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ON SEXUAL KNOWLEDGE

Part 3, Questions 73-90

(Note: Groups which had a 50% or higher correct response rate are in bold.)

Question		<i>N</i>	<i>n</i> correct	% correct
73. How many average days does a woman's period last? a. 2 days b. 4 days c. 7 days d. 9 days e. don't know	males	34	8	24%
	females	56	31	55%
	both	90	39	43%
74. During what time is a woman most likely to get pregnant? a. during her period b. 15 days after the first day of her period c. 7 days after the first day of her period d. 15 days after the last day of her period e. don't know	males	34	4	12%
	females	53	16	30%
	both	87	20	23%
75. Birth control pills are able to prevent the spread of disease. a. true b. false	males	34	30	88%
	females	55	50	91%
	both	89	80	90%
76. If the man withdraws his penis before he ejaculates, can the woman get pregnant? a. yes b. no	males	33	8	24%
	females	54	10	19%
	both	87	18	21%
77. Condoms are put on when? a. before the penis is erect b. while the penis is getting erect c. after the penis is erect d. after sex has started but before ejaculation e. don't know	males	34	12	35%
	females	56	13	23%
	both	90	25	28%
78. The sex of a child is determined by the a. egg b. sperm c. fate d. don't know	males	31	14	45%
	females	53	29	55%
	both	84	43	51%
79. Is it possible to get HIV through oral sex? a. it is possible b. it is not possible c. yes, but only giving it to a man d. yes, but only giving it to a woman e. don't know	males	33	21	64%
	females	55	25	46%
	both	88	46	52%
80. Birth control pills are taken when? a. at least 3 days before having sex and 3 days after b. at least 1 month before having unprotected sex c. begin to take them the first day of having sex d. don't know	males	33	4	12%
	females	54	6	11%
	both	87	10	11%
81. The female condom can be used... a. 2 or 3 times until it tears b. only once c. as long as it is washed d. don't know	males	34	21	62%
	females	55	18	33%
	both	89	39	43%

82. Douching prevents pregnancy. a. true b. false	males	34	21	62%
	females	50	39	78%
	both	84	60	67%
83. If a man hasn't had sex by the time he's 25 years old, he might have health problems, especially about reproduction. a. true b. false	males	34	31	91%
	females	53	44	83%
	both	87	75	86%
84. A woman will be happy the first time she has sexual relations. a. true b. false	males	34	15 T 19 F	44% T 56% F
	females	49	15 T 34 F	31% 69%
	both	83	30 T 53 F	36% 64%
85. A person who has HIV may feel very healthy and strong. a. true b. false	males	33	20	61%
	females	53	23	43%
	both	86	43	50%
86. Which part of a woman's body has the most sexual feeling? a. sex organ b. breasts c. clitoris d. labia e. don't know	males	34	28	82%
	females	45	23	51%
	both	90	51	57%
87. With condoms, the size is not important and anyone can wear them all. a. true b. false	males	34	22	65%
	females	54	30	56%
	both	88	52	59%
88. When a man has sex using a condom, is it safe if he withdraws after he's ejaculated and has lost his erection? a. safe b. not safe c. don't know	males	34	16	47%
	females	56	9	16%
	both	89	25	28%
89. The lubrication in condoms is enough every time. a. true b. false	males	33	12	36%
	females	49	34	69%
	both	82	46	56%
90. A woman can get pregnant even during her period. a. true b. false	males	33	7	21%
	females	55	10	18%
	both	88	17	19%

**APPENDIX Q. PEOPLE DIAGNOSED AT THE MAHASARAKHAM PUBLIC
HEALTH OFFICE WITH SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES BY
OCCUPATIONAL GROUP**

Information arranged by group from highest total to lowest.

occupation		male	female	total
farmer	<i>n</i>	81	54	135
	%	40%	26%	33%
prostitute	<i>n</i>	0	122	122
	%	0%	60%	30%
laborer	<i>n</i>	57	3	60
	%	28%	1%	15%
business/merchant	<i>n</i>	14	13	27
	%	7%	6%	7%
student	<i>n</i>	25	1	26
	%	12%	.05%	6%
civil servant	<i>n</i>	17	0	17
	%	8%	0%	4%
housewife	<i>n</i>	0	11	11
	%	0%	5%	3%
soldier/police	<i>n</i>	10	0	10
	%	5%	0%	2%
other	<i>n</i>	0	1	1
	%	0%	.05%	.02
TOTAL by sex		204	205	409

(NOTE: This information was obtained from the Mahasarakham Public Health office.)

GLOSSARY OF THAI WORDS

Transcribed word	Thai	English meaning
<i>aajaan</i> or <i>Ajaan</i>	อาจารย์	teacher (with a degree), master; when used as a title, it is commonly written in English as Ajaan
<i>amnâad</i>	อำนาจ	power, might
<i>amphæ</i>	อำเภอ	district
<i>amphæ mʉang</i>	อำเภอเมือง	municipal district
<i>ànúban</i>	อนุบาล	kindergarten
<i>aw máy</i>	เอาไหม	(Do you) want some?
<i>Báan Môø</i>	บ้านหม้อ	pottery village in Mahasarakham
<i>Báan Sàa</i>	บ้านเสื่อ	mat village in Mahasarakham
<i>bàap</i>	บาป	demerit, sin
<i>baay sǐi sùu khwǎn</i>	บายศรีสู่ขวัญ	calling back the spirit (ceremony)
<i>bay</i>	ไบ	bisexual
<i>bay-kee</i>	ไบเกย์	gay who can take either the king or queen role
<i>bøørisùt</i>	บริสุทธิ์	virginal, pure
<i>bun</i>	บุญ	merit
<i>Bun Bång Fay</i>	บุญบังไฟ	rocket festival (held in NE Thailand)
<i>Bun Bæk Fáa</i>	บุญเบิกฟ้า	Merit-making for opening the skies (festival)
<i>bun khun</i>	บุญคุณ	obligation (to parents)
<i>Bun Phawèet</i>	บุญพะเวต	Northeast festival honoring Vessantara
<i>bʉà ngây</i>	เบื่อใจ	easily bored
<i>cháat saasanãa phrá mahãakasàt</i>	ชาติ ศาสนา พระมหากษัตริย์	Nation, Religion, and Monarchy
<i>cháak wáaw</i>	ชักว่าว	"fly a kite"; masturbate (male)
<i>chǎn</i>	ฉัน	I, me (to inferior or intimate); to eat (for monks)
<i>chûu sǎaw</i>	คู่สาว	lover (of a married woman)
<i>Daawwáding</i>	ดาวดึงษ์	one of the heavens
<i>dammæn nay chíiwit</i>	ดำเนินในชีวิต	to proceed in life
<i>decha</i>	เดช	power, might, authority (divine)
<i>dèet</i>	เดท	date (from the English word)
<i>dichǎn</i>	ดิฉัน	I, me (female to equal or superior)
<i>dǐi</i>	ดี้	femme lesbian; from "lady"
<i>dìp</i>	ดิบ	raw, uncooked
<i>eentii</i>	แอนด์	against; "anti"
<i>èew sǎaw</i>	แอมสาว,	to court girls (as a group)
<i>Fàng Thong</i>	ฟางทอง	the red light district in Mahasarakham town
<i>faràng</i>	ฝรั่ง	westerner

<i>fɛɛn</i>	แฟน	spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend, fan
<i>hũa booraan</i>	หัวโบราณ	old-fashioned, old-style thinking
<i>hũamɯang</i>	หัวเมือง	local lord (in old Isan)
Isan (<i>iisǎan</i>)	อีสาน	another name for the northeast region of Thailand
<i>jaykhěng</i>	ใจแข็ง	hard-hearted, unyielding
<i>jayòɔn</i>	ใจอ่อน	yielding, weak, easily influenced; lit. soft hearted
<i>jâw</i>	เจ้า	lord (in Thai and Lao); also you/yours in Lao
<i>jâw chúu</i>	เจ้าชู้	womanizer
<i>jìip</i>	จีบ	to flirt
<i>jùup bèɛp dùuddhũm</i>	จูบแบบดูดดื่ม	kiss deeply
<i>kaalátheesà</i>	กาลเทศะ	place and time
<i>kam</i>	กรรม	deeds, sin, misfortune, karma
<i>kâasĩnsòɔt</i>	คำสินสอด	brideprice (paid by groom to bride's parents)
<i>Kalakèet</i>	กาลเกด	name of a Prince in a Lao folktale
<i>Kamphráa phĩinóɔy</i>	กำพร้าพี่น้อง	The Orphan and the Little Ghost, a Lao folktale
<i>kan</i>	กัน	I, me (male intimate, otherwise derogatory)
<i>kàthœy</i> (also <i>kràthœy</i>)	กะเทย (also กระเทย)	male who identifies as a female and desires men
<i>kee</i>	เกย์	gay (i.e., man who desires men)
<i>keeree</i>	เกเร	roguish, wayward, delinquent
<i>kèp dòɔkmáay</i>	เก็บดอกไม้	masturbate (female); lit. "to gather flowers"
<i>kɛɛ</i>	แก	you, (male to intimate male, female to intimate female); s/he, they (about inferiors or intimates)
<i>kengreeng</i>	แข็งแรง	physical strength
<i>kha</i>	คะ	polite feminine particle ending
<i>khâa náam nom</i>	ค่าน้ำนม	brideprice, lit. "price of mother's milk"
<i>khâa sĩnsòɔt</i>	คำสินสอด	brideprice (in Isan)
<i>Khăay Hũarò</i>		Selling Laughs, a comic book
<i>Khâw Phansǎa</i>	เข้าพรรษา	Start of Buddhist Lent
<i>khɛɛn</i>	แคน	Isan wind instrument, made of several bamboo pipes
<i>khěng</i>	แข็ง	hard, firm, stiff
Khon Kaen (<i>khǒɔn kɛɛn</i>)	ขอนแก่น	a province near Mahasarakham
<i>khon thay</i>	คนไทย	Thai people
<i>khôɔy</i>	ข้อย	(Lao) I/me/mine; servant
<i>kh ráp</i>	ครับ	polite male particle ending
<i>khruu</i>	ครู	teacher
<i>khun</i>	คุณ	you (to equals or superiors); also a polite title
<i>khwaam jarœn</i>	ความเจริญ	growth, progress

<i>khwaam tôøng kaan thaang phêet</i>	ความต้องการทางเพศ	sexual desires
<i>khwǎn</i>	ขวัญ	vital essence, protective spirit
<i>khwǎnòøn</i>	ขวัญอ่อน	lit. soft-souled; easily frightened
<i>kin</i>	กิน	to eat (informal)
<i>kìng amphæ</i>	กิ่งอำเภอ	subdistrict
<i>klúay hõøm</i>	กล้วยหอม	variety of banana
<i>klúay náam wáa</i>	กล้วยน้ำว้า	variety of banana
<i>kumaan thõøng</i>	กุมารทอง	a personal ghost; lit. "golden boy"
<i>Kunsàtrii</i>	กุลสตรี	lady (a girl/woman of good birth)
<i>laamók</i>	ลามก	lewd, obscene, pornographic
<i>láap dip</i>	ลาบดิบ	raw, minced meat mixed with spices
<i>lèn phǎan</i>	เล่นเพื่อน	euphemism for female-female sex play
<i>létbian</i>	เลสเบียน	lesbian, from English
<i>lõngrák</i>	หลงรัก	to be passionately in love, crazy over (someone)
<i>lũu</i>	ลื้อ	you (Chinese, intimate man)
<i>Lũuk Iisǎan</i>	ลูกอีสาน	Child of the Northeast, a novel
<i>máhǎasǎarákhaam</i>	มหาสารคาม	Mahasarakham
<i>mátmii</i>	มัดหมี่	ikat weaving
<i>mátthayom tõøn plaay</i>	มัธยมตอนปลาย	senior high school (3 years)
<i>mátthayom tõøn tòn</i>	มัธยมตอนต้น	junior high school (3 years)
<i>mêe</i>	แม่	mother
<i>mêe báan</i>	แม่บ้าน	lit. "house mother," housewife, homemaker
<i>mêe chíi</i>	แม่ชี	Buddhist nun
<i>mêe khaa</i>	แม่ค้า	shopkeeper (female)
<i>mêe khongkhaa</i>	แม่คงคา	goddess of water
<i>mêe náam chíi</i>	แม่น้ำชี	Chi River
<i>mêe (náam) khõøng</i>	แม่น้ำโขง	Mekong River
<i>mêe (phrá) thoranii</i>	แม่ (พระ) ธรณี	Earth goddess/spirit
<i>mia</i>	เมีย	wife in Isan; wife, colloquial, in Central Thai
<i>mia lúang</i>	เมียหลวง	major wife
<i>mia nóøy</i>	เมียน้อย	minor wife
<i>Mia tíng phró jon</i>	เมียทิ้งเพราะจน	"My wife ran away because I'm poor."
<i>mii feen ร้ัน yang</i>	มีแฟนหรือยัง	Do you have a <i>feen</i> (significant other) yet?
<i>mii phêetsǎmphān</i>	มีเพศสัมพันธ์	have sexual relations/have a sexual relationship
<i>mǎølam</i>	หมอลำ	expert Isan singer; Isan folk music
<i>mǎø lam síng</i>	หมอลำซิ่ง	style of Isan folk music sung by one singer
<i>mùu báan</i>	หมู่บ้าน	village
<i>mhang</i>	เมือง	municipality; city

<i>náa</i>	น่า	mother's younger sibling
<i>náa rák</i>	น่ารัก	lovely, adorable
<i>nák leeng</i>	นักเลง	rogue, rascal
<i>nǎng bóo</i>	หนังโป๊	movie with nudity (usually sex); blue movie
<i>nát phóp</i>	นัดพบ	schedule a meeting
<i>nippphaan</i>	นิพพาน	Nirvana
<i>núat pàak</i>	นวดปาก	lip cream
<i>núu</i>	หนู	mouse; I; s/he (used by or about female inferiors or small children); "little one"
<i>nóong</i>	น้อง	younger sibling
<i>òtthon</i>	อดทน	have patience, endure
<i>òøk phansǎa</i>	ออกพรรษา	end of the Buddhist lent
<i>páa</i>	ป้า	parent's elder sister
<i>pàap</i>	ปาบ	sin, demerit
<i>pay thǎaw phǎuyǐng</i>	ไปเที่ยวผู้หญิง	lit. go travel about for women; euphemism for going to a prostitute
<i>pay thǎaw sǎopheenii</i>	ไปเที่ยวโสเภณี	go to a prostitute
<i>pen feen kan</i>	เป็นแฟนกัน	to be sweethearts/lovers
<i>pen phǐi nóong kan</i>	เป็นพี่น้องกัน	to be siblings
<i>pháa khít</i>	ผ้าขิด	a kind of supplementary weaving technique
<i>pháak tawanòøk chíang</i>	ภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือ	the northeast (administrative) region
<i>nǎa</i>		
<i>pháasin</i>	ผ้าซิ่น	woman's sarong-like skirt
<i>Phadaeng Nang Ai</i>	พาดงนางไอ	Isan folktale recited during the Rocket (rainmaking) Festival
<i>phanrayaa</i>	ภรรยา	wife
<i>phátthanaakaan</i>	พัฒนาการ	progress, development
<i>phêet</i>	เพศ	sex; kind; gender (in grammar)
<i>phêetchaay</i>	เพศชาย	male (person)
<i>phêetsǎmphān</i>	เพศสัมพันธ์	sexual relationship/ sexual relations
<i>phêetyǐng / phêetying</i>	เพศหญิง / เพศหญิง	female (person) Thai/Isan
<i>phǐi</i>	พี่	older sibling
<i>phǐi bǎan</i>	ผีบ้าน	household spirits
<i>phǐi jǎwthǐi</i>	ผีเจ้าที่	village spirits
<i>phǐi liang</i>	พี่เลี้ยง	trainer (in beauty contest)
<i>phǐi ruan</i>	ผีเรือน	household spirits
<i>phít phǐi</i>	ผิดผี	offend the spirits
<i>phítpràweenii</i>	ผิดประเวณี	(commit) adultery
<i>phít thammachâat</i>	ผิดธรรมชาติ	unnatural, against nature
<i>phǎm</i>	ผม	I (masculine, polite)

<i>phôø</i>	พ่อ	father
<i>phôø bâan</i>	พ่อบ้าน	lit. "house father," head of household
<i>Phrá In</i>	พระอินทร์	Lord Indra (central Thai)
<i>phrá thudong</i>	พระชูดงค์	wandering, ascetic monks
<i>phũa</i>	ผัว	husband (Isan); husband, colloquial (Central Thai)
<i>phũuchaay thêe</i>	ผู้ชายแท้	real man
<i>phũu-mêe</i>	ผู้แม่	traditional Lao term for a transgendered person; male-female
<i>phũu yàv bâan</i>	ผู้ใหญ่	village head
<i>phũuyĩng jà dii phrò mii</i>	ผู้หญิงจะดีเพราะมีผัว	"A woman is worthy only when she has a husband." (Thai proverb)
<i>phũa</i>		
<i>phũuyĩng pràphêetsõong</i>	ผู้หญิงประเภทสอง;	"second kind of woman"; refers to <i>kàthay</i>
<i>phũuyĩng rãan</i>	ผู้หญิงร่าาน	a promiscuous woman
<i>phũuyĩng sì dii yòøn mii</i>	ผู้หญิงสี่ดีอันมีผัว	"A woman is worthy only when she has a husband." (Isan proverb)
<i>phũa</i>		
<i>phũuyĩng thêe</i>	ผู้หญิงแท้	real woman
<i>phũan chaay</i>	เพื่อนชาย	lit. "boy friend"; may be understood boyfriend
<i>phũan kin</i>	เพื่อนกิน	casual friends
<i>phũan sanit</i>	สนิท	close friend
<i>phũan taay</i>	เพื่อนตาย	friend to the death
<i>phũan thêe</i>	เพื่อนแท้	true friend
<i>phũan yĩng</i>	เพื่อนหญิง	lit. "girl friend"; may be understood girlfriend
<i>Phyaa Thẽen</i>	พญาแถน	Isan name for Lord Indra
<i>plaa dèek</i>	ปลาแดก	preserved, fermented fish (an Isan staple food)
<i>prathõm</i>	ประถม	primary school
<i>rák diaw jay diaw</i>	รักเดียวใจเดียว	love one, one heart; monogamy
<i>rây</i>	ไร่	land unit; equal to .4 acre
<i>rĩapróøy</i>	เรียงร้อย	together, in order (suggests politeness and appropriateness)
<i>rũam phêet</i>	รวมเพศ	lit. to mix sexes; to have sex
<i>rũam phêet thaang</i>	รวมเพศทางทวารหนัก	to have anal sex
<i>thawaan nàk</i>		
<i>sãalika</i>	สาฬิกา	charms made of rolled gold or silver
<i>sãamii</i>	สามี	husband
<i>sadẽeng òøk</i>	แสดงออก	lit. to show outward; to reveal oneself publicly as kee or lesbian
<i>sàkdinaa</i>	ศักดิ์นา	lit. (rice) field rank
<i>sàksit</i>	ศักดิ์สิทธิ์	sacred; (amoral) magical or holy power
<i>samãy mày</i>	สมัยใหม่	present, modern(ity)
<i>sanèe</i>	เสน่ห์	potions, charms

<i>sangha</i> ()		assembly of monks
<i>sanùk</i>	สนุก	fun
<i>Sàtriisāan</i>	สตรีสาร	a popular women's magazine (ladies' journal)
<i>sawǎey</i>	เสวย	to eat (royal)
<i>sék</i>	เซ็กซ์	sex (from English)
<i>sīnakharinwirōot</i>	(มหาวิทยาลัย) ศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ	Srinakharinwirot (University)
<i>sīn hāa</i>	ศีลห้า	five Buddhist precepts
<i>sōmbuun</i>	สมบูรณ์	fully supplied, replete, complete; healthy, perfect; abundant, rich, fertile
<i>sōmsōon</i>	สมสอน	promiscuous (man or woman)
<i>Sōngkraan</i>	สงกรานต์	Thai New Year
<i>sōopheenii</i>	โสเภณี	prostitute (normally of the "direct" type)
<i>sōong</i>	ซ่อง	slang for brothel
<i>sǎongtǎew</i>	สองแถว	a pickup truck taxi which has two rows of seats in the bed
<i>sūay</i>	สวย	pretty, beautiful
<i>sùk</i>	สุก	ripe, cooked, mature
<i>tàkráow</i>	ตะกร้อ	Thai sport played with a woven wicker ball
<i>tambon</i>	ตำบล	subdistrict
<i>ték</i>	เท็ด	discoteque
<i>thaan</i>	ทาน	to eat (polite)
<i>thamthéeng phāa khray</i>	ทำแท้งเพื่อใคร	Abort for who?
<i>than samǎy</i>	ทันสมัย	up-to-date, modern
<i>théeng</i>	แท้ง	to abort, miscarry
<i>thiaw</i>	เที่ยว	to go about, to wander around, trip
<i>thiaw phūuyǐng</i>	เที่ยวผู้หญิง	slang for visiting prostitutes
<i>thə</i>	เธอ	you; s/he (woman to woman, man to wife, to small children)
<i>thəom</i>	ทอม	masculine woman; lesbian who adopts masculine roles (from "tomboy")
<i>tuamia</i>	ตัวเมีย	female (nonhuman)
<i>tuaphūu</i>	ตัวผู้	male (nonhuman)
<i>úa</i>	อู๋	I (Chinese, Thai speaking to intimate)
<i>wāay</i>	ไหว้	salute with hands together, raised towards face
<i>wāay khruu</i>	ไหว้ครู	pay respect to one's teacher(s)
<i>yaay</i>	ยาย	maternal grandmother
<i>yét</i>	เย็ด	to copulate (obscene); "to fuck"
<i>yūu dūay kan</i>	อยู่ด้วยกัน	living together
<i>yūu kin kan</i>	อยู่กินกัน	living like married; married

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