



A White Paper: An Interview with Khun Pimpat Thanaseelungkool (A Native Thai) regarding the Issue of Child Abuse in Thailand

**By Gregg Tyler Milligan, Author & Abuse Prevention Advocate
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This is my 7th visit to S.E. Asia and I step further and further into an area of desperation. A trip I planned for the sake of abuse prevention and paid all costs in order to do so. I'm calling out people in positions of power, crossing lines I never thought I would to prove a point that the children are continuously being exploited, forced into prostitution, and no one is safe. As of recent developments, this is the first time in my life; especially since taking on the issue of abuse prevention and treatment, that I am feeling all is lost. I am sitting here in a home in Thailand and waiting for the worst. Telling the truth now seems like it must have felt for the recently beaten to death 8-yr old Gabriel in Los Angeles by both his mother and her boyfriend and the 6-yr old Thai girl (whose name I cannot mention for legal reasons) who was recently hospitalized after being raped repeatedly by a family friend. It is without a doubt I am at a point where I have no idea where to go or what to do. I am a man without a country, a soul, a heart, or any hope. Therefore, I chose to do something I also have never done before with regard to my abuse prevention advocacy work [...] I have asked a trusted dear person if I could ask her some difficult questions pertaining to abuse and write them down in this White Paper.

I am sure many will take these words and feel I am casting a negative light on Thailand, but I assure you that I am not. The reason I worked so hard to return year after year to S.E. Asia is because of the pervasive issue of child prostitution, rampant child sex brothels, and HIV infected children, (See: <http://www.camillianhomelatkrabang.org/>).

“Camillian Home is a registered non-profit children's charity operating on behalf of the St. Camillus Foundation of Thailand in the area of Lat Krabang, Bangkok. The Home was initiated by Father Giovanni Contarin, an Italian Priest who has done extensive work for the poor in Thailand since 1987 It targets orphaned and abandoned children who are living with disabilities. Many of whom are also living with HIV/AIDS. Managed by the St. Camillus Foundation of Thailand, children are brought up and taught values based on their own beliefs and cultural backgrounds. Everyone is free to express and follow their faith, whatever it may be.” (Source: The Camillian Home Official Website).

Let me also add that in 2011 I applied for and was accepted as a volunteer to work at the Camillian Home by Fr. Giovanni Contarin, Director. I graciously accepted in return. However, for no other honest reason, I could never bring myself to actually fulfill this promise. My reasons are not grand nor brave, but cowardly. As it got closer, I came to realize I just couldn't bear to see day after day the suffering of the innocent children forced into bearing sins from the horrific cruelty of others, that reminded me so much of me as a child – abandoned by those who were supposed to care for them, and many who were raped and beaten – it would simply tear me apart. I am so sorry.

But please know that this is prevalent all over the world; including the United States. Governments do not do enough and continue to look the other way while cutting critical funding. Abuse is a [disease] that is killing the world and those that can do something more than someone with so little power as me – are not. I am through with treading lightly. Withholding my words, gauging what I say, and hoping for the best. It is time for a Revolution, and with all revolutions, one must be prepared to die fighting. If this is the case, let this be my last fight. I have put those who care for me through far too much heartache already. For me to continue my abuse prevention advocacy, I will need a miracle.

Speaking of which, on Friday of this week, I blistered my fingers rolling hot sticky rice in small bite-sized portions for over a hundred Monks passing by in the street outside my hotel during a morning ritual in Luang Prabang, Laos. On Saturday, I knelt before a Monk in Chiang Mai, THA and received a blessing high above a mountain. He tied a white string around my right wrist then sprinkled holy water on me while saying a prayer, along with the others kneeling closely, heads bowed, and hands clasped together in a “Y” within the semi-circle facing him. On Sunday, also in Chiang Mai, I gave alms to two Monks in the compound I was staying, knelt on the sidewalk before them, while they too blessed me. Is the world really this beautiful? Is it ever going to be both right and good to believe in miracles, blessings, and prayers again? Was it ever?

Here begins the interview with Khun Pimpat Thanaseelungkool:

“In her words regarding the issue of Child Abuse in Thailand from conversations and observations with friends, family, neighbors, professional contacts within positions of authority (e.g., police, social workers, and health officials) and personal experience.” (Khun Pimpat is a native Thai and has been a Child Abuse Advocate for over the past two-years working diligently as my ‘agent’ in S.E. Asia in order to establish opportunities for me to speak; including the overwhelmingly successful workshop at Thammasat University on 30 April 2013.

All I asked was the following question of Pim.

“Tell me anything you know about your direct experience with abuse of any kind?” ...

“People keep the secret of abuse from even their closest friends and relatives. If you do find out that someone is being abused – it is usually by accident. Women have come to accept abuse as the traditional or old-fashioned way and the husband can do anything to their wives. My mother’s sister was abused all the time, but she could say anything. She kept the secret too. She’s shy. Everyone is shy. They don’t want to cause any more problems or make the abuse worse by telling on their husbands. If people come from a poor area or province, like my area - the girls go to areas where foreigners or tourists go to work for sex. The girls hope they can earn the money from being a prostitute and change her life and her families for the better financially. The younger generation find it is easier to be a prostitute because working in a factory does not make much money. A prostitute would make 1,500-2,000 baht for two-hours or 5,000 baht if you stay with the foreigner overnight. But in a factory you would make only 300bht a day. It is too easy to be a prostitute when you are poor. The girls and boys, who sell themselves for sex, do not feel ashamed when they can send money back home. For example, in Singapore, many of these Thai girls and boys live in a crowded home where a mammasan collects not only all of their money, but their passports as well. These girls and boys are literally sex-slaves and owned by the mammasan. The mammasan controls everything about your life. Even if the woman is menstruating, she still must work. She cannot stay home during this time, and if she resists for any reason, she is beaten. With a promise of more money working in Singapore, these girls and boys risk everything, move to Singapore, and trust these mammasans. Drugs are used to change the minds of these girls and boys in order to make the lifestyle more tolerable. The girls and boys choose freely this lifestyle; however, it is a cultural mindset based on reasons such as; lack of education, they have a family to support, or the other occupational choice do not pay enough money. I do not know of any children being forced into prostitution because that is a better kept secret.

Pavena, of the Pavena Foundation, told me that the ‘mother’ never abuses her children [...] “We don’t have that in Thailand. It is never the mother, only relatives that abuse the children; especially sexually.” Pavena

says no children are forced into prostitution. Pavena goes onto to say that children are not subject to child pornography.” <http://www.pavenafoundation.or.th/>.

Note: through the free-download software of AERS both Pim and I saw a 10-12yr old Thai girl huddled in the corner of a dingy room on a stained mattress being raped by what appeared to be a 60yr old overweight white male who actually showed his face. In the same video, it was obvious someone else was operating the camera and we heard other male voices talking in the background.

By the way Pavena, Mothers do sexually abuse their children...and murder them as well.

Pavena runs the oldest child abuse prevention organization in the country; now 25 years, and the largest. And, she claims there is no such thing as child pornography or forced child prostitution in Thailand. (Note: Another reason I chose to cross the line and find out for myself if these claims were true by downloading a peer-to-peer application – they are! How in the hell can I find out in a matter of letting this application run for a few hours, but the governments and Directors of Foundations can claim that child pornography or forced child sex does not exist in their country?)

Final interview comments with Khun Pimpat ...

“If people are given only a choice of going hungry or being a prostitute, girls and boys will keep using sex to make money and kids will be sold for sex. I just want everyone to see this is a problem. I don’t know how to change the minds of the girls and boys. I don’t know how to change anyone’s mind. I just don’t know what to do.”

Neither do I, Pim. I am again..., so goddman sorry.

Gregg Tyler Milligan is an internationally-known author and child abuse prevention advocate. He has written two books, A Beautiful World, detailing his childhood and the horrific suffering Milligan endured at the hands of his mother and strangers. Milligan later completed the continuation to A Beautiful World, describing his next eleven years. Both books are published under the same volume, titled God Must be Sleeping. Milligan is a member of the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) Speakers Bureau and continues to spread his message of hope.

In his words, “Please remember, the reason we are here is to save one another – Break the cycle.” More information can be found at godmustbesleeping.com/.