



April 6 By mid-morning the five of us and Spy traveled up to Mae Hon San to visit the Long-neck Karen people. Upon arriving to town we found the banks closed for the holiday, but we did a bit of shopping and ate lunch where I got my first pad thai. It was very good. Not far out of the town is the village of Long-neck Karen, known for wearing a series of brass rings around their neck that elongates their neck over time by pushing the clavicle bones down. They also wear rings below their knees. Before going there Boonchu met by the market one of his former students at a Bible College in Myanmar where he used to teach. This young man has learned the language of the Long-neck Karen and led ten of them to the Lord, the first of them to become Christians. In this particular village there are only about 70 Long-neck Karen. Their language is very different from the Karen that Boonchu speaks, so they cannot understand each other. However

Boonchu knows just a bit of their language that he tried out while we were there. This tribe came as refugees from Myanmar about 15 years ago. There are two other communities of them in Thailand, totaling only about 200 in the tribe. They sell to tourist various trinkets, woven scarves and materials, and carvings. Most of them are a mixture of animism and Buddhist. I saw unusual altars/shrines to the spirits in a location behind their housing. As we were leaving I met one of the young men who spoke some English. Being a Buddhist, I witnessed to him some as he tried to say our religions were almost the same. He did say the Christian Long-neck Karens did not wear the rings on their necks, but rather wore the large rings in their ear lobes. Yes, I had seen them. On the way back nearby this village I took an elephant ride.

On the way home we passed a small village of Christians, Slee-Klo, that Boonchu told me the story about. Until fifteen months ago the village was in a different location, about eight kilometers away. About ten years before Pu Paso (grandfather) in the village found a rock that looked like a hand sitting on top of another large rock. He went to an old shaman to ask him about its significance. The shaman said that the man had received good fortune. He would be blessed

as long as he offered to the spirit in the hand-shaped rock a blood sacrifice every day. So he made sacrifices of blood to the spirit daily with usually a chicken or sometimes a dog. Each night the blood in the cup it was offered in would disappear. However, if the man tried to offer the blood of a wild bird, it was not accepted and had not disappeared in the morning. Also the blood had to be offered by cutting the neck and draining the blood into the cup. It was not accepted if killed earlier elsewhere and then brought as an offering later. As the man ran out of his own animals to sacrifice, he had to steal his neighbor's. One day he did not have any animal to sacrifice. That night his adult son died with a broken neck. The next night a neighbor's child died in the same way. Then on following days another would die every two to three days or a week, as soon as the previous dead person had been buried. A Christian ministry had begun in the



village and Pu Paso had professed to have become a Christian, but had continued to secretly make the daily sacrifices. But when this crisis came upon the village, everyone was afraid and didn't know how to deal with it. The spiritually immature pastor ran away to Chiang Mai. Boonchu was called upon to come intervene. He witnessed with his own eyes a woman who died that night with a broken neck and blood running out of her mouth. The entire village then ran away, each family not telling the others what they were doing because of being afraid that the curse would then follow them. The man who sacrificed to the stone hand tried throwing it away over a cliff, but it miraculously appeared again in the bowl where he offered the blood sacrifices.

With all the villagers gone, Boonchu stayed with two Christian friends to stay up through the night to pray and read the Bible. They built a large fire and prayed. Eventually they fell asleep. Then Boonchu had a vivid dream in which he saw a large black dog with eyes like a cat, that blew upon the campfire that then got very large and exploded. He woke up to find that the fire had exploded. He woke up his two friends at that time, it being 3:00 am. They then prayed aloud intensely until 6:30 am. Then Boonchu took a gun and shot the stone hand seven times until it was broken into pieces and threw them into the fire. After that the people from the village were not bothered by the spirit again. The man had come to realize that what he had done was wrong and he repented of his sin of still making offering to the spirit. It is through similar experiences of victory of Christ over evil spirits that about half of the Karen people professing to be Christian have come to faith in Christ.