

“The recent winner of the Chommanard Book Prize, wirtler Thanadda ‘Eri’ Sawangduean talks about becoming a prostitute, the justice system and the difficulties of starting a new life.”

Cover : Courtesy of Last Word,
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Tel. (+662) 435-1671, (+662) 435-5789

fax: (+662) 434-6812

Website <http://www.praphansarnasia.com>

E-mail address : arthorn@praphansarn.com

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Stepping out of the darkness

Thanadda Sawangduean talks about venting her pain through the pen, writes Napamon Roongwitoo

At first glance, the petite lady with beaming eyes and a sincere smile fits in perfectly with the teenage crowds at Siam Square. Extremely youthful for her age, the 42-year-old possesses all the attributes befitting a perfectly happy and carefree girl.

Thanadda Sawangduean's life, however, was far from happy. In fact, she said she had never known what happiness was, being born into a violent family. Clutching dearly her award-winning book, *My Name is Eri*, which received the Chommanard Book Prize in December, she unveiled her painful past. Charming for its colloquial story-telling style, the book talks about her childhood, encounters with prostitution, gangsters, painful

relationships and imprisonment.

She blames her childhood for everything that has happened to her.

"I was always slapped across the face or kicked to the ground when I was young, without any explanation. It came to the point that I felt like I had no one I could call family. I became nonchalant about violence eventually, as no matter what bad behaviour I did, the worst thing that could happen, I thought, was being hit again. So what else was new? I got hit all the time anyway," recalled Thanadda of her bitter childhood. She said she was once unfairly slapped by her brother for coming home with red lips. He had misunderstood that she used lipstick while in fact she had just had a strawberry ice lolly.

"He called me a slut, too, without

bothering to ask why my lips were red! I was a slut for eating an ice lolly!” her eyes narrowed as she recalled the excruciating pain.

The first sharp turning point of her life was when she fell in love for the first time. It was defined as “falling in love” for her as a Grade 9 student, but now she looks back and knows that it was not love at all. “I was desperate to have someone to hold on to, and I was gullible enough to fool myself that it was love. In the end, I got pregnant at 17, and my whole life changed.”

The rose-tinted glasses shattered and the man she thought she loved became unbearable. The middle-school dropout had to work her hands to the bone to raise the baby while her man sat at home playing his guitar.

Poverty, despair and resignation from all hope in her life led her to enter prostitution soon after her son was born. She admitted it was a well-paid job, and faced with extreme poverty, she felt she had no other choice.

It was no easy money, though. She had to work 20 hours a day, sleeping with over 20 men a day. She worked in many countries during those years. She’d feel horrible about herself, decide to quit, go back to being dirt poor and enter the vicious cycle again and again.

“What other job could give me as much as 60,000 baht a day? People look down on sex workers based on social values, but let me ask you, wouldn’t you have considered this option if you were in their shoes? They compare sex workers to labourers and say we have less ethics. Well, how many sacks of cement do I have to carry just to keep a roof over my mother’s head?”

She spent over 20 years in the phase of her life that she calls “darkness”. She had been a sex worker, a chronic gambler, a junkie, and even an inmate. Her life, she said was one mistake after another, and when she ended up in jail for illegal immigration and prostitution, she understood the definition of “living hell” very clearly.

“Being a sex worker was hell enough, but being jailed was much worse. I even thought about killing myself just to be free from it all. Every morning I woke up to another day of ennui, but there were silver linings as well. While I was in jail. I learned that not all inmates were bad people. I made some really good friends there. Inmates, sex workers or whatever, we are all just the same. We are all human,” she said.

It was also while in jail that she learned how to write. A staff there named Siriwan was part of the reason

why she received the award. “She taught me how to write, starting with appeals for inmates. That’s where I developed my writing skill. I owe the success today to this woman,” said Thanadda.

Despite being an ex-sex worker, or even while she was a sex worker, the so-called bad girl in society’s eye would never ever steal anyone’s husband or break anyone’s family. “I would never get involved with a married man or try to be a *mia noi* [minor wife]. That is just too unethical for me.”

But ironically, her husband was stolen from under her nose by another woman. “The experience really threw me. We had been together for eight years, then this woman came along and he left me for her in just a few months. She had known all along that he was with me, but she told him to leave me, claiming that she was pregnant. So he left me, and now whenever I go home I still hear that they are together, without a child. She has a master’s degree, but I guess it doesn’t mean much to her morality,” she said.

“What really broke my heart was being left when I was 40, when I was too old to start over easily. He wouldn’t even take the dog that we’d raised together for years. I was too broke to take care of myself, let alone

another mouth to feed. But come to think of it, without this experience, I wouldn’t have been here today. The book wouldn’t have been written,” said Thanadda, smiling positively.

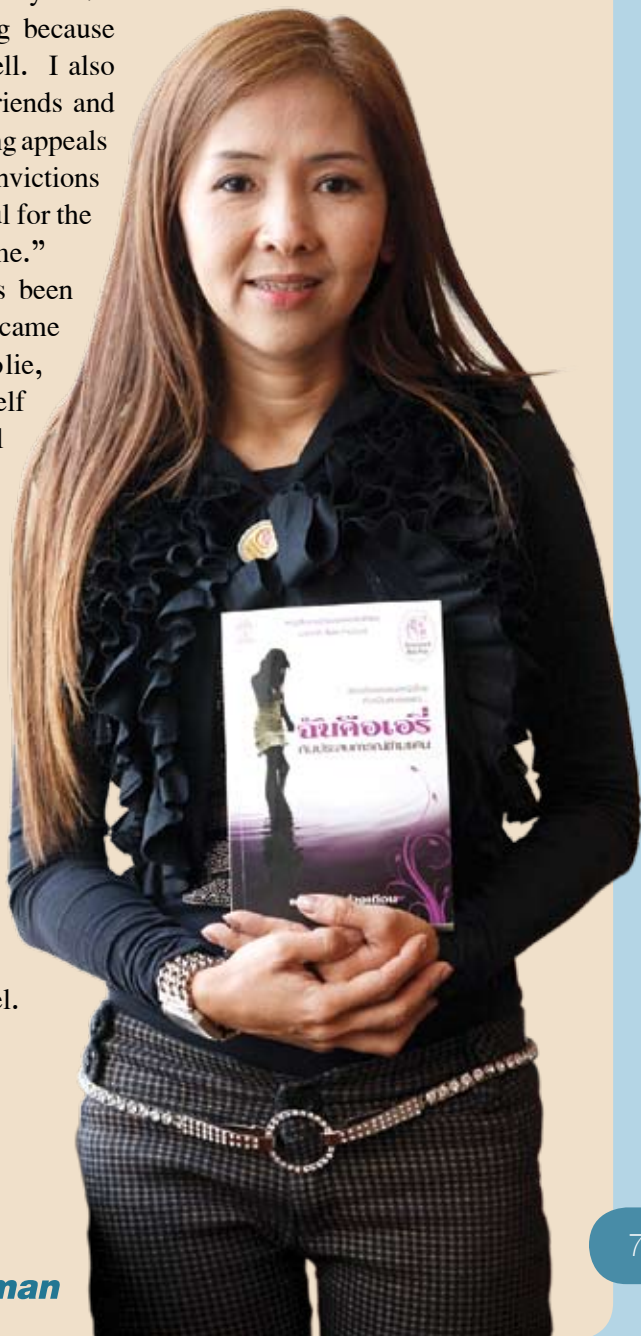
Receiving the prize was the biggest achievement in her life, and she feels wonderful that many people now understand her, admire her and sympathise with her past. “Well, actually, not everyone. Some family members are embarrassed and even told me to change my last name because they don’t want the world to know they are related to an ex-sex worker. Isn’t it sad when the whole world is happy for you but your family isn’t? But that’s my life. That’s my family from the beginning anyway. I was alone all my life and I don’t expect things to change now,” said the youngest sister of four brothers and sisters. She recalled that when she was working, she always sent money home, but when she was arrested, none of them were willing to bail her out.

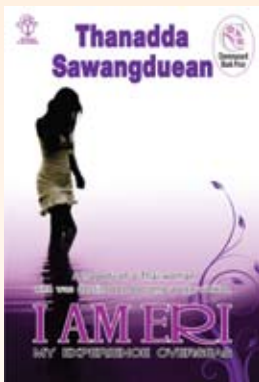
She has now stepped out of the darkness that has threatened her for more than two decades, and at this point, there is no turning back. “I wouldn’t dream far as living happily ever after with a perfect family and a perfect job. I’ve stopped having those dreams a long time ago. Now I just want a decent,

honest job that can pay the bills, and a companion to stay by my side. I want to continue writing because I have so much more to tell. I also want to help my inmate friends and other people in jail by writing appeals for them to have their convictions overturned. I am so thankful for the opportunities extended to me.”

And the question she’s been asked most since her book came out: Is it all real? “If I were to lie, I would have made myself a beautiful, wonderful princess, not the poor person in that book. It all seems surreal because it’s a horribly long streak of bad luck, but really, that’s my life. No, that’s just a tiny part of my life. There’s more to tell. Maybe I’ll write more books,” she said with hopeful eyes and a radiant smile that covered all the traces of pain that were once there before she saw light at the end of the tunnel.

**“Inmates,
sex workers
or whatever,
we are all
just the same.
We are all human**





Title's name	I am Eri :My Experience Overseas
Author	Thanadda Sawangduean
Publisher	Woman Publisher
ISBN	978-616-510-149-3
Year of published	2010
No. of pages	304

Synopsis

This is a true story of a Thai prostitute who experienced a cruel fate in which she was forced by poverty to do this kind of career, so that her family in Thailand can live happily with the money she sent back there. However, it was not everything that go into the way she wanted, challenges started to test Eri and her strength of mind.

《我是艾丽》

这是一个泰国妓女的真实故事—叙述了她被贫穷所强迫而做了这种职业的残酷命运。为了不停地赚钱给家里，她沦为妓女。然而，妓女的生活使她深陷在邪恶的地狱里，而不能退出这个邪恶的地狱。这本书以富有幽默感的方式反映了泰国的社会问题，而且告诉大家这并不是一条不归路，妓女还是有希望重新做人为时不晚。



Title's name	I am Eri : My Experience in Jails
Author	Thanadda Sawangduean
Publisher	Woman Publisher
ISBN	978-616-510-148-6
Year of published	2011
No. of pages:	216

Synopsis

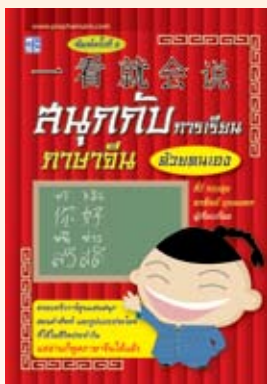
This title is a second one after the writer, Thanadda Sawangduean, had won a great Chommanard Book Prize by the title **I am Eri: My Experience Overseas** in 2010.

This title is **I am Eri: My Experience in Jails** was written and published in May 2011 and becomes one of the bestsellers at Thai market immediately. This is not only because she had won the award, but her truly experience in jails of many countries like Japan, Singapore, Bahrain and finally Thailand.

The writer told her direct experience in jails through this title as a good storyteller who had a good attitude towards lives. Though, a place that ordinary people call a “living hell”, but for Thanadda’s views is that there always a room of friendship, warmness and happiness through living difficult lives that still be there and then by a different thinking.

《监牢里的经历》

此书出版后十分畅销，它叙述了一个妓女在日本、新加坡、印尼的巴厘岛和泰国等国家的监牢里的生活记实。她不但反映了监牢里的地狱生活，还叙述了她在监牢里遇到的友谊、温暖和快乐的生活。此书之所以畅销不是因为作者曾得 Chommanard 一等奖，而是因为内容真实而畅销。



Title's name	Enjoy Learning Chinese (2 titles in one series)
Author	Xu GuangHui and Porntip Boonmongkol
Publisher	Praphansarn Publisher
ISBN	978-974-224-739-3 978-616-510-027-4
Year of published	2010
No. of pages	average 140 pages per one title

Synopsis

Porntip Boonmongkol and Xu GuangHui draw on personal experiences and those of their students to present an entertained way to study Chinese. **Enjoy Learning Chinese** presents cartoon characters' conversation in daily situations using common dialogues, which sit alongside pin yin with any foreign alphabet. Colorful text for vocabulary, it allows readers to understand the meaning immediately of each word, and a pin yin index at the front pages included appendix as a navigator for words. As the editors initiate the readers, "You can travel to half of the world just by knowing Chinese". Certainly, enjoy learning Chinese with this title can make it for you.

《一看就会说》

《一看就会说》通过日常生活所遇到的事情，配合精美图画、语言简练、相映成趣，以鲜明的颜色搭配使读者认知词语，在轻松愉快的心境下学会说一些简单的中国话。





Title's name	Maths Smart Gang (5 titles in one series)
Author	Asian Manga
Publisher	Asian Manga
ISBN	978-616-510-005-2 978-616-510-006-9 978-611-510-007-1 978-611-510-001-9 978-974-379-364-6
Year of published	2010
No. of pages	average 140 pages per one title

Synopsis

For students, who find math difficult and boring, **Maths Smart Gang** presents a new method of learning the subject through comic book stories. The characters lead readers through everyday problems that require maths to solve, making the learning process fun and easy. The content is related to standard maths curriculum, while the teaching technique turns abstract mathematics into something concrete. It allows students to study on their own, with the aim of adjusting the learning method while creating changes in the thinking process. This comic also encourages readers to study in groups, and builds better attitudes toward maths.

《智力数学》

很多学这生都觉得数学很难、很无聊。

《智力数学》通过漫画故事为学习主题的新方法。帮助读者解决每天遇到的数学问题。本漫画故事系列以生动易懂的内容，将抽象的数学变成具体有趣的数学。目的在于用简单有趣的方法让学生产生学习的兴趣和爱思考好习惯。这套连环画也鼓励读者在小组中学习，而且建立良好的学习态度。





Title's name	Gang Pui Guan Payad
Author	Asian Manga
Publisher	Asian Manga
ISBN	978-616-510-135-6
Year of published	2010
No. of pages	136

Synopsis

Learn to do personal financial plan through Asian Manga's comic story. A crucial lesson of a Thai famous comic Character named Keng. Keng is one of an extraordinary group of friends, that always annoys people in a peaceful community. This title conveys many tips that Keng's parent and friends are trying to teach him various ways of money saving for paying a big sum of Keng's deficit loan. A good adventure plot of storyboard helps readers enjoying and following how can Keng be freed from debt, then becomes independence.

《理财帮》

Keng 是一帮淘气孩子中之一，他因向朋友借钱买进口玩具，而受到沉痛的教训。他的母亲和朋友用各种各样的方法，教他节约和存储零钱，最终还清债务，使他感受到无债一身轻的乐趣。读者通过幽默诙谐的故事学会怎样理财。



Title's name	Gang Pui Mahadsajan Naew Phra Rachadamri (3 titles in one series)
Author	Asian Manga
Publisher	Asian Manga
ISBN	978-616-510-016-8 978-616-510-141-7 978-616-510-124-0
Year of published	2010
No. of pages	average 140 pages per one title

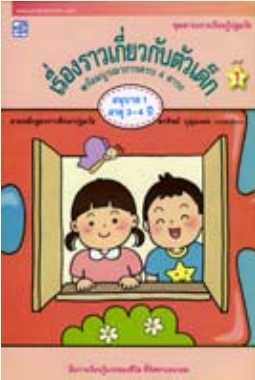
Synopsis

Asian Manga characters learn to implement Thai King's thought. This comic series contains three titles. Each title concerns about Thai King's thought and practice. Keng and his gangster learn about how to be self-reliance, even about soil and stream from our King's thought because our country long background based on agriculture society. However, the heart of Asian Manga's storyboard is how to preserve and present a good content through a series of well written exiting stories. A publisher should be proved by a variety of believes, cultures etc., and a real appreciated outcome of international readers.

《泰王神奇的思想》

这套卡通 有三册，每册都是来自有关泰王的思想。泰国是一个农业国，Keng 和朋友们从泰王为人民解决土壤和水流问题的方法，学会怎样充分利用资源、保护自然环境和生态环境，使大家有一个持久的幸福生活环境。亚洲Manga生动有趣地把泰王的思想融会贯通在这套连环画中，使读者轻松地愉快地体会到泰王的思想。





Title's name	A series for preparing kids before learning in school (10 titles for this series)
Author	Porntip Boonmongkol
Publisher	Praphansarn Publisher
ISBN	978-974-000-028-0, 978-974-000-029-7 978-974-000-030-3, 978-974-000-031-0 978-974-000-032-7, 978-974-000-033-4 978-974-000-034-1, 978-974-000-035-8 978-974-000-036-5, 978-974-000-037-2
Year of published	2010
No. of pages	average 40 pages per one title

Synopsis

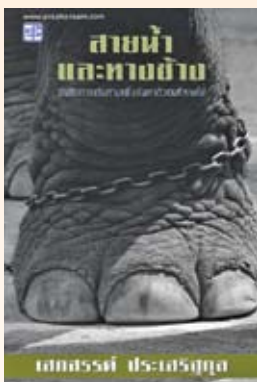
This is a family choice book series, because every parent could prepare themselves to be their kids' first teacher. The series are printing in full colors, design qualified content suitable for kids to learn about their living body and their first surrounding likes parent and cousins, places, things and nature around them. This series facilitates all kids have a golden chance to learn, understand, and then practice suitable skill at their age.

This series helps parent prepare their kids, a right attitude concerned their body, emotional understanding and intellectual development towards the coming real society. The various methods that each book of the series recommends step by step learning, such as many well designed activities that help our kids enjoy their perception and development gradually. The kids will be trained to win the designed activities from ease one to hard one through this wonderful series. Finally, by using this series as a helping tool will facilitate the user to prepare their kids ready for joining any discipline classroom by their own confidence.

《学前儿童必备》

这套书适合于3—5岁儿童，可以帮助父母成为孩子的第一位老师。它以鲜艳的色彩、精美的设计，以孩子周围环境为主要内容。如：父母和兄弟姐妹，各种地方场地，各种事物及自然现象等等。生动活泼，简而易懂，开启儿童学习思维，发挥儿童潜力，是一套帮助学前儿童建立信心，懂礼貌，能够愉快地适应社会学前必备书。





Title's name	Stream and Crosswalk
Author	Seksan Prasertkul
Publisher	Praphansarn Publisher
ISBN	978-616-510-008-3
Year of published	2009
No. of pages	480

Synopsis

The works in this period were written after Seksan's graduate with a Ph.D. in political science from Cornell University. He returned to Thailand and became a lecturer at Thammasat University, where he received his knowledge at the undergraduate level. From 1993-1995 he was Dean of the Faculty of Political Science. Apart from academic writings on Political Science theories, a field in which he is an expert, he has produced prolific literary works. The "warrior" image reflected in these works is not a warrior in an actual war as appeared in the writings of the previous decade, but a spiritual warrior in the sense that he had to fight against himself all alone. For a person who nurtured his "self-image" highly, his mental.

《路途》

本书叙述作者从一名信仰马克思主义的学生领袖成为一名忠实的佛教信徒的记实。他因对当时的军人统治不满而进入森林五年，然后出国留学，回国任泰国政法大学系主任。经历了失败的婚姻等等，最后他找到了治疗心灵创伤的良药——佛教。



Title's name	Sapan Phai Neau Sai Nam Chiel
Author	Seksan Prasertkul
Publisher	Praphansam Publisher
ISBN	978-616-510-116-5
Year of published	2010
No. of pages	308

Synopsis

Sapan Phai Neau Sai Nam Chiel : Every chapter within this title, not only reflected an important historical person's life named Seksan Prasertkul. Moreover, its content contains many crucial events of Thai society and politic that Seksan had participated and took himself an important role inside each chapter.

《艰难的路途》

《艰难的路途》里的每个章节，不仅叙述了Seksan Prasertkul是泰国社会的重要的历史人物，还通过他在各个历史阶段的经历，反映了泰国社会历史上发生的各重大事件，Seksan Prasertkul是其中的一个重要的角色。



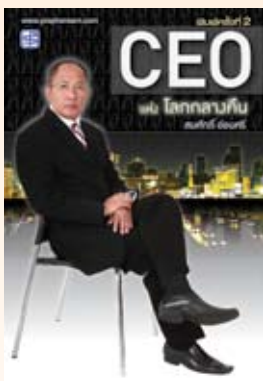
Title's name	Eastern Corner
Author	Seksan Prasertkul
Publisher	Praphansarn Publisher
ISBN	978-616-000-014-2
Year of published	2010
No. of pages	126

Synopsis

Seksan Prasertkul is a famous writer in Thailand, who has always traveled with his camera, and his photographic works are often used as illustrations in his writings. As for this **Eastern Corner** collection, most photographs were taken in Thailand, China, and other Southeast Asian countries. They are mainly pictures of local people- their expressions, their ways of life, as well as their places of worship. Seksan has personally compiled the collection, and has decided not to provide any textual explanation. In other words, he believes that the pictures themselves can tell something about this part of the world, and have no need for his additional statements.

《东方角落》(相集)

Seksan Prasertkul 是一位众所周知的泰国著名短篇小说作家和周报作家。他背着一台照相机，在东南亚泰国和中国旅行，收集了许多相片，这些相片通过他的视野反映了他对生活意义及灵魂的搜索，他收集的照片不用文字的叙述，就能向世人表达他要说的一切。



Title's name	CEO of the Nightlife
Author	Somsak Onsri
Publisher	Praphansarn Publisher
ISBN	978-616-510-003-8
Year of published	October 2009
No. of pages	304

Synopsis

Starting and building a business is tough at the best of times – but in **CEO of the Nightlife** there is unique insight into how to do exactly that – and succeed - in the cut-throat, dynamic and highly-lucrative nightlife business in Bangkok. In a seductive sector that many believe is good for a quick, easy buck, this book is ideal for those who have tried and failed or those that are taking a serious view at the nightlife business. **CEO of the Nightlife** offers a step-by-step “how to” approach, applying lessons and practical pieces of advice that can also be applied to entertainment businesses in other parts of the world – delving into everything from operations and location to construction, design, recruitment, training, service strategies and reward.

《酒吧管理者》

他怎样从一个贫穷的火车工人的儿子成为泰国有名的夜总会总裁。本书叙述他从一名最低级的酒吧洗杯工升到高级调酒师、酒吧经理、夜总会股东到夜总会总裁。他以刻苦耐劳的精神和聪明智慧克服了各种困难及问题，经历了坎坷的人生。他对泰国社会负责任，是个有道德的成功商人。



Title's name	Rattanakosin :The Birth of Bangkok
Author	Pongpol Adireksarn
Publisher	Praphansarn Publisher
ISBN	974-9754-05-0
Year of published	2010
No. of pages	640

Synopsis

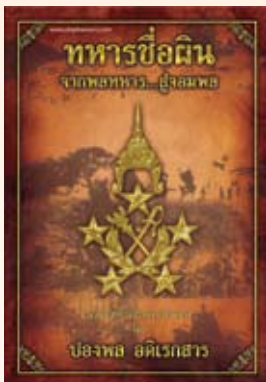
Pongpol Adireksarn presents a factual; historical look at Thai history in fictional form in **Rattanakosin: The Birth of Bangkok**. The plot centres on Christopher Milton, a secretary at the United States Embassy in Thailand, who is on leave, and decides to go to the National Museum, a visit that coincides with the 200th anniversary of the death of King Rama 1's viceroy, Surasinghanat. Milton then meets a strange monk, who tell him the story of the fall of Ayutthaya and King Taksin's battles to liberate Siam, which leads to the establishment of the Thai capital at Rattanakosin and the birth of Bangkok.

《曼谷王朝（乐达纳歌信）——曼谷》

这篇历史小说描述了从泰国大城王朝被第二次占领之前，到郑王战胜敌人夺回领土，直至曼谷王朝第一世皇，表现了泰国历代的先辈们，同心协力保护祖国的英勇事迹。

作者用自己的写法，收集了大量的事实资料 and 历史的证见，来叙述整段真实历史，使书中人物活生活现，引人入胜，读不释手。

Christopher Milton 是本书的主人公，他是美国驻泰国大使馆的秘书，Milton 在一个历史博物馆内，认识了一位僧人，他把他领入了泰国的历史，提醒后人知道，泰国之所以有今天，是泰国先辈们用自己的血肉牺牲换来的。



Title's name	A Soldier Named Phin
Author	Pongpol Adireksarn
Publisher	Praphansam Publisher
ISBN	978-611-510-005-7
Year of published	2009
No. of pages	344

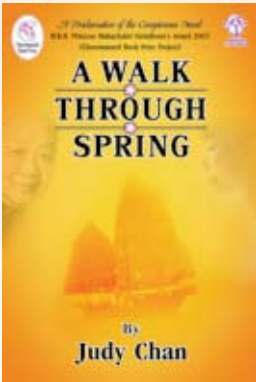
Synopsis

Pongpol Adireksarn brings legendary Thai Field Marshal Phin Chunhawan to life in a dramatic fictional account of a strong-willed young man's from low-ranking soldier to national hero. The story follows Thai history and politics as Field Marshal Phin faces life and death situations defending Thailand during the Bawondech Rebellion, the Indochina War and the East Asian War.

Mr Pongpol weaves Field Marshal Phin's family life into the plot, stressing the priority he placed on this relationships, and then takes us to the moment when the retired soldier led the nation's only non-military coup d'etat in 1937.

《从一个兵到将军》

作者以传奇的事实，叙述了一个贫穷农民儿子当兵。从一个小兵成为最高级的将军的纪实。它记录了一段泰国的重要历史。他经历了许多的战争，平息谋反、第二次世界大战等，参加了推翻泰国君主制，推动民主制度的改革，他是泰国军人在1937年军事的政变中主要领导人之一。



Title's name	A Walk Through Spring
Author	Judy Chan
Publisher	Woman Publisher
ISBN	978-616-510-012-0
Year of published	2010
No. of pages	432

Synopsis

A Walk Through Spring is exceptional in its ability to weave well-researched fact into a novel.

The author has carefully selected a wise method to create lively characters and entertaining dialogue while conveying a profound philosophy that celebrates life, at the same time asking probing question into its meaning. The reader will be enchanted by the charm of the tenderness, poise and delicacy of the human heart and soul through the roles of the female actors. Discover the bonds which tie generations to one another which are often to be as mysterious as the nature of women themselves.

《春天的一次散步》

《春天的一次散步》是一本描述了三代广东女人在泰国生活的事实小说。作家通过深入调查和研究，精心地选择，活泼生动纤细地反映了她们平凡生活中的不平凡。读者将从这本书中体会到吃的艺术、女人的温柔和两代广东女人之间的感情关系。



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Rights Contact Person

Mr. Arthorn Techatada

Managing Director

Email address: arthorn@praphansarn.com

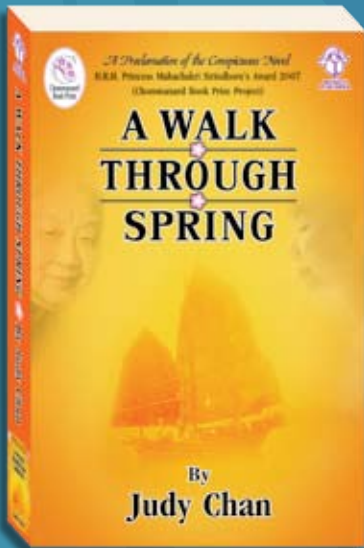
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668-676 Jarunsanitwong Rd. Bangplad

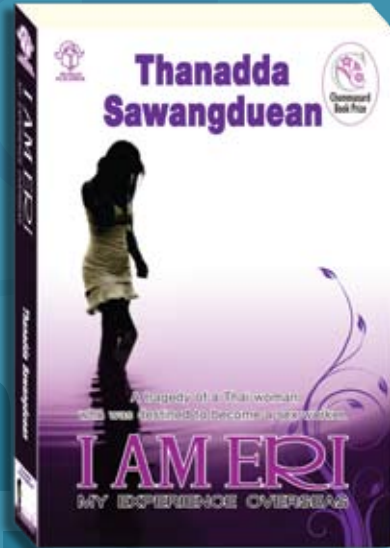
Bangkok 10700 THAILAND

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