

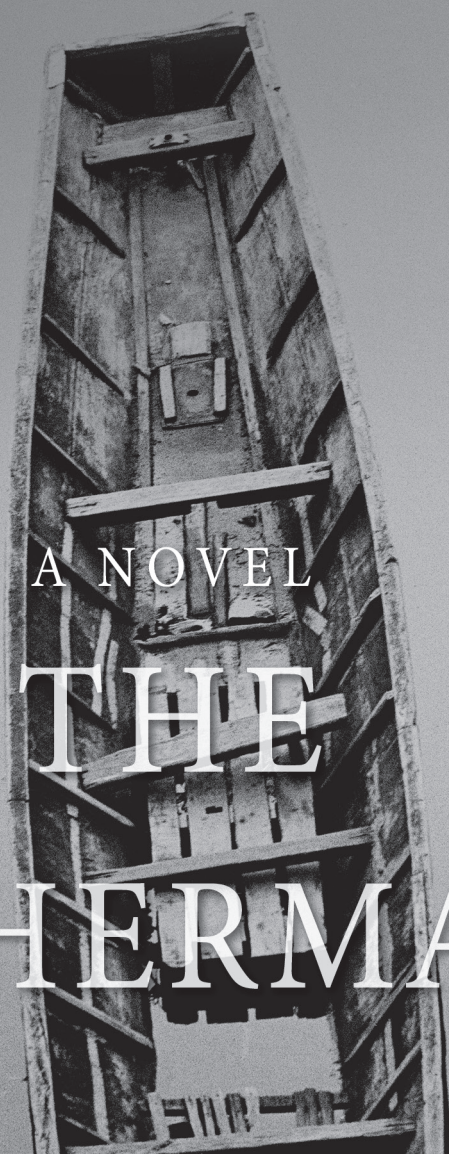
THAILAND'S NATIONAL ARTIST IN LITERATURE

SEKSAN PRASERTKUL

A NOVEL

THE

FISHERMAN



Publisher's Foreword

Seksan Prasertkul's *The Fisherman* is a remarkable work that, like much of his writing, emerges from the depths of his own lived experience. First written in 1985 and later revisited 30 years later in 2015, this short novel reflects Seksan's time as an insurgent in the forests along Thailand's western border, where he was immersed in the lives of fishermen and raft dwellers. The result is a deeply evocative and immersive portrayal of their world—the struggles, its rhythms, and the delicate balance between survival and nature.

For international readers unfamiliar with Seksan Prasertkul, he is a prominent figure in Thailand's modern history, known not only as a distinguished writer but also as a political activist and intellectual. Seksan first rose to prominence as a student leader during Thailand's historic 1973 uprising against military dictatorship. Following the violent political turmoil of the late 1970s, he spent years living as a guerrilla fighter in the jungle before later transitioning into academia and literature. His literary contributions, shaped by his profound personal experiences, have earned him widespread recognition, including the title of Thailand's National Artist in Literature in 2009.

Readers familiar with Seksan's literary journey will recognize his signature blend of rich storytelling, social realism, and deep philosophical reflection in *The Fisherman*. The novel does not simply depict the life of fishermen; it

captures the undercurrents of human nature tied to conflict, survival, morality, and the shifting tides of fate. Seksan's writings, as always, are precise yet poetic, offering scenes so vivid they seem to shimmer on the page like the river itself.

What makes this novel particularly compelling is how it grapples with the contradictions that define human existence. As Seksan himself reflects, life is often filled with unresolved emotions, sometimes persisting until the day we die. In his view, thoughts and emotions are merely events—transient, ever-changing, much like the water that both sustains and threatens the fisherman's way of life.

The Fisherman is not a work that merely presents hardship or conflict. It is a meditation on the forces that shape us—nature, community, power and personal choice. Readers will find themselves drawn into this world, not just to observe the daily struggles of the characters, but to reflect on the choices people make when faced with life's unpredictable currents.

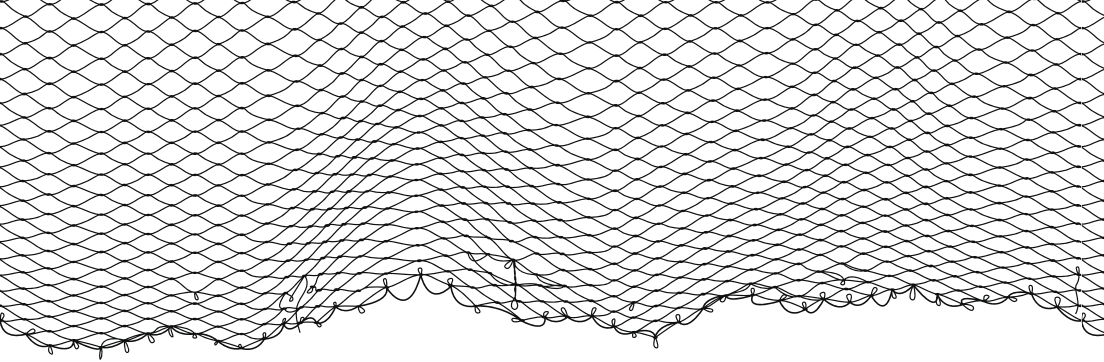
With this edition, readers have the opportunity to experience *The Fisherman* in its most complete form, following Seksan's careful revisions and refinements. It stands as a testament to his commitment to truth, both in storytelling and in the human experience itself. Whether one is drawn to its gripping narrative, its poignant themes of existence, or the beautifully rendered depictions of life on the river, *The Fisherman* offers much to ponder, appreciate, and return to.

Pairat Temphairojana

Editor

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Chapter 1

The mountains were growing dim, stretched out on either side of the large creek that flowed into a river. Ahead, the mountain feet on both sides met at the river bend. Beyond that, there was another mountain, rising like a wall against the sky. The ripe orange sun crouched on the treetops as the hazy winter mist swirled around the mountain valleys.

The long-tailed boat's engine suddenly became muffled before finally cutting out as it sped along the channel not too far from the shore. The young man stood up and ambled to the bow of the boat while the engine's momentum continued to propel the small boat slowly forward. Seeing that everything was under control, he folded the net into three and flicked one end over his right elbow, using both hands to fold the edge into a concertina. He lay down on his side and turned his face towards his target, raising himself up on one elbow and shaking his body behind him like a dancer, his eyes fixed on the ripples that chased each other on the surface of the water. At that moment, the tool of his trade, which was like an extra limb, was released.

He shook the net out into a circle like an expert opening a Chinese fan. It hovered above the water, blocking the sun that was disappearing behind the mountains, becoming a black shadow on the connecting net, which was like a spider's web

hanging between them.

The young man slackened the line, so that the net plunged to the riverbed, and left it there to soak for a moment. It all appeared quiet with no vibrations on the dragline tied to his right wrist, and experience seemed to be whispering in his ear to pull it in and save his hopes for the next catch.

As he began to pull in the net, he felt a forceful tug on his wrist. The line cut through the water almost two metres ahead and stopped short. It had to be a fish, and one of such weight he would not be able to pull it in. Fishing in the mountain brook had taught him it was best to let the net straight down so as not to waste time untangling it from the rocks the size of ships, which was what always tended to happen.

He did not know how he would bring up this fish. It was likely too heavy to be gathered in the net with the gills latching onto it, and the two-inch holes were not large enough to bind its nose.

The water there was eight metres deep and he would not be able to pull the net ashore. The only way was to swim with the net to where it was shallow. Although his chances were slim, it was still feasible as the current was not too strong.

The fisherman pulled on the line once more and the tug in response told him the fish was still there. Quickly, he let himself carefully down from the boat, using his right arm to paddle and his left to control the net so that the end would not come open. Each time the big fish flapped, he had to stop to keep the net slack enough to meet its impact.

At last, he felt his feet touch the riverbed, which was soft due to the decomposing leaves piled there. When his footing was firm, he quickly tossed the net to where it was shallow and, as soon as the weights on the edge of the net touched his feet, he ducked and grabbed the end. The enormous fish shot up in alarm straight into the gap in the net, hitting its head with perfect accuracy. The fisherman's face felt numb, but he still

had enough sense to wrap the net around the fish a few more times. He pulled up the fish in the net to his chest and stumbled clumsily ashore, water dripping from both his hair and the net. In the cloudy atmosphere of Wang Nam Kiew, he looked like a strange creature clutching its treasure as it emerged from the depths of the earth.

“A carp!” he exclaimed shakily as he caught sight of the golden scales, as perfectly ordered as a fish in an oriental painting. It shook itself in the net out of its instinct to survive while he picked up a nearby rock and hit it repeatedly on the head. The carp shook one last time and finally became motionless.

After he had tethered his boat to a tree on the bank, he tossed his dripping net over his shoulder and strode towards the rapids up ahead, since it was the last point where a boat could be steered. After that, even a guardian spirit would not be able to drive a boat against the current as the rocks in the middle of the creek created a turbulent whirlpool. It was frighteningly fierce but provided an asylum for the many kinds of fish with numerous places to hide from the fishermen, although they seldom ventured there, loath to patch up their nets after they snagged on the rocks beneath the water. And for another thing, there were fewer and fewer fishermen because of the trawlers with their huge nets that were pulled in each morning and left there for months.

But for him, fishing was still the best way to earn a living, and this was his treasure trove. He knew exactly where the fish were and went there each evening to cast his net in different places before he carried the fish he caught back home to his raft.

Each time he went, he would hurl his net into a whirlpool and usually caught a hampala or a leaf-fish or two. He would never lower his net in the same place twice as if to let the river’s guardian spirit know that he would only take enough

to make a living and would not take more than was necessary.

Today he had been blessed with a golden carp as long as his arm. It was a triumph that the rest of the fishermen would envy since the river had not bestowed a carp on anyone for a month.

He arranged his net and stood proudly on a large rock that jutted out into the middle of the creek. The water beneath was choppy, but he knew its rhythm well. He would usually hurl his net a little above the water and as soon as the edge of the net reached the riverbed, he would be able to quickly pull it back behind the rocks. That was all it took for the feeble-minded fish that swam with the evening current to be under his control. The narrow pool behind the rocks would be calm enough for him to pull the net up without the end getting pushed open by the current.

He stood motionless in concentration, luring the fish into a false sense of security that nothing was amiss, his frame silhouetted against the darkening sky. The twilight rays that shone on his face and down one side made the still picture appear to gleam as the water droplets dripped from his hair like precious jewels.

Crash! He hurled his net into the water and at that moment, two fish turned upside down. The water was turbulent but not too deep and the base of the net was almost a foot above the riverbed, so he deftly pulled it behind the end of the rock out of the channel.

Something was wrong. Most of the net was in the calm water behind the rock, but in the blink of an eye it had drifted back into the turbulent channel. He pulled gently on the line, and it felt like the bottom of the net was stuck on something. How was it possible he wondered. He knew what was under the water there with his eyes closed and there was nothing there to catch on the net unless a big turtle was hiding there, but what turtle would swim in such turbulent water he mused.

He tugged on the line with all his might, only to realize that he had been a fool. He heard his net rip beneath the water, but the edge with the weights was stuck. Although he was upset about his net, at least that was the only damage, he thought to himself.

At last, he had to crouch behind the rock in the calm water to see what had been pulling on his net. The water was almost two feet above his head, so he held his breath and cautiously tried to climb out from the rock beneath the water. If he slipped, it would mean being plunged into the turbulent channel and worse besides.

A huge log was stuck in a crevice in the rock and the chain on the edge of the net was wrapped around it. The force of the tug a moment ago had embedded the chain more deeply between the rock and the log, causing the net to rip and leave a hole big enough for a human head. Parts of the net were hanging from the branches on the log while the rest of it swayed back and forth with the current.

He shot up and filled his lungs with air, having no other choice but to dive down to the log and unhook the edge of his net, which would mean him going down into the turbulent channel and being carried along with the current. He had no idea how long that blasted log had been there. Perhaps a large branch on the log at the river mouth had decayed and broken off into the creek the night before and the raging current had carried it to the place where he made his living. He couldn't understand why this kind of thing had to happen, but sometimes it did.

The fisherman hugged the log with one hand while his body floated parallel to the riverbed buoyed by the current. With his other hand, he unhooked the chain from the crevice where the log was jammed, gradually pulling until it finally came free. The moment it came free, it was thrown over the top half of his body and both he and the net became tangled

and floated away with the current. He squirmed inside the net, cursing himself for forgetting to release the line from his wrist. The current hurled him against the rocks, narrowly missing his head, and he was beginning to lose heart as he flayed his legs in alarm, wondering if this was his karma for catching who knows how many fish with a net.

If he couldn't catch fish, how the hell was he supposed to earn a living he asked himself as he instinctively wriggled with all his might. At last, he was able to point his feet towards the mouth of the river and the net came free. The fisherman quickly released the line from his wrist and shot up to the nearest rock. He clung to it for a moment before climbing up and lying down, outstretched and panting.

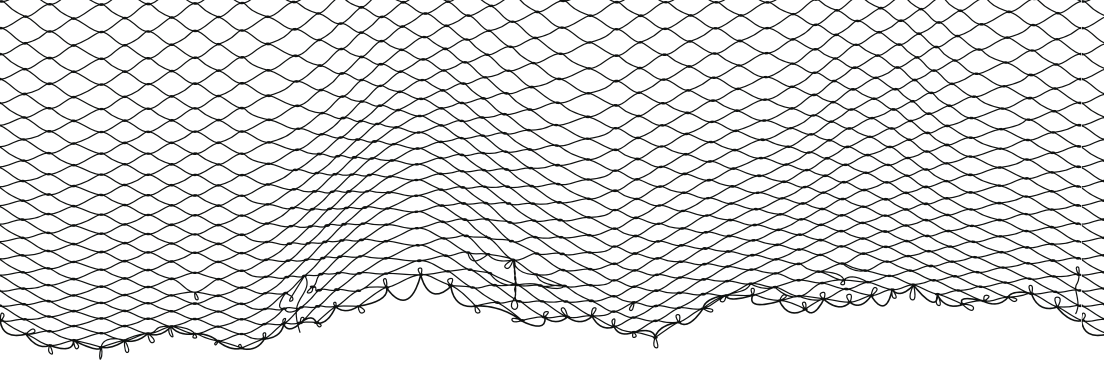
His thoughts suddenly turned to his young wife. By now, she would be fixing dinner and waiting for him on the small raft. He had almost lost his life and abandoned her. What a fool he had been. He had caught a carp of almost ten kilograms and had still not been satisfied. Wanting more had almost killed him. Fate had given him luck with one hand and snatched it away with the other.

He cursed himself furiously.

Soon after the long-tailed boat's engine reverberated through the mountains. The small boat raced over the rapids and round the bends into the deep channels, the flame from the oil lamp dancing behind the zinc wind shield as darkness enfolded both sides of the riverbank.

A cicada fluttered its wings noisily as if it had been holding its breath in suspense.

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Chapter 2

They called the place Wang Nam Kiew. It was on a wide bend in the river and was thirty metres deep. The water there was calmer than the surrounding areas and was green and clear. Three years earlier, it had not been named and was just another bend in the river that twisted through the mountain valleys and, except for those looking for bamboo, hardly anyone ever went there. It was part of the dense rainforest that covered the western border of the land of Thailand.

But when someone pulled up three twenty-kilogram catfish in a row, news that the area was full of fish spread as quickly as a forest fire in summer and the destitute flocked to set up rafts and make a living there. They hauled up hundreds of kilograms of catfish, carp, hampala, snakefish and even squid several times a day, and it seemed that this would go on until either man or nature was destroyed.

After that, someone with foresight set up a floating shop selling torch batteries, fishing hooks, rice, duck eggs, medicine, instant noodles and even amphetamine pills. He would buy the freshly caught fish and leave them on ice in a flat-bottomed metal boat, pulling them ashore three or four days later onto the bank next to the highway before one of his relatives would buy them, taking them in his truck to sell in the town where another relative bought them to trade. Nobody knew for sure

how many of the gaffer's relative's hands the fish from Wang Nam Kiew had passed through before they reached the plates of the pitiful patrons of local markets.

Needless to say, he wasn't the only one with countless relatives and, in less than a year, another gaffer outsmarted him. He had a relative who went looking for some out of work northeasterners and promised them boats and nets which they could pay for in installments on the condition they sold him the fish they caught. Naturally, it was an offer that the down on their luck could not refuse. Some arrived with nothing but the shirts on their backs, some dragged their children and grandchildren along and others brought along their elderly relatives. At least they would be able to take care of each other they thought.

The first gaffer was not to be outdone and soon had his relatives do the same.

And so it was that Wang Nam Kiew became an unofficial settlement. They arrived from near and far, setting up rows of rafts and, each morning, the rumble of numerous boat engines echoed through the mountain valleys. In the evenings, the glow of oil lamps flickered on the ripples from the rafts of the two gaffers, which were more brightly illuminated than any of the others, owing to the generators they both owned.

"You're back early today, Chieb," Gaffer Chai greeted the owner of the small boat as it docked next to the raft.

"My ruddy net broke," Chieb snapped.

"Did you catch anything?"

"A carp. I'd say it's ten kilograms."

The owner of the floating shop took the fish from the young man in the boat, buckling a little from its weight. Gaffer Chai was the first fish merchant in Wang Nam Kiew and, ever since he had found a rival, his generosity had increased by leaps and bounds. He no longer pushed the price down any more than was necessary and was more lenient with

his debtors than he had ever been before.

“Nine point four kilograms! My, oh, my!” the gaffer exclaimed. “I’ll give you nine hundred and fifty baht for it. This is splendid! No one’s caught a carp for a month.”

“Why?” the swarthy young man asked, raising his eyebrows doubtfully. A carp didn’t usually fetch more than a hundred baht per kilogram, but here was the gaffer giving him ten baht extra.

“It’s those blasted cops at the border, Chieb! They want a carp from me. I told them I hadn’t got any, but they wouldn’t listen. I told them no one’s caught any carp for a month.”

“You haven’t done anything wrong, Gaffer. Why do you have to give in to them?”

“Well, there is something. It isn’t much, mind you. I took a butterfly lizard to their restaurant. They fetch a good price, but they said it was an endangered species. Now they want a carp. I’m just trying to earn a living. If I don’t give them one, I’m done for,” he grumbled.

Chieb was quiet for a moment. He was so deep in thought that the veins on his temples pulsated. A moment later, he jumped up onto the raft and grabbed the carp that was lying next to the scales by the tail with his rough hands. Then he stepped back into his boat without a word.

“Hey! What are you doing?” Gaffer Chai demanded.

“I’m not selling it. I’m taking it home for my wife to cook,” he replied as he tugged on the pulley and started the engine with a roar before the small, long-tailed boat raced away from the floating shop and the light from the oil lamp at the head of the boat disappeared.

Chieb was a fisherman from a nearby district with his own boat and raft, but he was still as broke as could be. He had arrived in Wang Nam Kiew two years earlier on the recommendation of one of his relatives. At the time, he was destitute because he had intentionally stabbed someone to

death. He had almost ended up in prison, but fortunately he had enough money saved to bribe the officials into changing his story to be that he had acted in self-defence. To be fair, he had been defending himself since his victim had always pushed him around and his pride had been wounded for some time before he finally stabbed the man. The day it happened, he had been terrified of the police because his victim was the brother of a police sergeant and, if he had been beaten to death in his cell, no one would have known a thing about it.

He had arrived with a girl from the same village. He had fallen in love with her since she was a teenager and had planned to wait until she was twenty before proposing but, at the time, she was only seventeen and he was afraid that someone else would snatch her since she was a fine-looking girl.

“Come with me. If I stay, that sergeant will kill me,” he had told her and, although she hadn’t consented directly, she had lain her head on his shoulder, indicating her compliance. He had told her parents that he was running away and could offer her nothing but his devotion and, after less than two glasses of rice whiskey, her father had let her go and pinned his hopes on getting a bride price for her younger sister instead.

“I like you and that’s enough,” he had said.

For this reason, Chieb had become a resident of Wang Nam Kiew. His Uncle Sing had taken him there quietly, and he and his wife had helped each other to earn a living there ever since.

A light flickered on the dim raft in front of him. A woman was leaning out and tossing something in the water. Chieb grinned to himself in the darkness. This was the flower garden of his life. His last refuge in a sea of poverty. He turned off the engine and paddled the boat calmly.

“Why are you back so soon?” the young woman with the cloth tied around her torso greeted him, a doubtful expression in her lovely eyes.

“Do you mind if I don’t answer?” he said, smiling as he stepped onto the raft.

“Then I’ll put the pot on the stove to boil. I wasn’t expecting you so soon.”

His wife disappeared into a corner of the raft and a moment later he heard a match being struck followed by the sound of a palm-leaf fan flapping. Then an orange flame illuminated her soft features and flushed cheeks.

“Teng.”

“Yes?” she replied walking towards him and sitting beside him with her legs to the side, wondering why her husband was acting so strangely. “Can you tell me now why you’re back so early?”

“I missed you.”

“Why? You’re with me every day.”

“I nearly died today, Teng,” the swarthy young man cajoled, wrapping his arms tightly around her waist.

“Don’t! The cloth will slip down!” she cried, since the light from the lamp was bright. She didn’t understand what he was doing, sinking his head onto her breast like a child looking for warmth, wanting her to know that he had felt desolate because he had almost been separated from her.

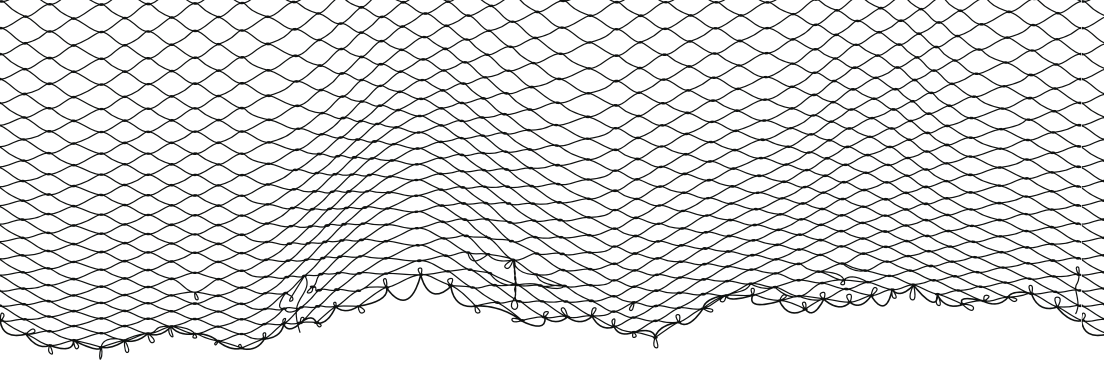
“I haven’t had a wash,” she said pushing him away.

Chieb said nothing.

“I’m three months pregnant.”

Suddenly, the flame on the oil lamp was blown out. The only remaining light was from the glowing charcoal on the stove. The sound of giggles alternating with the young woman’s muffled protests cut through the darkness above the creek. A moment later the pot boiled over and doused the glowing embers.

The red glimmer suddenly disappeared.



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Chapter 3

“Hey, Chieb. I heard you caught a carp of nearly ten kilograms a few days ago,” the short stocky man boomed as he filled a glass with whiskey. In another corner, five men were boisterously drawing cards, their noisy banter filling the air.

“It was just over nine...” the swarthy young man replied modestly.

“You got nearly a grand for that, you rogue!”

“I didn’t sell it. My wife wanted to eat it.”

His Uncle Sing chuckled and handed him a glass of whiskey. He looked on him like a son because they were from the same village, even though they were only distant relatives. Everyone treated Uncle Sing with respect because he had been one of the first to arrive at Wang Nam Kiew, added to the fact that he looked tough with wild eyes and a booming raspy voice that shook the raft when he roared with laughter on account of the alcohol coursing through his veins.

To Chieb, Uncle Sing was both his relative and his teacher in the art of fishing in the local waters. The first lesson he gave him still echoed in his ears.

“Remember this, Chieb. Fish are one of the lowest forms of life. They’re there for us to catch and make a living. There are only two ways to catch them. You use force or you trick them. If you use a net or a harpoon, that’s force, but sometimes

you have to trick them because some fish are clever buggers. You have to use bait to trick them. No matter which way you use, you get them because they're just fish. But you must never catch a lot of them, or we're done for."

The first year, Chieb fished like a madman since he'd used up all his savings from his previous job to bribe the officials. He and his wife earned a living each morning and evening with just a cast net and a few fishhooks. Chieb did not leave a net out to trap fish because there was no space left in the creek as it was full of nets stretching out for a kilometre, and it was fair to say that no fish could escape. Nevertheless, there were enough fish for Chieb to finish paying for his motorboat within the first year, which he considered his greatest achievement. The second year was more difficult since there were fewer fish but no less fishermen, leading to a couple of them deciding to sell their rafts and their fishing equipment before leaving to make a living elsewhere.

But Chieb remained because he had no other choice. He had begun to fish in the shallow rapids where boats could not go, which was more tiring because every day he had to climb the rugged rocks there. Besides that, since his wife was pregnant with their first child, she was no longer able to help him remove the fish from the net or steer the boat, not to mention the fact that he had to be more attentive towards her and save up because he wanted her to have the baby in a hospital in the town.

Today was a holiday and the fishermen had taken a day off to indulge in a lesser sin than taking the lives of living things, which was drinking whiskey and playing cards on Uncle Sing's raft. Chieb did not know how to play cards and did not intend to learn now, so all he could do was sip whiskey with his uncle, having no other outlet for relaxation.

The sound of singing and knocking on the side of a boat came closer and shook him from his daydream.

“So long, babe, as you sail away, through the stormy rapids’ fray, the choppy waters gush around, like the sky is falling down...”

The man on the boat leaned back on a pile of nets, one hand resting on the engine stick and the other tapping on the side of the boat contentedly, his accent revealing that he was a northeasterner and his face flushed with whiskey.

“Hey, Mo Lam. Want to come up here?” Chieb called.

The young man from the northeast docked his boat next to the raft and climbed up eagerly, plumping down against the pole which held up the roof.

“After fishing for five kilometres, I got fed up, so I had a drink.”

“Have another before you go home.”

The young man, who everyone called Mo Lam, reached out to take a zinc cup from Chieb, but before his hand could touch the cup, a sunburned arm roughly knocked it away.

“You Lao want everything for free,” Uncle Sing thundered, causing Mo Lam’s face to suddenly turn from red to white.

“Everyone likes free things, Uncle, whether they’re Thai or Lao,” he joked nervously, though his face was still ashen.

“I’m not your uncle. Get off my raft!”

All the men who were playing cards turned to look at him. Mo Lam glanced from left to right in alarm, not understanding what was going on and made to get back in his boat. Chieb turned to his uncle in astonishment.

“Wait!” Uncle Sing roared.

“You told me to go.”

“Are you fishing on a holiday? You son of a bitch!”

Mo Lam hesitated, both angry and afraid, since the middle-aged man looked like he meant business.

“I’m broke. And people are buying fish to let them go today. That’ll absolve my sin,” the young man replied shakily before quickly tugging on the engine rope at the back of his

boat and hurrying away. He had to be respectful on account of not being a local and the fact that his previous occupation had taught him nothing but crooning and vibrato.

"You were too harsh on him, Uncle," Chieb murmured.

"Those greedy bastards need to be taught a lesson. They never stop, even on holidays," Uncle Sing replied without turning to look at him.

"But we're just as bad, drinking and gambling on a holiday," someone chuckled from the gambling table. Uncle Sing hurled his glass on the ground and charged towards the young man who had spoken.

"What did you say, Yoi?"

"Nothing, Uncle."

"Say it, you pussy!"

"It was nothing..." the young man stammered, but it was too late. The stocky man's heavy hand came crashing down on Yoi's head, knocking him to the floor. The gamblers quickly dispersed.

"Wanna fight, Yoi?"

"No, Uncle," the wretched young man mumbled, hiding his vexation. Each of the men who had been playing cards scooped their coins into their pockets and hurriedly took their leave from their host. Chieb made to leave as well.

"Hey, Chieb. Stay for lunch," Uncle Sing said, grabbing him by the shoulder.

"It's alright, Uncle. I don't want to put you out."

Chieb was referring to Uncle Sing's wife who was about to go and buy lunch from the gaffer's raft.

"You in a huff now?"

"No. I'm worried about Teng. She's by herself."

"I can tell you are...but trust me. I did it for you lot."

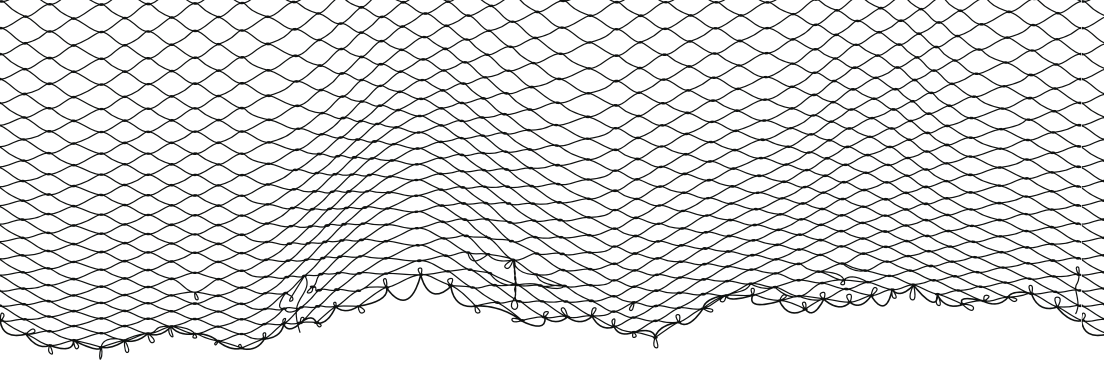
Uncle Sing stopped when he saw Chieb glaring at him.

"Don't look at me like that. I did it for me as well. These blasted Lao are taking our jobs. And they're greedy buggers.

Think about it. There'll be no fish left for us."

Chieb was silent before taking his leave again. The boat's engine rumbled and then Chieb and his trusty boat cut through the water towards the bend that lay ahead. The swarthy young man stared at the midday rays glistening on the water without hearing the voices that greeted him from the rafts on either side of the creek.

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Afterword

‘The Fisherman’ was my first attempt to write a novel. It happened thirty years ago, and I was not satisfied with it. At the time, I was working on my doctorate degree in the United States, and since I had to finish my thesis, I was only able to write a short novel or a long short story.

However, that was not the reason I did not want this work to be republished. It was because of the criticisms of some well-meaning individuals, which I readily took into consideration. Some of them thought that the novel seemed unfinished, or that it ended abruptly, and one felt that some chapters were unnecessary.

To be honest, I did not think that the ending of the original was problematic because I had always intended for the novel to close with the protagonist’s confusion rather than ending with a neat resolution.

Is it not true that in life we often have conflicting emotions for a long time, sometimes until the day we die? In my view, therefore, thoughts, emotions and feelings are simply events.

But the fact remained that those criticisms weighed on my mind because I write to communicate, and if I fail to do so, I am dissatisfied. For several years, I tried to think of additional chapters to resolve the novel more completely, but

for the longest time, I did not get around to it, even though I had an outline. After completing my studies, the necessity of supporting myself (and my children) led me to teach as well as write for a newspaper column unabated, so I was not able to devote myself to an extended piece of work as I had hoped, not to mention the fact that the political situation after 2010 left me lost for words.

These events made me realize that, for a writer, ideas alone are not enough. A writer must also be in the right frame of mind for writing in order to nurture creativity and tune out distractions.

Thirty years on, I finally found the time to complete 'The Fisherman'. To tell the truth, my motivation was not complicated. I simply realized that if I did not return to writing, I might never get around to it, since in two years' time, I will be seventy.

In making revisions and additions for this edition, I did not change the original plot. I simply removed chapter 4 (in the first edition) according to the advice of well-meaning individuals and polished the language. As for the additions, I tried to remain faithful to my voice from when I was a young man for the sake of continuity and consistency of style.

How did 'The Fisherman' come about you may ask?

It was inspired by my own experiences. Back in the days when I was an insurgent in the forests along the western border, I was exposed to the life of fishermen, which in one way is the same as the life of raft dwellers. For this reason, the novel gives an accurate depiction of their lives, and I only invented the characters and the plot.

However, when I reread the novel and wrote additions, I found that the contradictions and personalities of the characters were true to life, not just in a small community like Wang Nam Kiew, but in society at large, and that includes me and you.

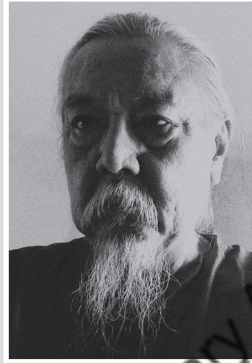
I will not explain the message of ‘The Fisherman’ because that is not as important as the readers asking themselves what they got out of reading the novel.

Seksan Prasertkul

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About the Author

Seksan Prasertkul, born in 1949 in eastern Thailand, received a PhD in Political Science from Cornell University and lectured at Thammasat University for 20 years. He gained prominence as a student leader during the 1973 uprising, a pivotal moment in Thailand's modern history. He later lived as a guerrilla fighter before turning to academia and literature. Known for his distinctive writing style and insightful reflections, he was named Thailand's National Artist in Literature in 2009.