



*[The story and drawing of brave "Tao Suranaree, the woman who saved Korat," is found in **Stories of the Northeast** a reader developed by the English department of the Teachers Training College of Maharakham for first and second year students in that institution. While that institution has not existed. The purpose of the reader was to help students understand English could be used to tell their own stories, too. That institution has not existed for 40+ years, but its most recent successor institution today is known as Maharakham University. Peace Corps Volunteers at the Teachers Training College of Maharakham handles much of the work in producing that reader. The artist of the drawing was a fourth year student at the College.]*

THE WOMAN WHO SAVED KORAT

IF YOU GO TO KORAT YOU WILL SEE A STATUE OF A WOMAN IN FRONT OF THE OLD CITY WALL. The statue is Tao Suranaree, and she is one of Thailand's greatest heroines. Here is the story of how she defeated the Laotian army and saved Korat.

About one hundred and fifty years ago the Thais were then enemies of the Laotians. The King of Laos, Anuwong, brought his army into northeastern Thailand. King Phanongklao of Thailand was not ready to fight, and so the Laotians conquered most of the Northeast.

In Korat the people were very worried. Their governor had gone to Bangkok to see the king. There were no leaders to defend their town. The people asked each other, "What will we do? How can we fight the Laotians? We have no army,"

When King Anuwong came to Korat, the people did not fight against him. They hoped he would "be kind to them. The Laotians did not hurt the people of Korat because they wanted them to be captives. They wanted to take them to Laos. Laos needed people to work in the fields and in the towns. So King Anuwong decided he would not kill people, he would take them back to Laos.

The captives were very sad, they did not want to leave Korat and they did not want to go to Laos. They walked very slowly and they said, "We must stop. We are very tired. We are not used to walking," So the Laotian army did not go very far the first day.

One of the captives, a woman named Mo, was very clever. She had an idea. She said to the general of the Laotian army, "It is evening now and everyone is ft/angry. We must soon stop for the night, let us stop here. Then we can cook food for you. But we do not have any knives and we must have some to prepare the food."

The Laotian general was very hungry, so he told his soldiers to give their knives to the women. Then the captives began to prepare food. Mo had another idea, and she said to the women, "First, we must give the Laotian soldiers some liquor. It will make them drunk and sleepy. Then we will feed them."

After they had eaten, the Laotian soldiers fell asleep. Then Mo said to the women, "Take your knives and give some of them to the men. Now we can fight, and the Laotians cannot defeat us, they are drunk and asleep, and they do not have any weapons." So the women took their cooking knives, which the Laotians had given them, and they gave some of them to the men.

At midnight Mo led the captives to the Laotian army. She said, "It is dark and they cannot see us. Now let us fight with them." The Thais quickly defeated the Laotian army, and they returned to Korat. The Laotians had to return to Laos without any captives.

When Mo and her army came to Korat everyone was surprised and happy; The captives told everyone of Mo's plan, and of her bravery. Soon even King Phanongklao in Bangkok heard of Mo's bravery. He was very impressed, and he gave her a new name, the Brave Woman (*or in Thai: Tao Suranaree*). When the famous Tao Suranaree died, the people of Korat wanted to remember her. They decided to build a statue of her, and they also named a school after their greatest heroine.