



The SUPPORT Arts and Crafts
International Centre of Thailand
(Public Organization)



Types of Handicrafts

Aranyik Knife



Aranyik Knife is wisdom of people in Baan Ton Pho and Phai Nong District who migrated from Vientiane, Laos to settle in the plentiful basin of the Pa Sak River, Ayutthaya Province. They mainly earned their living by knife forging, which is acceptable in their skills, to sell at Aranyik market. The knife is very well-known for its strength and durability and is available at Aranyik village. Therefore, it is known as the quality “Aranyik Knife” ever since.





identity reflecting wisdom and engineering skills in Aranyik Knife

The outstanding features of “Aranyik knife” are different from the other types. It is sturdy, sharp, durable, and very strong that is able to cut the steel at once. With the long history of wisdom that is inherited from generation to generation, Aranyik knife, made with hand forging technique, is carved with outstanding and beautiful Thai pattern. Importantly, each knife has the seal of “Aranyik” and the name of the house making the knife.

The wisdom that has been inherited for many generations until today is the conservation of knife hand forging which is consider the key of knife making. In the past, the steel used to make the weapon and for agricultural purpose was “*Ta Pu Sang Kha Wa Non*”, the same type of those used for constructing the chapel. It was beaten with hammer (*Khon Panern*) while it was heated which needed three people to beat it. Put it in heat, twist the steel, and beat it until the steel fold homogeneously making it strong and robust. This method was used to make pruning knife, bamboo hatchet, and sabering. Afterwards, spring steel was used. Today, the steel is imported from Germany because the spring steel is very rare. However, the traditional method is still practiced. The important step is forging steel in heat and in chill, which is called “*Hai Lek*”. This is to forge the shaped steel while it is cold to fix the contortion of the blade and to smoothen the steel thoroughly, as well as to strengthen its hardness. Then, put it back to the heat and let it cool by air before filling and hardening.

Hardening is also the wisdom of a bladesmith that requires the skills in noticing the color of the heated steel to have appropriate temperature for hardening. The color should not be dark red since the steel will easily crack. It should be the light red color which gives the small, hard, and sharp blade. The hardening agent is water which takes out heat from the steel to cool it down quickly. The bladesmith hardens the whole blade for the balanced hardness and durability.



At present, Aranyik knife is made for the four main purposes as follows.

1. Kitchen knife: chef's knife, bread knife, cleaver, paring knife, and carving knife.
2. Agricultural tools: glass cutter, machete, hoe, shovel, big knife, scythe, and axe
3. Trekking knife: small knife, pocketknife
4. Weapons and decoration such as Thai sword, Samurai sword, spear, halberd, lance, dagger, and other types of decoration knives





Background of Aranyik Knife

“Aranyik knife” is the wisdom of bladesmith in Vientiane Province, Laos who settled in at Baan Ton Pho and Baan Phai Nong, Ayutthaya (currently Moo.6 and 7, Tha Change Sub-District, Nakorn Luang District, Ayutthaya). They earned their living by making knife to sell in the neighboring region. The most important location was Aranyik village where numbers of shops and gambling houses were located. People visited here and exchanged goods. People from Baan Ton Pho and Baan Phai Nong sold the quality knife here and it became very popular later through the word-of-mouth. It finally well-known as “Aranyik knife” ever since. Although the gambling houses were closed in the reign of King Ram V, people in Baan Ton Pho and Baan Nong Phai community still preserve this wisdom until today and it becomes very famous as the product of Ayutthaya Province.

The evolution of Aranyik knife began with the use of Ta Pu Sang Kha Wa Non, the type of nail using in chapel construction. Melt the nail, twist it, and beat it flat. When this kind of nail became rare, it was replaced with spring steel which is hard and had durable durable. Today, Hua Daeng steel importing from Germany is used. In the past, there were few knife designs; it was made for specific purpose only such as pruning knife, bamboo hatchet, knife for agricultural purpose, and weapon knife. The shape of Thai sword is more delicate than that of Myanmar. The usage is similar because the knives found from the battle were collected to use until the present time. Currently, Baan Ton Pho community is the learning center for traditional knife forging to promote the wisdom to the young generations to study. Furthermore, it is the tourist site where numbers of tourists visit and are impressed with the Thai style knife forging that is still inherited as yet.



Making Aranyik Knife

Materials:

1. Any types of steel using for making Aranyik knife.

- Alloy tool steel which its sharpness and hardness is suitable for making knife for agricultural purpose, weapons, and knife that requires the durability.

- Stainless steel that cannot process the hardening. It is used to make spoon, dinner knife, and carving knife. Besides, there are some types of steel containing great amount of carbon but are applied to make quality knife such as file, leaf spring steel, circle plate for plowing. The most widely used is leaf spring steel.

2. Bamboo charcoal made from *Bambusa blumeana* or the surplus bamboo joint from making incense stick. Bamboo charcoal gives heat in the steel core gradually without producing the spark. It is suitable to apply heated steel forging technique with medium heat to have enough time to remove the steel out. Therefore, the even heat from burning bamboo is the most appropriate heat for knife forging.

3. Woods for making handle mostly are hardwood such as Burma padauk, *Azelia xylocarpa*, and Rosewood. The aluminum handle is only used for making dinner knife, thin knife, and chopping knife. Bamboo handle is made from *Bambusa* since it is not hollow while horn handle is made by buffalo horn used for making small-size knife.

4. Sheath is made from two materials: 1 inch diameter black carbon steel six-meter long or the remaining steel from band steel with wood handle. It is for chopping knife or shovel.

5. Other equipment such as brass for making the guard, zinc pin to hold brass connection or the handle with the guard, glue sheet, diamond dust for polishing, coconut oil to prevent rust, lacquer for painting the handle, sandpaper, and salt.





Step of making Aranyik Knife

1. Select the appropriate steel for knife forging and burn it until getting the red steel as desired. Beat it with large hammer by three people while it is still hot. When it is cool down, burn it again and repeat the process for three times to get “Hun” or “Koon” (the desired shape which people call “Lab Lek”). Currently, human labor is replaced by using electricity to blow the charcoal using the tool invented by people.

2. Burn Hun or Koon again and form the shape of knife as desired (People call this step as “Sum” meaning to repeat.).

3. Let the shaped knife dry and beat the blade with hammer to make it smoother, solid, and straight (People call this step “Lum Rieb” or “Hai”).

4. Sharpen the Hai with a file to beautify it.

5. Rub the blade to make it thinner. Get rid of rust by chaffing with steel to get white and thin blade, call “Khud” (chafe).



6. When having the desired sharp edge, “Sok” the blade with a rasp and smooth file to whiten and make the thinner cut.

7. Then, use the file or flint to shape the cutting edge, called “Phan Khom Meed”.

8. Harden the knife. In this step, the proficient skill is required because the knife needs the

appropriate heat burn. “Soak” it in water immediately after burning to make the cut harder and smooth.

9. Sharpen with rustic and fine stone. Emery grain is used presently (called “Lub Khom”).

10. Attach the blade with the suitable handle. Coat the knife to prevent rust.





Belief and story relating to way of life

Traditional culture and tradition “Wai Kru Bu Cha Tao” Apart from making Aranyik knife, another tradition and culture that is inheriting until today is “Wai Kru Bucha Tao”. It is to ceremony to pay respect to the master of knife forging of people in Baan Ton Pho and Baan Nong Phai, including people in Baan Tha Chang who earn their living with knife forging. The ceremony is held on the early morning of Thursday 7th or 9th day of waxing moon or other day between April and May to recognize the kindness of teachers and to be blessed. This is the tradition that old people teach the children to have gratitude to the teacher. Moreover, it constructs a harmony among the bladesmiths and community.

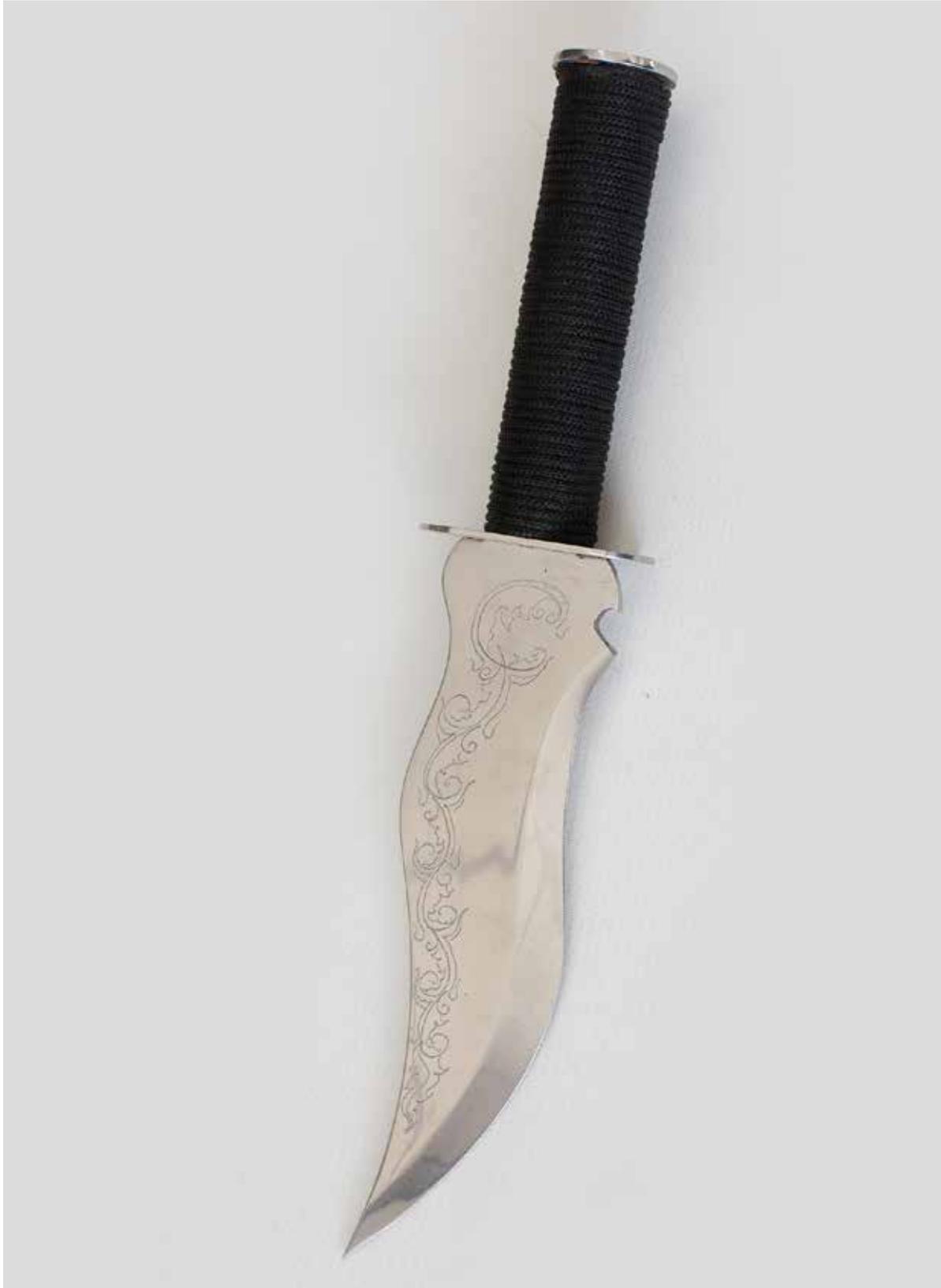
“Wai Kru Bucha Tao” ceremony is the important belief influencing people’s life. Every household repairs and cleans tools and utensils. The kiln is newly made and the offerings will be

well prepared for the ceremony. People share and exchange food and desserts. For this reason, tools and equipment for making knife will be in good condition and are efficiently used. This event also constructs the unity and awareness of the new generation to preserve the tradition. Moreover, paying the respect to the master not only reflects the cultural value but also prevents the accident or any fault of knife forging.

The ultimate pride of people in Aranyik community is when King Rama IX visited the village to see Aranyik knife forging on 28 December 1976. He gave the royal words to people to preserve this art as one of Thai identities. Afterwards, he harvested in the historical rice paddy field in Thung Makham Yong, Baan Mai District, Ayutthaya on 14 May 1996. On that day, the bladesmith offered the sickle made from the strong and robust steel to King Rama IX. The sickle was shaped in heron’s neck shape, the cut was sharpened, and was carved in Thai style carving with letter “Long Live the King”. The pearl was embedded in the handle beautifully.







Source of information and reference documents

Interview with Mr. Boonsom Srisuk, a Master of Arts and Crafts B.E. 2555, Metal Work: Aranyik Knife