



CREATIVE
TOURISM
DISTRICT
THAILAND
Nam

Local Life

*More Travel,
More Fun,
Lasting Friendships*



Local Life

It may be the weather, pristine nature, or the serene water source that bind together the friendly Nan people who wouldn't hesitate to smile, that make them always ready to share their hearts with visitors from other localities, and influence their lifestyle, customs, and culture, which even though are simple with profound and beautiful. I guarantee that you will be able to truly feel the happiness and satisfaction with life and identity in them after I have visited Muang Tuet and Wiang Sa this time with my own eyes.



"Sri Bun Rueang Temple"



"Nan cultural exhibition hall"

If you want to be familiar with yourself Nan people, you will have to learn about their lifestyle and history of the Lan Na Kingdom of the past at Nan Cultural Exhibition Hall, where the Nan identity in historical, lifestyle, natural aspects, are collected, along with tales about its good relationship with other Lan Na major cities, other neighboring cities, and Rattanakosin Kingdom from the past to the present. As you start to appreciate and get a better picture, we can continue to Si Bun Rueang Temple, our first destination, where friendly Mr. Dai will be the one to guide us through every detail with patient. Si Bun Rueang Temple has a lot to offer, like archeological artefacts archived and exhibited in the museum behind the temple, which include rows of palm leaf scriptures lining up as if it's an ancient library,



*Buddha image
(The attitude of subduing Mara)*



chests that hold the ancient Tripitaka, and many other antiques. Mr. Dai will then lead us to the beautifully built sacred sanctuary that holds bronze Buddha image in Nirvana posture, Buddha image in 'Man Wichai' posture in the earlier Sukothai art, 'Phra Chao Fa' ancient bronze Buddha image decreed to be created by a Nan prince by a Lan Xang artist by casting from gold the size of a person. We will then pay respect to a portrait model of a past abbot, 'Phra Kru Buddhamontra Chotikun' or 'Tu Lung,' who is widely respected by the locals. Having a knowledgeable expert constantly explaining stories of the olden times added a lot of flavor to the visit. Before leaving the sanctuary, Mr. Dai pointed out the mural that depicted the villagers from the local community. If you looked carefully, you could spot him, and I guessed it right!



Next, Mr. Dai took us to sculpt exorcising candle, made of thin mulberry paper that had your birthday, zodiac sign, and name written in Lan Na script wrapped with the same number of wicks as your age, of which you will get to sculpt yourself. If you wanted to handwrite your name if you had learned the Mueang script and thus the Lan Na language

before. They have classes here that will make you able to read and write it within two hours. Mr. Dai said learning it wasn't hard at all since it wasn't very different from Thai language, since both originated from Indian language that had evolved down different paths. Back to sculpting the candles, after you finished making them, you will get two more candles, one representing fortune, another representing misfortune that you will have to light yourself. Strangely, even though both were lit simultaneously and placed adjacent to each other, one's flame was ablaze, while another's only feebly shone, with very clear difference. That was truly a miracle. Fortunately, the one with brighter flame represented misfortune, meaning it had all burned away. That's good even for me even if I wasn't that much of a lucky



"Sculpting exorcising candles"

person. Another interesting activity was painting the bow of Nan boat. As Nan is a civilization intertwined with river and also the origin of Nan river, the country's second longest river, Boat Race Festival is another aspect that can reflect the Nan identity really well. The race is arranged every time the 'Tan Kuai Salak' Festival is held. The boat used is elegantly decorated, the hull made from whole 'takian' tree, with one growing by the temple's side gate. The bow is engraved with an image of Naga in delicate Lan Na style. Today you will get to actually paint the bow, but not of the ship with actual size used for racing, but of one modeled after that. This activity really required some art skill, but it wasn't hard and it was fun, so both adults and children should enjoy it alike.



"Paint boat bow"



"Boat Race Festival"

After touring the temple, he introduced us to Ms. Bua Kham, the owner of Ban Khom Kham, the center of 'matao' lanterns, which we will also get to make. Before all else, she prepared us with fresh passionfruit juice, crispy noodle, and 'khao niao' corns for us to enjoy and rid us of any tiredness. Before trying our hands, she will explain us the history of the 'matao' lanterns first so we could appreciate our works. There are 4 types of lanterns: the mobile lanterns; the popular floating lanterns that, you know, were first floated in Nan; hanging lanterns; and 'phad' or rotating lanterns, which are two-layered lanterns that will rotate with hit by light or smoke. In Nan, the rotating lanterns are called 'matao' lanterns, which means watermelon. The lanterns here are different from those in Chiang Mai, since in Nan they are made from mulberry paper and fabric, with patterns cut by hand in every step, requiring more time to craft. The pattern used is the 'pracham yam' pattern, which is called 'watchara' that means diamond in Buddhist terminology, representing brightness and strength. I've seen a lot of lanterns before

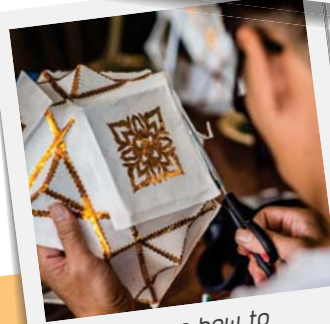


"Making 'matao' lantern"

but I just realized today that there were different types. I was so ignorant. When I looked behind, I saw Ms. Bua's husband sharpening bamboo for the frames. The bamboo must be 'khao lam' bamboo, the same type used to make 'khao lam chaeng,' due to its flexibility, sturdiness, and length. He said other woods were too crispy and brittle for the purpose. A total of 16 pieces needed to be bent after sharpened, 10 large and 6 small. Setting up the frame was already difficult, but fortunately the ones we were making already had the frame assembled with mulberry paper for. All we had to do was decorating them with gold paper, traditionally called 'kham.' Oh, so this was where the name 'Ban Khom Kham' came from. As Ms. Bua Kham was making it, she told us that, in Nan, lanterns were mostly used in royal residences and palaces, or to greet national



"Phra That Chae Haeng Temple"



Learn how to make "matao" lantern



"Local packed lunch"

visitors. I suddenly got tensed when I heard this, seeing a work of distortions in my hands. Nearby was a classroom with local students with elegant skills and styles. Their lanterns looked so good I wanted to secretly swop with mine. After finishing the lantern, it's time to show our Muang script writing skills again, by writing your name onto the lantern. We were going to offer them to Chae Haeng Temple in the afternoon, but let's refill our energy with the carefully prepared packed lunch by the river near a flower field. Having a meal amidst the riverside lifestyle made everything so appetizing.



"The charming way of life"

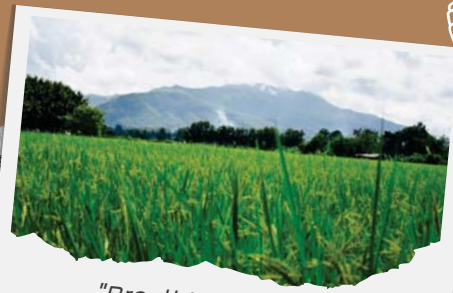
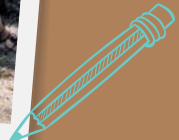


Now it's time to offer the lanterns to Phra That Chae Haeng Temple, since it holds the Buddha's relic of the rabbit zodiac, whomever with the zodiac sign were really happy. Paying respect here will definitely bring fortune to your life. You will both to get your heart cleansed and enjoy beautiful scenery at the same time in peaceful atmosphere and nice weather. As it gets less sunny in the afternoon, our program won't end yet as we will watch a performance of cattle yoked to bullock carts digging sand up from the river. Sand from rivers in Muang Tuet area is of high quality, having been in used for construction work from the ancient times up to this date. The sand was of course transported up from the river employing the labor of these cattle raised. At first, my picture of oxen was skinny and bony ones you commonly saw, and so I was think whether it would be animal abuse. However, as the cattle made their debut onto the stage, I gaped wide. What a Game-of-Throne-like state of the art to the point I wanted to provide them with background

music. The people steering the cart just looked so cool. The cattle were so muscular I have never seen ones this big. They are definitely pampered as apparent from their elegantly curved horns and glossy bodies. Everything became clear when I heard the price. They were a hundred-thousand each! This is no joking matter. I couldn't resist just standing on the ground so I ask them to let my try riding the cart. It became another most impressed moment in my life. Would I even get to ride a bullock cart pulled by a massive buffalo down the river again in my life? Let me tell you first that if you wished to ride it down the river, it has



"The cattle yoked to bullock carts digging sand up from the river"



"Breathtaking view"

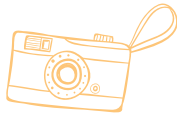


to be February. During other period you could still get to experience the state of the art still. We ended the day with a full satisfaction gauge, and get a good night sleep at Nan Si Panna Resort, a resort not big with captivating scenery of rice paddies within arm's reach as you open the door to the veranda in the morning. That really was a vacation heaven.

The day before, we were so impress with Muang Tuet and the traditional Ban Nong Tao community once abundant with turtles. Today, we will move to Wiang Sa starting out by paying respect to the Buddha image in standing posture that was said to grant longevity and fortune to those who visit, so we couldn't miss it either. Once we calm our mind from paying respect, we will cross the street to Wiang Sa Municipality Local Museum where we will be greeted by iced cold drinking water and warm and friendly smiles from the staff members. We will see antiques that will reflect the traditional lifestyle of Wiang Sa people. The highlight will be the ancient ship bows with carved Naga image, whose special features are their differences in meaning and symbolism. The important attraction that took us to this museum is that no one could miss was the first footstep set in Nan by His Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej and Queen Sirikit when they were showing himself to his subjects at the veranda.



"Master Tone"



After that, we had an appointment with Master Tone, an expert in every kind of tourism of Wiang Sa and of nan. That day, I turned myself into his disciple to learn about ethnology at the Ratchaprachanukro 56 Nan School, where different ethnics including Hmong, Mien, Khmu, Lua, Tai Lue, Tin, Tai Yuan, Laotian, and, most importantly, Mlabri or Tong Lueang that were not normally found in other regions, gathered to learn, adapt, and exchange their cultures with peace and happiness that those with great powers should take examples. Besides the classrooms, there were also 'farmstay,' an integrated agricultural farm where crops can be harvested all year round, silversmith workshop where minority artworks were produced, and multicultural square used as multipurpose space for activities and performances. The children seemed to be happy and delightful, providing us with positive energy that I wanted to trace



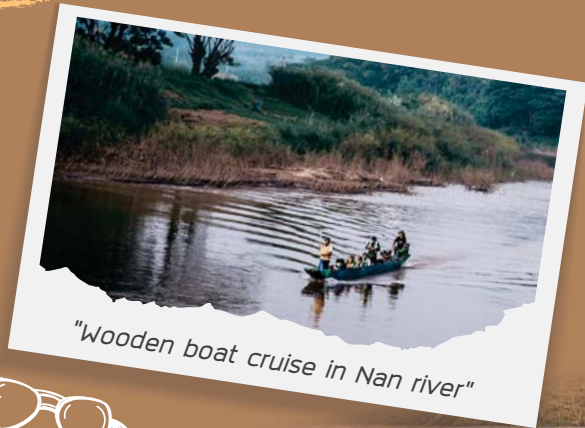
"Kalok homestay"



the example of Ploy Chermarn of the film 'Kit thueng Witthaya 2' with the kids from Tong Lueang and other minorities. As the sun and the wind were softening down, we headed towards Ban Kalok Homestay of Master Radom who warmly greeted us in 'mohom' attire on a bicycle. The evening activity will be the cruise in a wooden boat that will set out from the pier here, but he guaranteed a bitter atmosphere if we would wait until just before sunset. So we reviewed and continued our lesson on writing Muang script that we started out at Si Bun Rueng Temple, since the class was also offered here. But the activity that could not be found anywhere else would be hitting the 'kalok' to signal the fish for a meal. In the past, kaloks were used to warn the

community of urgent and dangerous matters or to call for assembly, but now he uses it to signal mealtime to the fish. Normally the fish has only breakfast as the only meal of the day, but I asked for a special case, so the fish got to fill eat twice. Before hitting, Master Radom would hit the 'pucha' or the 'bucha' drum for the rhythm and tempo, and take us up to the rooftop balcony and pour fish food into a basket and hoist it along the line into the water. The sound of the pulley was a bit unsmooth and loud, so he said it was intentional he didn't oil it

so the loud noise would act as signal to the fish. After we had fun with feeding the fish, the sun started to move low, a good time to board the wooden ship to view wild drongos. The wood boat headed toward the direction of the setting sun. You could see the peaceful lives along the two riversides. Some were setting out on the boat to catch some fish back for dinner using a rod. The river were still abundant with fish, like 'pik daeng' fish, red tailed tinfoil, 'kiod' fish, and black sharkminnow, which the locals said were the best ingredient for 'lab pla' Master Radom said if we had enough time to spend the



"Wooden boat cruise in Nan river"





night at his homestay, he would have took us on a moonlight cruise at night and collect fish trap often with large 'khang' fish to be made into delicious 'kaeng pla khang.' The fishing area had to be some distance away from Ban Kalok, since the area in front of the house was designated as conservation area for the fish species to make them last a long time.

You could see a wide area to the right in which Master Radom pointed out to be a rich piece of land for growing agricultural crops called 'Don Thong.' Not far from there were groups of people on row of small boats gathered to fish, with some just setting around, and some busy with their tokens freshly caught under the last light of the day as a captivating backdrop. In the sky flying over was a flock of white birds Master Radom pointed out to be a congregation of white egrets, that acted as a signal of the verge of winter arrival every occasion when seen, since they were migrating from around Siberia. Boat racers would be really happy if they saw white egrets since it meant the rainy season was ending and it was finally time to race boats. In addition to white egrets, there were also drongos that glided so low with no trace of fear of humans, so you could spam the camera's shutter. When I got to see all of these, I had to admit that I was so happy we waited until sunset like he said, since the picture of the sun slowly disappearing behind the horizon just ahead was beautiful no words could describe. What an impressive way to end a trip!



Contacts for tourism:

Muang Tuet, Mr. Dai – Tel: 084 808 9813

Wiang Sa, Master Tone – Tel: 088 407 1740

River cruise, Master Radom – Tel: 085 029 8029

Best time to travel:

All year round, but if you want see the white egrets, it will have to be early winter, and as for the cattle pulling the bullock cart down the river, it will be February.

Directions:

From Nan city, cross the bridge over Nan River and take highway no. 1168 for about 3 kilometers, and you will arrive at Phra That Chae Haeng Temple.





Target audience:

Tourists who like traveling to different places to appreciate new lifestyles and cultures different from routine daily life, and have fallen in love with expediting to fulfill inspiration and search for meaning of life through living and exchanging experiences with respective local societies and communities



Trivia:

The location of Muang Tuet is a wide low lying basin with Phu Phiang Chae Haeng hill situated in the center, where earth were dug and bricks laid down to construct Chae Haeng Buddha's relics. Wiang Sa is Nan's largest Amphoe, so called 'the Gate to Nan,' being very abundant in rivers and streams.



Activities with local communities:

- Sculpting exorcising candles
- Painting boat bow
- Making 'matao' lantern
- Sand carting performance
- Wooden boat cruise in Nan River
- Feeding fish at Ban Kalok

Preparations:

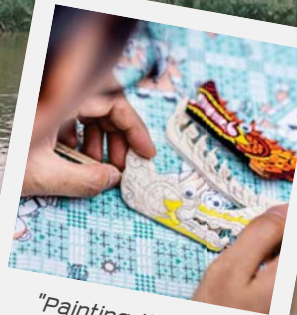


Do research on the places you are visiting, without forgetting your camera and diary to record your memories.

Values and impressions gained:



You will get to experience the charm of simple with elegant lifestyle of each locality, break away from binding old rules, and discover inspiration that includes the value of leading a more meaningful life, and you will find the way to live with nature and disparities of people more happily.



"Painting the bow of the boat"



"Feeding the fish at Ban Kalok homestay"



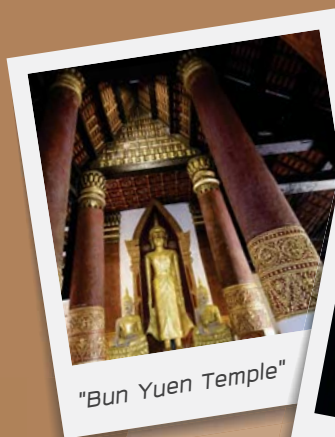
Tourist attractions:

- Si Bun Rueang Temple: Besides the ancient Buddha image where you can make wishes, many interesting activities are also available inside like visiting the museum, sculpting exorcising candles, and painting the bow of Nan boat.

- Phra That Chae Haeng Temple: An important Buddhist sacred sanctuary of Nan people, aged over 600 years. Those born to the rabbit zodiac sign should not miss the 'chu that' custom or paying respect to the relics of your zodiac sign, which is believed to bring you luck and fortune.

- Bun Yuen Temple: Besides being an important archive of physical evidences of Nan lifestyle and culture, it is also the location of the first footstep His Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej set in the land of Nan.

- Ethnology Learning Center of Ratchapra-
chanukro 56 Nan School: An interesting and
living learning center for ethnology, being
an example of a peaceful multicultural
community.



"Bun Yuen Temple"



"Proof of living"



"Local museum"



Souvenirs and must-haves:

- Models of ancient boat
- Nan's 'matao' lanterns



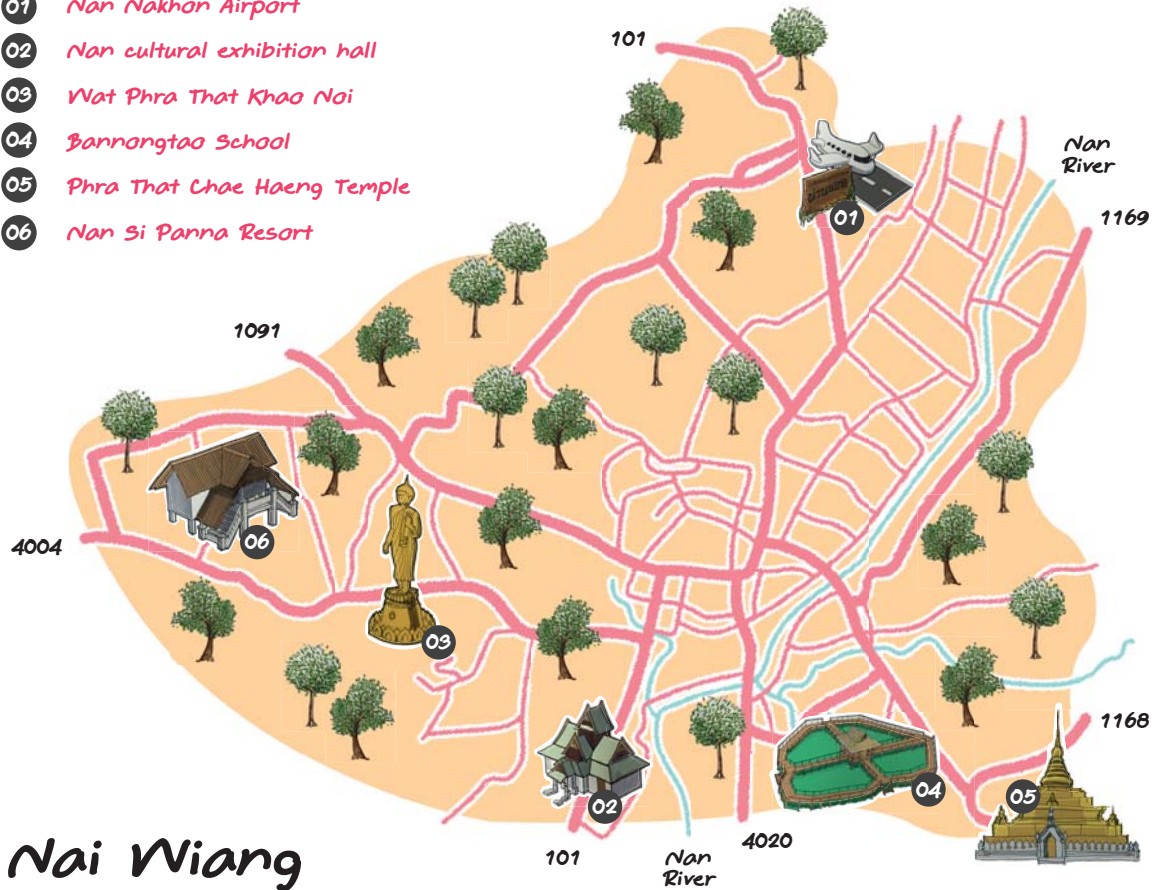
Accommodation:

- Nan Si Panna Resort

Day 1

In the morning we will get to know and tour Nan Cultural Exhibition Center, then to pay respect to Buddha image for fortune and tour the museum with the temple ground that houses an archive of archeological artefacts, followed by sculpting exorcising candles, painting the bow of Nan boat model, then we will learn the making of matao lanterns at Ban Khom Kham. After having lunch by the riverside at Ban Nong Tao, we will bring the matao lanterns along to offer them to Phra That Chae Haeng Temple, followed by an interesting activity that is the performance of cattle yoked to bullock cart carrying sand up from the Nan river, and finally checking in at Nan Si Panna Resort with stunning scenery.

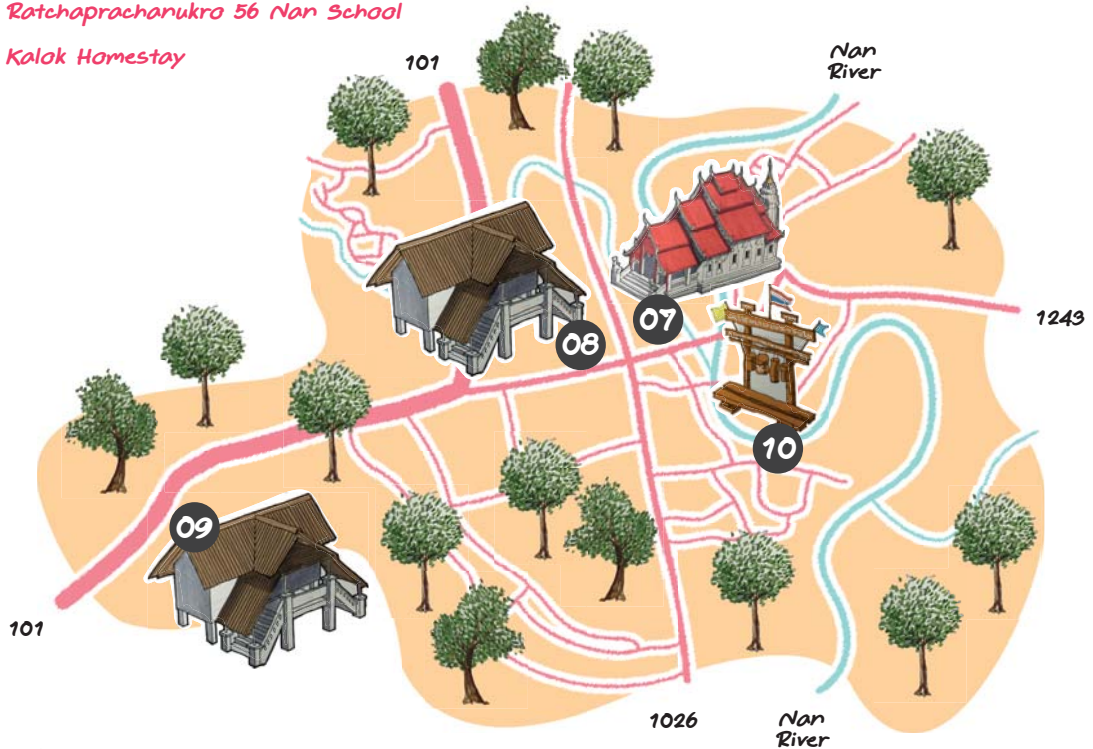
- 01 Nan Nakhon Airport
- 02 Nan cultural exhibition hall
- 03 Wat Phra That Khao Noi
- 04 Bannongtao School
- 05 Phra That Chae Haeng Temple
- 06 Nan Si Panna Resort



We will wake up early to pay respect to the Buddha image in standing posture at Bun Yuen Temple, then cross the street to visit Wiang Sa Municipality Local Museum to learn about the lifestyle of the Nan people of the past, at the same time also about the first footstep His Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej set during his visit the Wiang Sa as a part of his royal visit to the major Northern cities. After that, we will learn about the differences between ethnics at Ratchaprachanukro 56 Nan School. In the evening, we will feed the fish at Ban Kalok, take lessons in writing Muang script of the Lan Na language, and end our trip with cruising on a wooden boat down the Nan River in under a peaceful atmosphere.

Day 2

- 07 *Bun Yuen Temple*
- 08 *Wiang Sa Municipality Local Museum*
- 09 *Ratchaprachanukro 56 Nan School*
- 10 *Kalok Homestay*



Wiang Sa



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