

3-18-1989

## Interview with Pane Sananikone (FA 83)

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TRANSCRIPTION

Name of Oral History Project Southeast Asian Refugee Project

Tape 1 of 6. The number of the tape being transcribed 1

Name of narrator: Pane Sananikone

Address: 1009 Raven St.

Bowling Green, KY 42101 Tel. 502-782-5402

Name of principal interviewer: Jimmy D. Browning

Date of interview: 3-18-89 Place of interview: Refugee Assistance Center

Other persons present at interview: None

Equipment used: Reel-to-reel     ; Cassette X; Model: Pioneer-Centrex KD-11

Tape used: Brand Ampex; Amount (side 1) 30; (side 2) 30  
672 C-60

Summary description of interview context and contents:  
This transcription includes all of tape one, side two, which covers, mostly, acculturation in the United States. The interview was conducted in an office at the Refugee Assistance Center. There is considerable background noise from classes being conducted in other rooms and a band practicing in the basement of the building.

BROWNING: Is your family with you?

SANANIKONE: Yeah.

BROWNING: Your family, all of your family is with you here?

SANANIKONE: My wife [unintelligible word] just few minute.

BROWNING: Oh, okay.

SANANIKONE: She learn other room, other class.

BROWNING: Okay. Did your brother teach you how to use the heating and cooling in your house here?

SANANIKONE: Yeah, yeah, I don't [unintelligible word] know anything.

BROWNING: You don't know anything.

SANANIKONE: Yeah, how to do with the heat and the, put what number, two number, he told me, then he call me,

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go to visit me, and check.

BROWNING: Check on you?

SANANIKONE: Yeah, check on how I use the heat, I use the air. And I use the stove and check in the bedroom. And he set on the floor and around outside, inside the house.

BROWNING: Uh, huh.

SANANIKONE: Always check, and.

BROWNING: Who taught you how to use an alarm clock?

SANANIKONE: Yeah, that's right, and how to use the telephone at first like "911," call home when what happened, home.

BROWNING: Do you have a vacuum cleaner now? An electric vacuum cleaner?

SANANIKONE: Yeah, I have. I buy it. I just buy it when I buy a house.

BROWNING: Did you ever have to, before you got your washer and dryer, did you go to the laundromat?

SANANIKONE: Yeah.

BROWNING: Was that different? A different experience for you?

SANANIKONE: Oh, very different.

BROWNING: Very different?

SANANIKONE: Very, very different. Before I take my clothes, I put in the bag and carry to the laundry. But now I do it.

BROWNING: Do it at home.

SANANIKONE: At home.

BROWNING: What do you for fun, now that you're here, when you're at home and you're not busy with working of some kind? How do you, what do you do for fun now? At home you used to work in your garden.

SANANIKONE: Yeah.

BROWNING: Now that you're here, what do you do?

SANANIKONE: Yeah, I like, I did like that, I do it.

BROWNING: You still have a garden?

SANANIKONE: Every year, like last year, before last year. I grow many kind of vegetables, many different kind of lettuce.

BROWNING: Uh, huh.

SANANIKONE: Tomato. Onion.

BROWNING: Do you watch t.v. very much?

SANANIKONE: Yes, I, sometime.

BROWNING: What's your favorite television show?

SANANIKONE: I like wrestling.

BROWNING: Wrestling. Okay.

SANANIKONE: Boxing.

BROWNING: Boxing. You like sports then? Do you like other kinds of sports?

SANANIKONE: Yeah, basketball, I like because I know the rules. But about football game, I know many people like it, but I like, rule, I don't know the rule.

BROWNING: A lot of people don't know the rules. But they watch it. Do you have a car now?

SANANIKONE: Yeah, I have.

BROWNING: Who taught you to drive? Did you know how to, you, you knew how to drive before in Lao?

SANANIKONE: Yeah, I drive before but I had to learn again. In the United States, when I arrive here, I drive, because my brother give me one, when I arrive here he give me one car work. But now it doesn't work. I use that car about six months. I sold it \$50.

BROWNING: \$50?

SANANIKONE: My brother give me free because is old car. He use a long time, that time I use several years. He has a new car. Bought a new car. One he give me free. He help, but I use it one year three month, six month, cannot move.

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1-3

So I buy one, well, for a hundred. I buy one and I use it. Until now and I have a new one. I have a new one. Yeah, I buy yesterday, one car.

BROWNING: Oh, good.

SANANIKONE: Yeah, good.

BROWNING: You work at the Director's Chair.

SANANIKONE: Yeah.

BROWNING: And you're a painter.

SANANIKONE: Yeah.

BROWNING: What do you paint with? A brush or do you use some sort of spray can or what do you paint with?

SANANIKONE: Yes, sometime, I use a pencil, pen, sometimes use the spray, sometime we take the chair or table like that, dip in big tank. We have big tank and we have [unintelligible word] so we dip in the big tank and hang. Big tank have to do many chair, about 800 to 900 chairs a day.

BROWNING: That's a lot.

SANANIKONE: A lot. But a chair and table, beside a chair ten table, too.

BROWNING: Tables and chairs.

SANANIKONE: Yeah.

BROWNING: I'm sorry, go ahead.

SANANIKONE: And the table. We paint a lot of, too. Six hundred, seven hundred table a day.

BROWNING: Do you listen to the radio here? You said you listened to the radio before. Do you listen to it here?

SANANIKONE: I listen, I always listen to radio. I like to listen to radio.

BROWNING: What do you like to listen to on the radio? Music or news or?

SANANIKONE: News.

BROWNING: News?

SANANIKONE: I don't like music.

BROWNING: You don't like.

SANANIKONE: Only my children.

BROWNING: Your children do. Do you have, do you like music from Lao? Do you have music that you listen of your music from Lao?

SANANIKONE: I have the music from Lao, but I don't like to listen, only my wife and my children. I like to stay where is quiet, calm. I off by myself. I need, like that, quiet.

BROWNING: Okay.

SANANIKONE: But I, and I like to read, only I like to read, "Reader's Digest," I like to read, like to read, only.

BROWNING: What kinds of things do you read?

SANANIKONE: "Reader's Digest."

BROWNING: "Reader's Digest."

SANANIKONE: Short stories, short stories.

BROWNING: Short stories. I like short stories, too. I do, too. Who taught you, you said that your brother taught you lots of things, when you got here at home. Who taught you at work? Who taught you to do your job at work?

SANANIKONE: At work I have a supervisor.

BROWNING: Supervisor.

SANANIKONE: And a supervisor assistant. When I am new worker, after three month on I know I can do that myself.

BROWNING: Were they American or were they Southeast Asian?

SANANIKONE: American.

BROWNING: American.

SANANIKONE: All of them American.

BROWNING: Do you ever, have you used a computer yet?  
Do you use?

SANANIKONE: No.

BROWNING: No, no computer?

SANANIKONE: No, I haven't. I don't know.

BROWNING: Would you like to?

SANANIKONE: I like.

BROWNING: Like to learn? Since you've been here, what, what machine, like the telephone or the recorder, what machine have you learned to use that's been the most helpful for you? What's been the best thing that you've learned to use?

SANANIKONE: Did you mean [unintelligible word] thing I used before?

BROWNING: Well, it could be something you used before or something you hadn't used before, like something as simple as a refrigerator or, or a telephone, but what have you found that you've, since you've been here, to be the most helpful to you?

SANANIKONE: I think, all, all of them.

BROWNING: All of them.

SANANIKONE: Yeah, all of them. Because each thing I don't know how to use it very well.

BROWNING: So, learning, learning to use all of them was a big help?

SANANIKONE: Like a computer, I don't know at all, I don't know any. I don't know how to use it. But like a tape recorder, like a telephone, yes, I know how to use, but not very well. I have a telephone at home.

BROWNING: What would you hate to give up most? If you had to give up something, like a telephone or a refrigerator or something, like that, what would you, if somebody asked you to give it up, what would you hate to give up the most?

SANANIKONE: Give up most? Like most?

BROWNING: Well, I was going to ask you that later. But if somebody came to you and said you can't have that anymore, what would you hate for them to take away from you? Something like your telephone or your stove or your indoor plumbing. What would you hate to lose if you had to lose something?

SANANIKONE: If I lost? If I lose something?

BROWNING: What would you miss the most?

SANANIKONE: I don't understand your meaning like that.

BROWNING: Oh, okay, okay.

SANANIKONE: If you try another way. Explain it another way.

BROWNING: Okay. I don't know how to ask it another way. What, okay, let's ask a different, let's talk about something different. What do you dislike the most? What modern appliance do you wish that you didn't have to have? If any? Does the phone ever get on your nerves when it rings a lot?

SANANIKONE: My son. Ring a lot.

BROWNING: He does?

SANANIKONE: Every day. My son [unintelligible word] the telephone at home.

BROWNING: But.

SANANIKONE: I don't like to use it.

BROWNING: You don't like to use it.

SANANIKONE: Because it's not necessary to me.

BROWNING: To you.

SANANIKONE: But I often could use like one month or two month a time. I call my relative. My sister live New York.

BROWNING: New York.

SANANIKONE: Sometime I call my friend, but not always. One time, two time, three time a month, not a week. But my son everyday, he has a lot of friends, American friends [unintelligible word].



BROWNING: He goes to Warren Central?

SANANIKONE: That's right.

BROWNING: Goes to Warren Central. When something goes wrong at your house, like something wrong with the electricity or something wrong with the plumbing, do you fix it or do you call somebody else?

SANANIKONE: First I fix it by myself, if I cannot do that I call someone else.

BROWNING: Did you just, sort of, teach yourself to fix things?

SANANIKONE: Yeah.

BROWNING: Or did someone show you how to fix things when they broke?

SANANIKONE: When they broke, but the past time, my son know how to fix, like, something broke, like stove, before last year when I came, arrived here, I arrived here first, the stove it doesn't work, but, I want to see, my son say I try first. Maybe I know. But I try, it's working.

BROWNING: Well, good.

SANANIKONE: Sometime in bedroom leaking, he can fix by himself. My son, because sometime he read in the book and he follow the book, then he try. Like sometime he buy a small radio, new, but he separate it out and he assembly by himself. He try, he learn by himself and he know many things. How to use.

BROWNING: How old is he?

SANANIKONE: Now, seventeen years old. Seventeen years old.

BROWNING: How old was he when you came here?

SANANIKONE: When we arrived here, fifteen years old.

BROWNING: Fifteen. So, your family has come over, well, did you all come at once, or did you come at different times?

SANANIKONE: No.

BROWNING: You.

SANANIKONE: One time.

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BROWNING: One time.

SANANIKONE: Come together.

BROWNING: Are you happy?

SANANIKONE: Yeah.

BROWNING: Would you like to go back? If you could go back and, to the way it was before the Communists, would you like, or how do you feel about that? Would you rather stay here?

SANANIKONE: If I can, if I can go back?

BROWNING: If you could go back and things be good again.

SANANIKONE: Yeah, I would like to go back. I would like to go back to my country if I can. But now I cannot, because I escape. They kill me if I come back.

BROWNING: Do you still have family there? Or is all?

SANANIKONE: I have a, my relatives, cousin.

BROWNING: But a lot of your family is here now?

SANANIKONE: Yeah.

BROWNING: Some in New York and.

SANANIKONE: I have four brother and sister in the United States. I have one sister in New York and a smaller sister in Illinois Chicago. Over here. So I have four people same parent.

BROWNING: What would you, if you could, your children, when they have children, and when they have children, what would you like for them to know about Lao, more than anything else? What would you want to tell them about?

SANANIKONE: Custom.

BROWNING: What would you want them to remember? About you and about your home, your original home?

SANANIKONE: You mean about my children?

BROWNING: Well, what would you want them to, what would you like to pass along to them, what thought, or?

SANANIKONE: Do you mean my children?

BROWNING: Yeah, yeah.

SANANIKONE: Oh, I don't, I don't. I have no idea. Because it's different, city is. But now they know American. More than Lao. Like my children, the children, smaller, first grade, [unintelligible word] they can speak English, more than their own language. I don't know how to [unintelligible word], because they learn American.

BROWNING: Things are changing a lot?

SANANIKONE: Yeah. They change a lot, change very fast. They different from their parent, like me, they can speak English very well, but me, I cannot speak English. I know some English only, but they can speak English. My son, like that, the first boy, the first boy, now study in eleventh grade, but the second boy ninth grade, in high school, they can speak English, and the third one, the second grade, like that, they can speak English, but about me, cannot speak English.

BROWNING: What is your favorite memory of your native country? What's the thing you like to remember the best? What's the most happiest memory?

SANANIKONE: In my country?

BROWNING: Um hmmm.

SANANIKONE: Oh, the most I remember. I'm thinking about the living conditions. About living conditions.

BROWNING: Um hmmm.

SANANIKONE: In my country, easy.

BROWNING: Easy.

SANANIKONE: Yeah, easy, different, opposite. Like that. About living conditions. In my country, in the United States, opposite.

BROWNING: Opposite.

SANANIKONE: Yeah. Because, before, I never rent a house and I never buy the food. When I arrive here

in the United States I rent house. Everything money. Use money. Everything. [unintelligible word] Buy food. Buy house. [unintelligible word] Everything. Nothing, no pay. Everything have to pay. Everything have to use money. Have to spend money. Different. But in my country, no, how, I have house, I have paid for house. About food, I look for by myself. If I want to eat fish, I carry a net to the river. If I want to eat the animal in the forest, like squirrel, rabbit, I carry the gun, get in the woods, get in the forest, hunting, and hunting and fishing very easy. But in the United States, I like too, I like to hunting and fishing. I have my license. (removes license from wallet)

BROWNING: License.

SANANIKONE: Yeah, hunting and fishing. I have, every year, when I arrive, I have.

BROWNING: Um, hmmm.

SANANIKONE: But this year, I have. Hunting and fishing.

BROWNING: Great. Where do you hunt at? Where do you go hunting at?

SANANIKONE: Hunting at farm, my owner, of factory.

BROWNING: Oh.

SANANIKONE: He have a lot, great farm. Like last year I try to kill deer. I never got it. But squirrel, bird, rabbit, I could get. Owner of factory.

BROWNING: One more question, then I'll let you go back to class. What do you like best about here? One thing.

SANANIKONE: In the United States? The best? Oh, the best, about education.

BROWNING: Education.

SANANIKONE: In the United States, here, about education, about learning, many things, if you want to, learn, many.

BROWNING: I agree.

SANANIKONE: I like that. Is my favorite. I like very much, because we can learn. Many things we can learn. I think everything in the world can happen in the

United States if you want to learn. So, I like education.

BROWNING: Okay.

SANANIKONE: Best.

(end of tape one, side two)