

## Kuomintang in northern Thailand

### *Transcript*



**When did you join Chiang Kaishek's army?**

It was the 29<sup>th</sup> year of the Republic, 1940.

**Why did you enlist?**

At that time it was like this: after the Communists took control of the mainland, the average Chinese person didn't have enough to eat. They had nothing to eat. Because there was nothing to eat, part of the Forgotten Army retreated to Taiwan and part of them surrendered to the Communists. So the rest of us... We didn't have enough to eat, so we started a rebellion. We came together and started an uprising, but the problem was we had no weapons. Some of our weapons had been sent to Taiwan and some had been seized by the Communists, so we had none.

America tried to convince Korea's army to support us. Then they supported us by air-dropping weapons.

**When you first entered the army, what did you think about being a soldier?**

Being a soldier? At that time we were very young – underage at that time, mostly 14 or 15 years old.

*Aah, very young. It must have been very difficult.*

Certainly. Difficult doesn't come close to describing it. We didn't even have clothes to wear. No food to eat and no clothes to wear.

On his Old World Wandering website, Iain Manley has presented a [terrific interview](#) with a Kuomintang soldier, Zhan Dening, who settled in northern Thailand. The general story is one that gets told from time-to-time but the details of this particular account are well worth your attention. Zhang concludes by reflecting:

Yes, you could say we're pretty satisfied. We take care of ourselves. Apart from taxes, the country [Thailand] doesn't ask anything of us. It's a different story in Burma. Burma has a complex composition of armies, every ethnic group has its own military force. This ethnic group wants you to pay tax and that one wants you to pay tax too. People there don't have such a good life. In Thailand, it's like this: if you look after yourself, that's fine, you're left alone.