

Obituaries

HOWARD KEVA KAUFMAN (1922–2000)

Howard Keva Kaufman was born in New York City November 5, 1922; he died November 15, 2000 at his home in Brevard, N.C. His family spent several years in Europe, exposing him at a formative age to French language and culture and to the wider European world. His undergraduate studies of French and music at Oberlin College were interrupted by World War II. He studied spoken Thai at the Army Specialized Training Program with Mary Haas, and served in Burma and then in China as an English-Chinese translator, which gave him his first exposure to Asia. These early experiences set him on a course of studying people and their music in many countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

After the war he completed undergraduate studies at Oberlin and graduate studies at Indiana University with Carl Voegelin in anthropology and ethnomusicology. A Fulbright grant in 1953 led to dissertation fieldwork in Thailand and a published ethnography on a central Thai village. His spoken Thai at that time was very impressive to me. During the next fifteen years he served as a rural community analyst for the Agency for International Development in Laos, Vietnam, Korea, and Nepal. He also worked several years as a consultant for AID and other private organizations in Thailand, Colombia, and Haiti.

He brought his extensive field experience and his family back to the United States when he became chairman of the Anthropology and Sociology Department at Ripon College. After some years of teaching and writing, he returned to consulting on development projects with various agencies and contract firms, mostly in Africa. He had short- and long-term assignments—as social analyst or as team leader—in Djibouti, Ghana, Zaire, Burkina Faso, Chad, Swaziland, and Togo. Whenever time permitted, especially in longer assignments, he reveled in collecting local musical instruments and recording local music. In a very short visit to northeastern Thailand, he filled the library of our training center with several types of local musicians and their music. His musical skills enhanced his grasp of new languages, and his musicological skills enhanced his ethnographic work and his enjoyment of it. His curiosity and interest in people were constantly in play, as he probed more than argued with friends and new acquaintances.

He sometimes spoke dismissively of his writings, but his publications and extensive consultant reports (some of which I read) show a substantial contribution to ethnographic research and to development anthropology. His major ethnography, *Bangkhuad, a Socio-Economic Study of a Rice Village in Central Thailand*, was among the early village ethnographies to appear after World War II. He updated it twenty years later. He contributed specialized articles to several edited volumes.

After retirement he and his wife, Mary Ann, spent part of the year in the Mexican hill town of San Miguel de Allende. They returned full-time to Brevard during his final years.

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