I n Thailand, there are more than 600 leprosy colonies, two-thirds of which are located in the southern province of Nakhon Si Thammarat. The colony was founded in 1948 and has stayed here ever since, “said La-ied. “Back then people felt lepers were disgusting. When we patients hailed public transport on the road, we never got picked up. ”

La-ied Ditsaru, 77

Unemployed

Boontham Sukkasem was diagnosed with leprosy when he was 15 years old. Suddenly the clinics stopped seeing him after they became aware of his disease. “Back then I felt no relief if leprosy was curable. Neither did I know where to turn to for medical treatment. So I did not do anything, only kept the worry to myself,” recalled Boontham. “But when it comes to social welfare, government’s attitude towards lepers has changed considerably. The Persons with Disabilities Qua
tity of Life Promotion Act, which was enacted in 2007, has helped the physically impaired enormously in terms of better social benefits. Yet Boontham still thinks that if the disabled need the most is the chance to be recognized as the able- bodied, especially in terms of job opportunities.”

Boontham Sukkasem, 61

Lottery vendor

There are 12 leper colonies in several regions of Thailand. The Phud Hong Leper Colony is one of them. Located in the southern province of Nakhon Si Thammarat, the colony was founded in 1948. It is a place of refuge for people falling prey to the sickness where they can live without being looked down upon. The lepers are no longer contagious. There are 12 leper colonies in several regions of Thailand. Phud Hong Leper Colony is one of them. Located in the southern province of Nakhon Si Thammarat, the colony was founded in 1948, has helped the physically impaired enormously in terms of better social benefits. Yet Boontham still thinks that if the disabled need the most is the chance to be recognized as the able-bodied, especially in terms of job opportunities.

La-ied Ditsaru, 77

Unemployed

Boontham Sukkasem was diagnosed with leprosy when he was 15 years old. Suddenly the clinics stopped seeing him after they became aware of his disease. “Back then I felt no relief if leprosy was curable. Neither did I know where to turn to for medical treatment. So I did not do anything, only kept the worry to myself,” recalled Boontham. “But when it comes to social welfare, government’s attitude towards lepers has changed considerably. The Persons with Disabilities Quality of Life Promotion Act, which was enacted in 2007, has helped the physically impaired enormously in terms of better social benefits. Yet Boontham still thinks that if the disabled need the most is the chance to be recognized as the able-bodied, especially in terms of job opportunities.”

Boontham Sukkasem, 61

Lottery vendor

There are 12 leper colonies in several regions of Thailand. The Phud Hong Leper Colony is one of them. Located in the southern province of Nakhon Si Thammarat, the colony was founded in 1948, has helped the physically impaired enormously in terms of better social benefits. Yet Boontham still thinks that if the disabled need the most is the chance to be recognized as the able-bodied, especially in terms of job opportunities.
Stigma hinders efforts to combat leprosy in India

Despite government’s declaration of ‘cure’, many believe true extent of disease hidden

NIRMALA GEORGE

A nongovernmental organisation working with leprosy patients.

For more photos, visit www.bangkokpost.com/redmediad

A man Tomas was infected with leprosy when he was only eight years old, following a visit to a relative in Sri Lanka.

A merican Tomas was infected with leprosy when he was only eight years old, following a visit to a relative in Sri Lanka. He thought he had a cold, but a rash was followed by sores.

NORMA GEORGE

As far as her husband is concerned, “she is the same.”

As far as her husband is concerned, “she is the same.” A merican Tomas was infected with leprosy when he was only eight years old, following a visit to a relative in Sri Lanka. He thought he had a cold, but a rash was followed by sores.

A man Tomas was infected with leprosy when he was only eight years old, following a visit to a relative in Sri Lanka.

A man Tomas was infected with leprosy when he was only eight years old, following a visit to a relative in Sri Lanka. He thought he had a cold, but a rash was followed by sores.

A man Tomas was infected with leprosy when he was only eight years old, following a visit to a relative in Sri Lanka. He thought he had a cold, but a rash was followed by sores.

A man Tomas was infected with leprosy when he was only eight years old, following a visit to a relative in Sri Lanka. He thought he had a cold, but a rash was followed by sores.

A man Tomas was infected with leprosy when he was only eight years old, following a visit to a relative in Sri Lanka. He thought he had a cold, but a rash was followed by sores.

A man Tomas was infected with leprosy when he was only eight years old, following a visit to a relative in Sri Lanka. He thought he had a cold, but a rash was followed by sores.

A man Tomas was infected with leprosy when he was only eight years old, following a visit to a relative in Sri Lanka. He thought he had a cold, but a rash was followed by sores.

A man Tomas was infected with leprosy when he was only eight years old, following a visit to a relative in Sri Lanka. He thought he had a cold, but a rash was followed by sores.

A man Tomas was infected with leprosy when he was only eight years old, following a visit to a relative in Sri Lanka. He thought he had a cold, but a rash was followed by sores.