













Matti Sarmela

LAWS OF DESTINY NEVER DISAPPEAR Culture of Thailand in the postlocal world



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LAWS OF DESTINY NEVER DISAPPEAR

Culture of Thailand in the Postlocal World

Helsinki 2005

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School of life
Marriage
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Inside the village community

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II. COMMUNITY CULTURE

Being human

How we were married. * In the fire. * We meet death together. * The village in mourning.

Ban Srii Muod Klao 1985. Mrs Mooj, 38. Who said to turn out the light?

I don't use my husband's surname because our marriage isn't registered yet.

How long have you been married?

15 years.

Have you quarrelled?

Sometimes we have been angry with each other, but we have never called each other names, nor slept apart, unless one of us has been away.

How did you meet?

My husband – his name is Moon – came to visit our house in the evenings. Other men came, too, but I chose this one. In those days, we used to manage with an oil lamp. We knew each other for a reasonable time, we had many opportunities to talk. We have no children. I went to the doctor and he wanted to check out my husband as well, but he wouldn't go to the doctor's, just said that if we can't have children, so be it. Now I wouldn't want them, people would laugh if somebody became pregnant at my age. At first, I didn't love Moon, but since he came around each day, he built up points and I married him. The other men I did love, they didn't

love, they didn't visit every evening.

You wouldn't swap this Mr Moon for a valuable buffalo?

No.

How did you get married?

We already knew each other and were in love, and we just turned out the light.

Who turned it out?

Moon did. Didn't you?

Who said to turn it out, did you?

No, it was Moon. He had been to check out a favourable day to marry, and so we turned out the light and were married. In the morning, my husband left at five o'clock to go to work. The next few nights, I didn't lock my bedroom door, because I knew that he'd return in the evening. Sometimes he came at 9 o'clock, sometimes at 11. Sometimes not until around midnight. Gradually, the villagers knew from this that we had married. This way of getting married has a name, the ceremony of 'lights out and away we go'.

Did you visit your husband's home?

Yes, many times. I took them gifts of miang leaves (tea leaves for chewing), fish sauce and dry foods. On my first visit, they gave me 200 baht in cash, the second time 150 baht, and the third time 100 baht. Later on they gave me nothing. Each time I visited, I filled all their water crocks to the brim. I haven't been for a long time now because we have our own home.

Do young people still marry according to the 'lights out' ceremony today?

Not really. Today, when young people fall in love, the man brings his parents over to negotiate and ask the girl's parents for her. If they agree, they find out a favourable day and time for the marriage. Before, the girl used to provide the bedding, today the man pays for everything. Nowadays, young people go to the movies and parties together. They don't visit in the evenings like

before. On Saturdays and Sundays, the youngsters make a date and go into town. Parents don't know what they should do. It used to be out of the question for young people to go anywhere alone before they were married.

What is the engagement party like these days?

If the young people come from different villages, the man must pay for a gold chain one baht or at least 50 satang in weight. If the man is from the same village and already known, he doesn't need to pay this betrothal fee. The young couple are engaged for about a month. In that time, a favourable day is found for the wedding.

Are the wedding invitations printed?

In their own village, the wedding is announced by word of mouth, but invitations are sent to neighbouring villages.

What if the wedding is tomorrow, what must be done today?

Today, the necessary food must be bought and dishes borrowed, and many dozen bottles of spirits bought, 10 bottles is the minimum. Then, on the day of the actual wedding, about 9 or 10 o'clock in the morning depending on when the favourable time is determined - the young couple's hands are tied. Sometimes the tying of hands is not until about 6 o'clock in the evening. If the hands have been tied in the morning, the man then returns to his home and the woman starts decorating herself and dressing up.

In the afternoon, about 5 o'clock, the groom arrives in a procession and the bride greets him. The groom must pay a gate fee in cash, or cash and a bottle of spirits, or just a bottle. The gate or the door is closed with a silver belt and gold chains, the meaning is that the new family would be prosperous, with gold and silver. The gates are called gold and silver gates. Then the groom must find the bride who is hiding in a bedroom. To get into the bedroom, the groom must again pay a door fee in cash or spirits. When the bride is found, the groom and bride together return to their guests to sit in the place reserved for them.

When the young couple's hands are tied, a respected relative of the bride or her parents are first, and they start with their future son-in-law's hand, tying his hand to their daughter's. Then the groom's father ties the bride's hand to the groom's. Then other relatives and guests tie the couple's hands. After this, they are escorted to the bedroom. The escort is chosen from people with a name that augurs well, for example 'gold' or 'silver' in their name. The bed has been sprinkled with flowers and tree leaves, they also bring wealth. Then a suitable person must be selected to cut the threads. Then the young couple lay down on the bed and they are photographed. Sometimes they are also served food in the bedroom. After all that, the young couple returns to the

guests, to receive gifs. A bridal payment wasn't necessary in the past, nor did guests bring presents money wasn't used. Today, the woman doesn't need to pay for anything when she marries. Before, the man didn't need to have anything when he married. My husband only had one set of clothing. Nowadays, the man must pay for everything.

The day after the wedding, both families tell the phii (supernatural guardians) of their families. When people start to build a house, they ask the phii of the earth for good luck and protection for the family that will live in the house. If this is not done, for example some piece of timber, a beam, might drop on someone's head during the building work. At the start of the farming season, we ask the phii of the field, Mother Thoranii, who is a female phii, she is asked for as good a harvest as others get from their fields. But we must not ask for a better harvest. Mother Thoranii is also asked to keep away everything that could harm the crop.

What do you do when you get sick?

First, I go to the doctor and take the medication he prescribes. If I don't get better, I contact the spirits, I promise that if I get better, I will make an offering of this and that. I'm sure that the spirits must exist, I've got better many times.

Would you tell us about becoming a monk?

After leaving elementary school, a boy can become a novice. He needs to take to the temple a bed, locker, bedding, a crock for drinking water, and naturally his clothes and other personal items. The neighbours help by giving him gifts of money or goods. The day before, khanom (small cookies, snacks) are prepared. The next morning, the boy's head is shaved and he is dressed at home in a white robe. Musicians are brought in, too. The next day, everyone goes to the temple in procession, and there a revered monk, the oldest in the temple, exchanges the white robes for saffron yellow ones. The father hands over his son to the care of the temple monk. If a novice makes a mistake, for example changes his clothes in the night and goes out to party, he is dismissed from the temple. The novice must take care that he lives in accordance with the rules of the temple. Nowadays, there are monks who go out to enjoy themselves. They visit women. If the villagers find out, they are sent away from the temple.

Would you tell us what happens when a person dies?

My father died 21 years ago. The body is first washed, the eldest child first washes the face of the deceased with somploi water, and then the other children. After washing, the body is placed in the coffin and then everyone weeps. There is no need to invite the neighbours, they come when they hear about the death. People usually buy a soul house. The monk is called for the evening and he arrives about 8 o'clock. The monk says a recitation, it means that he tells the soul of the deceased that you are

dead. If suat is not read, the soul will wander around not knowing where it belongs. After suat is read, the soul knows that it is dead, and maybe it weeps as well. People don't have wakes today like they used to in the time of oil lamps. Nowadays, people won't come unless there is good food and alcohol at the wake.

If the cremation is tomorrow, what needs to be done today?

The day before the cremation, in the afternoon, the coffin is taken out of the house, and on that last night there must be music and food for the guests all night long. On the morning of the cremation, there must be food for all the guests, and at 11 o'clock, a meal is served to the monks. In the afternoon, the coffin is taken on a hearse wagon to the cremation place. In the shelter (chapel) at the cremation place, the monks are given new robes or towels, for all monks that are present. After that the coffin is lifted on the pyre and the relatives walk around the coffin three times.

Why?

I don't know that.

Who lights it first?

A close member of the family of the deceased.

What is the significance of the fireworks that are often let off at the cremation?

We didn't used to have them. People used to just use kerosene to make it catch better. When the pyre is lit, everyone goes home. And for three nights, lights are left burning in front of the house and a water crock is put out. The soul comes to get fire and water. The leader from the realm of souls perhaps tells this new soul to get water and fire. Or maybe the soul of the deceased doesn't yet want to leave its loved ones, or it's worried about its family. After three days, we go to the cremation place to extinguish the ashes with somploi water, and then the bones are collected and placed on the ground in the shape of a body. Small bones are left in the ashes.

Is an offering made to the deceased?

Those who have money make an offering, take food and perhaps other things for the soul, when 100 days have passed from the death.

Does the soul of the deceased show itself?

I shouldn't think so. I've never seen one. When you die, you die. We did hear noises in the first three days after my father died, but we didn't see anything.

Perhaps they were rats or thieves?

No, they were definitely noises made by the soul. They were not like other sounds.

Do you believe in reincarnation?

Yes. When babies cry, the sorcerer can tell the reason for the crying, who is reincarnated in the child. My mother's father is reborn in my sister's children. If a child is given the wrong name, it cries in the night and refuses to feed. A child must be named after the person who is reincarnated in him or her.

Are old people honoured in this village?

Yes. At new year, Songkran, young people visit the old people in their families and take them money and clothing.

Do you go to the temple?

Only at festival times. At the beginning and end of Lent.

What did you do yesterday?

Cultivated the vegetable field.

How about today?

Today I'm doing the washing and then I'm going to the field again. Tomorrow I'll sow the seeds.

Ban Mae Kong Nya 1984. Mrs Tonkaew, 29. When you get a fright, you lose the strength of your soul

I have one child, he is in the fifth form of elementary school. I was married at 17. I want another child, but not yet. I come from the village of Ban Yuom. I came here to get married 12 years ago, and moved here to live. My husband came to visit my village to look at the girls. It used to be a custom that young men went in groups to look at girls, visiting houses and neighbouring villages where they knew there were young girls. This is how I got to know my future husband. He visited our house for a little more than a month and then brought his father and mother the negotiate our marriage with my parents. So it was decided, and we didn't have any wedding or ceremony.

One way of getting married is that the man's parents come to talk to the girl's parents about the marriage, and then when they have agreed, the girl must take a pig's head, a betel nut and a bunch of clove tree leaves to the phii of the compound of her new family. A feast is arranged for the phii because of the daughter's marriage. Young people often meet at the girl's home, when young men come to visit in groups. Changes have taken place in getting married between the old days and today. Nowadays, if a young couple falls in love, they first get engaged. Although things have changed a lot, young men still call in the evenings at houses where there are unmarried girls.

How was the day of the marriage chosen?

The parents knew and advised that there is a very good day in the seventh month, a lucky day or vanphajavan. In the modern (Western) calendar it's in mid-April, and we chose that day to get married. At the time, the custom was still that the girl provided the bedding mattresses, sheets, quilts and mosquito nets. When girls began to grow into young women, their mothers would teach them, so they could make the bedclothes themselves, or the girls would work and try to save money, so they could buy all the necessary bedclothes for the wedding day for getting married. Modern women have it easy, because the man pays for everything, including the bedding, and takes care of all wedding expenses.

What do you think is most important in choosing a spouse?

I think it's important that he is a good person, kind-hearted and hard-working, and he mustn't be quarrelsome. I think that these qualities are more important than wealth. When you are together and work hard and save, prosperity comes later.

When you were having a baby, were there any particular foods that were forbidden during pregnancy?

For example, fruit of the quava tree is forbidden during pregnancy. If you eat them, you will have a difficult birth. I gave birth in hospital like most people do today. When I was expecting, I didn't make any preparations - I didn't know if it was a boy or a girl.

What about giving the baby a name?

We hadn't thought of a name beforehand. When I had had the baby in hospital, the doctor gave our son the name Suphot. Both myself and my husband were satisfied with that name. Of course, you can change the name later, but we were happy with it.

Have children's games changed and how?

Games have changed a lot. Parents used to make their children's toys themselves. For example, they used to make a hole in half a coconut shell and thread a cord through it, you needed two shells, one for each foot, and then the string would be placed between the toes. Children would walk standing on the shell halves, holding onto the strings with their hands, clack clack clack. It was called the copcap game. Coconut shell halves were also used in play as objects and containers. They used to hold things when we played at shops. Modern children only play with shop-bought toys cars and guns. And they are expensive. When I was a child, we'd play a coin tossing game or with rubber bands, we either blew them or tossed them. We also used to play at shops a lot. And the copcap game I just told you about. We used to use large tree seeds as toys in tossing games.

Do you remember some special event from your childhood?

I remember once fighting with my friend, she was pretty unruly and often foulmouthed. We had a quarrel and I hit her so hard that I won the fight on that day. I remember it still, she is still alive, too, and has many children.

You have a son, at what age do boys go to the temple?

The boy must have either completed elementary school or be 12-13 years old. The ceremony of ordaining a novice is a celebration shared by the whole village. The villagers make a financial contribution of 10-20 baht per family towards the expenses. Special foods are prepared at the home of the boy becoming a novice, and served both at home and at the temple to everybody who has taken part in the preparations. A pig or buffalo is slaughtered and used to cook the food for the feast. At home, people eat and also drink spirits, and then in the afternoon at about three or four o'clock, everyone sets off in a procession towards the temple. Leading the procession are the musicians with their instruments, then the novice sitting on

some strong man's shoulders, and then the relatives and villagers follow behind. So, music playing and dancing accompany the boy from his home to the temple. Sometimes, the boy may have previously served at the temple as the monks' serving boy, a temple boy, but it isn't essential. When they arrive at the temple, the head of the monastery reads the chapters from the writings that belong to ordination as novice and dresses the novice in a yellow robe. That is the end of the ceremony.

What is the customary procedure in this village when someone dies?

If a man has died, his wife and children wash him with just ordinary water, and then his face is dusted with talc and the corpse placed in a bought coffin, people no longer make the coffin themselves like they used to do.

And where is the coffin placed then?

If the person has died at home, the corpse is kept at home; if the death has been in a road accident or elsewhere outside the home, then the body is taken to the temple. The coffin decoration (the soul house) is either bought or made together at home. The decorations are cremated along with the corpse. Every day before the cremation while the body is still at home, food is prepared and a good serving is taken to the temple monk who then blesses the deceased. This offering of food to the monk is called the memorial ceremony for the deceased.

Is a wake held?

Not always, but usually gamblers arrive on the first night and play until sunrise. Often also the family and relatives talk by the coffin until sunrise.

When is the body cremated?

The cremation is not done when the sun is still rising, not before midday, but in the afternoon at about two or three, when the sun is already going down. The coffin is placed on a cart and a rope fetched from the temple and tied to the cart, and then the relatives and villagers together haul the body to the cremation place. This rope is only used for this purpose, it's a handmade manilla rope. First at the end of the rope are 4-5 monks and then the relatives and friends and neighbours. This way, the corpse is escorted together to the cremation place. Near the actual cremation spot there is a chapel and they stop there, there are monks in the chapel reading prayers, and as a reward each is given a saffron robe. Then the body is taken to the cremation place and the coffin is lifted on top of the wood and kindling. The timber is sprinkled with some kind of kerosene. The first to light the fire is a monk, then the relatives and friends. Each lighter is given a little curl woven from a wood shaving which he uses to

light the fire. When the pyre is well alight, everybody returns home. Only the cremators stay behind, two or three people, whatever, to see the cremation to the end. The cremators must be paid more than 100 baht each in wages.

When we get home, we collect the things that were borrowed from the temple, plates and dishes, perhaps chairs and other things. They are returned to the temple. The first evening and night, when the body is no longer at home, feels very lonely, and so some neighbour or relative comes to stay the night. And then the next morning, the children and grandchildren go to the cremation place to perform the extinction ceremony. In reality, the fire is already extinguished, but this is a ceremony that is performed. The ashes and bones of the body remaining at the pyre place are doused with water, but I don't know if it's ordinary water or holy water consecrated by the monks. When the ceremony is done, the remaining bones are collected and they are kept at home. 100 days after the death, a memorial ceremony may be held, when the temple monks are taken food and gifts. The memorial is not essential, but it's held only by those who can afford it, poorer people don't hold it.

Do people here believe that the soul of the deceased comes to visit the relatives?

I don't believe that such things happen, as I've not heard any.

What about customs associated with the new year festival?

At Songkran time in April, there is a special lucky day (vanphajavan), when many people get fruit pods of a certain tree and soak them in water. The water turns an orange brownish colour and it's put in bottles. It is taken to an old relative or a revered person in the village, who then sprinkles the water with a small bunch of twigs or by hand on the head of the bringer. This is to bring good luck and success.

Do you go to the temple often?

Myself, I don't visit the temple regularly, but my mother always goes once a week, on the monk's day and also whenever there is some festival at the temple. I go to work and don't have time to visit the temple regularly.

Do you believe in reincarnation?

Yes, I do.

On what grounds do you believe, how can you know that someone is reborn?

If a baby that has already been named cries a lot or is sickly, or otherwise behaves in a strange way, then we go to see the sorcerer and ask him, who is this new child? The sorcerer contacts the phii (of the house), performs certain ceremonies, and he receives an answer as to who the child is. Then the child is given a new name according to the answer of the sorcerer or the incantor. So we know who is reincarnated in this baby. I believe that if a child frets and is sickly, then it has been given the wrong name. When the correct name has been obtained from the sorcerer, the name of the person who is reincarnated, after that the child no longer frets or gets sick. The name must also be changed at the amphoe's office.

What did you do yesterday?

In the morning, I fixed and tied up a load of sugar cane that had spilled in the compound. Then I did the cleaning and then made dinner. In the afternoon, I went to see the workmen who are helping us cut the sugar cane. There are two cane cutting gangs in our village, groups of about ten people. When I had seen the gang, I returned home and carried on loading the sugar cane, and after that I was about to do the washing when you came. I've just been ill and today I was thinking of going to the field to cut sugar cane, but my husband wouldn't let me. Tomorrow I intend to go to the field.

Have you performed ceremonies at your home to prevent the spirits from disturbing your lives?

No, we haven't. Neither did we tell the phii (of the compound) when my child was born. One time, when I was sick, the health centre doctor gave me medicine and four injections too, but since I didn't get better, I went to the sorcerer. He said that the phii that lives east of our house had caused my illness and that I should give it a meal. I followed his instructions, prepared a meal of fresh blood and also a good meat sauce for the phii that lives to the east of our house. When I had made the offering, I felt that my symptoms eased, my stomach no longer hurt like it had before.

When your husband goes off on sales trips further afield to other provinces, do you tell the phii (of the compound)?

No, we don't tell the phii, but he goes to ask the sorcerers what would be a good day to go on a business trip. But it isn't essential, you can go without asking for a suitable day, not everybody does it.

What if there is a road accident? What does he do then?

When a person has a bad fright, he loses the fortitude of his soul (siak khvan), and after the fright one of his family goes to the accident spot with a kind of woven fishing basket and finds or sort of gathers the fortitude back. This seeking of fortitude, getting it back, can be done without any other ceremonies, but some people call a monk to the accident spot, to the place of the shock, to look for the fortitude and to call it back.

What kinds of ceremonies are associated with rice farming?

At the start of the planting season, a few rice seedlings are first planted in some corner of the field and certain incantations are said. This way, the phii of the field is told that the planting season has begun and it is asked to bless the work and the crop.

Are there any ceremonies to do with building a house?

At the erection of the pillars, a monk is invited from the temple to perform the ceremony of four pillars, and then the house can be built. We have no paddy field, we only grow sugar cane, and when we sell it, we buy the rice we need to eat. There are no ceremonies in sugar cane growing, and I don't personally believe in or value such ceremonies much.

Ban Dong 1984. Mr Khaaw, 47. A pig's head was offered to the phii of the house

The age of 47 is not very much, if you compare it to a day, it's perhaps 9.30 or 10. The heat of midday hasn't arrived yet. I am a farmer of fields and swidden and working is still quite all right. I still have sufficient strength to work. Both my wife and I come from here in Ban Dong. My wife is about three years older than me. My parents have already died. Of my siblings, only one elder sister is still living. I never had the opportunity of going to school and I can't read or write, neither can my wife. I have never worked anywhere else. My wife and I have a lot of relations in this village.

My father died about 30 years ago. I was a child then and I remember almost nothing about his death. My mother died about 20 years ago, also here at her home. I do remember my mother's death. Mother had some disease. She coughed a lot and she had a fever. We never took her to a doctor, but she took herbal medicines made here in the village. My father was a little over 80

when he died. His body was kept at home for three days and nights. It was a bit different then. There were no bands of musicians at funerals like today. No players. After three days and nights, the body was taken for cremation. At that time, there were no regular cremation places. The body could be cremated in the forest. They were cremated in different places. The body was also kept at home then, not at the temple. The cremation customs were also different from today. There were no funeral co-operatives that would give you money for the cremation ceremony. The coffin was woven from bamboo strips and not from timber, boards, like today. And it wasn't always possible to get a monk to the funeral to drive evil spirits away from the house of the deceased. In those days, the funeral was arranged alone and the body was cremated in the usual way.

Do people put necessaries and clothing in the coffin for the deceased?

Clothing and small possessions belonging to the deceased are put in a cardboard box or made into a bundle and given to the cremator, who decides whether to burn them with the body or whether to use them himself. Some time after the cremation, you still need to call the monk to the house of the deceased to chase away evil spirits.

My wife is from here and we were married here. Engagements and weddings weren't necessary in those days. I just came to my bride's home, to my father-in-law's house, to live. However, the phii of the house had to be given twelve baht and a pig's head. Naturally, an honoured relative had to go and ask for the girl and when it was agreed, you can begin living together on the same day. No further arrangements are required. The pig's head was offered to the phii of the house two or three days after the marriage and the twelve baht paid. The pig's head is eaten among family members.

Father, how did you find your wife?

I came to visit here and met the girl. We fell in love and married. The matter was negotiated for about ten days and then we got married. In the old days, when you found a suitable girl, you got married right away. Today, people wait several months or even years before they get married. When I was a child, there were only about 30 houses here in the village. This area used to be mainly forest and grassland and a few temporary dwellings. Houses were not permanent. And they were not really houses, but small bamboo huts with grass roofs. Later on, people built permanent houses from timber. Getting food used to be easy. There was plenty of food in nature. If you wanted to make a fish-kang (sauce), you just went to catch some fish. There was plenty of game in the forest. It's much harder today, because there are lots of people and not enough food to go round. Today, everything has to be bought. If you don't buy, you can go without.

My father and mother were also field and swidden farmers. They were very poor. They worked on paddy fields and swidden, they didn't have any land of their own. They worked for other people. So, we children were all very poor. But when I married, my

situation improved somewhat. My life is much easier now and because I have children, they work on my behalf. I don't have to toil a lot. I can work only as much as I have the strength to do. When I get some money, I save it all and little by little, I get materials for a new house. I buy all kinds of timber whenever I can. I work as a daily labourer on other people's paddy fields or farm other people's fields so that the owner gets one part of the crop and I get two parts, if I work with a buffalo.

Clothes used to be cheap and only some were bought. Women used to weave cloth and make clothes from it. Bedclothes were also always made at home. They weren't bought. When I was a child and if we had to go to town, there were no buses like today. They didn't have an engine like today, but they worked on charcoal that used to be burned. The road was also very bad. It wasn't surfaced yet. If you went to do your errands, you had to wait for a bus for a long time at the roadside, same when you wanted to come back. There were so few buses, only a few a day. But as a child and youngster, I was able to go to the city several times. We had to walk to the highway and get the bus there. We had movies here only occasionally. Usually, if we went to town on errands and stayed the night, we'd go to the cinema. Movies used to be free in town. It's more than 30 years since I went to the city to the movies. I can't remember what the movies were like.

Children's lives have changed a lot, too. Their games are different. In the past, up to the age of 15, children really were children, for example, they wore no clothing at all. They weren't seen as teenagers, they were children. And the children weren't coy, even if they had no clothes. Today, I'm sure they'd be shy at that age. In the old days, we used to do folk dancing in the evenings, Thai dancing, but it's not done any more. We used to sing folk songs and play old traditional instruments. Now we listen to music on the radio.

Ban Mae Kong Nya 1985. Mrs Saaj, 52. We had to hang on to a men's loincloth

I have been married for 32 years. I have had six children in all, but the first two died. Of those living, the eldest is married. The second is 25, not yet married. The third is a boy. He was just called up, but didn't have to join the army didn't draw the lot. The fourth is in the final year of secondary school at the Khelang School in Lampang. This year, he will finish school and then look for a job. I would like to send him to university, but I'm old and can't raise the money.

When you were married, did you have a wedding?

Yes. I was the only one in the village at the time to have a wedding. My husband's uncle was kamnan (district leader) and he organized the wedding. We even had a photo taken, it's there in the sideboard. The children have had it enlarged for themselves. My fiance was already married, but both his and my parents thought that we should get married. And so our parents made my husband divorce his first wife and we were able to marry. We are related. I didn't love my husband when we were married, but because my parents chose him to be my spouse, I agreed to the marriage. I have later learned to love him. Young men used to visit girls' homes and then the girl's parents contacted the parents of the man they wanted for a husband for their daughter. Nowadays, men ask for their own wives.

Was engagement money paid for you?

No, because we are related. Our hands were just tied and a bunch of clove leaves and a bunch of areka palm fruit were split in two, one half was taken by the husband's family to their phii, and the other half by my family to our phii. I don't know the meaning of that practice, but it's an old custom that is still observed.

All the villagers of Mae Kong Nya were invited to the wedding, and guests came from other villages, too. My uncle was Azan Wat and he came to our house and I asked him for a favourable date. My uncle is now over 70. The wedding was at my home. There were no tables or chairs in those days, grass mats were spread on the floor and the ceremonies performed there.

When did the guests arrive?

From the morning. Our hands were tied in the morning and then we made merits (tam boon) by making offerings of food to the monks. The monk was asked to come to the house at 9 o'clock. The groom paid for the meal, my family just for the rice. The relatives had given some onions.

Are people afraid of death, if someone has died just before the wedding?

If the wedding is already organized, it's not postponed because of a death. If a death occurs before the wedding preparations are under way, the wedding is put off. Just recently it happened here, just as the young couple's hands were being tied, they heard that the bride's brother had been killed in a road accident. He had crashed while drunk. But the wedding went ahead and then they started preparing for the cremation. Everything's gone well for that young couple. Old people say that if dishes get broken at a wedding, it's a bad omen, means an accident or divorce. A water crock was broken at our wedding, but it hasn't

made any difference. I think such a belief is odd, because of course dishes get broken easily at big occasions.

How does the groom arrive?

The groom arrives in a procession, like today. He must pay a gate charge, a door fee. The guardian of the wedding gate gets the money and it's lucky; if he buys a lottery ticket with the money, he's sure to win. Then comes the tying of the hands. First the bride's parents tie the hands, then the groom's parents and other relatives. The bride's father escorts the couple to the bedroom and wishes them happiness. Then the young couple compete in collecting coins off the bed. If the man gets the most, it means that he will be a good earner. If the wife, she will be better at earning money than the husband.

Your parents chose your partner, will you do the same for your children?

I have tried, but the children don't want to follow my wishes. My daughter is a good seamstress, and I have advised her to choose a husband with a similar income level, but she doesn't seem to be taking any notice. My eldest son is just 30 and already married.

People used to have their babies at home. I gave birth at home, too, because the hospital was a long way away and in those days hardly anyone gave birth in hospital. One wasn't allowed to eat sweet foods or bathe late at night, that would cause the waters to break before time. The birth of my first child was very difficult and they wouldn't let me lie down, I had to squat and a man's loincloth was tied to a beam that I had to hold on to hang on to it. The midwife just turned the baby at the birth. The second baby was a bit easier.

Were you in the fire?

Yes I was, 25 days and nights after the birth. Today, not everybody does and mothers also eat all kinds of foods. If I'd done that, I'd have probably died.

Can you tell me about becoming a monk and a novice?

First, the boy's father and mother cut a little of his hair here and there and then Azan Wat shaves his head. And then the boy is given a so-called novice bath and dressed in a white robe. Azan Wat also performs the ceremony of the novice's soul. The first night, the novice stays at home, and around 11 o'clock the next morning he is taken to the temple in a procession. The procession is headed by musicians. On arriving at the temple, the procession first walks around the temple. Then the novice

asks his mother and father for permission to become a monk. The parents hand over the monk's robe they have got ready, and the temple monk puts it on the candidate. Today, the celebration and meal of becoming a monk is usually held in the temple and only a few have it at home. Because the monk must have all kinds of things at the temple, the relatives and villagers help him get them. Donation of necessaries to a monk is a matter of honour to relatives and villagers. The ceremony used to take three days, today only two. On the first day, the monk instructs the novice for the ordination ceremonies. After the ordination, the novice withdraws to the temple for three days and eats only one meal a day. After three days, his relatives visit him and take food for the temple monks.

When your father died, what was the procedure?

The last four days of his life, he was no longer able to eat. Then his breathing gradually became slower and slower and he died in the evening. The body was washed and wrapped in a white shroud. The coffin was bought. The neighbours visited to honour the deceased. The soul house was also bought. The body was kept at home, because he died at home. If a person dies in hospital or somewhere else, the funeral is often held at the temple.

The monk was not yet invited on the first night, but the relatives came to sit up through the night with us. There are all kinds of things to do for the funeral, the invitation cards must also be printed for the cremation day. The monks were invited on six nights and they recited suat readings every evening. In the afternoon before the cremation, the corpse is taken out of the house and placed on the hearse, and the soul house is put in place. Then the monk assures the soul in suat thoon incantations that you are dead and belong to the kingdom of the dead, and it is asked to leave the house with the body. On the day of the cremation, on arrival at the cremation place, the coffin is lifted into the chapel there and a revered man of the family places the robes reserved for the monks on the coffin, and the monks go and get them. Then the coffin is placed on the pyre and the children and grandchildren of the deceased honour him by walking round the coffin and repeating verses after Azan Wat. The body is cremated in its coffin. Some people cremate first the body and then the coffin. The next day, we go to check if there is anything left and if there is, it is burned. We also take along some somploi water and use it to extinguish the ashes. If there is a lot of ash, the cremation place is cleaned and the ashes taken elsewhere. So the cremation place is left tidy ready for the next users.

Do you believe that the soul of the deceased appears?

Yes, I do. My father's soul also appeared and we wanted to make sure that it was father's soul, so we called the sorcerer. Through the sorcerer, father's soul reeled off the names of his siblings, his children and grandchildren who were present. The sorcerer sat and behaved like my father at the time of his death and said that he recognized us. We believed that it was father's soul. The soul also said that we loved father and that there were a lot of people at the cremation. We asked if he had received

the gifts we gave and he said yes, all of them. We also asked who was ordained novice at the cremation and the soul replied, my son. The soul assured us that everything is well with him. My father liked a blood dish called laap and I had taken some to the temple. Now my father's soul said that he was not allowed to eat the blood dish, and asked that we take boiled fish and grilled pork. We put some grilled pork in a bag and gave it the sorcerer. He held the bag tightly and the soul left.

Some people don't believe that the soul can appear, but I think it's believable. Same as if a child is sick and a ceremony is performed, ordered by the sorcerer, then the child gets better. I believe that the soul can appear. Do you believe it Wiwien? A long time ago, about six months after my mother died, about 20 years ago, I was at home with the children and my husband was at work at the temple, when I heard my mother's soul come to sweep the floor.

Mother, do you believe in reincarnation?

Yes, because my father is reincarnated in this grandchild of mine. At about seven days old, the baby cried a lot and we asked the sorcerer the reason. He said that grandfather was born and nobody knows it yet. The sorcerer ordered the child's uncle to tie cords around the child's wrists.

Do you go to the temple?

Yes, every week on monk's day. Every morning, I also give food to passing monks.

Are old people still honoured in this village?

Yes, but not by all. Some obey old people's advice, others not at all.

How do you honour phii (of the compound), or what kinds of things must they be told?

When a child is born, it is placed on a large woven sieve at the top of the stairs. Then an adult stamps her foot on the floor and says, if the child belongs to the phii or is its grandchild, come and get it at once, so we don't need to take care of this child at all. If the child is not yours, don't come to bother us.

What about illnesses?

I had a bad headache and I went to the doctor, but it didn't clear up with his medicines. Then I made a promise to the phii (of the

compound) that if I get better, I will make such and such an offering, and my headache got better.

If you go on a trip, do you tell the phii?

No. We've had the spirit house for a long time. We used to have buffalo and they got sick a lot and would not eat grass. My father told us that we must put up a spirit house and make promises to the phii. I did that, and the buffalo got better and ever since then, our buffalo have been healthy.

Do you tell the phii when your children get married?

Yes, I do. And when my grandchild was born, I also informed the phii (of the compound), and this child is healthy and strong. The old phii (ancestor) of our family is in the village of Thung Maa.

Is that phii not yet dead?

Actually, it isn't, although it's very old. It has lived from one generation to another. I will probably also become a phii when I die.

How do you know that?

Old people say so. Yesterday I minded my grandchildren at home, and today I went to Lampang market to sell coconuts. Tomorrow I'll probably stay at home, I have no plans

Ban Mae Kong Nya 1985. Miss Nittajaa, 24. Who could change old beliefs

I have finished high school and now I'm a trainee at the hospital. Many hundreds of people apply to train as nurses, and before you are accepted at the nurse training school, you first have to work at the hospital and your work is monitored. Only after the training period can you apply for the course.

Do you like your work?

I can't really say that I like it, but it's all right. I would rather study agriculture and forestry, my aunt suggested it to me, too. I would have gone to agricultural college after secondary school, but it had a very bad reputation at the time. Discipline was poor there. So, I didn't dare go there, but carried on in high school. I can't say I'm sorry I didn't go. Now I am free to choose what I want to study.

Where do young people of today meet each other?

Young people meet at temple festivals and Loi Kratong festivals, and other national festivals. Only a few meet and get to know each other at home like they used to do, when young men used to call at houses with daughters.

Who decides on marriages nowadays? The parents or young people themselves?

I can't say which is more common. In many cases, young people introduce their boyfriends or girlfriends to their parents and ask for their parents' opinion, but not all. Often, young people decide for themselves, and if the parents aren't agreeable to the marriage, the young couple usually elopes and then gets married. Then they return home after a while. Here in Northern Thailand, the bride's parents don't decide the engagement money, but the groom must decide for himself how much to pay. However, most commonly the betrothal presents are paid in gold, gold chains, and not in cash. As for inheritance, it is only the youngest child who receives one, if he or she remains in the parents' home, but if he or she marries and moves away, the parents' house is inherited by the child who stays there with the parents.

Are wedding invitations printed here in the village?

It's pretty rare. In our village almost everybody is related, and somebody goes round on a bicycle and invites the villagers to the wedding. Relatives and friends come very willingly to help with wedding preparations. People go to a famous, well-known monk to ask for a favourable wedding date. I don't know Azan Wat, I don't know where he lives.

The groom arrives in a procession with his relatives, and he is met at the compound gate by one of the bride's relatives or the bride herself. The gate is closed with a women's silver belt and before it is opened, the groom must pay cash, but he can decide himself how much he pays. This is called the 'silver gate' or 'money gate'. The groom has with him the agreed engagement fee, and so everybody both the groom's and bride's families go up into the house and sit on the floor, and then there is discussion and checking of the betrothal presents, if it's the correct amount. The bride's parents also check that the gold chains really are

pure gold. Then the relatives wish the young couple happiness and blessings, and then everybody goes outside again.

A low table has been placed under the house, and the couple kneel at it, and old and revered persons start the tying of the hands. Usually only people that are older than the bride and groom tie their hands together. Then it's time to escort the young couple into the bedroom. The chosen escort is a person who has been married for a long time and whose marriage has been happy and harmonious. This escort also makes the bridal bed. The bedroom door is also closed with a silver belt or a gold chain, and the groom must pay again in order to get through. I forgot to mention that usually the bride and groom also give all wedding guests a small wedding souvenir gift.

What do you think is most important in choosing a spouse?

I think it's important that my future husband is educated at least to the same degree as myself. But if he has studied a lot more than I, it might be that our conversations are difficult because he knows so much more than I do. Neither would it be right if he was not as well educated as I, because then we wouldn't understand each other. We should have equal amounts of knowledge. A sense of duty is also very important, people should know each other long enough to know whether their boyfriend is sufficiently responsible. Wealth and rank are not so important.

Do mothers in this village lie in the fire after giving birth?

Yes, very many do. Doctors do say that it's quite unnecessary to lie in the fire; the smoke from the fire is unhealthy. But people are afraid to give up this ancient tradition. Once I saw a newborn baby who just fretted and refused to take breast milk, so the mother fed the child rice and banana. I was worried and said that a small child a newborn can't take such food, its stomach is not strong enough and it's dangerous. But the mother said: "I've given it to all my children, and they haven't been sick or died." What could I say to that? According to old customs, pregnant women hardly eat anything in the last month before the birth, then the babies are very small and weak at birth. Nor is it permitted to eat nourishing food after the birth, and then mothers don't have milk for the baby. The doctor at the hospital does advise them to eat all foods, but who can change those old beliefs? Not me, anyway. Here in the village, too, very many people still observe them.

How have children's games changed?

They haven't changed much. Today children play at shops like they used to. We used to play for example riding on a hobby horse. The horse was made from a banana leaf stalk. You could fashion the head and ears from it. Then we tied on the reins. It was a flexible horse. We used to also play various running games. Nowadays, children play with cars or little tricycles, they

pretend to be bicycle rickshaws. Roller skates are very fashionable today. Toys used to be made at home, today they are shop-bought.

Do people believe here in the village that souls of the dead appear or otherwise disturb the lives of the living?

Yes, most people believe it. For example, if someone has died accidentally or been murdered, the soul of such a person sometimes settles in a person or it may cause illness. When people go to sorcerers to ask for the reasons for illnesses, the most usual reply is that they are caused by evil spirits (restless souls).

Do people believe here that after death, the soul appears to the relatives?

Yes, most people believe so. The soul returns to visit its former home and causes various noises or knocks. Personally I don't believe that souls of the dead come back. I don't believe in reincarnation at all. I don't believe that it's possible. When I'm dead myself, I'll find out.

Do you visit the temple?

Not regularly, only on festival days, like at the beginning and end of Lent. I haven't got time to go to the temple.

Ban Dong 1984. Mrs Khaaw, 78. I have already died twice

I am very old and waiting for death. I have already died twice. The children cried a lot and went to get the sorcerer to do rites so I would come back to life. The neighbours reckoned that it would be best to get a coffin. They had called a car to take me to hospital, and when the neighbours saw them taking me away, they thought I'd die on the way and the car would soon be back. The car was full of people going with me. The children remember that I was in hospital for eight nights. When I came round, I immediately remembered my money that I had saved up, and thought I'd go and check it. But when I got out of bed, I realized that I was in hospital. And in order to pay the hospital bills, we had to sell our house and build a smaller one in its place.

I have been married twice. With my first husband, we had three children, but we got divorced. With my second husband, we

had seven children. He has already died. The reason for the divorce was that we quarrelled because my husband didn't look after or care for his family much. He went to work, but didn't always return home, but went to other women playing away. He was very aggressive and often hit me and beat me up.

We have a custom that when you have a baby, a fire is lit outdoors and water is boiled in a large vat, bathing water, and the mother must lie by the fire, in the heat, for 30 days. But when I gave birth, there was nobody to boil the water. I took some water out to the sunshine to warm, so I could bathe. A little more than a year after the divorce I remarried. In the divorce, the three children stayed for me to keep. I went out to work to earn a living for my three children. Then, when I married again, my husband's father-my new father-in-law-took two of the children to look after and one stayed with us.

As a child, I learned a little bit of Northern Thai dialect and its letters, but I've forgotten them now. I do remember something I learned as a child. When you bow to a monk, you must say the honouring words: thong kam, which I still remember.

From my first marriage, all three children are girls and none of them can read, but the children from the second marriage can all read enough to get by. Some have been to school for four years and some less. There were no schools in the old days, but children studied at the temple. But it wasn't taken so seriously, and if somebody really didn't want to learn, they failed to learn to read. In the past, little boys had to watch the buffalo and little girls had to mind their younger siblings.

I have many relatives here and in these nearby villages. They come to see me and to say hello. My father and mother lived to a very old age and died in this village. Today, people learn new things quickly and easily. I can't keep up with it. The reason could be that in my day, there was no opportunity of going to school. I never learned how to learn or got any practice.

In the old days, when you went to town to sell goods, everything had to be carried and we had to walk right to the highway more than ten kilometres. The road was poor and very hard to walk on in the rainy season. When we had harvested the peanuts they were taken to town to sell. One selling trip might have taken two or three days and then back with a new load. Thankfully, the bus fare was cheap. When the crop was sold, we used to buy salt and dried fish in town, because they weren't available in the village. Most people of my generation are already dead. Even three of my younger siblings have died.

There have been a lot of changes in village life and of many kinds. For example, all farmlands used to be shared, but nowadays they are divided between families and the boundaries must not be crossed. You can't farm other people's land. All clothing and bedding used to be made at home. But if you bought a sarong, it used to cost ten satang. I was already quite grown-up when I got the opportunity of going to school and learning to read this northern dialect. The villagers together built a bamboo shelter with a grass roof, and employed a teacher to teach the children. The fee was twelve baht per pupil. We pupils were already

grown-up.

My first husband came from near the city of Lampang and he travelled around the villages selling goods, also here in Ban Dong, and that's how we met. In the old days, people got married like this. The bride's parents went to see the groom's parents and took gifts of one betel nut and a leaf from the clove tree tied together. They took these and asked the groom's father for his son to be their daughter's husband. By this time, the young people have already lived together for two or three days. After the girl's parents' visit, the man moved to live with his wife. Nowadays the custom is almost the same. When the bride has lived at the man's home for two or three days, the bride's parents come to ask the man for their daughter's husband and bring a gift of a betel nut and a bunch of clove tree leaves. After that the young couple go to live at the bride's home. The bride and groom also go to inform the phii (of the compound), in its place of devotion, that a new family is moving into the village and to ask the phii to take this new family into its protection.

In the old days, when my mother died, it was customary to hold the cremation service at the home of the deceased. A monk from the temple was called to the house, to read chapters or sermons from his books. That way, they drive out evil souls from the house where death has visited. The family of the deceased decides how many days the corpse is kept at home, and those days are a mourning period. Neighbours and friends come to visit. The monk or the village elder must be asked for a suitable day and time when the corpse may be taken for cremation at the cremation place. To prevent the corpse from smelling too much, we used to sprinkle a lot of dried and crushed tobacco leaves or ashes on the corpse in the coffin. When my second husband died, we kept his body at home for seven days and it didn't smell yet. One way is to pour honey on the body to prevent the smell. Leaves of the faranki tree are also chopped into small pieces and sprinkled to prevent the smell. Today, when a person dies, they rush off to the drugstore to buy poison that is sprayed on the corpse. This way the corpse can be kept at home for several days, and it won't smell.

I got a radio about five years ago. It often needed repair, and now it's useless. I saw my first car there on the highway, and I think it was about 30 years ago. There wasn't even a motorbike here in the village before. There are now, and even children know how to ride them. I like to listen to radio programs - music, plays and monks' programs. Radio programs give you all kinds of enjoyment and benefit. We don't have a television. I have been to our neighbour's house to watch programmes before, but I can't get there any more. On Saturday mornings, there's a Thai folk music programme on TV and I like it very much. People's nature has changed a lot. I think that people used to be much more honest than they are today. Of course there are good people nowadays, too, but there are bad ones as well.

Ban Srii Muod Klao 1998, 1999. Miss Amphaa, 20. Parents are strict in courting matters

Miss, are you still a student?

I'm in the final year in vocational school. I'll graduate in two weeks.

Do you intend to continue your studies?

Yes. I'll be going to the Lampang Teacher Training College, but I won't become a teacher, I'll be studying bookkeeping.

How many children are there in your family?

Two. I have one sister. She is 15 and studying in the ninth form. When the price of rice was low, I felt sorry for my father, because he was forced to work very hard. My education demanded a lot of money. Now my father is visibly relieved.

How do people start courting these days?

Mostly people get to know one another at school. Today, there are also various leisure venues, for example department stores and cinemas that are part of them. I think it would be good if the boy came to my home and we could do our courting here at home. At the same time the parents would see what the boy is like. Some young people have gone off alone driving in cars or on motorbikes. It has immediately led to bad rumours and the parents have disapproved.

Do parents today force young people to study a lot?

No. We can study as much as we want to ourselves. Parents are strict in courting matters.

How strict are they?

In the evenings, they watch everything I want to do.

On what grounds is a marriage partner chosen?

Personally, I want a boy who's a little older than myself. A little older feels safer. Parents don't participate in choosing the boy, but they do give advice. I want to go out with somebody for many years before I marry. Many people, like myself at present, go out with somebody just for friendship. Not to get married. Today, people often swap boyfriends.

Do you believe in spirits?

No.

Why do people honour spirits?

I only do it to please my parents.

Is there some phii here that people honour?

No. Only the family have a celebration to honour the phii.

Do you go to it?

Only my mother takes part.

Do you tell the phii about your illnesses?

No. We don't have a phii of our own (compound) that we honour. We just go to the doctor. We only honour a statue of Buddha.

Does a dead person appear after cremation?

I have seen the soul of a dead person enter another person and that soul knows everything. I half believe in it.

As you have studied so much, do you believe in other spirits?

No. They are just fantasy.

Do you believe in reincarnation?

No.

Why don't you believe it?

I don't think anybody is born here again.

Do you go to the temple often?

Yes. Often at new year I put offerings in the monks' dishes.

Do you often go to show respect to old people?

Yes. We often visit my grandparents and take them some food.

What did you do yesterday?

After my studies I did some cleaning and then I went to my typing class. After I got back, I visited our neighbour. In the evening, after dinner, I played with my younger sister.

What do you think should change here?

Everybody should have a permanent job like in Europe. Life should be easier.

Now that a municipal council has been elected, has it brought any development?

Yes, and every village representative looks out for his own village. If they elected a provincial representative for it, he wouldn't care about the issues of a small village like this. When the village becomes part of Lampang City, I hope that matters will be conducted better.

What do you need most now in your life?

I want to finish my studies and find a good job, once the economy improves.

Why have so many people become infected with Aids here?

Aids has come here from men who have visited brothels. After going to brothels, men have passed on the disease to their wives, because Aids is mainly a problem of people with families. Only a few people without children have Aids.

How old are the men with Aids?

Mostly over 30. Young people have been better informed and they have seen the awful pain Aids causes and are afraid of it.

How many people have died of Aids here?

About 10. There are some people here who have Aids in the early stages.

Are you afraid you might catch this disease yourself?

Yes. Aids is a huge problem.

Is there any pilfering in your village?

No. The drug problem is worse here.

Does some organization help those with a drug problem?

Not really.

Should the government be stricter in this matter?

I think it should provide more information on how to resist drugs. Many young people use drugs here. Drug-users' studies are wasted. You can't tell from everybody that they use drugs. Sometimes their friends tempt young people to use these

substances.

Is it possible to give up the drugs?

It depends on the person. Some people are more susceptible to substances than others.

Have you tried drugs yourself?

No. But I have seen other people try them.

Are there any problems of morality here?

Yes, because some young people live together, even though they are not married. It usually causes great sorrow to the parents. Many young people's friends live together before marriage, and friends are a great influence on young people. Everybody wants to do the same, even if it's not right.

Ban Srii Muod Klao 1998. Mrs Sommai, 30 . My illness eats me up from within

I was born here, my mother is also from here, but my father came from another village. I was married in the year 2536. My husband is dead.

When did he die?

He died in the year 2539.

Was his death sudden?

No, he had been ill for a long time. He died in his own village, not in hospital. We were together a little more than three years.

When did he contract Aids?

The virus was in him before we were married. He had been ill for six years before we married, but he didn't know it. But after we had been married for a couple of years, he found out about it. He fell on his motorbike and was injured. The doctor took a blood sample and found this disease. I learned about my own illness in the year 2537. I didn't say anything about it to my husband.

When you learned about this illness that you had caught from your husband, were you angry with him?

No. Quarrelling would have been no use.

Where did you meet your husband?

In a nearby village. I was working as a seamstress there. My husband bought some fabric in Bangkok and brought it to the village for sewing. We didn't have a wedding. I just moved in with him. After some time, we told both sets of parents about it, and when both sets of parents made an offering to the phii of their houses, we decided that they had blessed our union.

Why didn't you have a wedding?

I was no longer a virgin. I had been married before for six months.

How did you meet your first husband?

Some friends arranged our meetings for us. We didn't have time to get to know each other at all. We never registered our marriage with the authorities, so divorce was easy. We did have a wedding ceremony. My fiance's parents came to ask my parents for my hand. My husband gave 50 satang's weight of gold and 5,000 baht in cash.

Why did you break up?

We lived in my husband's parents' house and I was sick the whole time. I had tightness in the chest. My mother went to ask the sorcerer the reason for my illness. He said that the phii in my husband's home was so powerful that it didn't get along with me. So, I decided to get a divorce. They made a lot of offerings to the phii in their house, and we lived upstairs and my husband's parents below. Everyone else wondered, too, why the young people lived upstairs. I complained about it, but nothing was done.

What was the final reason of your divorce and when did it happen?

My husband told me to go home and see if I felt better there. I went to my home without my husband and immediately I was better. My husband never came to take me back. So, we concluded that this was divorce. The phii of our houses didn't get along.

Why didn't you return to your husband's home yourself?

I didn't love that man.

Why did you marry him?

My father had just died, and I didn't know who would keep me. People encouraged me, although my mother said, don't go, because you don't love that man.

After I left school, I worked in a peanut factory and then in the ceramics factory making cups for four years.

Why did you give it up?

I went with my (new) husband to Bangkok to buy fabrics. Then I couldn't go back any more because of my illness. Sometimes, I was very sick.

Does the whole village know about your illness?

Yes. Nobody has shunned me, but some have even invited me to eat rice with them.

Has nobody really shunned you?

No.

So, people here are civilized?

Yes.

Do you believe in reincarnation?

Yes, and I believe that my husband was reborn as a little baby.

How do you know that?

There is so much proof, and sorcerers have told us about reincarnation. But not everything was true that the sorcerer said. First he went into a trance and my husband's soul spoke through him. I didn't recognize him right away. I asked, where are you? He said, in the fourth dimension. I don't know what he meant. He was glad that I hadn't remarried. Then my husband's soul told me to buy a lottery ticket with certain numbers. I did, but I haven't won anything. I asked him, have you been on earth? He said yes, as a snake. Then I knew that he had appeared to my younger sister. There was a dead snake under the house where she lives. I haven't dared tell my relatives.

Has your husband's soul appeared to you?

Once, a relative's child vomited a lot and cried. I asked the sorcerer the reason. He said that my husband's soul was in that house. I prepared some food immediately for that soul. I got raw meat, cooked meat, blood and fiery brik. And I added some spirits. They were always my husband's favorites.

Have you ever been bitter that your husband passed this to you?

No.

Did your husband ever apologise to you about infecting you?

No. He said that I could return to my home, if I wanted to.

Do you know how many people in this village have this disease?

About ten. Seven have died. They are the ones who have disclosed their illness.

Does everyone know about your illness?

Yes. Everybody knew what my husband died of. I didn't want to keep it a secret any more. I was in hospital for five days for an operation. They took some tests for it and so they diagnosed Aids. I was told to go back to the hospital after a week and then the doctor told me about the Aids. I wasn't at all scared.

Have you had any symptoms?

After my husband's death, I've had some episodes of fever. Up to three times a month, I have diarrhoea and I feel dizzy. Lately, I have coughed a lot at night. I also get a one-sided headache. Drugs have helped it.

Do you still visit the doctor?

No. I go to the Aids Centre every three months. They take blood tests. The disease is only in the early stages and that has encouraged me. Last October was when I last had the tests.

Do you have hope of a cure?

Yes, I believe in it a lot. I've heard that there are new drugs now, too. That gives me hope.

What would you like to say to people now you have this illness?

I'd like to say that when you meet an Aids patient, don't avoid him. I also wish that people would help Aids victims to find work.

Are your parents living?

No.

Who lives in your parents' house now?

My elder sister.

How does your elder sister relate to you?

The same as before. She doesn't look down on me at all. One of our relatives farms our field and gives us half the crop. It's not enough, but we have to buy more rice. There are five of us to feed altogether. My sister and her husband have two children. I'm the fifth.

How do you make your living?

I don't have any income. I have applied for money from where they help Aids patients. I'll find out in November if I can get some work or some money. I think I might be able to raise ducks and chickens at home.

What kinds of symptoms have you had since this illness was diagnosed?

I might just get nervous more easily. Sometimes I hate myself and then I get cross.

Do you visit the temple often?

Twice a month on temple days, for my parents' souls.

Do you listen to Buddha's teachings at the same time?

No. I make an offering and then I get a blessing from the monk. Yesterday, I went to town to buy some flowers. We are having a party at the Aids Centre and I'm taking the flowers to give to the doctor. We Aids patients collect the money. Today I'm doing the washing, the dishes and housework. Once a month, I meet my friends at the Aids Centre. Alcohol and raw meat are forbidden. I have to drink a lot of milk. Coconut milk gives me lesions.

Have you got boils on your hands?

No. My illness eats me up from within.

Are you ready to die?

Yes. I have seen a lot of death. I'm not bitter.

THE ARC OF LIFE

Family and community

Women's compound. In the villages of Lampang, it has been customary for daughters to remain living with their parents after marriage, and the husband to be expected to build a house for his family within his in-laws' compound. In anthropological terminology, this type of residence is uxorilocal (matrilocal). According to Phya Anuman Rajadhon, the pioneering researcher into Thai culture, the marriage was not considered binding or finalized until the son-in-law had completed the house. In Lampang Yuan villages matrilocal residency is still common; the young couple stays with the wife's parents at least for a while and then moves elsewhere, for example to the groom's home village, if the prospects of earning a living are better there. Thus, in ideal situations, the compound is formed by daughters and their husbands, or sons-in-law, with their families, and often relations live in the immediate vicinity, right behind the compound fence. The youngest daughter remains in her parents' house; it is her duty to take care of her father and mother until their death, and in return, she inherits her childhood home. This form of residency supported the matrilineal principle, and prior to modern order of inheritance stipulated by law, the compound and also the established farmlands were passed on principally through daughters to the next generations. The son-in-law came into the house to farm land that his wife's parents had farmed. In terms of cultural anthropology, the compound may be called matrifocal, women-centred, and apparently for that reason, the kinship cult group is still formed matrilineally. The kinship group that honours the same phii of their ancestor is determined through the maternal kinship line.(19

According to questionnaires carried out in 1985 and 1998, in Ban Mae Kong Nya and Ban Dong about half and in Ban Srii Muod Klao more than 40 % of compounds were matrifocal and about 20 % ones where sons had remained to live with their parents. No change has taken place over the years. The compound is still a strong women's kinship and neighbourhood community. Within their own compound, sisters pulled together and helped each other, and cared for their parents together. Daughters have been their parents' natural carers, perhaps closer than daughters-in-law. On the other hand, grandparents have helped with childcare, and grandmothers have supported their daughters even in intimate matters. In cases of divorce, the situation of mother and children was better than in cultures where the wife moved as daughter-in-law into the husband's family, and if the marriage failed, she was forced to return home. A divorced daughter could continue to live with her parents, and sisters helped care for her children, if necessary. Conversely, sons have been expected to move away from home, and young men have been the first to go to wherever work has been available. The interviews often revealed that the family's daughters had stayed in the village, but sons have moved to various parts of the

province, today even to different parts of the country.

In Thai culture, and also in the villages of this book, seniority and age ranking is important. Grandparents were 'mother' and 'father' to all compound residents and also to outsiders; in accordance with good manners, the interviewers addressed elderly people as mother or father. From their own perspective, people distinguish between brothers or sisters older or younger than themselves, and in the same way, kinship terminology also discloses whether e.g. the mother's or father's brother is elder or younger. It may be noted that corresponding age-ranking distinctions have also been used in Finnish kinship terminology. Informants of this book also always define whether they are talking about their elder or younger brother, or elder or younger sister. The eldest brother or sister is still an authority for younger siblings, and his or her opinion is respected. In the family hierarchy, the eldest brother inherits the father's place, but he also has the first duty to assist his younger siblings, for example to educate them if he is financially able to do so.

To this day, an individual's social security is his own kinship group. In Lampang villages, the importance of kinship has been preserved, and relatives who have moved elsewhere cannot deny their obligations even today. The country's social legislation takes it for granted that families and relatives are primarily responsible for the elderly, and under no circumstances society. In cases of necessity, the government may grant relatives or employers loans at low interest rates, or reduce their taxes, and from 1985, poor old people have been provided with free healthcare until their death, but there is no general old age pension in the country. (20

Assistance of relatives is deep-rooted in these Thai villages and local Chinese culture. Villagers cannot conceive of assistance from the government or local authority. When asked to whom they would turn if they were sick, for example, and unable to support their families or manage alone, all interviewees replied almost without exception: to relatives (Table 10:2). Nobody wanted to seek help from the village chief or social services, and the responses have not changed much over thirty years. In Ban Srii Muod Klao and Ban Mae Kong Nya, villagers often referred to the fact that the whole village was related. Originally, the villages only had a few families that have become related through marriages. Although kinship cannot always be defined by using kinship terminology, villagers feel that they are related; they are not surrounded by 'strangers' or 'outsiders', but people who, as if in an inborn, primordial way, belong to the same community. Many informants regarded contact and mutual assistance between neighbours as the finest feature of village life; it distinguished villagers from city people.

In the life of villages, the compound has been the kinship group's own place, but it is also in danger of delocalization. As numbers of children decline, matrifocal compounds become rarer. E.g. in Ban Srii Muod Klao, there were compounds in the early 1980s that may have contained more than ten houses, most of them built by daughters and sons-in-law. In those days, daughters stayed in their home compound; today, girls also move to where they can find employment corresponding to their

education. Compounds have been divided and fenced off into smaller sections, as privatized nuclear families want to live in their own private yard.

Making a communal living. In the era of village cultures, family members have worked together in their own compound and their own fields. Every family member, from children to old people, could participate in making a shared living. In the swidden era, villages in both Thailand and Finland have contained large extended families, into which were taken relatives' children and even non-related foster children, aged uncles and aunts, who all lived in the same household and worked as one family. (21 Old people looked after their grandchildren, cleaned vegetables, did basket work, fished and collected food plants from forests. Boys watched buffalo, a necessary job in the rainy season, when fields were under rice. Older girls looked after their younger siblings. This was also crucial for the family's living, as the adults would not have been free to go to their work, had eldest siblings not taken care of younger ones. Children also took part in farming work, they grew up into working communities and learned to live together with their kinship groups and neighbours, to help one another. Family unity has continued in the era of cash economy, too. Family members who are in employment contribute their share to communal expenses, and many old people say that their children have bought them a refrigerator or TV set; household consumer goods, mopeds and cars have been purchased with communal cash.

There has been no strict division of labour in Thai villages between men and women and the interviewees do not talk about inequality of the sexes; local people have not generally seen inequality in the role differences that have existed between the sexes. Women and men have done almost all farming work together, and cooking or other domestic work has not been regarded as shameful for a man. If necessary, men had to be able to cope with all tasks encountered in family life. In clearing fields, women have participated in cultivating the soil and building irrigation dams, reaping and threshing rice, as well as caring for buffalo and zebu. In ancient Thai work culture, transplanting of rice belonged to women, and ploughing and harrowing of fields with water buffalo to men; women still do not plough fields or drive large agricultural machinery. They have been able to choose work that was suitable for women. In village streetscapes, a characteristic of women is carrying. Women are still seen everywhere carrying their baskets, used for bringing vegetables from the fields and for taking their produce to market for sale. On house and road building sites women have carried sand, cement and even bricks in baskets on their heads. Women have gone in large groups to construction sites and worked together; many Asian countries have been constructed with women's carrying baskets.

In villages, women are in charge of the home and the family's everyday life. Women have taken care of family rites, temple monks' daily fare, remembrance of the deceased. Although in Thailand, in common with other countries, men are prominent in public life, women have had their own opportunities of influencing shared issues. In public occasions, such as funerals, role

divisions are more distinct than in everyday family life. Women take charge of the food preparation area, and the men erect the festival canopy. Within the family circle, women have traditionally used money, and in the past they were better able than men to earn money by market trading. It is said that in the past it was not considered honourable for men to handle cash; even today, Thai and Chinese family businesses in Lampang often have a woman director.

There has been no hierarchical division of labour in village artisan occupations, only the blacksmith's work has belonged exclusively to men. Women have done sewing and handicrafts, but tailors are often male, as was the case in Finnish villages; today, young men are already seen in traditional women's occupations, e.g. as women's hairdressers and make-up artists. Since paid employment became common, however, division of labour has become more defined and raised the status of men. Men increasingly go out to work outside the village, while women look after the home, and spend their earnings on their own needs. Of villagers' new occupations, tradespeople, such as carpenters, joiners and masons are mostly men, while women on building sites have been labourers. Vocational training reinforces the division between men's and women's occupations. In Thailand, too, men dominate so-called hard, technological occupations, and women are left with soft, less well paid caring and social occupations. In academic fields, boys have been dominant, but women's share has constantly increased - in Thailand, as in Finland, girls will predominate in universities and many academic professions.

Delocalization of culture has also affected family structure. Thailand was also one of the countries where population multiplied manyfold in the 20th century. When I went to Thailand in 1972, the population was 35 million, a couple of decades later it had risen to approx. 60 million. But at the end of the 1990s, growth stopped abruptly. Modern families have only two children, and demographic growth is estimated to become negative in the next few years. (22 The change in family size is also evident in the material I have collected (Table 4:3). Thailand is becoming a one-child society. In the era of agrarian culture, big families and large kinship groups did the best, as they contained most labour and voluntary help. Today, a child is best able to care for his mother and father, if he or she has been educated as highly as possible and secured a good occupation.

Their children's education has become a condition of a secure future, the parents' social security. As many interviewees say, an ordinary villager cannot afford to have or educate more than two children at most. How hard must fathers and mothers work in order to educate these two children! The small number of children has not reduced parents' work burden. They have as much worry over one or two children as for a large family in the past. Both parents and the environment set young people ever increasing demands; education is constant competition. In conversations and at some point in interviews, parents' neverending worry over their children's future emerges. Parents are anxious about whether their children will cope, or will they drop out to join those in danger of marginalization, psychological problems and drugs. The social problems of a delocal environment, unemployment, urban poverty, alcoholism, growing divorce rate, pose a threat to the unity of families and kinship groups also in Thailand. The safety networks of local village communities stop functioning. Young people who have migrated

from country villages into cities are often unable to keep their parents or to assist their relatives. On the other hand, the media fuel new ideas about the rights of modern man. Educated, employed women and men may live as singles or in their own communities, leading their own independent lives. Individual freedom, breaking away from tradition and kinship bonds are new life values of urban people also in Thailand, and gradually, the poor, the sick and the old are left in the care of social institutions.

Childhood environments. In Thai villages, mothers devote themselves almost totally to caring for their infants, they are always with their child. The children also have many other people around them, women of the compound and the neighbourhood. Particularly in densely built Ban Srii Muod Klao, neighbouring young mothers spend a lot of time together, and in all villages the grandmother and grandfather sit all day long in the shade under the house, doing handicrafts and minding their grandchildren. I have never seen children climb on their fathers' knees as naturally as in these villages. When we are talking to some village man, a child will appear from somewhere onto his lap, either his own or some relative's child, or a whole bunch of children. They are present without demanding particular attention, watching the events without becoming fractious. At the age of three or four, children may already be taken to nursery school or similar day care. Private nurseries already existed in the 1970s also in remote forest villages; more recently, the nursery has usually been built alongside the village school.

Today, there are baby clinics, and village health centres provide all kinds of help for childcare problems. Scientific-technological information on childcare, healthy nutrition, correct child rearing methods and children's psychological development also reaches village mothers, and the wisdom of grandmothers is becoming obsolete. Children's nutrition has become more varied; at least, children now get sweet things, candy, ice cream, Pepsi Cola, and their food contains more carbohydrates and proteins than it used to. Children have become taller and fatter than before. The average height of Thai youth has grown visibly, and in common with Western countries, more and more young people suffer from obesity.

The older informants reminisced how in their childhood there were no shop-bought toys, but playthings were improvised from surrounding nature. The informants have played at shops, coin tossing and various hopscotch games, like children in Finland. (23 The goods sold in play shops were made from wood or clay, money was leaves, berries or fruit. Boys had slings, catapults, stilts and 'push-along cars', with a wooden wheel at the end of a stick, driven loudly revving by boys especially on the lanes in Ban Dong. 'Cop-cap' shoes and hand balls were obtained direct from nature. Children would collect many kinds of insects, race them or arrange fights between them. In those days, there were forests near the houses, and from an early age, children would learn natural history that interested their own age group. Even in the 1970s, in Ban Dong and also in Ban Mae Kong Nya, the accompaniments of everyday fare were found from nature. In Ban Dong, boys would go off to the forest after school to find

fruit and trap small game for food; at the same time, this was a daily adventure in nature which still contained diversity of life.

Today, boys of their age are more interested in videos and games, where adventures take place in a totally unreal world. Houses and compounds are scattered with colourful plastic toys, most of them broken. They do not hold children's interest for long, before they want something new. The question now is, how expensive toys to buy? Does the boy have a pedal car, a bicycle, when will he get his first moped? Does he know how to take care that he won't have an accident? Now parents need not worry that something will happen to children out in the woods, but a far greater worry is how they will cope with roundabouts on highways.

From village school to university. Book learning was not important in self-sufficient villages; children were encultured into their community and daily work. From when they were tiny, children were taken along to the temple to listen to teaching of the monks, values of the village community and life wisdom were reinforced by folk tradition, stories, folk songs and proverbs of agrarian communities, much utilized in everyday speech in villages both in Finland and in Thailand. Before the advent of village schools, people could learn to read at the temple, which is why former monks who were able to read e.g. books on sorcery and almanacs were given the honorary name 'temple teacher' (azan wat). When I came to Lampang in 1972, there was a four-year elementary school in the villages. At the time, all citizens were encouraged to learn to read, a literacy campaign was ongoing in the villages and adult education was provided to all who were willing and whose education had been inadequate. As the informants recall, in their childhood children went to school if they had nothing else to do, and parents did not insist that children attended. It was crucial for the family's living that children helped at home. Teachers did not want to live in the villages, and even in the 1980s, teachers in remote villages had a casual attitude to their work, they were often late for school or absent. In Ban Dong, the teacher frequently failed to turn up, and the children would play for a while on the playground and then go home. Many of the informants had a school-free childhood and freedom that is no longer possible.

The modern Thai education system is similar to those in Western countries. Children go to kindergarten or nursery and then to 'pre-school' before moving on to elementary school. Instead of four, village school now has six grades. So, everybody must go to elementary school for at least six years, followed by optional secondary school which takes three years. Ban Srii Muod Klao and Ban Mae Kong Nya have their own secondary schools which are attended by all young people in the village; in future, 9-year basic education will be mandatory. After graduating middle level school, young people may continue in a three-year secondary school or vocational schools, and then apply to colleges and universities. Lampang is a 'school city' with municipal and private elementary schools and secondary schools, vocational schools, a commercial college, police training school, sports college, a construction sector vocational high school and a teacher training college. The city's Chinese community, as well as Christian missionary organizations, have their own private schools. (24 The streetscape is dominated by schoolchildren. Well-to-do families from nearby villages, such as Ban Mae Kong Nya, send their children to city private schools

starting from elementary school, to give them a better chance of making it through to higher education.

The Thai system of writing was invented as early as the 1200s, but villagers have only learned to read in the last few decades. In the material I collected in 1972-1973, the oldest generation could not read, and villagers were not interested in newspapers or literature. In those days, people went to the movies and information about the outside world was obtained from the radio. Today, everybody can read, but their reading is almost as negligible; the daily news are seen on TV. Newspapers cannot be ordered in the villages, but they must be bought daily, and there are no books in houses. Perhaps only the generation graduating from higher education will become interested in reading and have literature in their homes other than magazines and comics. In the 1970s, the villages of this book housed scarcely anybody who had received occupational training; in the 1980s there were already young people who had been accepted at Lampang police and teacher training schools, in the 1990s, village youngsters have gone off to universities and some have already gained academic degrees. In the 1970s people complained that Thai people do not want monotonous factory work, while in the 1980s paid employment was already essential, and village youngsters generally moved straight from elementary school to working in factories. Today, finding employment is no longer so simple; certificates of occupational skills are now required.

In the era of local cultures, a good person was a good member of his kinship group and his village community. In a delocal society, the ecological winner is an educated organization man, a meritocrat. New generations must be trained to operate in techno-systems. The curricula of the Thai educational system define the aims of education and draw a distinction between an uneducated and educated, or 'cultivated' person. A citizen of a developed, modern society must be a 'new person' who is able to understand and assimilate abstract knowledge, who has a strong thirst for knowledge and a willingness for self-development. (25 Civilization is scientific knowledge and technological skill, science and art. The opposite of a civilized citizen is a person who lacks self-discipline, willingness to educate himself and to maintain his physical fitness. In national meritocracy, the uneducated are collectively classified as lower persons, lacking civilization is equal to mental inertia, dirtiness, primitivity; through training and education citizens could be saved and prevented from sliding into criminality or prostitution. Young people are already well aware that it is not possible to succeed in the new delocal environment relying on traditions of the village community. Today, young people are forced to fight for their education, to take part with thousands of other applicants in college and university entrance examinations, to compete from an early age in the world outside the villages.

School of life

From villager to citizen. In the small village of Ban Dong, children did not sit at separate desks in straight rows, but around

large tables, and if there were separate desks in the classroom, they were pushed together to form a large circle. Much drawing and craft work still takes place in the country's schools, things are written down in exercise books and learned by rote in chorus. In one voice, the children learn the alphabet, the multiplication tables, the English language; children's happy choral singing and speech echoes from schools. In village schools, children were also taught skills needed in their own everyday lives. Children also did domestic work at school, cleaned and washed dishes in turns; in Ban Dong, they even had washing days, when children washed their own clothes. Food served at school has also been important in Thailand, and during the recession when the government had no funds for school meals, many village schools grew their own vegetables and raised poultry for the school kitchen. A couple of decades ago, the objective of the education system was to equip young people for work, so that each could earn his living, and in addition, they had to learn social skills in order to be able to function within their own local community.

The time of village schools has passed, Ban Dong school has also closed down. The objective of the modern education system is to raise citizens of a nation state, and to pass on to new generations a belief in organizations and scientific-technological development. In a modern state, the education system also becomes delocalized, teaching becomes centralized and uniform. In schools of Thailand, a patriotic spirit prevails, which might be crystallized with the words 'king, motherland and religion'. (26 Young people must be unequivocally obedient to the structures in which they belong. In the eyes of a Westerner, children are good and well-behaved, parents and teachers are respected. From an early age, children have been taught that they have obligations towards their parents, teachers and the whole society. Teachers have had the power of using corporal punishments, although now that they are forbidden (2000), many people fear that educational and child rearing problems will arise in Thailand, too.(27

On the other hand, Asian nations still maintain their old family values and kinships. They still want to keep the family at the heart of society and family morality is emphasized in public debate; marriage partners are expected to fulfil their obligations, children must be obedient towards their parents and prepared to take care of their parents, siblings and also more distant relations, as was customary in village cultures. The community spirit is now transplanted into the ideology of the nation state. The education system, armed forces and Buddhist religion must produce patriotic citizens who are willing to take responsibility for society as a whole. In Finland, too, patriotic ideals were prevalent when national state cultures were under construction in Europe, and the so-called Miracle of the Winter War had its roots in nationalistic military education: in the Second World War, the Finns managed to hold their own against the Soviet Union and to retain their independence.

In Thailand, nationalistic educational ideals are implemented e.g. by the Scout movement; all official occasions call for the presence of Scout leaders, as well as government or municipal officials and the armed forces. All schoolchildren must be members of the Scouts and pass the required camps and tests, or they cannot move on to the next grade, however gifted they

are as pupils. Education of young people has been patriotic, particularly during the military regime, and the tradition continues. Soldiers march, schoolchildren march, Scouts march, processions march. In the mornings, pupils march into school to drum beats after assembly; up till the 1980s, the country stopped every morning at eight, when the national flag was raised at all offices, with the national anthem blaring from loudspeakers.

In common with many other Asian countries, schoolchildren in Thailand wear a school uniform. Every pupil must have three complete outfits: school uniform, Scout uniform and sports kit, and in addition, school classes procure uniform costumes for festivals and processions. The school uniform unites schoolchildren and conceals parental social status, but it also distinguishes them, makes them visible outside school, and places certain obligations on the wearer; the school uniform must be clean. In general, it is important for children and adults to appear well-groomed and in nice clothes. School, like the whole country, is a beautiful, colourful human landscape. And it is increasingly expected that the country should be a precisely functioning state community, a national culture.

Parents must pay more and more for their children's future. The informants in this book also complain about the cost of education. Children must be given daily pocket money, uniforms bought, in higher grades, books and school materials must also be provided. Many people believe that teachers have turned supplementary teaching into a business. It is no longer possible to achieve good grades without supplementary teaching provided by teachers themselves, and without good grades, it is not possible to continue in further education. Supplementary teaching takes place after normal school, and schoolchildren's working hours become unreasonably long. There has also been newspaper debate on why all schoolchildren must be members of the Scouts, although some children, due to ill-health, cannot cope with the hardships of Scouting camps, and accidents, even fatalities, have occurred on camps. Protesters feel that Scouting skills are outdated in an urban information society, and that instead of learning their knots, children should be taught computer skills. But the Scouting ideal has influential defendants, above all manufacturers of Scout uniforms. It is a large national business, and for many civil servants, Scouting brings merits, higher appointments and increased salaries. Supporters also argue that modern Scouts may be given new tasks in conservation of nature and the living environment. (28

Appreciation of national culture is evident in villagers' answers to questions on their preferences in music or movies. The respondents unequivocally preferred home-grown entertainment (Table 10:3). The respondents took a negative view of Western music and cinema, but on the other hand, Thai music has increasingly absorbed Western influences compared to how it was in the 1970s. The national entertainment industry of Thailand also belongs to the international techno-system, within which cultural elements - production formats, consciousness technology and fashion trends - converge in all commercial cultures. Thirty years ago, sporting activities were rare in Thailand, but today the villages at least have football teams. The education system supports sports, even village schools have sport teachers, and in the cool season, inter-school

sporting tournaments are held in Lampang villages. Young people are encouraged to strive for careers as sporting professionals, and internationally successful sportsmen become national heroes.

Table 10.

Perspectives of village communities

	Ban Srii Muod Klao			Ban Mae Kong Nya			Ва	Ban Dong		
Year	1973	1985	1998	1973	1985	1998	1973	1985	1998	
N	50	62	70	50	56	60	50	50	50	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
1. Family values										
Marriage of young people										
must have parental approva	98	80	86	92	100	97	92	94	92	
Girls must										
be virgins	100	100	89	100	100	95	98	98	86	
Disapproves of boys'										
long hair	90	87	34	82	73	48	86	90	56	
2. Financial hardship										
Asks for assistance										
only from relatives	98	52	99	90	73	100	92	36	99	
Borrows money		02	00		, ,	100	02	- 00		
only from relatives	86	82	96	68	85	100	74	95	96	
3. Music and movies										
Music. Prefers										
Thai music	84	78	71	86	91	81	80	100	92	
Thai Western	12	18	21	12	9	7	16	100	4	
Western	4	3	9	2	- -	12	4	_	4	
May listen to	7	3	9	2		12	7			
rock music		31	37		29	31		28	24	
TOCK THUSIC		31	31		23	31		20	24	
Movies. Prefers										
Thai movies	80	61	51	90	80	70	84	93	84	
Asian	2	22	26	4	16	8	6	5	8	
Western	18	17	23	6	4	22	10	2	8	

Table 10:1. Family values. Both the young and old take it for granted that young people must obtain parental approval for their marriage. Although research shows that in Bangkok and other large cities, sexual mores among young people are changing, in the rural villages of Lampang, ideals of morality remain unchanged. Girls believe that parents watch them rather too closely and worry about them.

Young people's 'protest dressing', such as boys' long hair, has not been accepted in the villages, and schoolchildren have not been able to stand out by following youth fashions. In the 1970s, long hair on young men was a hallmark of hippies; to villagers, a hippy meant a (foreign) drug user. The attitude towards such people was strictly negative. During the military regime, the norms of appearance for schoolchildren and students were implicit, and even in the late 1990s, one never saw young people with long hair, ear or nose rings in Thai countryside. But new hair fashions spread from television, and an increasing number of parents have learned to accept youth fashions, including long hair.

Table 10:2. Financial hardship To the question: Where would you seek help, if you were sick and could no longer take care of yourself or your family, the interviewees gave the almost spontaneous answer: from relatives. In the 1980s, some demands were beginning to be placed on society, but in the 1990s, importance of the kinship network would appear to have increased again. Relatives are the first choice also when people are forced to borrow money; villagers do not want to turn to the village chief or provincial social services except in an extreme emergency.

Table 10:3. Music and movies People's taste in music and movies is national, the vast majority of villagers preferring Thai music and movies made in their own country. There is resistance to Western entertainment, although people seem to be used to rock music. The table does not show that people's ideas of what constitutes Thai music have also changed. Music in Thai language and held to be their 'own' has acquired more and more Western qualities, it is now difficult to distinguish between Thai music and Thai-Western. Old folk music is only ever heard on village special occasions, mainly at funerals. Only a small number of Thai films have been produced, and they have rather tended to be TV serials; cinemas show many American movies as is the case elsewhere in Asia.

From citizen to globality. In Thailand, too, the education system has irrevocably set into motion the structural change to delocal and ultimately postlocal culture. Modern states started to produce their citizens, created a new information system and cultural hegemony. Scientific-technological knowledge and information is concentrated to become the 'world brain', a system of postlocal technosystems, which defines what is real and historically significant in the culture of all the people in the world, what the real environment and future hold. In modern meritocracies, culture is new development, its function is to produce an ever better, more interesting and richer life for the consuming masses. Delocal culture no longer consists of collective traditions of village communities, nor life of ordinary people, but achievements of great individuals, science and art. Higher culture is created by achievers, experts, geniuses, human gods. Thailand has also become a scientific-technological meritocracy, where a human being is measured and classified from birth, and forced incessantly to compete for a place in technosystems.

Thailand is included in the global educational contest, and the distance to Western countries is closing. In Finland and other Nordic countries, the Lutheran church started mass education in the 1600s, and in the 1700-1800s it gradually became standard procedure that everyone intending to enter Christian marriage should attend so-called confirmation school, to become passably literate and conversant with the principles of Christianity. The elementary education system maintained by the state and local authorities spread throughout Finnish countryside at the end of the 1800s, and compulsory education was enacted in 1921, in Thailand about 60 years later, in 1983. After the Second World War, Finland became an education society, where almost all young people gain either vocational or professional qualifications. School and university education are free, all municipalities have a public library, where books may be borrowed for free; Finns are also the most prolific buyers of books, newspapers and magazines in the world. In the space of a few decades, local information systems disappeared in Finland, and national education has also become almost exclusively postlocal. Finland is intent on a place at the top of international knowhow, adapting to a future of universal technosystems.

In modern Finland, people no longer talk about motherland, nor about the obligations of children and young people towards their parents or teachers. It is customary in Western countries to talk about children's and young people's right to success and self-fulfilment in an international world. The nation state is labelled as fiction of the elite class of its time, which in fact never actually existed. (29 It is possible that postlocal man will see the idea of nationality as an ideology that has caused the most violence and suffering in the history of mankind. Finnish meritocracy is competing for careers within the official hierarchy of the European Union, seeking prominence in the history of the continent state. The European elite is now creating a continental state without borders, it is the new utopia of power and success, and a cultural dominance that infiltrates all structures of society.

Asian countries are following the European example and building their own continental state. National culture and development is no longer sufficient. In Thailand, education in technology and the natural sciences take precedence; a new generation is now rising fast that is fully au fait with modern technological knowledge and skills. With regard to educational level, Thailand is still behind the Asian 'top countries', Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, China, but it is catching up fast. The government aims to install computers in all schools and to set up information centres where young people can read magazines and books and learn to find information on the Internet. In cities, parents and young people themselves, too, want the government to provide more opportunities of joining the international culture, for it to invest in information technology, libraries, sport and the arts and generally in areas that bring new creative jobs. In Thailand, too, young people must educate themselves for the international labour market, the demands of a global economy. In a couple of decades, a whole new social class, students, has emerged in the country, of young people in an increasingly prolonged liminal state. They should now find their place in the postlocal environment. More and more Thai young people apply to study in universities in the USA and Europe,

and will also be employed abroad, in international technosystems. Thailand is beginning to produce the same civilization as other nations of the world.

In educational competition between continents, many Asian countries have already surpassed the Western countries, and competition for development is gathering pace. For the national culture of Thailand, as for Finland, it is increasingly important to assimilate continental development, and like everywhere, the key words are freeing of markets, privatization, flexibility of employment, top-level know-how... Everywhere, the liturgy of economic development includes a demand for more stringent education, more investment in science and production of experts. The national heroes of textbooks are replaced by transnational achievers, the hierarchy of society becomes globalized, complete, finalized.

Virtual civilization. Today, people everywhere must also adapt to the world of communications and to undergo experiences produced by international culture, experience or consciousness industry. I prefer to call it the consciousness industry. Everywhere, modern consciousness technicians reporters, politicians, advertising people, artists and researchers incessantly try to take control of the human mind, to impinge on the consciousness of their viewers, listeners or readers, on their thinking and opinions. Along with TV, movies and magazines, villagers can also be transported outside their local everyday lives, into a virtual environment, a totally different reality from the one in which they live. Lampang has its own commercial TV channel, and national TV programmes follow the same formulae as entertainment production elsewhere in the world. Within villagers' home environment, news films and serials are broadcast, many of them the same global movies also shown in Finland, and during commercial breaks, increasingly skilful mind engineers create illusions of the components of good modern living.(30

The consciousness industry distorts the dimensions of local cultural environment and creates a new postlocal cultural hierarchy. In people's living environment, anything that attracts public attention, that is described in the media, becomes more and more important, interesting and valuable. The cultural significance of people, issues and events is determined in virtual reality. The high-achievers of the consciousness industry displace collective community culture. In Thai culture, too, greatest people are those at whom TV cameras are aimed, and who are surrounded by consciousness technicians and public media rites.

Viewed from Lampang villages, Western culture flooding from movies, videos and the media looks like a wealthy fairyland where people have no worries over making a living, where everyone can live by their emotional whims and seek whatever pleasures and experiences they want. Thai advertising reality also sells happiness and creates ideas about what constitutes a good home and a good home life. Advertisements offer urban dwellers' family idylls and dreams that may be made true through

goods, by the whole family buying and consuming together. Fathers, mothers and children of happy families need more and more goods around them.

The commercial environment also creates human ideals. Advertisements and other programs show young, beautiful people who behave like modern people in all Western countries do. Events of popular youth serials are set in a city-like dream environment, in luxurious urban homes, and the main characters solve their perennial narcissistic human relationships problems, like in their Western models. The actors are young, universally pretty, their facial features as Western as possible. Ordinary Thai faces are only seen occasionally on TV news. Neither do pop singers on TV sing like people in Thailand used to sing. Their voices do not have the characteristic timbre of the old way of singing, and the musical scale is tending towards the Western. Pop stars sing in the same style as pop singers on all the world's televisions.

In Thailand, lightening shampoos, lightening skin creams, nowadays also slimming creams are marketed for women. Contestants in a Lampang beauty contest had made themselves up so pale that in my flash photographs their faces looked like chalk-white death masks. Officials warn that slimming creams are ineffective and that lightening creams cause cancer. But the adverts roll on and continue to reinforce ideas of what is important in a woman's life. In the villages, the most watched men's programme is the Thai boxing on Saturdays. Their commercial breaks are used to push men's issues into viewers' consciousness; cars, ploughing machines, lubricating oils, batteries, all kinds of things that are a part of men's knowledge and skills, men's talk, of being a man. At the end of the 1990s, car advertisements were like folk narratives expressed through modern consciousness technology, with heroes who crossed all boundaries of reality, as if playing. Cars, motorcycles, batteries flew and exploded, some car marques landed from the sky onto runways like jet planes, they defeated mountain giants, crossed bridges being blown to pieces, they were elemental, like wild action movies. Perhaps exploding advertisements carry some deep message to people of Thailand, where society also seems to be disintegrating around them. It may also be that along with action movies, a new aggressive generation of men will arise in Thailand, too, with behaviour patterns similar to those in Western countries.

I remember how in 1973 in the city, we bumped into the young female village schoolteacher dressed in a shorter than short miniskirt. It was then universally fashionable. She said that she was in town to make some small purchases, to look around the shops, or in modern parlance for a little retail therapy, and she did not want people to think she was from the country. She did not want to stand out from city people. Although their own village is important to modern young people, outside the village they do not want to stand out from the imagined 'others', imagined Western students, imagined Western typical young people. There is talk in Thai media about the 'new generation' growing surrounded by the international techno-world. In Lampang, too, youth culture means clubs and rock bands. Teenagers hanging out around supermarkets want to behave and dress like their contemporaries in international adverts and rock videos; they want to copy the self-assured achievers on TV, to use universal

language, universal gestures and a global style of speech. Bangkok teachers complain that young people can no longer speak their mother tongue without an English accent. Ever fewer consumers in Western countries as well as Thailand want to be different from some imagined superidol, global female beauty, global masculinity, universal man.

Violence, sex and pornography are elements of global consciousness industry. In Western countries, freedom of commercial culture can no longer be curtailed, nor citizens' right to consume entertainment, to produce experiences for themselves. Many interviewees spoke about how TV and the press change good old behaviouur patterns and moral values, and how sensational reporters in their revealing articles teach young people in villages, too, new sexual values, drug use and all other degenerate behavior. Evil sells in Thailand too. Problems of society are created and sustained ever more by media culture. Western technosystems have created their own explanations, their own morality, and commercial and political ethics have become increasingly inconsistent. On becoming adults, young people of Thai villages are forced to distinguish between their own lives and commercial reality, to decide for themselves what is good and what is bad, and to search their postlocal environment for values that might withstand modernization and globalization, too. Today, everybody knows that virtual reality is only an impossible fairy tale, but what then, when there is nothing else left in the commercial environment?

Marriage

Romantic love. The older informants remember how boys used to make evening calls at girls' houses, and when the boy had found the right girl, he would start visiting the house almost every night. As they were getting acquainted, they would use metaphors or figures of speech; for instance, the girl might use them to express whether or not she was interested in the visitor, and in general, they used 'poetic language' in conversation. Girls and boys would gauge each other's ability to invent pretty phrases and witty expressions. On his 'visits', the boy would help the girl or other family members at their work, show his ability to cope with everyday village life. In the same fashion, young men in rural villages of Western Finland, as well as elsewhere in European regions of village culture, have also made overnight visits to girls' houses in the 1800s and early 1900s. In Finland, boys addressed girls in poetic language, and rules existed among young people on appropriate conduct during courtship. Village communities spawned local youth cultures, the young organized their introductions and selection of the marriage partner within their own circle, and maintained moral values that have been characteristic particularly to agrarian communities in different parts of the world. (31

The informants of this book say that when choosing a spouse, the most important was love, compatibility of character. After it

came other qualities, such as good health and industriousness, or prosperity. Girls thought it important to get to know the boy's character. The boy needed to be hardworking and decent, without any tendency to drinking or gambling. In the past, girls valued boys who had served as monks in the village temple; today, the future husband must have a good education and qualifications, to ensure the best standard of living for the family. (32

When a courting couple had decided to get married, the boy stayed with the girl. A few days later, the girl's parents went to see the boy's parents to ask them to give up their son to become their daughter's husband. So, the proposal was made by the girl's parents, often her mother, and it signified that the groom was invited to live in the compound of his parents-in-law. The young couple's marriage was confirmed by exchanging gifts, which were allegorically deemed to strengthen the marriage and new kinship ties. The boy's parents visited the girl's house and the girl reciprocally the boy's home to pay her respects to his parents. Reciprocal giving of gifts has everywhere reinforced people's mutual agreements and unions. A feature peculiar to the old village customs was that the marriage was confirmed inconspicuously, the reciprocal gifts were modest, and marriage celebrations were confined to the families' reciprocal visits. Marriages were seldom registered: they were based on the girl's and boy's mutual attraction, love, and a mutual agreement of the families; engagement gifts or bridal fees were not required of the groom. In fact, the only marriage announcement required was to the phii of the families, as approval of the ancestors was also necessary. The young couple finally became a family when the son-in-law had completed their own house in his wife's family compound.

Nowadays, boys no longer make evening visits, but young people meet at school, youth meeting places and parties. Neither do girls wait for suitors at home, but want to go to places where young people gather. Young people's circle of friends has become wider; they seem to believe that boys and girls of their own village are not interested in each other. Parents are less able to supervise their daughters' courtships than before, and this is a source of worry. Parents are generally more afraid for their children, of what kind of company they keep, how their daughters take care for themselves, even meeting boys alone. (33)

Today, considerable financial demands are placed on the boy before he can honourably be married. The boy, or in practice mostly his family, must buy the bride engagement gifts, pay her mother a bridal fee or 'milk money', if she asks, and foot the bill for the wedding. The engagement gifts are gold jewellery, usually a chain, the weight of which is defined using the old gold baht coin as measure. Usually, a gold engagement gift must weigh one baht. The engagement gift and the wedding are means adopted by a society that has moved to cash economy to set criteria of suitability for the groom, and to test the seriousness of his intentions. Getting married has become such a financial hurdle for the groom and his family that many of the informants wondered how expensive a wedding is reasonable.

In Thailand, including in the villages of this book, divorce has been rare, even if the marriage might have begun simply by 'putting out the light'. The informers rather seem to feel that divorce has become more common in recent decades, as has been

the case in all industrial societies. Among the informants, there was an older man who had gone round the villages, and in the course of his life built more than one house in the compounds of his mothers-in-law. It is hard to obtain precise figures, because all couples still do not register their marriage, but in 1996 it was estimated that in the whole country, 13% of all marriages ended in divorce, and four years later (1999) this had risen to 19%, in Bangkok to 30%. In rural villages, where the bride's or groom's parents live in the same household, there are still very few divorces, they are exceptions in villagers' personal histories. On the other hand, financially successful men have started to keep 'little wives'; a published estimate was that about 10% of husbands have a steady mistress or a second wife, but the estimates are typical sensationalism. (34 In these villages, we have encountered only two or three men wealthy enough to support two families.

Village wedding. I photographed the first wedding celebration in Ban Srii Muod Klao in 1982, when they represented a new culture. As the informants remember, weddings arrived in Ban Mae Kong Nya ten or fifteen years ago, and in Ban Dong in the 1990s. The wedding is held at the bride's home, and girls who have moved away also return to their home village for the wedding; it is the time when the groom and his family introduce themselves to the bride's family and the villagers. In my earlier works, I have distinguished two classes of wedding customs: kinship weddings and village weddings. At a kinship wedding, the central scenario is the passage of the bride from her own family to the groom's kinship group. It is the bride's rite of passage. The wedding ceremonies are centred around the bride; she is given up to the groom's family, taken in a celebratory procession to the groom's home and made a member of the groom's family and kinship group. In Thailand, the kinship wedding formula does not apply, because the bride is not removed from her home, but the young couple remains in the wife's home. In other ways, too, marriage in agrarian cultures also touches the village community and not just the two families. (35

A Thai wedding is a village wedding, it is a community celebration whereby the marriage is made public and the young couple admitted into the class of married people, a new social status. At the wedding, the groom and bride are symbolically tied to live together, hand in hand, and escorted to the marriage bed. In agrarian cultures, before industrial society, a custom in European village weddings has also been that after the marriage ceremony, the young couple is publicly escorted to the marriage bed. Behind this custom are ideas of the point at which marriage between a man and woman finally begins. According to the Christian concept, the church ceremony made the marriage legal, but it was consummated by the first sexual intercourse; the same concept has been widely prevalent in agrarian village communities. Once the bride and groom have had sexual intercourse, their marriage has irrevocably begun. At a Thai wedding, the permanence of marriage is also emphasized. A marriage made public in front of the village community is expected to last the lifetimes of both groom and bride. In weddings of agrarian cultures, the village community was present to witness the birth of a future family, and a marriage entered into so publicly afforded children the position of being born in wedlock and inheritance rights; today, such rights are also confirmed officially by registering the marriage.

Weddings are described in many of the villager accounts. Consequently, I will just briefly outline their basic format.

Table 11.

Basic wedding format

- Assembly of groom's family and departure to bridal home
- Wedding procession to bridal home
- Reception at gate of wedding house, payment of silver belt
- Escorting to wedding chamber, payment of gold belt
- Buddhist initial prayer, parental blessing
- Presentation of engagement gifts
- Tying of bridal couple's hands and general presentation of gifts
- Bridal couple escorted to bed, ceremony of scented room
- Wedding meal, village feast with performers

The wedding guests on the groom's side, the groom's company, assemble at the groom's house or a nearby house, if the groom is from another village. When the favourable time determined by Azan Wat arrives, the groom's company sets out as a solemn procession to the bride's home. At the groom's side walks a female representative of the family, holding a gift bowl, she is usually the groom's elder married sister or an aunt; the groom's parents are behind. A floral ornament, baisri, is carried in the procession, as always when a new stage in life that is important for the future is embarked upon, and the village women receive the guests by joining the head of the procession and dancing. This is also a celebratory custom that brings good fortune. The relatives and guests on the bride's side wait at the gate of the wedding house. The gate is closed by a silver belt, and in order to gain entry to the compound of the wedding house, the groom must pay a silver belt fee. Now the procession continues towards the wedding chamber, and on the stairs the groom must pay the gold belt fee, in order to gain the right of entry to the house of his bride's parents. Inside the wedding chamber, the bridal couple first kneel in front of Buddha's altar, light a candle and bow to the ground, then they make a ritual bow in front of their parents and receive their blessing. Like in all ceremonies, there is a speaker who announces what is happening and what everyone should do.

Then the joining of the young couple begins. The bride and groom kneel behind a low altar, the groom on the bride's right. Each has their assistants, the groom a male best man, the bride one or two bridesmaids, who take charge of the money envelopes given to the young couple. First, the groom's parents bring the engagement gift in a bowl, usually a gold chain, and the bridal fee (milk money). In Ban Mae Kong Nya, the village chief hands over the gifts and the groom fastens the gold chain around his bride's neck and the bracelet on her wrist, if one is part of the gift. The bride's parents may also present a corresponding gift to the young couple. Then the village chief or some other high-ranking guest ties the bridal couple's heads together with a white

braid, and places a white mark on their foreheads. Then comes the tying of the hands. The chief and his wife, the bridal couple's parents, relatives and wedding guests, one after the other, usually in order of age and rank, use white cord to tie the bride's right hand to the groom's left, wish them happiness and blessings, and give them a cash gift in an envelope. The bridal couple thank them by bowing their faces to cushions, and the bridesmaids hand everyone a reciprocal gift. It is wrapped in a colourful package, but its value is symbolic, containing a handkerchief or some other small item. So the ceremony continues, and soon the bridal couple is tied together with numerous white cords.

Now comes the escorting to the marriage bed. The binding is removed from the bridal couple's heads, and the bride's mother or perhaps some older woman with a 'favourable' name leads the young couple by the braid into the 'scented chamber' containing a wide wedding bed. The wedding company follows. Having a favourable name means that the young couple's escort is called by a name meaning something good, love, wealth or happiness, and she herself must be happily married. In the scented room, decorated with flowers, the young couple lie down on the bed side by side, and the cords are removed from their hands. Playful predictions of the future may be added to the wedding bed ceremony. Coins are tossed on the bed or the floor, which the young couple must compete in collecting. Whoever collects the most coins will dominate the family finances. The bride is likely to be quicker, and in practice, too, women have been in charge of family finances. Finally, the wedding company leaves the young couple alone, the wedding ceremony is complete. The young couple is taken their wedding meal, and having rested a while on their bed, they return to greet the guests. The wedding meal is prepared jointly by villagers like on other special occasions, and naturally there must be alcohol. Prosperous families hire a band for the feast; there is no traditional wedding music, but usually the band and vocalist play luk thung music or pop songs that villagers like.

Marriage and morality. The informants of this book remember times when sexual relations were not a part of young people's courtship. In agrarian communities, both in Thailand and Finland, sexual morality was absolute, and demands of purity applied to boys, too. The informants recall that in the 'old days' the boy and girl were not permitted to touch each other, and if they held hands, they had to pay 12 baht to the phii of the compound, in this case apparently to the ancestors, because they have supervised the morality of their kinship groups. Villagers' attitudes have not changed much. At various times, I have asked whether girls are permitted to have sexual experiences before marriage. The reply is unequivocally: no. The respondents do not approve, although they do not want to judge anybody either. Old and young, women and men agree on this issue, and the results of the 1998 survey scarcely differ from the earlier results (Table 10:1). Girls want to meet the right man and retain their virginity until they are married. When I asked what they would do if their boyfriends wanted to have sex, the standard answer was: if he really loves me, he wouldn't demand it.

In Thailand, too, absolute morality has gradually transformed to become men's double standards. Young men began to acquire sexual experiences, even boast about them, and village boys also wanted to emulate the heroes of movies and sex books. In

the 1970s, there were news items in the press from time to time about groups of boys who had gang-raped a girl, and today there are also girls in the villages that boys feel they can exploit. The rapes shocked the then society. The penalty for such crimes is extremely severe, even death. Young men's sexual experiences have gained acceptance, especially if they are acquired in brothels or with women who engage in sex. Among boys, the first visit to a brothel has become a kind of rite of passage into the company of experienced young men, and some estimate that up to half of boys have visited a brothel before the age of 16. Conversely, girls are still subjected to severe sexual norms, they are expected to sustain idealistic images of good girls and faithful wives, they are even instructed to accept men's casual sexual relationships. For boys, sexual experiences bring a kind of kudos, while liberal-minded girls are viewed with contempt and called derogatory names, as is the custom in youth cultures. Boys' visits to brothels have even been considered in positive light, because then they have not attempted to pressurize their girlfriends into a sexual relationship, but preserved the romantic idea of genuine love and marriage. However, the spread of Aids has been deemed to have changed boys' behavior. As young men have no longer dared to visit employees in the sex industry, they pressurize their girlfriends, and gradually girls' attitudes have also begun to change. Because contraception is hardly used among young people, abortions have increased sharply in recent years. The divergent sexual norms of girls and boys are still reflected in responses to questionnaires: young men exaggerate their sexual experiences, while girls are ashamed of them and deny ever having had sexual relations, if possible.(36

One questionnaire carried out in the 1970s showed that almost all girls and boys expected their future marriage partners to have no sexual experiences. It was important to boys that their chosen partner was a virgin. In 1984, a study of sexual attitudes of 13-20-year-olds showed that 60 % of girls and 64 % of boys thought the sexual purity of their future spouse to be important. Ten years later (1995), 46 % of women and 32 % of men in Northern Thailand felt that boys should not have sexual experiences before marriage; correspondingly 71 % of women and 63 % of men believed that girls should be virgins when they marry. The so-called norm of love is becoming common among young people, or acceptance of sexual relations of a couple going steady or an engaged couple intending to marry. For instance, according to one survey conducted at the end of the 1990s, 57 % of 14-25-year-olds considered a premarital sex life of a couple going steady to be normal. Although girls still deemed virginity to be very important, 40 % was prepared to agree to their boyfriends' demands; about 30 % would not agree, but wanted to be sexually pure on their wedding day. Compared with Western countries, particularly the Nordic countries, Thai girls want to preserve romantic love in their own lives. However, young people's behaviour is rapidly changing, and the researchers are forced to conclude that permissive society is coming and premarital sex becoming more common among young people.(37

In the villages of this book and largely elsewhere in Thailand, ideas of morality and family values of community cultures still prevail. The authorities, education system and religious system are using every means possible to repel sexism and to protect young people from Western cultural models. Sale of pornography is forbidden, cinema censorship is in operation, girls are expected to behave with restraint and modesty, and a Thai woman will not appear on city streets dressed as indecently as a

Western tourist. Young people are supervised at school, and university chancellors still issue directions on how female students should dress and conduct themselves. Sex tourism and local concepts of morality have belonged in completely different worlds. The dichotomy between Eastern and Western behavioural customs is evident e.g. in press reports on conflicts that arose during the world Scouting jamboree held in Thailand in 2003. It was meant to be a great event for the country's Scouting movement, but problems arose both among organizers and participants. Asian girls were horrified by the behaviour of Western youngsters, and the camp became famous because the country's health authorities decided to dole out contraceptives to foreign participants. (38

Asian countries are fighting against the spread of Western sexual culture. The issue is one of cultural conflict between East and West, the seriousness of which is not understood in the Western countries. In spite of strict censorship, Western consciousness industry is infiltrating Thailand; movies, pornographic magazines and videos selling sexual freedom, and nowadays, a limitless sexual culture floods the Internet. Young people get the idea that total sexual freedom, promiscuity, prevails in Western countries, and in general the values that existed in village communities seem to belong to the past. Young people moving into urban environments, especially university students, have already adopted the values of the new generation, and increasingly want to follow modern lifestyles modelled on perceived, imagined international culture. It will likely not be long before Thai sociologists demand that the authorities deregulate the sex industry, following the model set by Western countries, because they believe that replacing prohibitions and severe sex laws with education of young people would result is more sustainable social values, gender equality and individual responsibility.

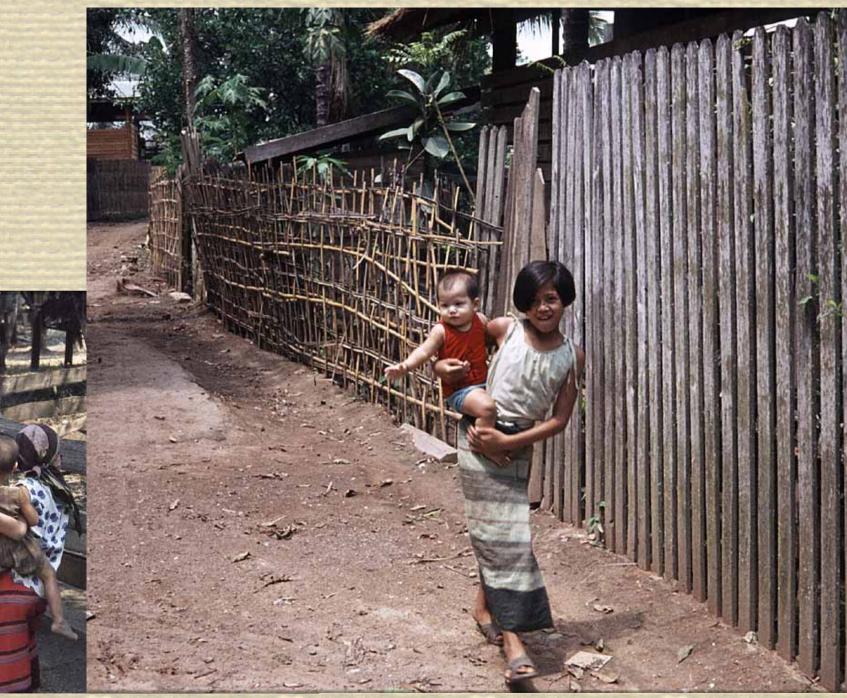
III. COMMUNITY CULTURE

Photos 121-141. Childhood. Grandmother provides security for children (121, 159-160). It was the duty of the elder sister to look after younger siblings (121-125). A plastic bag or rubber band sufficed as playthings (126), many still remember the push-along wheels they drove along the lanes (127-128). Nowadays, bought plastic toys are necessary and hold children's interest, at least for a while (129).

In the past, girls had to learn everyday chores from an early age, today it is more important for children to prepare for going to school. Taking children to nursery or school is daily routine of families (130-132). In the past, boys wandered in the forests, nowadays they explore the virtual world (135-137). A family at home together in the past and present (138-139). Friendships are important for young people. Today young people must cope with problems of growing up among themselves (140-141).



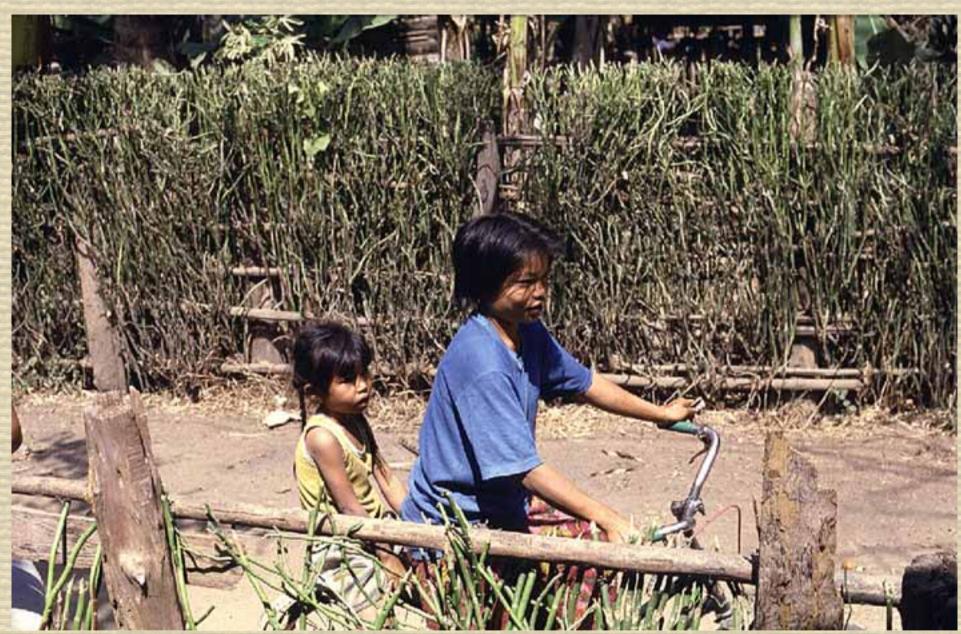
121 Ban Dong 1985.



122 Ban Dong 1973.

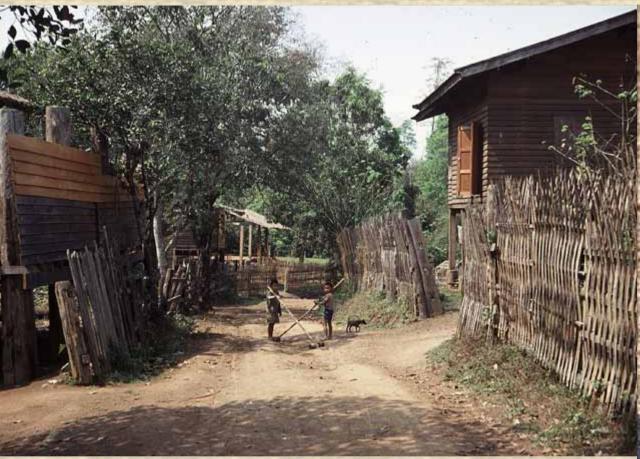
123 Srii Muod Klao 1973.



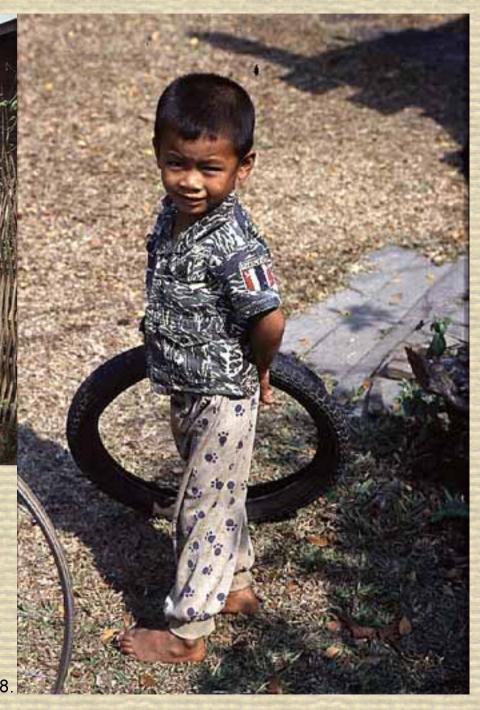


125 Mae Kong Nya 1985.

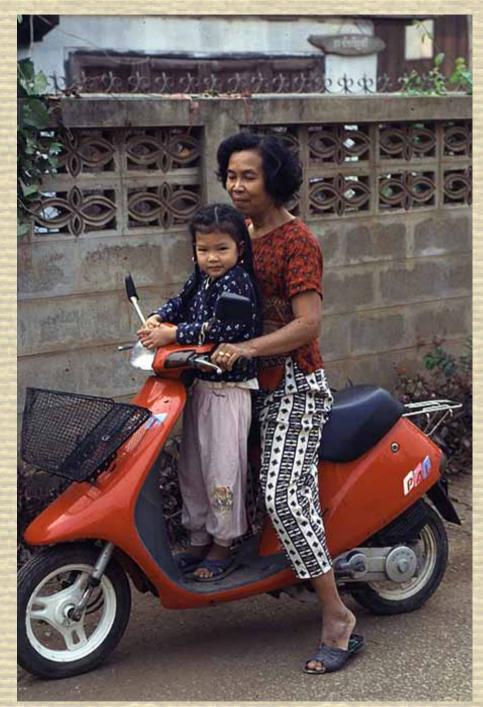




127 Ban Dong 1973.



128 Ban Dong 1998.



130 Srii Muod Klao 1998.



129 Ban Dong 1998.



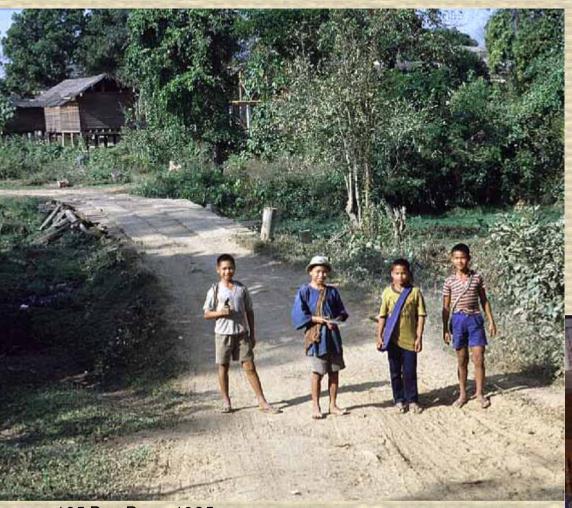
131 Ban Dong 1973.





133 Mae Kong Nya 1973.



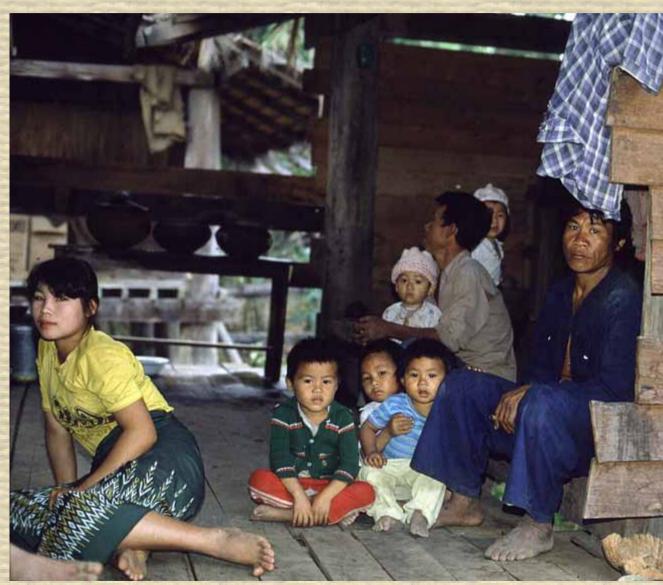


135 Ban Dong 1985.

136 Srii Muod Klao 1998.







137 Srii Muod Klao 1998.

138 BanDong 1985.





141 Mae Kong Nya 1998.



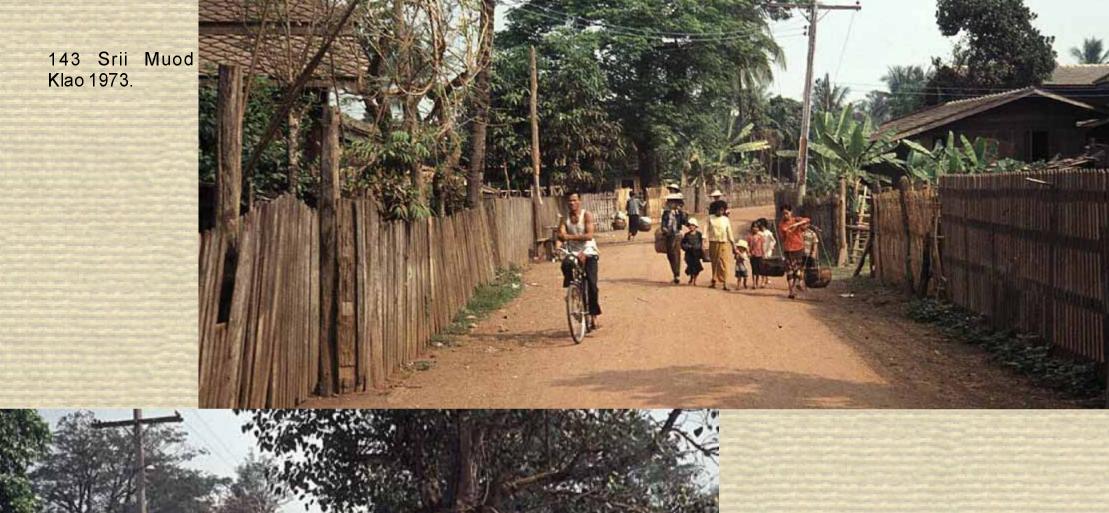
140 Ban Dong 1998.

Photos 142-161. Arc of life. Women's daily routines: work in the home and garden, taking care of animals (142-150). Women are joining forces in Thai villages: annual festival of the Women's Association (151). Equipment of a rice farmer in the 1970s (152), men's everyday tasks in the village (153-154). A high point in a man's life: the village chief has been awarded the King's Prize and a function is held in his honour. The chief and his wife are blessed in a hut made of banana leaves, encircled by a white cordled from the statue of Buddha (155).

The declining years (156-161). Old people are not sent to community care. In fullness of time, their lives will end at home, where they have lived with their relatives and neighbours, grown their own rice.



142 Ban Dong 1985.





144 Srii Muod Klao 1973.



145 Srii Muod Klao 1973.



146 Srii Muod Klao 1973.









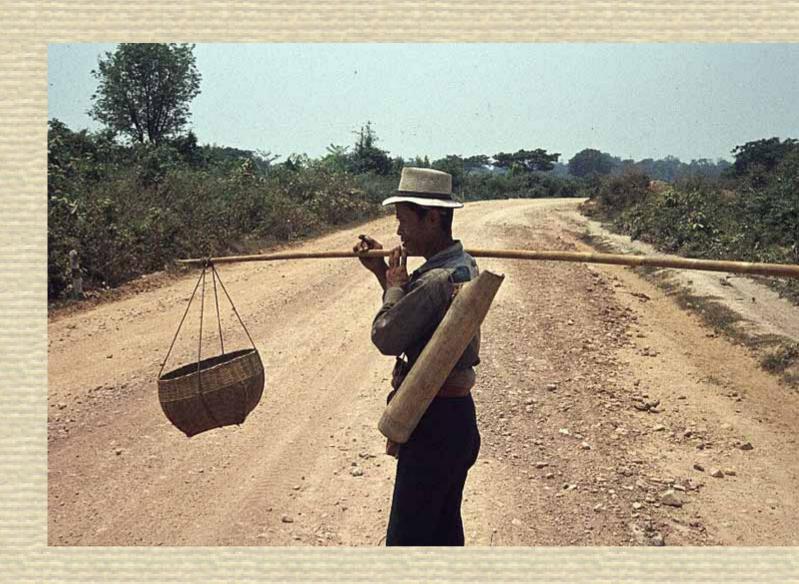
150 Mae Kong Nya 1973.



151 Srii Muod Klao 1998.

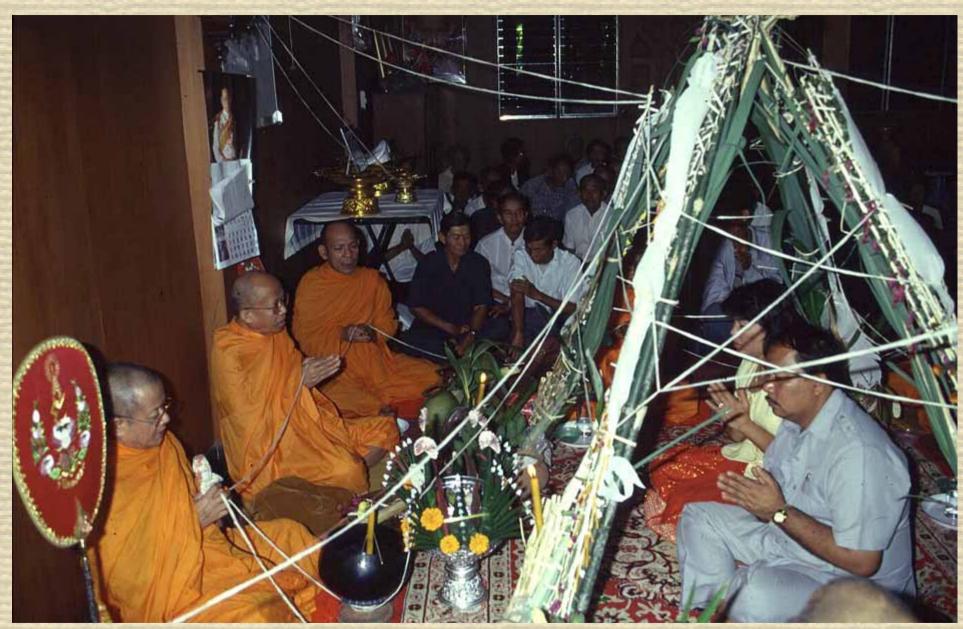


152 Srii Muod Klao 1999.

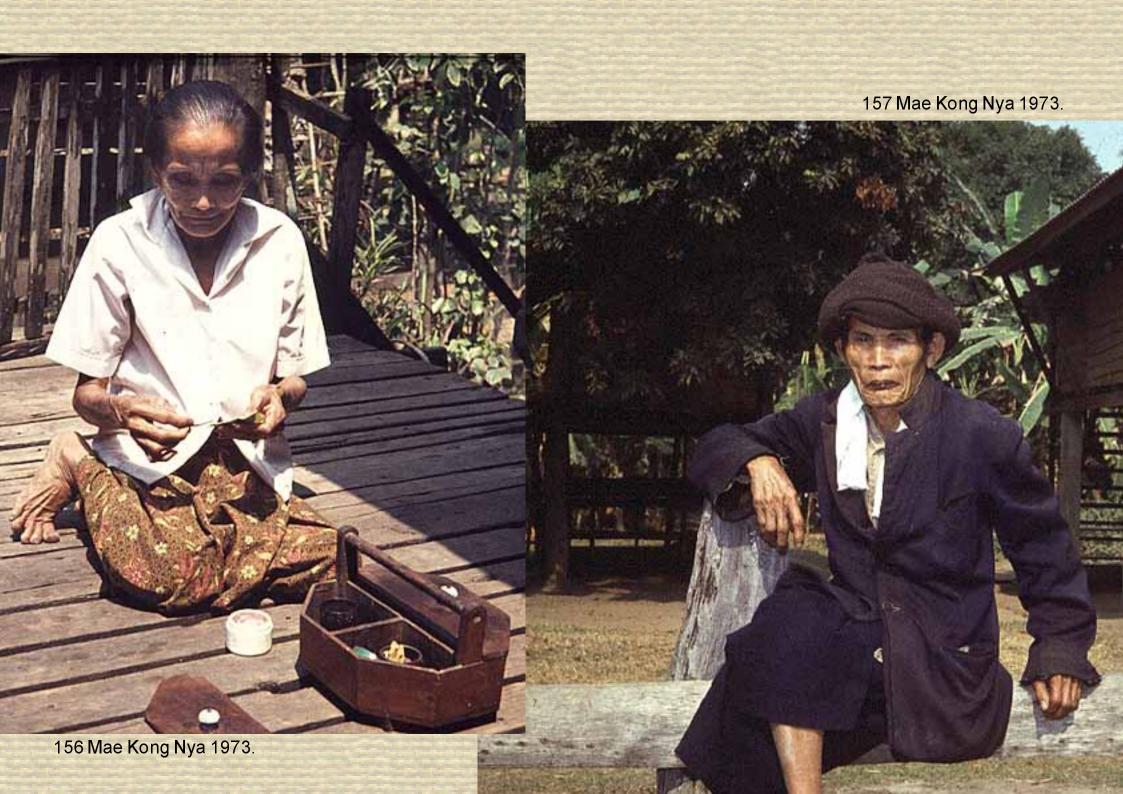




154 Srii Muod Klao 1985.



155 Mae Kong Nya 1999.



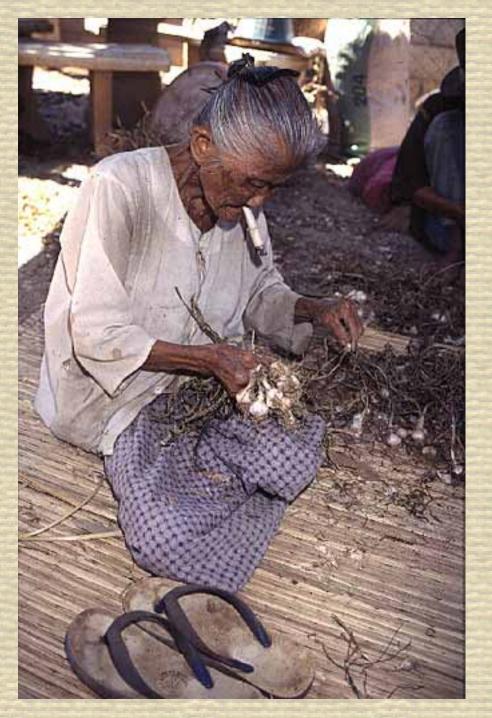


158 Mae Kong Nya 1999.



159 Srii Muod Klao 1984.





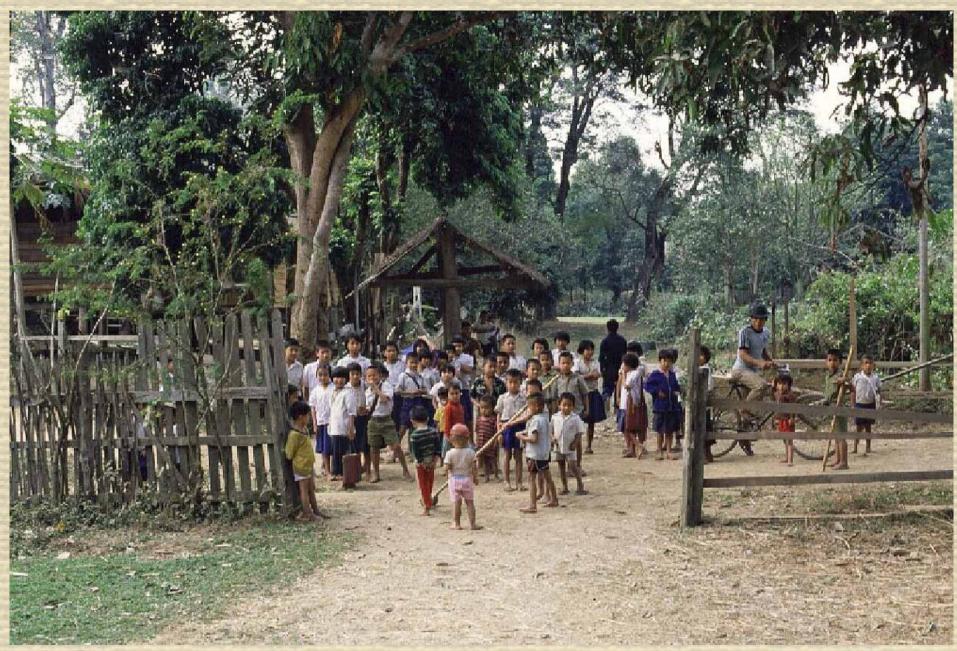
161 Srii Muod Klao 1998. Grandmother, 97 years. **Photos 162-171.** At the village school. Milieu of school age children (162-166). Washing day at the village school (167-168). Schoolchildren plucking chickens the pupils have raised for the school end of year festival (169-170). Scouts marching (171). All schoolchildren must join the Scouts.



162 Srii Muod Klao 1973.

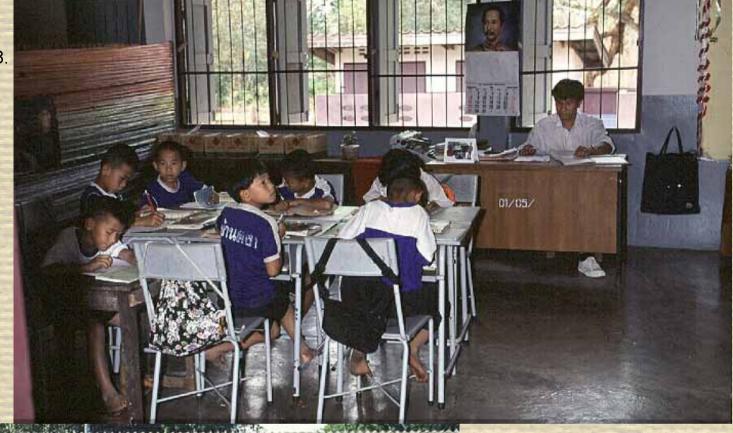


163 Mae Kong Nya 1973.



164 Ban Dong 1973

166 Ban Dong 1998.





165 Ban Dong 1998.







170 Ban Dong 1998.

169 Ban Dong 1998.





Photos 172-192. Sport education. The Olympic flame is lit at a sports tournament between village schools (172). Sports tournaments start with an opening march, where village teams introduce themselves (173-175). Winning the relay race is most important (176-177). The winners step on the rostrum (178). Village supporters' teams complete with bands march, dance, wave their flags and compete in slogan chanting (179-180). Hostesses assist in prize-giving ceremonies (181). Villagers watch the sports on the sidelines (182). Nowadays, there is a soccer team in almost every village (183). Marching day of Lampang schoolchildren 1973 (184-186). The sports competition of the Northern provinces was held at the Lampang stadium in 1984 (187-192).





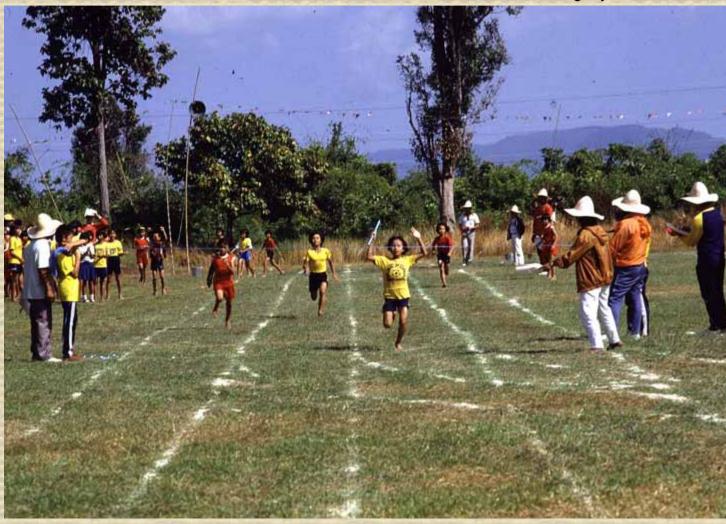
173 Mae Kong 1984.







177 Mae Kong Nya 1984.



176 Srii Muod Klao 1987.



178 Mae Kong Nya 1984.



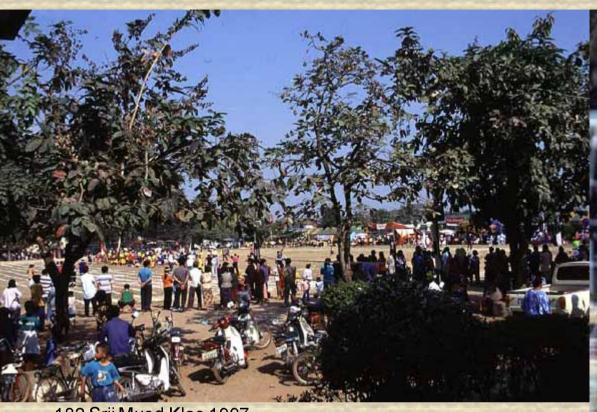
179 Srii Muod Klao 1997.



180 Srii Muod Klao 1997.



181 Srii Muod Klao 1997.

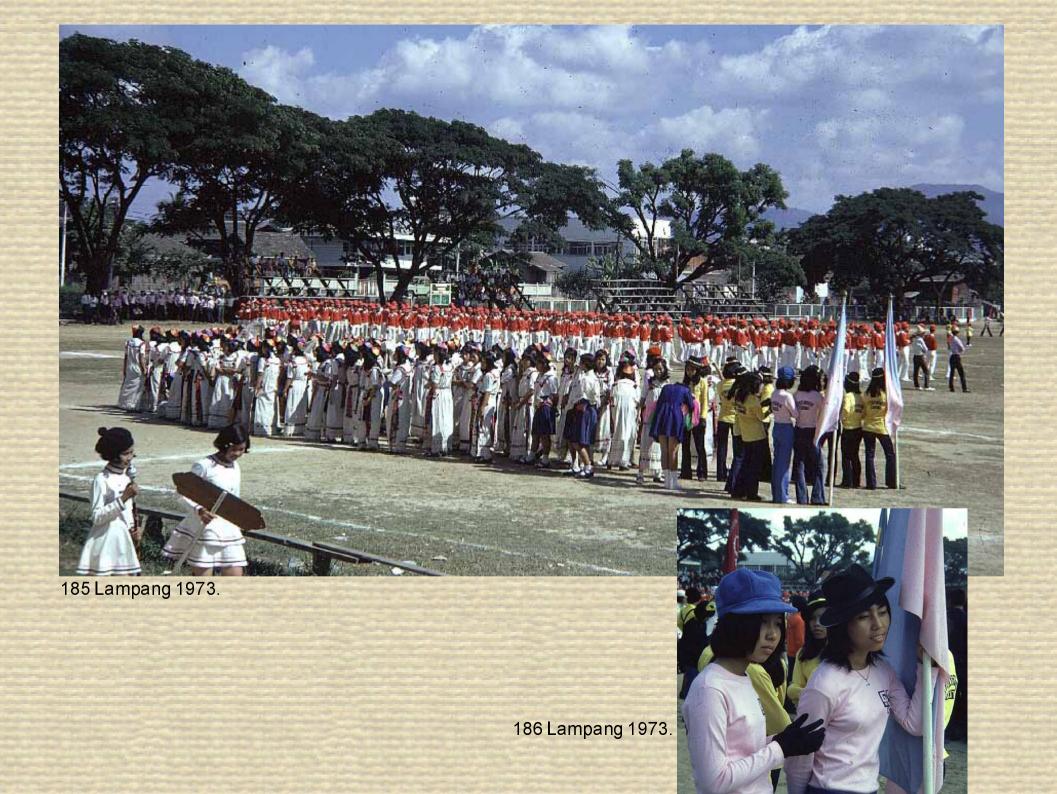


182 Srii Muod Klao 1997.



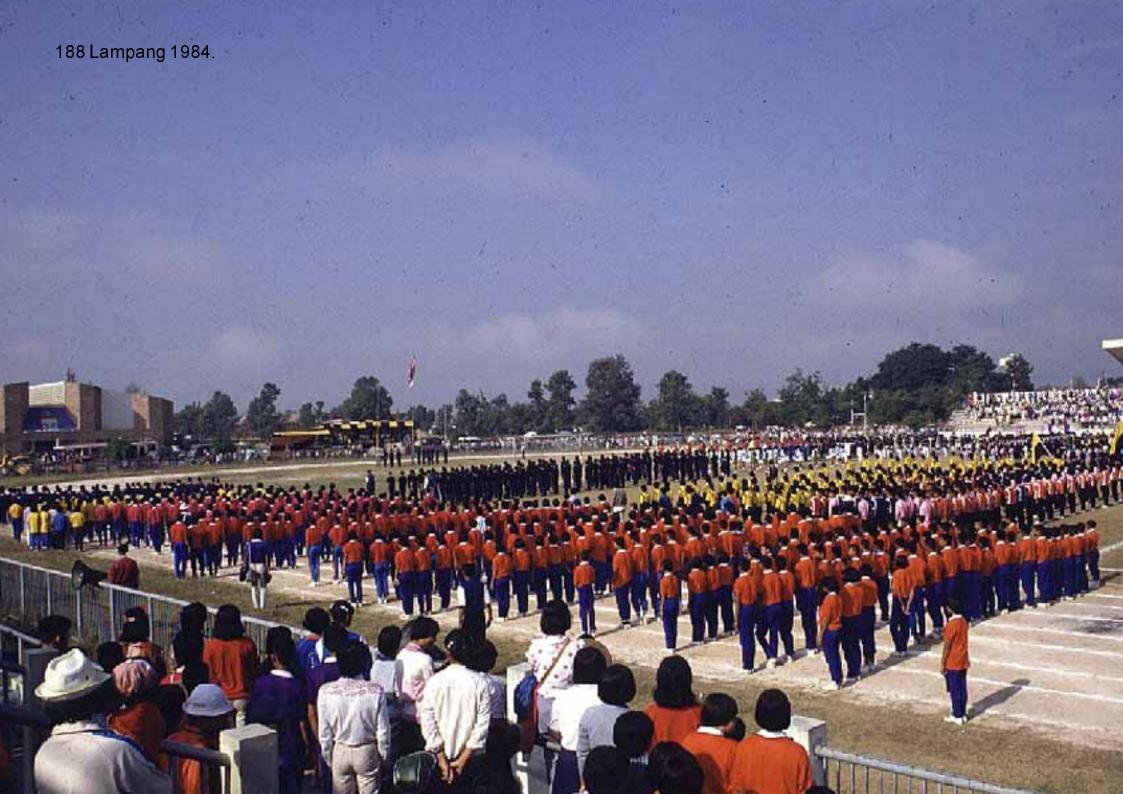
183 Srii Muod Klao 1998.







187 Lampang 1984.





189 Lampang 1984.



190 Lampang 1984.

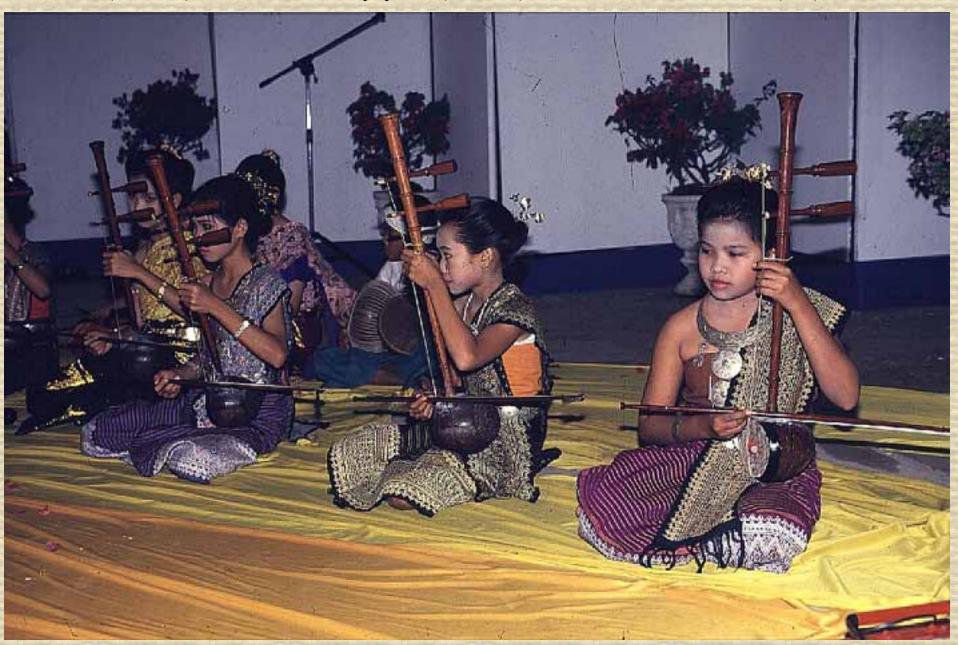


191 Lampang 1984.



192 Lampang 1984.

Photos 193-200. New popular culture. National and international high culture (193-195), traditional and new Thai dances (196-197), local and non-local pop stars (198-199). Eventide of local Thai music (200).



193 Lampang 1997.



195 Lampang 1985.



194 Lampang 1998.





197 Lampang 1998.



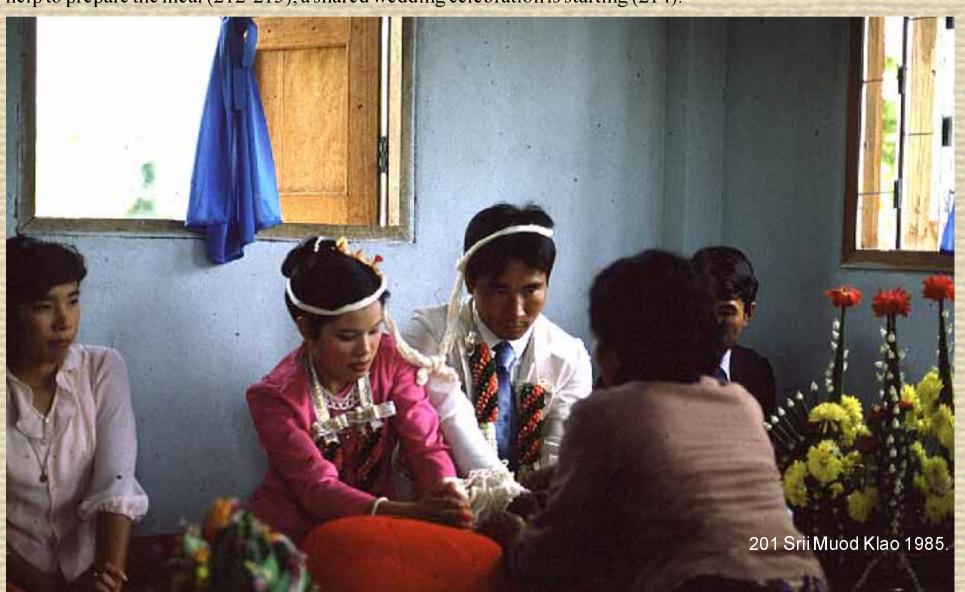
198 Lampang 1973.



199 Lampang 1985.



Photos 201-214. Weddings. Marriage ceremonies are new customs in the village: tying of bridal couple's hands (201) and escorting to marriage bed (202). The groom's procession arrives at the bridal house (203, 209), led by a female family member bearing the groom's gifts. The bride's female relatives wait at the gate of the wedding house (204). Here the groom must pay a silver belt fee. The groom is led to the wedding house (205). Chinese priest performing rites (206), the groom gives betrothal presents (207), and delivers 'milk money', reciprocal gifts (210). The bride's parents extend wishes of happiness and blessings to their son-in-law (211). The bride's and groom's parents, relatives and villagers each tie the young couple's hands together with white cord (201,208). Villagers help to prepare the meal (212-213), a shared wedding celebration is starting (214).





202 Srii Muod Klao 1985.







207 Srii Muod Klao 1998.





210 Mae Kong Nya 1998.



211 Mae Kong Nya 1998.



213 Mae Kong Nya 1998.



212 Mae Kong Nya 1998.



214 Srii Muod Klao 1998.

DEATH

Death rites

The wake. In villages of Northern Thailand, the death rites comprise four stages: 1) the wake, 2) the funeral or celebration of the cremation, 3) extinguishing the ashes and 4) remembrance, which in these villages is 100 days after the cremation. (39 Funerals are organized by the village funeral society, which is one of the oldest organizations in the village. The villagers have agreed that the minimum of one representative from each family attends the funeral, and that all families donate at least a kilogram of rice towards the shared meal, and also make a cash donation to the society's coffers. A funeral incurs scarcely any costs to the family of the deceased, and outwardly the cremation celebration is roughly the same for all, regardless of the wealth of the family. Preparations for the cremation are done communally. While communal working parties have vanished from rice farming and other village life, communal village life is now concentrated on arranging funerals and other special occasions. In funerals, communality and reciprocal assistance continues in the villages.

When someone in the village dies, the news spreads quickly, and relatives and villagers gather to help the family of the deceased with funeral arrangements. Close family members wash the body with holy somploi water and anoint it with honey or herbs to prevent decomposition; nowadays, the body is sprayed with formalin right at the hospital, and lately the coffin is stored in a large freezer. The body is wrapped in a white shroud and tied with fine twine, and then the coffin is placed on a platform in the living room aligned with the ridge beam, and food is put out at the head end for the deceased. The correct funeral day is ascertained with the Azan Wat, although nowadays the cremation usually takes place on a Saturday or Sunday, to enable employed villagers to take part. Up to the cremation, a 'wake' of the deceased or 'remembrance' in local parlance is held day and night. Relatives and neighbours assemble for the wake, they sit by the coffin, are served food and drink by the hosts, and watch TV. At the wake, the deceased is remembered through social intercourse and drinking spirits, as has also been the case in European village communities.

In the evenings, monks are invited to the house to pray for the deceased, to read suat in Pali language, and to accept gifts given to the deceased. Different monks must be present each evening, so monks from other village temples are also invited. During the wakes, villagers built a cardboard palace (brasart) for the deceased, a house for the soul to be placed on the coffin; nowadays, the soul house is bought. The day before the cremation, villagers arrive as a working party to prepare the house for the occasion. The altar of Buddha is collected from the temple, a dais for the monks, festival canopies, tables, chairs and other

furnishings, and the funeral stage is set in the compound of the house. The men erect the canopies, carry the tables and chairs, install loudspeakers, the women prepare the feast and floral decorations. The body may also be kept in the temple hall or salaa, if the death has been unusual or there is no room in the house. In Ban Srii Muod Klao, compounds are now becoming crowded and a new, modern cremation site is planned for the temple compound, in which case funerals would be moved to the village religious centre.

The funeral celebration. On the morning of the cremation or previous afternoon, the coffin is carried behind the chief village monk out into the compound, and placed on a cart or the back of a truck. The soul house is placed on the coffin, which is decorated with flowers, and an altar with incense and food is placed at the head end. A local band of traditional musicians is always hired for the funeral, and when the music starts to carry into the village, the funeral guests gradually assemble. (40 On arrival, the guests first stop by the coffin, light a stick of incense, offer their apologies to the deceased if they might have sometimes insulted him, and bid their farewells to the departed member of the community. In the compound, the guests stop by the table of the funeral society and make a cash donation; all sums are carefully entered in the ledger. Nowadays, written invitations are often sent at least to relatives and friends of the deceased who live outside his own village. Older people sit on a mat in front of the monks' dais, middle-aged families sit further away at tables, especially if they have brought children along. Some distance away, behind the house, is the food preparation area where women gather to prepare the feast.

By ten o'clock, the monks arrive and sit down on their dais in front of the honorary cloth. Buddhist death ceremonies have an established order. First, the 'novice monks of the deceased' are ordained and dressed in yellow robes (buat nah fai, ordination in front of fire). They are grandchildren of the deceased, young boys or older relatives, who spend some time at the village temple. Then the monks conduct a service; it follows the order of the temple service, but special prayers may also be recited at funerals,

and finally the monks are presented with gifts on behalf of the soul of the deceased. After the ceremonies, a lay singer performs the life history of the deceased, or at least a traditional song of thanks (ventaan), thanking those present by name for having respected the deceased and helped his family.

The meal is served at 11, as at all occasions where monks are present. In the 1970s, the cremation took place in early evening, and the ceremonies went on until two o'clock in the afternoon. Before departure to the cremation site, one of the monks or an invited high-ranking guest might have made a speech, and prior to elections, politicians also came to funerals to speak. While waiting to depart, the funeral guests talked among themselves and listened to the band. The funeral took all day, especially if the deceased was a revered person. In an industrial society, the schedule must be adapted to the new rhythm of life, and today departure to the cremation site takes place immediately after the meal, once the women have done the dishes.

The cremation. Before departure for the cremation place, many people go up to the coffin to light a stick of incense, to say their goodbyes. A decade ago, the hearse cart would be hauled together through the village and to the cremation site. At the tow rope were the monks of the deceased often accompanied by temple monks, followed by the others, with family members nearest the coffin. Immediately behind the procession was a taxi car with the band on the roof, playing all the way. The only other people taken by car were the old and sick who were unable to walk. So the deceased left his village on his last journey, surrounded by his neighbours, relatives and friends. Modern hearse carts have an engine and they are only hauled symbolically. The monks get into cars and drive direct to the chapel at the cremation site. In Ban Srii Muod Klao, the cremation site is shared with neighbouring villages and it is reached by car, while in Ban Mae Kong Nya the deceased is still escorted on foot the whole way to the cremation place, and the custom of the cremator carrying a white flag of death walking ahead of the procession has also been preserved.

In the chapel at the cremation site, the monks hold a service, recite texts appropriate to the occasion, and bless the departed. The service ends with distribution of yellow monks' robes or towels, or the kathin ceremony. According to the old order, the most high-ranking funeral guests took turns to place a robe on the edge of the hearse, to be collected in turns by the monks while sprinkling some sacred water from a small wooden flask on the ground. In Ban Mae Kong Nya the ceremonies are now held indoors in the chapel, and the deceased on the hearse is left on one side. As the master of ceremonies announces them, the high-ranking persons: the municipal and village chiefs, headmaster of the school, and perhaps even a higher provincial official, and the wealthiest land owners of the village, take turns to collect a robe and hand it to one of the monks sitting in line on their dais alongside the chapel wall; an additional special gift is handed to the chief monk of the occasion. The family of the deceased has purchased the robes and there must be sufficient for at least four monks.

When the service of committal is over, kindling flowers woven from wood shavings are handed out, and the relatives of the deceased gather in front of the hearse for a group photograph. Then the cart is hauled to the funeral pyre. The coffin is placed on the ground and opened, the cremator cuts the twine used to tie the hands and feet of the deceased with an axe, splits open a coconut and anoints his face with coconut milk. The soul of the deceased is now 'cleansed' and free to leave the body. Then the coffin is raised on the pyre, the soul house placed on top with the flower decorations and boards of condolence. Only a few years ago the congregation would still walk in line around the pyre and throw their kindling flowers into the fire. Today, the kindling flowers are symbolic, they are returned to the family of the deceased, who pass them back to the cremation organizers, the funeral society. The fire is lit by the cremator or a monk and these days it is done with an ignition rocket. A wire has been fixed from the corner of the chapel to the pyre, shooting the rocket to the soul house roof and igniting a container of fuel. The coffin with its soul house and ornaments catch light in a flash. This is the end of the funeral, and the congregation leaves to go home. Only the cremators remain overnight to see that the corpse is thoroughly burned into ash. The soul of the deceased has been liberated from its earthly body and rises to the heavens with the smoke, to the hope of a new life.

Extinguishing the ashes. On the morning after the cremation or two or three days later, the immediate family of the departed go to the cremation site to 'extinguish the ashes' or 'cleanse the bones'. This means sprinkling sacred somploi water on the ashes and pieces of bone remaining on the pyre. In Northern Thailand, in common with numerous other peoples, the soul of the deceased has been deemed to reside in the body parts that resist decomposition the longest, such as bones or hair. A couple of decades ago, the bones and ashes were collected in a covered urn and brought home, where the urn was buried in the compound or placed on a shelf just under the ceiling of the anteroom, immediately at the top of the stairs. This practice was also common with mountain swidden peoples of Thailand, and urn shelves may still also be seen in Lampang villages. In kinship cultures it was important for a person that his bones were brought home, to his own family, to where he had lived.

Cremation of bodies is not a very old custom in Northern Thailand. The oldest informants remember that the dead used to be buried in the compound or somewhere else nearby. That way, the deceased remained to live in their family homes as ancestors of the kinship group or phii of the compound. As population became denser, burials in or around villages had to be abandoned mainly for health reasons, and cremation of the body became mandatory.

Nowadays the usual procedure is that a monk is called to extinguish the ashes and to read prayers for the deceased, and the ashes and remaining bones are buried in some corner of the cremation site. The cremation site is becoming a graveyard. In Buddhist tradition, ashes have also been buried in temple grounds, and prosperous families have erected a small stupa to mark the spot. In the villages it is not customary to erect family stupas, but for instance in Ban Mae Kong Nya, there is a place in the temple wall where the ashes may be taken. Thai people do not erect gravestones, although they are customary both among local Chinese and Christians.

Hundredth day memorial rites. A hundred days after the cremation, a remembrance ceremony is held at the home of the deceased. There have also been other memorial rites in Thai tradition, e.g. after 50 days, but they are no longer observed except perhaps among the family. For a large remembrance occasion, a festive canopy may be erected and a table of offerings prepared for the deceased. Nowadays, monks are also invited to the remembrance, like to the wake, and also a Thai band, if the family can afford it. The occasion begins in the morning, because the monks are served a festive meal. The monks leave around midday, but relatives and friends of the deceased celebrate until late. Women drink spirits and dance among themselves; today they listen to recorded music and sing karaoke. Remembrance celebrations are no longer very common, as the informants say, but old women may gather with their friends on their husband's remembrance day at the temple or the home of the deceased.

The death rites end with the hundredth day remembrance. Until then, the deceased has still remained somewhere in his home

ground or in his village. In Thailand, too, people have believed that by the time of the funeral rites, the soul of the deceased has traversed his earthly life again, re-experienced his good and bad deeds, and now finally ends his sojourn on earth. The temple monks receive their last gifts at the remembrance; henceforth the family no longer take food or other offerings intended for the deceased to the temple. So, the monks' task is to recite Pali prayers and suats for the deceased for the last time. The informants' understanding is that they are now calling the soul of the deceased to accept all the good deeds, food offerings and gifts that have been addressed to him via the monks from the day of his death, and urging him to finally depart to the invisible world on the other side. The family may now stop caring for the soul of the deceased and grieving for him in public. Gradually, the deceased stops being an individual and moves on to the great collective of the dead, the great cycle of living nature.

Message of death

Final passage of human life. The funeral is a rite of passage whereby the deceased is removed from his family, kinship group and community, and transferred to the side of the deceased. After death, man is liminal, a term customarily used in cultural anthropology, as if existing somewhere between the communities of the living and the dead, and those living in this world must see that the soul of the deceased makes it across the final boundary and gets along in the realm of the dead, Hades, or where the souls of the dead have been thought to continue their existence. Through death rites, the family of the deceased and the community process the unavoidable conclusion of a human life, the ultimate fate of all living things, and also rearrange their social relationships. In experiences of death, there is a presence of the unity of destiny among people. Funeral rites return the order of existence and remove the disharmony brought about by death, and answer again and again the fundamental questions of human life.

Forgiveness is also important in death rites. The deceased members of the family and kinship group, neighbour and villager, is bid goodbye and asked forgiveness. It is important for everyone to be forgiven the conflicts they may have had with the deceased, and to take care that they do not remain on bad terms with the dead, to prevent anything from the other side from bringing bad luck to their lives. In Buddhist culture, death rites are occasions where good deeds may be done for oneself, too, and by participating in gift ceremonies, every funeral guest simultaneously procures immortal merits for his own soul.

So, what do villagers think about death and life after death? The majority of informants believe in rebirth, as Buddhist monks teach, but in every age group there are also those who do not believe in reincarnation. Many people have their own philosophy based on everyday experiences of both life and death. However, most seem to believe that when the body is cremated, the soul of the deceased is liberated into the eternal cycle of life, to be reborn to a better or worse life, depending on how many

merits he has earned for the other side, and refined his personality or immortal soul. Offerings and gifts of the family and their caring can no longer help the deceased. In religious thinking, the issue is above all one of morality and justice. For many informants, a belief in a higher being affords assurance that everyone must atone for their sins, their bad deeds, either in this life or an existence on the other side. The villagers, like people everywhere, long for final atonement and final judgment for those who have done wrong in their lives. Without a belief in the final judgment and victory of good, the ethical order of the world, human culture has no future.

The deceased in kinship culture. Villagers' accounts are superimposed on two religious world views: ancestral belief and Buddhism. According to the ancestral belief system, the dead are reborn within their own kinship group and continue their lives in a member of their own line; thus, the kinship group remains one from one generation to the next. According to Buddhist ideas, life is an individual person's striving towards ultimate atonement and peace. In Thailand, as in Finland, local communities in the swidden era have been kinship cultures, where ancestors bound relatives together, watched and protected their descendants, and in time, were reborn in some member of the kinship group. The deceased of the kinship group have been deemed to reside on the other side around the places where they lived in this world, and after death they lingered around their own home ground at least for a time. In the swidden era, the dead were buried at their homesteads or near their swidden; ancestral graves were signs of ownership that gave descendants the right to live on and cultivate the land their ancestors had worked. In plains villages, too, the dead were buried near houses, and the ancestral cult is still behind many funereal customs, as in villagers' interpretations of the afterlife.

The family and kinship group of the deceased are duty-bound to hold the funeral, to escort his soul to the other side, and to take care of his life there. They had to do good deeds on behalf of his soul and to present offerings to the monks at least until the hundredth day remembrance. From the wake onwards, food is placed by the coffin, and on the day of the cremation, the coffin is placed in a decorative house, a palace for the soul. The beautifully ornate soul house symbolizes the new residence of the deceased and shows the family's wish that he will be surrounded by the splendour of palaces and goodness in his afterlife. At the hundredth day remembrance, the deceased is given food, bedding and other items that he is thought to require in the world on the other side. Similarly, the Lampang Chinese may build a house from cardboard for the deceased, including all the conveniences and luxuries he had in life, and burn the house the night before the funeral. By burning 'gold' and 'money' (gold paper), the Chinese send goodness to their dead both at the wake and later at the remembrance, when they make their annual visits to the graves on the day of the ancestors. In the same way as kin should take care of the living, it also had to care for the dead.

If the death rites are not performed, the soul of the deceased is not admitted into the realm of the dead, but is deprived of its

rightful place in the cycle of life and death. Such a soul becomes an evil, haunting spirit, who still demands its share from its kin. In the same way, souls that do not receive atonement for their evil deeds or are unable to give up their earthly life or property often remain to haunt the living. Twenty years ago, people who had had an 'unlucky', e.g. accidental death were thought to bring bad luck to the whole family, and they were buried using exceptional ceremonies. A person killed in a car crash was buried in the earth as if to cleanse him, and the remains were cremated only after four months; a woman who had died in childbirth was taken out of the house through the floor. Even today, efforts are made to lead the soul of a person who has died in a traffic accident away from the accident spot back home or to the temple, and a pennant is placed at the spot; more and more of these pennants are seen at roadsides.

The deceased in village culture. At a village community funeral, the monks sit on their dais, with the monk leading the ceremonies nearest the altar of Buddha, which is always to the left of the audience. In front of them sit old men and women in the traditional fashion on a raffia mat, the men in front of the chief monk and the women in their own group further down. One does not step on the mats wearing shoes, it is like a sacred place where only those with legitimate access may sit. Esteemed, honourable old people who 'sustain Buddhism', observe good manners and rules of religious life, sit at the monks' feet. The stage displays the ranking based on a person's age and the hierarchy of a rice village. Usually, the middle-aged village chiefs or the kamnan do not remain seated on the mats, although on other occasions they are the most important persons of the villages, and the first to hand robes to the monks at the cremation site in the kathin ceremony.

At the cremation, the monks repeat the ethics of local cultures. They talk about the fleeting nature of life and urge people to live their lives honourably, to love their fellow human beings and to help one another. The eternal norms of village religions are present, the commandments of communal life, and the belief that a good person is rewarded in the life after death. High religions of agrarian cultures define a good communal life, and their message fulfills the expectations of a person who has lived in local communities, of coping together, being good neighbours and family life. Like in a farmer's everyday life, so a person shall reap after death as he has sown in his life.

Death rites, in common with other sociodramas, have their own message for the future. The funeral serves to build a safe community and to deal with the dangers that at the time surround the local living space. In recent years, the villagers have assembled ever more frequently to bury community members who have died of Aids or drugs, committed suicide or been killed in traffic accidents. At modern funerals, villagers' minds are not only on concern over the human soul, but also over shared morality and a shared future. Villagers who have come to the wake and the funeral must weigh up the life lived and the fate of the departed, and what his death means to his family, friends or neighbours. Participants in the death rites account for their relationship with the deceased, and perhaps glance back also at their own lives as members of a village community. At the

interviews, many people ended up wondering a little about what their own funerals should be like.

Focus of life. In death rites, the family of the deceased is the focal point of the community's attention, sympathy and assistance, but on the other hand, the family must fulfill the expectations set in villages for the wake and the funeral. Although funerals organized by the funeral society are the same for all in principle, regardless of the social status of the deceased, village occasions are always also a stage on which to display prosperity or to surreptitiously compete over social prizes. The social status of the funeral house and esteem bestowed on the deceased are evidenced e.g. by the number of guests at the funeral, or how important an occasion it is among the villagers. One cannot be absent from funerals of high-ranking people. And conversely, each family must also establish how people in their position should act. Occasions are important for families who have the means to pose as upholders of the village community's social culture. The guests keep track of how many monks are invited to the cremation and who they are. Modern practice dictates that monks are paid a cash fee for religious ceremonies, commensurate to their status and their spiritual merits. A famous monk is the most revered person at the cremation. As a spiritual teacher, he draws villagers to the event, his presence gives the funeral particular kudos and shows that the relatives want to do their best for the soul of the departed.

Respect for the deceased has been, and still is, shown by the soul house. The soul house used to be built by the family members, friends and neighbours as a communal effort, it was done as a show of respect for the deceased and as proof that he had been a well-loved person both within his family and among villagers. They wanted to give an esteemed villager the best imaginary residence and a good life after death. Nowadays the soul house is bought and its 'quality' must correspond to the prosperity of the deceased and his family. Villagers complain about the high cost of the soul house and many do not really know any more why such a contraption must be bought. Many would not bother with it, if they dared to defy the village community. Even those who considered the soul house to be a waste of money explained that if they did not buy one, villagers would talk behind their backs that the family did not love the deceased enough to sacrifice a little money on his behalf. In modern death rites, the soul house is a social emblem which is still interpreted among villagers. It allows the family to display their wealth and their close family unity, to make a public assurance that the deceased was dear to them. On the other hand, the soul house is a spectacular ornament, and without it the coffin would be naked, bare and lonely, without the splendor with which people want to surround the deceased on his final journey.

Of course, the interviews also include cynical comments, where people refer to the superficiality of funerals, luxury of the decorations, size of cash gifts to the monks and shooting of rockets. Rocket-shooting at the cremation site became fashionable about 15 years ago, and many informants say that it is just a way for the rich to show off their wealth. Some consider funerals to be artificial community celebrations. How could every villager turn into an important person to all after death, even if he was not

particularly well-liked while living, and most people did not even know him. There are more and more people in villages that nobody knows. And there are those, too, who do not go to funerals, but take the view that when they die themselves, the funeral society need have no part in it. In large villages there are already too many funerals, one or two every month. Do these views portend the future? What do young people feel about village funerals? Do future generations here, too, want to become privatized and make funerals a closed occasion where the village as a community no longer gathers? In the postlocal media world, the only shared culture remaining is the arc of life of a superperson, funerals of leaders shown on TV, international death rites... In the villages of this book, an ordinary person still matters to the whole community, his demise touches the neighbours and unites all who gather to accompany him on his final journey.

Photos 215-264. Funerals. Preparing funerals (215-216). The coffin with the soul house at the gate ready to depart (217-218). Farewells to the deceased (219). Representatives from the funeral society collect the invitations and keep account of donations made by funeral guests (220). A band of traditional musicians always plays at funerals and memorial occasions (221-222). Young women gather at the cooking site (223). In the garden of the funeral house, women prepare a shared meal (224). Rice and sauce bubbling (225).

The novices of the departed are blessed, dressed in monk's robes (226-227) and ordained monks of the deceased (228). At about ten o'clock a Buddhist service starts, where the monks instruct (229-233).

The monks are served first (234-235). Old women and men eat on the mat in front of the monks' dais (336-337). Finally, the monks are presented with gifts, monks of the deceased at the front (238-240). When the women have finished the dishes (242-242), the funeral procession leaves for the cremation site.

The deceased leaves his home village (243-251). Formerly, villagers together pulled the funeral cart to the cremation site. The *kathin* ceremony (252-254). The monks collect a robe in turns and sprinkle consecrated water on the ground from a small wooden flask. The family photograph (255).

Prior to cremation, the bindings on the deceased are severed and his face anointed with coconut milk (256-258). The soul house has caught fire (259-260). Freed from its earthly chains, the soul of the deceased ascends to the heavens with the smoke.

Funeral of Lampang's highest priest 1985 (261-263; 322, 324). The soul of the deceased is guided across the bridge to Hades in Lampang Chinese funeral rites 1973 (264).

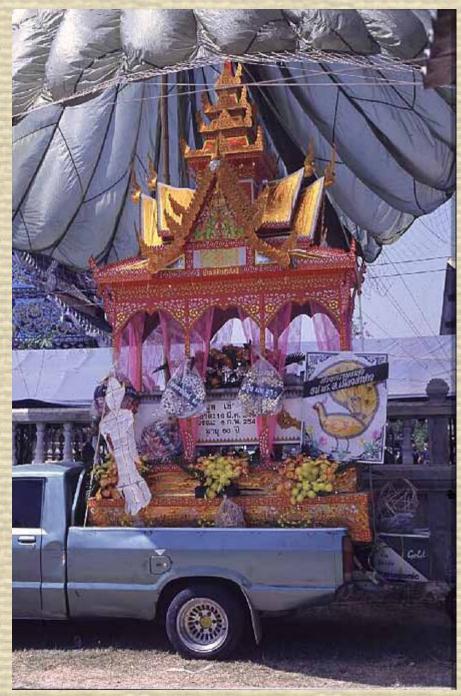


215 Srii Muod Klao 1998.

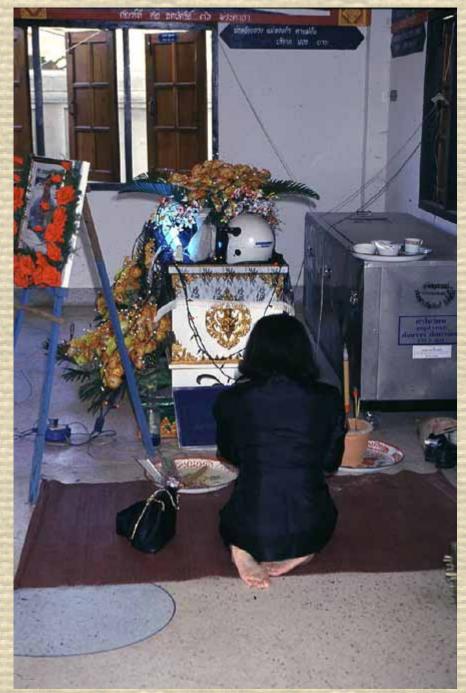


216 Mae Kong Nya 1985.

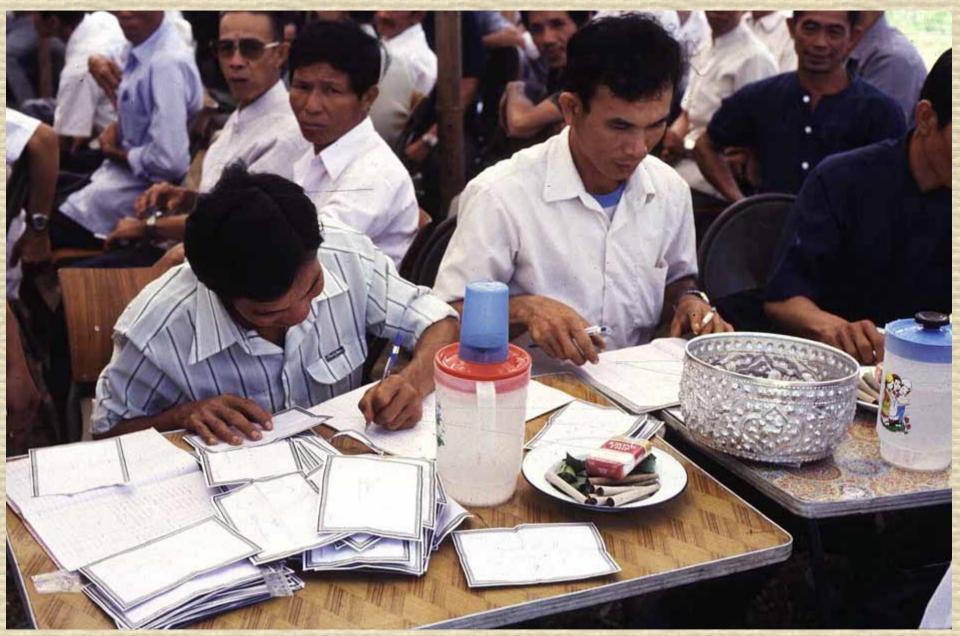




218 Mae Kong Nya 1998.



219 Mae Kong Nya 1998.



220 Mae Kong Nya 1985.



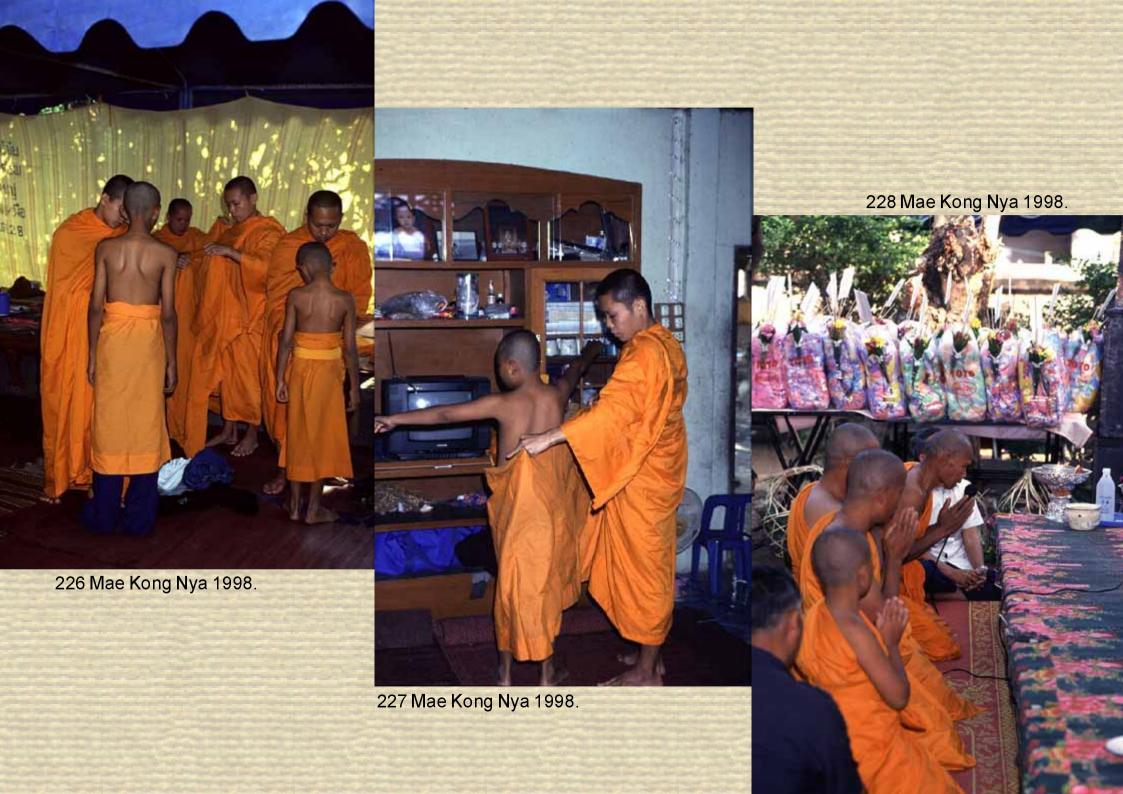




223 Mae Kong Nya 1998.

224 Mae Kong Nya 1998.







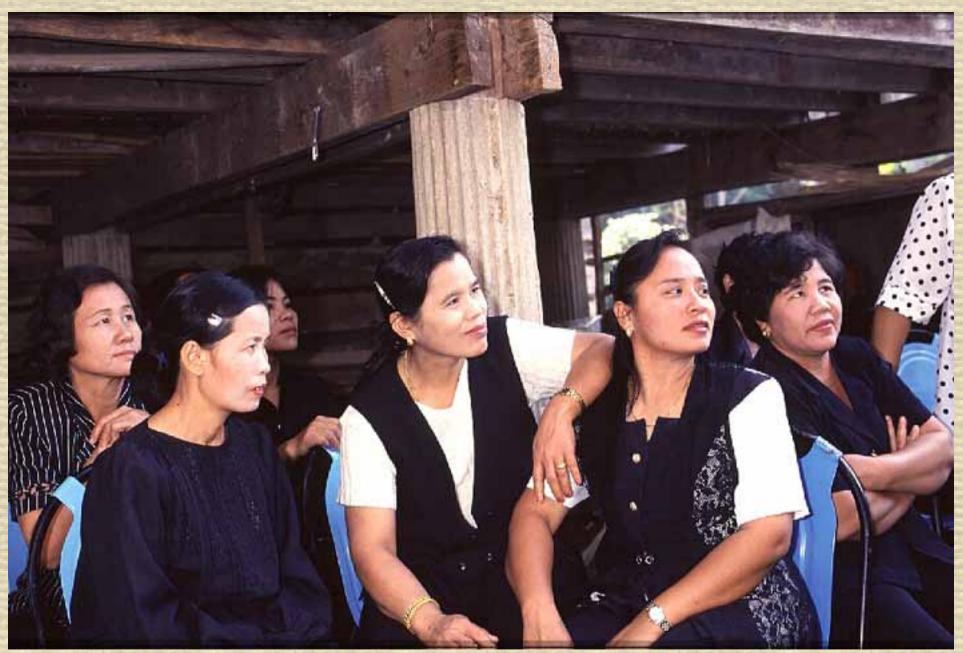
230 Mae Kong Nya 1998.



231 Mae Kong Nya 1999.



232 Mae Kong Nya 1998.



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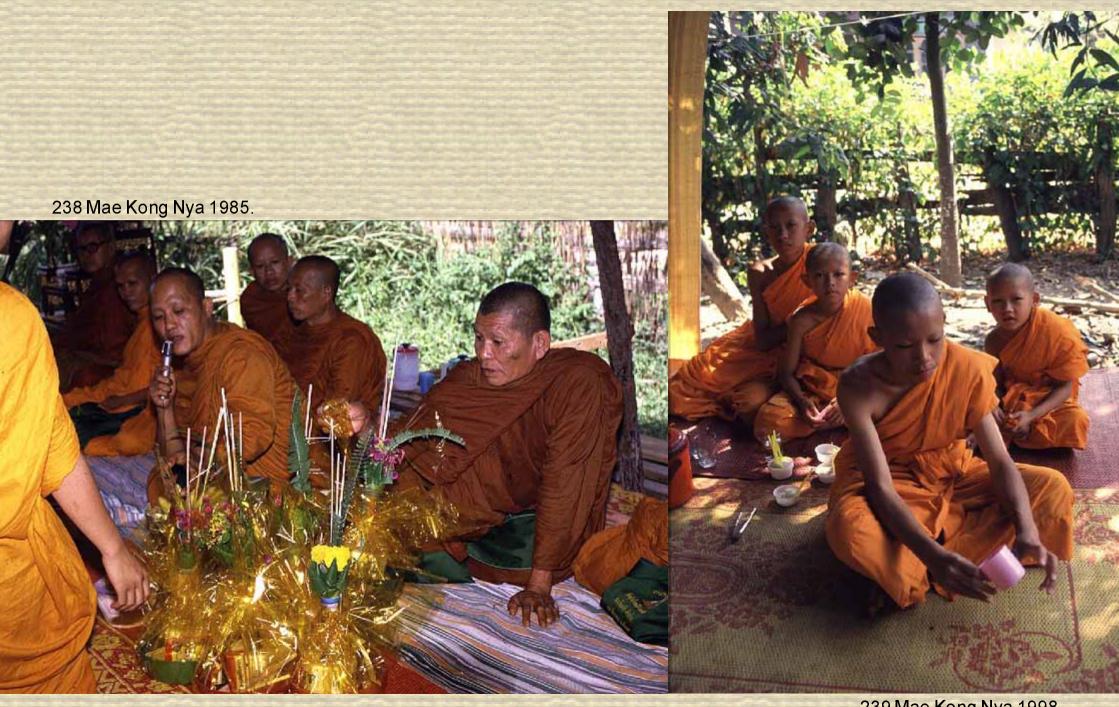
234 Mae Kong Nya 1998.







237 Mae Kong Nya 1998.



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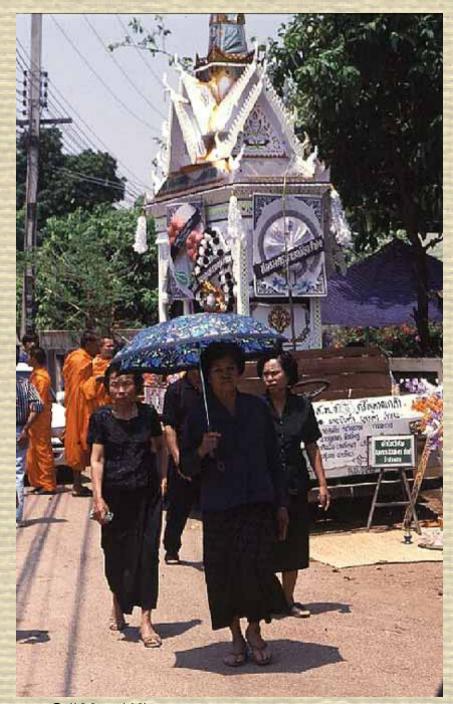
242 Mae Kong Nya 1998.



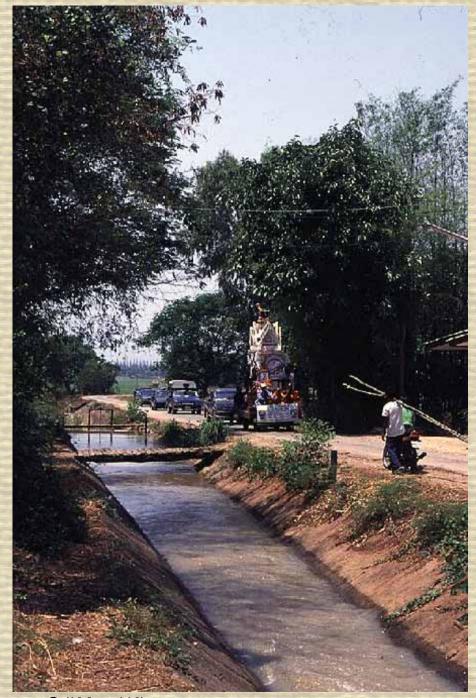


244 Mae Kong Nya 1985.



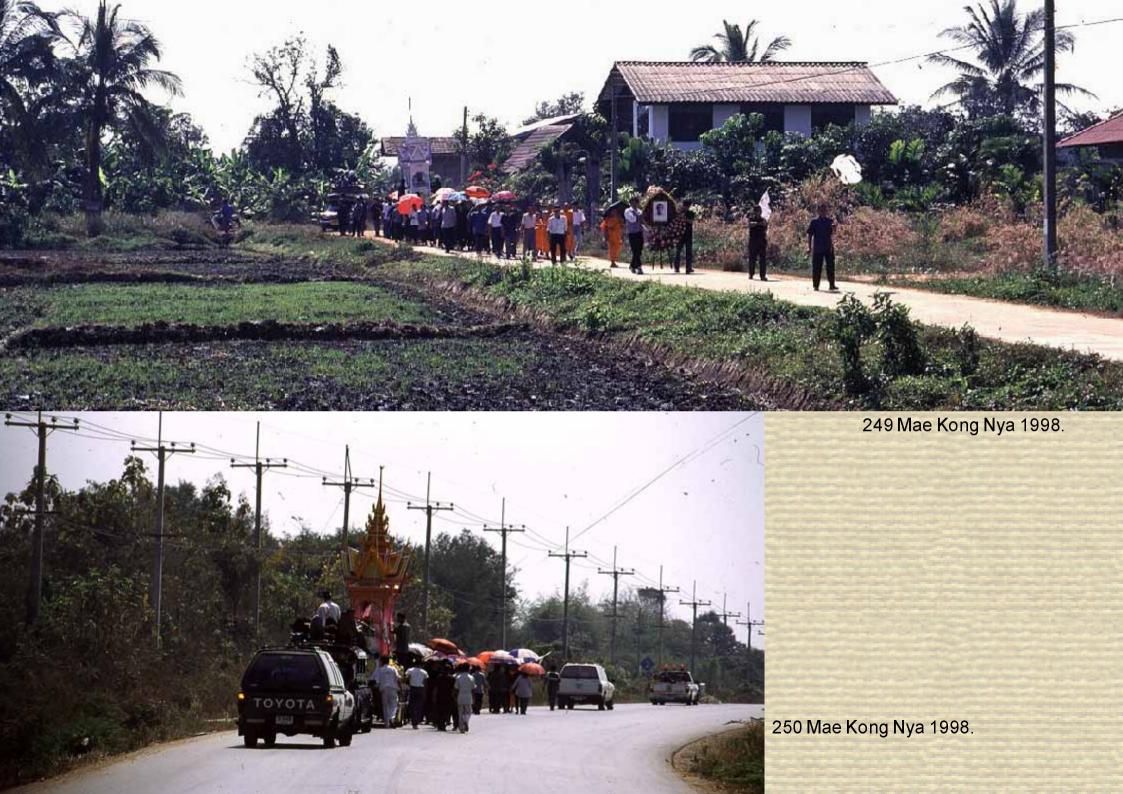


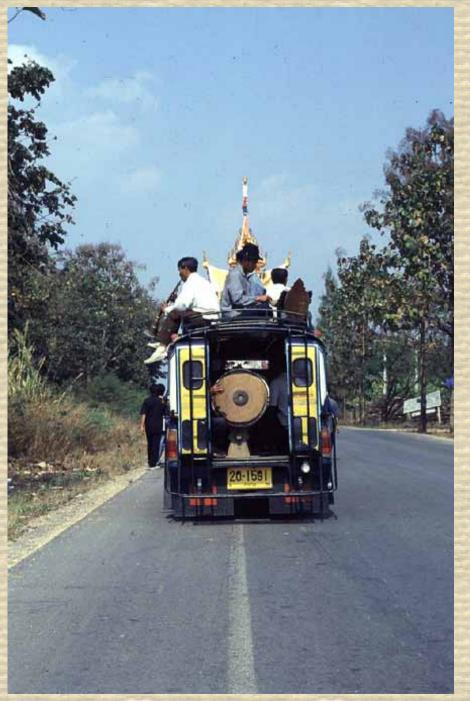
246 Srii Muod Klao 1998.



247 Srii Muod Klao 1998.



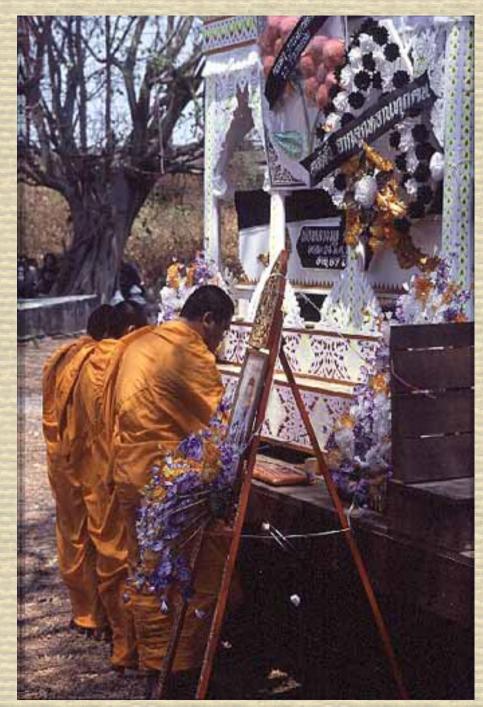




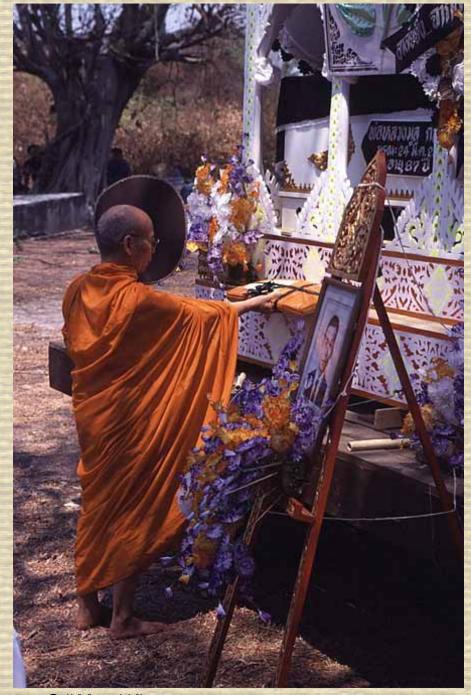
251 Mae Kong Nya 1998.



252 Mae Kong Nya 1998.



253 Srii Muod Klao 1998.

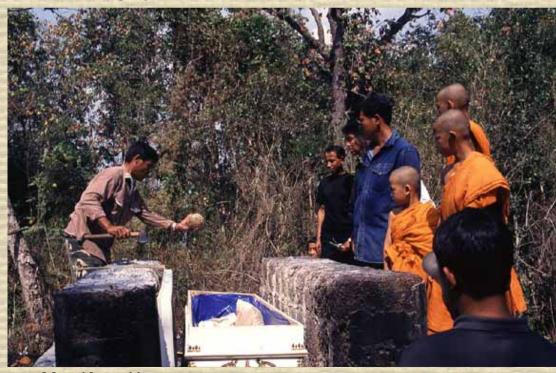


254 Srii Muod Klao 1998.

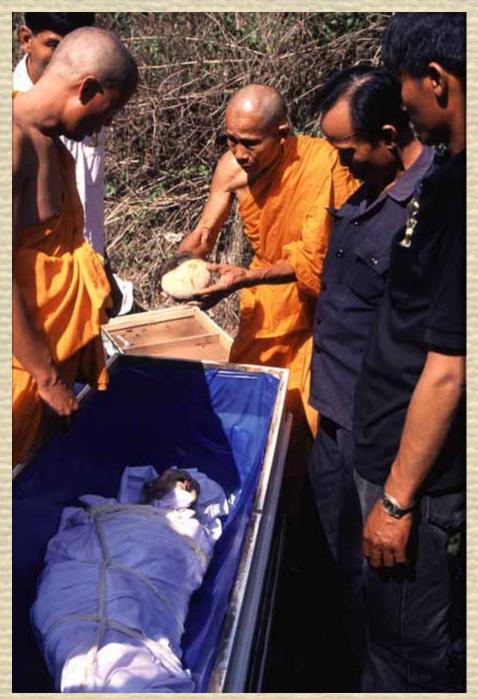




256 Mae Kong Nya 1998.



257 Mae Kong Nya 1998.



258 Mae Kong Nya 1998.



259 Mae Kong Nya 1998.





262 Lampang 1985.



261 Lampang 1985.





264 Sob Tui 1973.

INSIDE THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY

Annual festivals

Farmer's festival calendar. In Lampang, the rainy season starts according to the Western calendar in May at the latest and ends in December, when there is first a brief cool period before the dry season. The last rains come around January tenth; these slight rains are called mango rains, because they affect the ripening of mango fruit. In the cool period, the temperature might fall to under 20 degrees C, in the mountains to under ten degrees, and in a humid climate, such nights are cold and the villagers burn fires in their compounds. In January, the coolness is replaced by heat. Gradually, the heat increases, grass dries up and many trees, such as teak, shed their leaves, and fields turn rock-hard. In April the heat becomes oppressive. In this hottest period falls Songkran, Thai New Year. Soon afterwards the first thunderstorms come and downpours replenish the dry earth; the rainy season begins, nature awakens and villagers start a new farming season. In European peasant tradition, the equivalent has been May Day, the festival of spring and the start of sowing and planting.

In the old days, the dry season was spent building and repairing houses, visiting relatives, making pilgrimages to famous temples. To pass the time, bullfights, cockfights and Thai boxing matches were organized. Thirty years ago, there was a bullfighting ring to the south of the city, where villagers took their zebu bulls for headbutting matches. These matches entailed the bulls locking horns and butting until one gave in and fled; the proud winner remained strutting around the arena. Nothing more cruel happened at the fights. The same applied to cockfights, the intention was not that the losing fighting cock should be killed. The audience was mostly interested in betting, increasing stakes, cash changing hands, that was the excitement of the fights. Cockfights still go on and there are many village men who raise their fighting cocks with great care, treat their wounds and rejoice in their victories.

The old Thai calendar followed lunar chronology and the annual festivals were attached to events in Buddha's life, in the same way that chronology has also been religionized in other high religions. In agrarian cultures, the most important festivals have fallen at the start or close of farming work. The change of year or new year festival has usually followed the harvest, when the results of the year's labour were reaped. Then, fecundity, fertility of the soil, was transferred to the following year, and the ancestors were given their share of what the earth had produced. In Thailand, too, in the old lunar calendar New Year fell on the time of the new moon in November, and in the Buddhist year there have been notable days after the end of the rice harvest,

such as bun kathin and bun phraaves, when harvest festivals and markets were held in temples and offerings made to ancestors. In Northern Thailand, women's 'finger nail dance' (fawn lep) belonged to these temple festivals. In 1889, Thailand moved over to a solar year, and the New Year festival, Songkran, was moved to April (13-15.4.); the new year began at the end of the dry season and the start of the rainy season and at the same time the new cropping season. In the rainy season, a period of religious importance was Lent, which began as khaw phansa when the transplanting of rice was finished, and ended as org phansa. The fasting period lasted three months, while the rice was growing, a critical period for the harvest. At that time, old people spent a lot of time at temples, and it was usually for the period of Lent that young men entered the monastery as monks.(41

From 1951, Thailand has officially followed the Western (Gregorian) calendar, which regulates business, the education system and administrative culture. However, in the national calendar, the year is counted from the birth of Buddha (543 BC). The old Buddhist calendar of holidays is also adapted to international months, but many old temple days have lost their status. The Thai Chinese also still follow their own lunar calendar characterized by 12-year periods and years named after animals. The Chinese New Year usually falls in February. There are still three New Year celebrations in Lampang: the Western and Chinese New Years and Songkran. However, Songkran has in recent years become the greatest festival period, the national New Year. City celebrations complete with processions are a part of national culture, and they are organized by provincial and municipal cultural authorities jointly with the local business community.

In an industrialized society the concept of time changes, and the periodicity associated with seasons of the farming year is displaced. In the production life of Thailand, too, time already moves incessantly around the clock, form one working day to the next, from one weekend to the next, regardless of the seasons; the production process must never stop. Modern rhythm of life is governed by schedules, precise working hours, events dictated by the clock, to which local people have not adjusted very quickly. In Lampang, a distinction is still drawn between Westerners' or farang time and Thai time. According to Western concept of time, everything must happen precisely at the appointed hour, while Thai time is defined in approximate terms, and being an hour or two late for an appointment is acceptable. To date, all the events and celebrations at which I have been present over the years have begun according to Thai concept of time.

Modern annual festivals. Twenty years ago the Chinese New Year was as important a festival in Lampang as Songkran. Chinese shopkeepers would shut up shop for the week and take a holiday. In 1985, Lampang celebrated Luang Vieng Lakoon, where provincial amphoes displayed their local cultures, among other things. Chinese dragons go around the city during New Year week. They are pupils of Chinese schools collecting funds for their school from shopkeepers and individual families. Accompanied by frantically beating drums and firecrackers, the dragon dives into the shop and snatches in its mouth an

envelope of money hung above the door or from the ceiling. The festival of Tip Chang or Elephant Boy (5.2), the national hero of Northern Yuan people, is also held in February on the parade ground in front of his memorial statue. The climax of the dry season festivals is celebration of Songkran. In the villages, Songkran used to be a quiet festival at the temple and for visiting, when the young would visit the elderly to honour them. Nowadays Songkran in Lampang City is a great 'Water Festival' with processions and public events.

The greatest festival at the end of the rainy season is Loi Kratong, the festival of small flower boats, at the time of full moon in the 12th month (November). Then families gather in the evening by the river to send little flower boats with candles down the river, to drift along slowly with the candles reflecting on the dark surface of the water. Loi Kratong has now become a two-day festival in Lampang. On the first night, families send lotus boats down river, and processions of boats travel up and down the river until the small hours, colourful lights shining and music and advertisements blaring from loudspeakers. On the evening of the second day there is a festive procession in town, after which families customarily go to a restaurant for dinner. Businesses, schools and public offices build large boats for the procession, and they contain the same elements as other processions: golden palaces, lotus and dragon thrones, upon which sit queens surrounded by a guard of warriors. They are decorated by mythical creatures, these days including also the cockerel of Lampang, the emblem of the city; the dedicated Loi Kratong symbols are the lotus flower and the swan.

The history of Loi Kratong is not precisely known. (42 In Bangkok, sending of flower boats along the canals has been made into an atmospheric tourist festival, and apparently with tourism, the two-day Loi Kratong has become established also in Lampang. It may be that the background is an idea of the stream of Hades, which in religious world views of various nations, including that of the Finns, has separated the habitats of the living and the dead. Lotus boats have been sent off at new year, after the harvest, to take offerings to the deceased; in the imaginations of their time they were ancestors' boats, drifting on the dark stream towards the realm of the dead.

December 5th is the King's birthday which has become Thailand's national day. Then government and municipal officials, such as representatives of schools, hospitals and public agencies, assemble in Lampang to honour the King. The King's Day is a public ceremony, a part of official culture, like the memorial festival of Tip Chang, the Northern national hero. Villagers take no part in them. In December, village schools organize sports events, and in 1984, a sport tournament between schools of all Northern provinces was held in Lampang.

At the time of Western New Year, a great cool season fair is held in the park of Lampang Stadium, continuing the tradition of harvest festivals. The fair goes on all week and culminates in the election of Miss Lampang on New Year's night. The fair reached the peak of its popularity in the 1980s, when in addition to traders, also many government agencies, charitable

organizations and counselling services erected their information points at the fair. The fair still goes on, but it has become almost totally commercialized, with the festival ground dominated by beer tents, big wheels, fun fairs and large sales stalls. However, the City does have its own cultural pavilion in the park, where young musicians and dancers may show off their skills and awards of merit are presented to those who have made best progress. On the morning of the first day of the year, a Buddhist ceremony is held, where townspeople may present gifts to the monks in the same way as at Songkran; in 1998 the presentation took place at the stadium, and about 300 monks took part. Commercial festivals spread quickly. 1985 was the first year when Valentine's Day was marketed in Thailand, and around Western Christmas time, Christmas trees with presents appear in shops and restaurants and international Christmas carols are played in department stores; at the turn of the year, presents are exchanged and greeting cards sent. But Christmas is still an unknown festival in the villages.

I have photographed the annual festivals of the city and also of schools, and I have thousands of pictures of them in my collections. However, city festivals do not belong to the village culture that is the subject of this book. Villagers do take part in the events of Chinese New Year and Songkran, and that is why I will describe them in a little more detail.

Chinese New Year. A large local mass show and local heritage festival, Luang Vieng Lakon, was organized in the city in 1985. That year, the festival began on 21 February and lasted for three days. The main theme of the shows was the history of the city's Emerald Buddha, with particular remembrance of Mother Suchada who died a martyr according to legend. The first two days were devoted to displays of the villages, Krua Tan processions, and competitions with a heritage theme. On the third day, the proceedings were organized by local horse-drawn cabs and stables, and they culminated at the city's stadium. The processions assembled on the playing field of School no. Four along Roawp Wieng. The programme began in the morning with a hot-air balloon competition between temples. The village teams arranged themselves on the school playing field, and after the opening ceremony marched in procession through the city to the Wat Phra Kaew Don Tao temple, where the Emerald Buddha is kept. Dance and drumming teams and virtuosi of the old singing heritage performed in the temple compounds, and the dance troupe and traditional orchestra of Ban Srii Muod Klao also took part in the nail dancing contest.

In the Krua Tan processions amphoes and villages presented something characteristic of their local culture or their occupations or crafts. Mostly, the teams displayed farming produce from their villages, but there were also villages of potters, craftsmen and weavers. Some villagers wanted to display their temple or other place of interest of which villagers were proud. The programme of the third day included a procession of horse-drawn vehicles, election of the horse queen, and equestrian competitions at the city's sports stadium; the highlights were a riding competition and a Roman style chariot race.

The small Emerald Buddha statue is Lampang's most valuable religious artefact, of which there are only two in the country. It

plays a part in all big festivals in the city. The 1985 processions retold in many ways the legend of the birth of Emerald Buddha and the death of Mother Suchada; a sound and slide presentation of Mother Suchada's story was given in the evenings at Wat Phra Kaew Don Tao. In 1998, a splendid carriage had been built for Emerald Buddha, to carry it in e.g. Songkran processions. According to the legend of the birth of the statue I will recount it here briefly - Nang Suchada was a woman who farmed vegetables on the other side of the river to the north of the city, when it was still countryside. One morning, she found a large melon with a piece of emerald inside in her garden, and took it to a monk at the temple in town. The monk was unable to carve the emerald, but an old man mysteriously appeared and carved it in the shape of Buddha. The emerald statue quickly became famous and people came in hordes to the temple to make offerings. After a while, jealous people began to spread a rumour that Nang Suchada and the monk were secret lovers. When the Prince of Lampang heard this, he ordered that Nang Suchada must be executed. When the executioner took Mother Suchada to the riverside to be killed, she swore her innocence and said before she died that if her blood runs upwards and not down towards the earth, she is innocent. When the executioner cut off her head with his sword, her blood spurted high up in the air. Then everyone believed that Mother Suchada had been executed in innocence. This took place 1,500 years ago. The monk left the temple, taking the statue to Wat Phra That Lampang Luang, and each time an attempt was made to bring it back to its former temple, it returned there by itself. However, a few decades ago the Emerald Buddha was brought back to Wat Phra Kaew Don Tao. The processions referred to the birth legend with figures of executioners with swords and a comical-looking Prince of Lampang, who also got his come-uppance according to the legend.

In 1998, the country was in the grip of an economic slump and the Chinese New Year celebrations were simple, and combined with the day of Tip Chang. There were no carriages with decorations in the procession, but participants, who were mostly teams from official agencies, carried tall pennants. The procession started from the square outside the city offices and progressed to the statue of Tip Chang, where the annual memorial event was held. At Lampang festivals, people march in processions through the city, and reassemble their exhibition floats and floral decorations again and again over the years. All the events include dance performances by young people, thousands of new variations have been created of the traditional temple dance, and all big festivals include the opportunity of presenting gifts to monks, to obtain merits for the future.

Songkran

New Year of Thai culture. Songkran has been a three-day festival of the turn of the year. On the last day of the year (Songkran), a ceremony of washing the statue of Buddha and the hands of the monks was held in the temple compound. Families went to the temple carrying water that they poured over monks' hands. This way, villagers washed away the sins of the monks that they may have accumulated through the year. At the same occasion, a small statue of Buddha was doused with

water and the water collected; this was holy somploi water with which the hands of old people were washed at Songkran, but through the year it was also used for many other purposes. The next day (Van Naw) was the Day of the Ancestors, when it was customary in Lampang to collect sand from the river and to build small sand stupas in temple compounds. On that day, the first of the new year, young people visited the elderly of their families. They ran holy water on the old people's hands and pressed a white chalk mark on their foreheads, and the elders gave them their New Year blessing. This is still the custom today, as the interviews show. The third day (Thalerngsok) was a day of amusement, when villagers would walk in procession along village lanes, pouring water over themselves or each other, to ensure sufficient rain in the rainy season and a good crop of rice that year. (43

Lampang City Songkran celebrations go on for two days, after which people are given the chance to carry on within their family circles and with more solemn services at temples. People collect consecrated water from the city parade ground upon which a large wooden 'consecration plant' is erected; I have silently also dubbed it a holy water factory. In 1985 the water consecration plant was new, used for the first time on the School No. Four playing field. The plant is a large structure in which the Emerald Buddha is 'washed'. People come in family groups bringing water and flowers in their offering bowls and pour the water in a long wooden gutter, whence it runs over the statue of Buddha into a large container. Water that is now consecrated is collected from pipes that protrude from the sides of the structure. The consecration plant stands on the parade ground on both holy days and there is always a queue of people at it.

The main feature of Songkran has become people dousing one another with water. Young people and adults, too, stand at roadsides with their water containers and drench all passers-by. Village youngsters hire vans and set off with water barrels cruising the streets of Lampang, each bombarding other vehicles and gangs positioned at roadsides. The dousing starts several days before Songkran and it is impossible to walk on the streets for a couple of weeks without getting soaked. Today, Songkran is the most important festive season in Thailand, when people take a holiday, travel, and those who have moved to cities visit their home villages. All public transport is full, the roads come to a standstill and many accidents take place, with 500-600 people killed on the roads over Songkran every year. (44 Newspapers carry pieces complaining about binge drinking and slackening of good manners. Cities have started organizing official events at Songkran and directing the water fights e.g. by providing barrels at roadsides; they have managed to stop mixing of ice cubes in the dousing water and spoiling of people's clothing with lime. What is meant by slackening of discipline is relative. I have not seen many drunks in Lampang at Songkran, nor at any other festivals. People from Thailand would probably view with horror the kind of public drunkenness of young people that happens in Finland, for example on modern May Day.

Programme of the Water Festival. Nowadays, the first day of Songkran in the city starts with the procession of the Silver Bowl or the Gods. The small Wat Pratuu Ton Phyng temple on Thama O Street on the north side of the river received the gift of

the 'world's largest silver bowl' which is taken in a procession guarded by warriors through the city to the new festival ground. On arrival at the Khelang Nakhorn park, the new central park, an evening event is held there. The procession of the Silver Bowl replaced the former military procession. The custom used to be that representatives of townspeople crossed the river at the official residence of the Governor, with a military guard riding on elephants at the head of the procession, to deliver him a Songkran greeting. This ceremony was deemed to be too male-oriented, and a new celebratory tradition was created to better reflect equality of the sexes. Crossing the river is also nigh on impossible today, because the water level across town is kept high throughout the dry season. The idea behind the new procession is that along the way, people pour water from their offering bowls into scoops held by the guards, who then pour it into the great Silver Bowl. At the festival ground, the water is consecrated and shared among townspeople. The procession of the Silver Bowl would unite townspeople in a dignified way that honours traditions.

In 1998, Lampang City Songkran festivities followed this programme:

Sunday 12 April

In the morning, the Emerald Buddha is brought to the Town Hall.

14:00. Procession of the Silver Bowl from Wat Pratuu Ton Phyng temple to the central park festival ground, where consecration of the water takes place.

17:00. Evening event on central park festival ground. The programme includes a traditional cookery competition, public donations to cover the cost of the new carriage for Emerald Buddha, and dance performances on the stage.

Monday 13 April

6:30. Morning event on the festival ground. Buddhist gift ceremony, service and consecration of water. About 300 monks receive gifts.

9:00. Freeing of birds and fish on the festival ground. Consecration of water. Washing of hands of the elderly.

13:00. Festival procession, starting from the railway station, proceeding along Chatchai past the Town Hall to Boonyawat and ending on the square at the city offices.

Tuesday 14 April

14:00. Sand pagoda building competition at Wat Kaowarukaram. 16:30 Prize giving.

Wednesday 15 April

8:00. Ceremony of the Bho Tree and giving of gifts to monks (wisaka Bucha). I attended this ceremony in Ban Srii Muod Klao.

Often, processions have a message that may be expressed by participants in different ways. In 1985, Mother Suchada

reminded people of the position of women and promoted equality of the sexes. At the end of the 1990s, the processions included young men dressed up as transvestites, who wanted to defend sexual equality and tolerance. As is customary at annual festivals, highest officials of the province and city took part in the Silver Bowl procession, and the city administration had forbidden dousing of the procession. However, this was not heeded, and the procession was thoroughly drenched on the way. At the evening event, people went around watching teams from different villages preparing traditional dishes, and the Governor with his assistants received donations from townspeople for the building fund of Emerald Buddha's carriage, with the donors receiving a small parcel wrapped in red paper in return. The evening ended with dance performances which belong to all celebrations.

The main Songkran festivities began in the central park on the Monday morning (13 April) a little before eight o'clock. Public celebrations have their established formula. The occasion is opened by the highest-ranking person present, in Lampang usually the Governor, by lighting a candle on the altar of Buddha. Then follows a Buddhist service, and if the kathin ceremony is included, four monks sit on the seats reserved for teachers. In the kathin ceremony, high-ranking guests hand robes to monks seated on the dais; in Lampang public hierarchy the first are the Governor, the Mayor, the Chairman of the City Council and the Members of Thailand's Parliament elected from the province. The Buddhist service is followed by raising of the flag accompanied by the national anthem.

At the main Songkran festival, townspeople have an opportunity of together giving gifts to monks, of whom at least three hundred were expected. The monks sat down behind long tables in the shade of the festive canopy, and people distributed their gifts walking along the rows of tables. The gifts were placed in small polythene bags; a little rice, tea and other 'dry goods', preserves, spices, and also detergents, soap and toothpaste, anything the monks need at the monastery. As in giving temple gifts, everyone can attach their own requests silently to their gifts, but the monks are particularly present at New Year celebrations to bless the new period in the lives of local people.

At the morning festivities, washing of hands of the honorary elderly took place. Twenty old women and men sat behind a long table under the festival canopy, and each of them received gifts from the city. Washing of the hands was started by the Governor with his wife. Many Lampang residents came as families, children included, and everyone took turns to pour somploi water from a small silver cup on an old person's hands. At this event, people wanted to teach the children the beautiful old custom of Songkran. At Songkran, people selling captured birds in small cages also traditionally arrive, as releasing birds is a good deed in Buddhism. However, it looked like people no longer approve of birds being caught, as they did not buy them and at the end of the festivities, the sellers had to leave with their unsold birdcages.

The main Songkran procession (13 April, 13 o'clock) set off from Sob Tui station as always, and proceeded via the clock tower

to the city administrative complex on the other side of town. The march-past of the procession took around two hours. Dozens of teams, amphoes, villages, institutions and societies had once more decorated their floats and joined the procession. The public stood at the roadside with their water containers and doused the participants, everyone was drenched through. Now in 1998, at the head of the procession, right behind the police cars, came the new golden carriage of Emerald Buddha, and behind it elephants carrying Buddhist religious symbols. Then came baisris drawn by white zebu and flower pyramids, with a young woman sitting among them, then a tiger with a pretty girl on its back, accompanied by a panther, again carrying a beautiful woman. Almost every zebu cart or dragon carriage contained a pretty girl surrounded by flowers. This time, the tiger theme was repeated in the procession, as the new year was the year of the tiger. Another symbol belonging to Songkran processions was a thick yellow bho-tree prop or a bunch of forked props. Familiar old floats representing village crafts and events were there, with young men on the back of a lorry showing Thai boxing, advertising the boxing arena in their village. Nowadays, dance shows and processions always include a team from one of the mountain peoples. And, as in all celebrations, a pair of speakers make announcements and give prizes to teams as they pass the honorary stand erected in front of the Town Hall. The stand was empty; the city fathers and elderly people had already tired of the celebrations and continuous drenching.

Bhodhi Tree Festival. Today, Songkran has a fourth day, Wisaka Buddha, or the day of Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death. According to the old lunar calendar, it has fallen at the start of the rainy season, the busiest time of the year in village cultures. No great temple celebrations were held in villages on Wisaka Buddha, but monks were given uncooked rice and monasteries were generally stocked up with dry foodstuffs, because during the farming season villagers did not always have time to take care of monks' daily food. In 1985, the custom in Lampang temples was still to bring monks large quantities of uncooked rice, but today the gifts are mainly cash or other small everyday necessaries, like at other religious occasions. According to legend, Buddha was enlightened after fasting in the shade of a bhodhi tree. The original bhodhi tree was thought to be a banyan tree, and such a bho tree grows in the compounds of Theravada Buddhist temples.

The Wisaka Buddha is particularly festive in Ban Srii Muod Klao. In the morning, local families, albeit often just the women and children, arrive on foot or on mopeds at the temple, bringing a long forked pole painted yellow. Women carry a silver bowl on their arms, containing flowers, candles, incense, scented water and gifts for the monks, and children carry small pennants. The yellow props are stood at the foot of the bho tree to support its lower branches. This is a symbolic way of supporting old age, ensuring health and a long life for the elderly of the family and for oneself, too. On the previous day, the Day of the Ancestors, a communal sand stupa has been prepared in the temple yard, where families place their pennants.

Canopies are erected in the temple compound, where gifts are collected. Behind a long table, members of the temple council and women helpers sell pennants, candles, flowers and other material for offerings, as is the custom at all great temple

festivals. In 1998, there were ten different places where one could make an offering or a donation at Ban Srii Muod Klao temple. After placing their poles under the Bho tree, families go to the sale stall to buy candles and other offering paraphernalia; many families also bought gold leaf and placed it on the statue of Buddha that was being gilded for the new village monastery. Then they went to the sand stupa. In many families, the children erected their pennants without any particular ceremony. Old women, who observed good religious customs of the past, knelt and bowed to the ground to show their piety and respect. Some families brought an offering of food and water for an ancestor, and these were taken to a low dais by the temple wall to a monk who would read verses of the offering rite over the food tray.

After leaving the sand pagoda, people lit a taper on the 'candle altar' located in the compound in front of the temple steps. To make an offering, people placed a burning candle in a long low rack, adding incense and flowers in the sand of the altar. From the candle altar, they moved on to the 'flower altar' in front of the temple door. Women formed a queue that snaked through the right-hand side stairs, while the men came straight in from the left. There was no queue on the men's side, only some old man came to meet his wife. The women first placed flowers in a large bowl, then kneeled on the floor, poured a little scented water into a tank and put some money in the temple coffer through a slot in its lid. There were also three plates by the coffer, where money was placed for poor families. The flowers were taken inside the temple and placed in front of the statue of Buddha, before the day's temple service began.

After leaving the flower altar, women settled down to chat on the salaa steps or inside the temple. The men sat around on the floor of the temple, on the right-hand side by the wall, or in the shade of the Bho tree. A money tree was being made under the Bho tree, with 20 baht notes hung on it for donation to the temple. At 11 o'clock the monks had their meal in the temple. After they had finished, collection of the gift packages followed, corresponding to presentation of uncooked rice to the monks in wisaka Bucha. Finally a Sunday service was held in the temple, starting with a donation contest or auction in aid of the monastery. It was held inside the temple and took around half an hour, while the speaker read out the sums of money and the names of the donors. Finally, it was also possible to donate to the monks in the customary way during the temple service; monks and temple boys had arrived also from neighbouring villages. A couple of people selling captured birds had arrived in the temple compound, but trade was poor here, too. Only two young women released a bird from the temple doorway. After the temple service ended, the day of gifts was over, the visiting monks left, the temple compound emptied of mopeds and cars. Hundreds of yellow poles remained placed around the Bho tree.

Dangers of life

Attraction of sex tourism. The oldest informants of this book have witnessed a total change of the deep foundation of local culture in their lifetime. The future comes from somewhere outside the village, and people must adapt to the new conditions of living, regardless of what consequences they may bring. Villages as communities have begun to disintegrate, the old social ethics, family morality, sexual morality, respect of elders, all the old values of agrarian cultures are gradually losing their significance. Perhaps here, too, young people will adopt a new 'teen culture', where rebelling against parents and elders and imitation of international 'trends' constitute heroism. The villages now have drugs and Aids, youth problems, which were thought to belong only to metropoles and Western cultures.

In the world's press, Thailand is labelled as the land of sex tourism and drugs. According to sensational statistics, there are at least 2.8 million prostitutes in Thailand, and their number grows from one set of figures to the next. The country's indigenous researchers have now tried to curb the writing and found that if such statistics were true, at least one in three Thai women aged 19-30 would be serving Western sex tourists, and the tourist regions would already have more prostitutes than female inhabitants. In reality, the number of professional or full-time sex workers is likely to be around 60,000; according to estimates by women's associations about 300,000.(45 Women may also visit brothels and hotels on a temporary basis, but they are probably also fewer than publicized. In relation to the total population, there are no more prostitutes in Thailand than in European countries. People writing about the brothels in Thailand mention as given that prostitution has always been a part of the culture in Asian countries. That is also one-sided generalization. Above all, prostitution has belonged to European culture from the times of its earliest civilizations. Brothels were brought to Thailand by the US army during the Korean war; sex trade has always flourished around all American military bases. In 1983, it was said that there was only one brothel in Lampang city. Young men stood in line at its door. In the 1970s, village men would not have had the money for sexual services, and prostitution become common only in the 1980s with the advent of sex tourism. In the years of economic growth, restaurants, hotels and dance halls sprouted also in Lampang, and village men began to frequent them. Tourism and Western development have brought sexual services to everyone's reach.

Brothels were banned in Thailand in 1960 due to international pressure, but with the advent of sex tourism the law lost its practical impact, and a new, less draconian law has been under way. People of Thailand do not approve of brothels any more than people elsewhere in the world, but they have reconciled themselves to the fact that sexual services are a part of the tourist industry. In villagers' view, a girl or boy working in a brothel has her or his own reasons. The prime reason is poverty of the family; prostitution provides work for women who are poorly educated or who cannot otherwise find a decent job. It is said that the obligation of daughters to take care of their parents has led many country girls to take up sex work, often without her parents' knowledge. On the other hand, the commercial culture and loosening of moral values are bound to impact on young

people's attitudes and behaviour. In Thailand, in common with many other Asian countries, female students have found that by selling themselves every now and then to rich tourists or businessmen, they can earn many times more than from normal employment. The girls spend their easily earned cash on expensive fashions, make-up and other luxury goods; they may feel that they are living truly elegantly. In the mode of expression of modern youth, they are doing something with good earnings potential while 'having a good time'. The girls use the Internet and mobile phones, and seek connections to wealthy businessmen's clubs and hotels. There is no longer any need to go to brothels. Student girls may also take a 'sugar daddy', a wealthy, older businessman or official who will finance their studies. (46

Commercialization of society lies behind prostitution. Constant need for cash makes even young mothers take up temporary work in brothels in order to make extra money. By becoming involved in the world of entertainment, many girls and boys, too, may alleviate the disillusionment of failure at college and university entrance examinations. In college cities, young people become detached from their homes, the atmosphere of their family and village. In many homes, both parents also must work today, and nobody supervises the family's teenagers. In reality, the number of boys and girls among schoolchildren and students earning cash from prostitution is very small, but the media produce ever new sensational news on the subject, media business. Gradually, this affects young people's ideas of what other young people do, and how archaic it is to adhere to the norms of morality of the local community.

Fated to contract Aids. The informants believed that there were around ten people with Aids in the villages. Many of them are already dead, and many are seen to be dying. The figures on Aids patients have varied wildly, but I will here only refer to the investigations by the country's Ministry of Public Health Bureau of Epidemiology. Between 1984 and 2000, about 140,000 people were diagnosed HIV positive, of whom 110,000 are men; in Finland, the number of Aids patients has been only about 1,700. The majority of those infected were labourers (44 -48 %) and farmers (21 %); the majority of those who knew the source of their infection had caught the virus through heterosexual intercourse (87 %), but a number also from needles used to inject drugs (5 %); only a minority (0.8 %) are homosexuals. The total number of Aids patients who have died in Thailand over these fifteen years is about 30,000. Aids is most widespread in the Northern district of Chiang Mai, of which the province of Lampang is part. In the seven provinces of the district, the number of dead by 2001 was over 13,000; in Lampang province 88 people for every 100,000 inhabitants. (47

Why has Aids spread especially in Northern Thailand? It is said that northern girls are particularly pretty, and that was why they were enticed to southern tourist centres, and also that pre-marital sexual morality was not as absolute among northern mountain peoples as in the agrarian villages of the plains. When southern girls no longer went to the brothels in the years of economic growth, they were replaced by girls from remote northern areas and mountain peoples. The first great wave of Aids

caught this group. Subsequently, the cycle has continued. Today, illegal workers from Burma, China, Laos and Cambodia are flooding into Northern and Eastern Thailand. Among them are girls who enter the brothels. These good, quiet country girls work to provide financial help to their parents, money for building a new house, modern conveniences, a fridge and a moped. According to global statistics, Aids is now spreading like wildfire beyond the borders of Thailand, in the so-called poor countries of South-East Asia.

Those who have contracted Aids in the villages of this book, as well as elsewhere in rural areas of Thailand, have primarily been middle-aged men with families, who in the economic boom years frequented city bars and indulged in heavy drinking, and encouraged by this, visited a cheap brothel. They did not believe the disease to be as dangerous as it is, and in their drunken state did not bother to use protection. Their victims are women and children. In the interviews, many fathers spoke of their sons who had died of Aids, but statistics show that there are few young men among the sufferers, and they tend to have dropped out of school and become hooked on drugs or alcohol. The young have also been quickest to learn to protect themselves from HIV infections.

The villager interviews conducted between 1997-1999 show that Aids-sufferers are not shunned or hated like in the early days when the illness was embellished by all kinds of rumours; no reliable information existed then. All the villagers say that they would go to the funeral of an Aids victim to share a meal. But on the other hand, there is a sign on the wall of the village barber's shop saying that it refuses to cut Aids patients' hair. The fear has gripped many wives who have some doubts as to their husbands' fidelity. In many families, Aids seems to have led to profound discussion on the foundations of their own marriages. Women repeatedly emphasize that marriage must be based on mutual trust, and that the husband must take responsibility for his family, for his born children.

The Government of Thailand, local authorities and many charitable organizations have embarked on a fight against Aids. They have organized highly visible campaigns, trying to encourage sex workers and their clients to use condoms. In the north, young Buddhist monks have set up their own organization, sending its members to schools to educate on the issue, and also visit villages to share a meal with Aids patients. The monks want to show that they are willing to share rice with these people. It is a symbolic gesture in many ways, as local rice is eaten by hand from a shared bowl. Various organizations have set up Aids centres and care homes for orphaned children, and nowadays, even the government provides a small regular subsidy for Aids patients. Many temples have taken orphaned boys into their monasteries and given them an opportunity of education. All this public sympathy and political attention has only just begun, a couple of decades too late. For villagers, a family member who has succumbed to the illness has meant deep sorrow and financial hardship. People talk in the villages how some newborn babies have become infected by their mothers. In some cases, only a grandmother has survived from the family, and she has had to care for her orphaned grandchildren. Aids has shaken the order of culture. In village life, children and grandchildren

should take care of the grandparents, see them properly to the grave, look after them also in the life after death. Such modern destinies finally stop with the old, whom time, life and culture has deserted.

Aids education has penetrated everywhere and the number of victims has begun to decline, although statistics on deaths will continue to rise. Maybe deaths from Aids will gradually become less interesting and designated to the shadows of human life. Those infected are now more commonly prostitutes or drug users who are alienated from society, and no longer have a future in any case. In densely populated villages, deaths of ten people from Aids constitutes a rare cause of death in recent years, compared to other wasting diseases. A much greater number of people are killed in traffic accidents. Aids and drugs have now become transparent. Many people believe that every adult should by now know what Aids means, and that village communities are not obliged to endlessly sympathize with those who have no sense of responsibility for themselves or their families, for lives of other people.

Drugs and the village community. Along with Western lifestyle, the problem of drug use has also now appeared among young people. In common with under-age youngsters elsewhere in the world, they may start with sniffing solvents, gradually drop out of school and slip outside society into their own drug gangs. A second risk group consists of schoolchildren who have begun to use amphetamines and other drugs to help them through exams or pressures of school and studying in general. In addition, there is also a growing number of children of affluent city families, with the money to experiment with drugs and to indulge in extreme experiences at clubs or other places of young people's entertainment. How common is drug use in reality among the young people of Thailand?

In 1985, there were still few drug-related items in the Thai press, and the problem of young people was limited to Bangkok schools, with about 80% of drug users living in Bangkok. According to a study by the Ministry of Education in 1997-1998, amphetamines and other performance-enhancing drugs had already spread throughout the country among schoolchildren and students. Drug users in the country's schools at that time would have numbered about 10,000 or 1.4 % of school pupils, and a similar number had begun to use alcohol to alleviate their problems. About 8,000 pupils sought help from amphetamines, mostly in upper grades at school and in educational institutions leading to higher education. A recent report by the government drugs agency put the figure of drug users at 200,000, with their number more than doubled in the last five years. Most drugs were used by students in vocational schools, and one of the problem hotspots was Lampang. Another report slightly later, a study of 5.3 million students, claimed that the number of drug users has reached 700,000. This would equal 13 % of all pupils and students; although half used drugs only occasionally, this would put the figure of people dependent on drugs at about 90,000. (48

In Thailand, police have the right to carry out drugs testing, and there has been public debate on whether all the country's schoolchildren should be tested to ascertain the extent of the drugs problem. On the other hand, among thousands of schoolchildren and clubgoers tested, only a handful were found with traces of drug use. Some researchers consider the drug statistics to be exaggerated, typical civil service statistics produced by different departments to emphasize the importance of their work in an effort to procure more government funding. In reality, the drug problem would still be minor. Statistics are similar in Thailand and Finland. According to latest studies, 12 % of Finns, of young men up to a third (about 30 %), have sometimes tried drugs, but only about one percent descend to regular drug use. In the same way, young people in Thailand try drugs, but various estimates show only 0.5 1.6 % becoming dependent on drugs, or a similar or lower proportion than in Western countries.

In its own region, Thailand is the most industrialized country, with trade connections around the world, and consequently it has become a transit country of the drugs trade. The country is fighting furiously against drug crime. Drug smugglers may receive a life sentence or be sentenced to death; most of those executed recently have been drug criminals. Newspapers carry items on drug confiscations almost daily, and the drug quantities are huge. The actual drug factories are outside the country's borders and their production is intended for consumption of the Western world. On the northern hills of Thailand, opium growing has ceased, but continues in Myanmar and Laos, and in any case, synthetic drugs like amphetamine have displaced opium. (49 In Asian countries, drug use has never been common, and drugs have not threatened the future of young people like today. In actual fact, the drugs industry has evolved as a part of global commercial culture, and will go on as long as there is a demand for drugs in so-called developed countries. Instead, stimulants have long been sold in Thailand, and used particularly by people doing heavy work, such as drivers. In the villages, stimulants, medications and ever increasing alcohol use are a more serious problem than young people's drug abuse.

Young people's drug problems are familiar in the villages of this book. In Ban Srii Muod Klao, there are student hostels, where young people are said to experiment with drugs, and drug dealers have appeared in the village. In 1999, I was present at the annual festival of Ban Srii Muod Klao women's association. On this occasion, 180 women assembled at the venue dressed in uniformly coloured sarongs, the monks sat on their dais, flags flew and the speeches echoed across the monastery grounds. The women wanted to unite the village, to start helping one another; they intend to drive away the drug dealers and to bring young people back to their parents. The village men also have a corresponding pattana group. The chief of Ban Mae Kong Nya has mounted a determined attack on the drug problem and succeeded in putting a stop to local dealing. Fathers and mothers have decided to fight for their children, to defend their families and village, since society seems to be incapable of doing so. They want their village to be declared a drug-free zone. The government also wants tighter social discipline. It has decided that instead of prison, young drug users who have received a light sentence are sent to an army camp to 'recover physically and mentally'. This means: to learn discipline and responsibility that they have forgotten. The Thai village may yet gather its

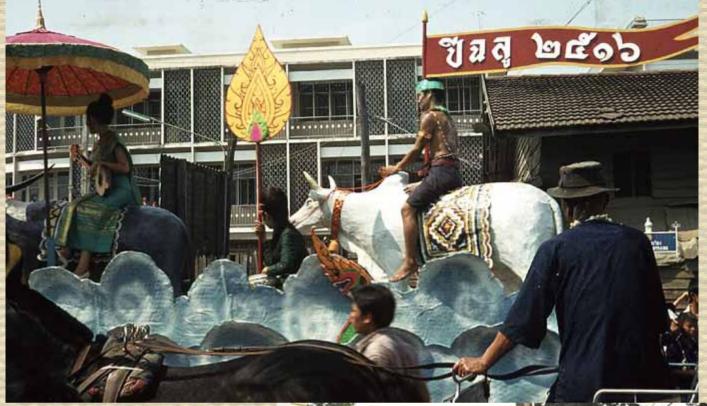
strength and tackle its shared problems.

In early 2003, when this book was already written, Thailand declared a war on drugs for three months. Lists of drug dealers and users in villages were compiled, and they were given an ultimatum to return to society. During the first months, more than 2,000 people were killed, apparently deemed to be local drug dealers, and a number of big drug barons were caught. Next, war was declared on criminality that had infiltrated society, and finally against poverty. The intention of the last campaign is to eliminate the maladies resulted from international capitalism, such as unemployment, homelessness, child abuse and domestic violence. It does not mean that Thailand intends to set up social services, because the government believes the welfare state to be an inappropriate form of culture. After drug abusers and mafiosi, the country's poor are now recorded, and they are given an opportunity to earn a living through training and loans. (50

It is not yet known whether it is possible to wipe out the 'drug culture' or social inequality, the shadows of capitalism, from the country. The fact is that in ten years, Thailand has become a competitive and education society, where the anguish of both adults and young people is real, and evidenced also by mental health and suicide statistics. Thailand's own experts believe that social change and the economic slump have brought an ever growing number of social problems. Today, the most acute issues are domestic violence, child abandonment, youth homelessness, youth crime and child prostitution. Divorces are on the up, as is violence, mental health problems and suicides of young people. (51 They are real domestic, deep flaws of the whole of society, compared to which sex tourism is only a superficial phenomenon. Before long, the country as state must be able to help those who have fallen by the wayside of modern society, who no longer have the security of family, relatives or community. The villagers' environment, too, is becoming touched by the shared problems of modernized and globalized states, the world's shared fates, shared horror stories. The world's nations are united by the internal degeneration of Western development culture. Who could know what varieties of modern tragedy are contained in the death of an Aids patient or that of a drug addict and drug dealer?

Photos 265-279. Festivities of the dry season. Bull fight in 1973. The winner struts proudly around the arena (265). Chinese New Year procession 1973 (266-267). Luang Viang Lakon processions 1985 (268-275). Villages of the province display their products in the festival carriages. Women's temple dance belongs in all festivals (272) and new versions are constantly created. New version of the dry season processions, Tip Chan day 1998 (276-278). Dragons of Chinese students 1998 (279).





266 Lampang 1973.



267 Lampang 1973.





269 Lampang 1985.



270 Lampang 1985.



271 Lampang 1985.





273 Lampang 1985.

274 Lampang 1985.





275 Lampang 1985.





278 Lampang 1998.

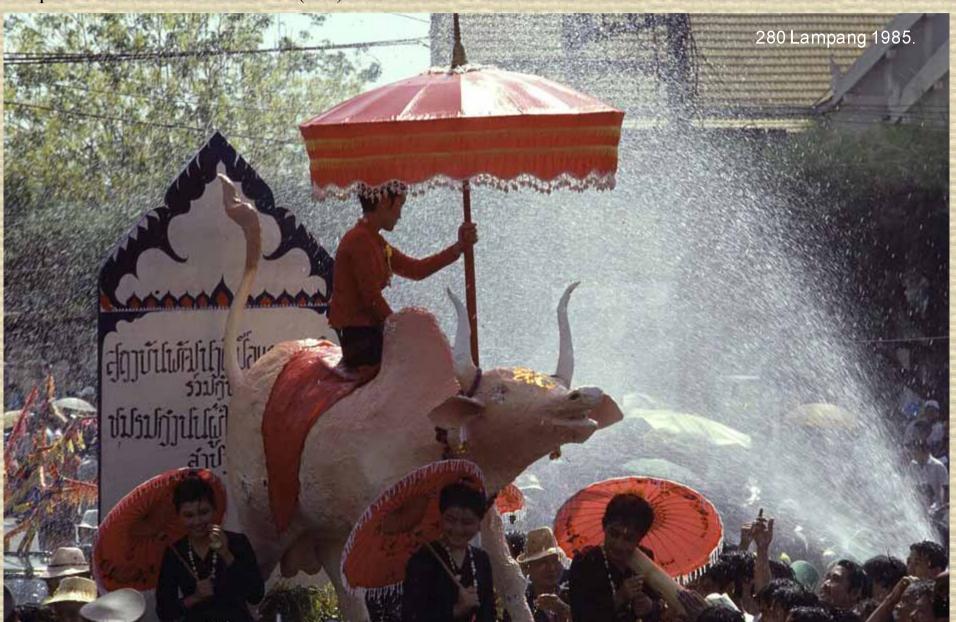


277 Lampang 1998.



279 Lampang 1998.

Photos 280-295. Songkran 1998. Everyone is drenched at Songkran (280-282). Guards of the Silver Bowl in the procession of the Gods (283-284). The holy water machine at the central park festival ground, consecration of water (285-286) and offerings to the image of Buddha (287). Dancers of the evening feast (288). Buddhist gift ceremony at the morning event (289). The main procession in the afternoon (290-294). The new carriage of Emerald Buddha (291). Songkran Queens (292-294). The Year of the Tiger has begun. Sand pagoda building competition at Wat Kaowarukaram (295).



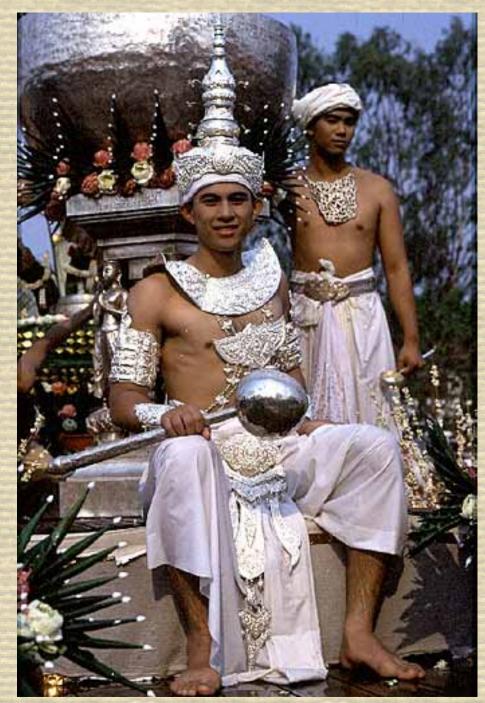
281 Lampang 1998.





282 Lampang 1998.





284 Lampang 1998.



285 Lampang 1998.



286 Lampang 1998.



287 Lampang 1998.



289 Lampang 1998.



290 Lampang 1998.



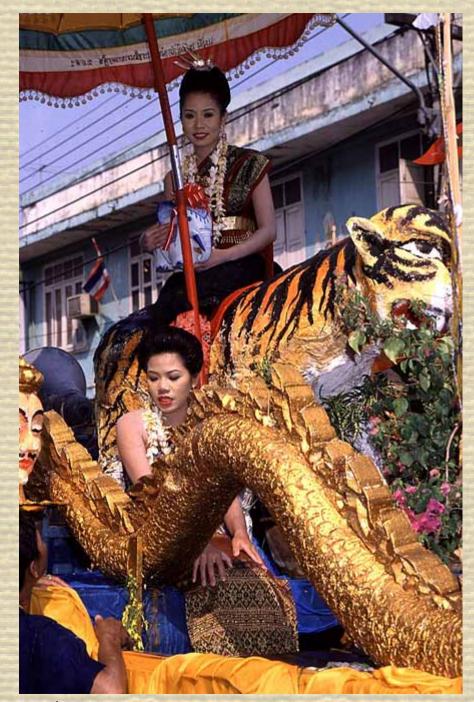


291 Lampang 1998.

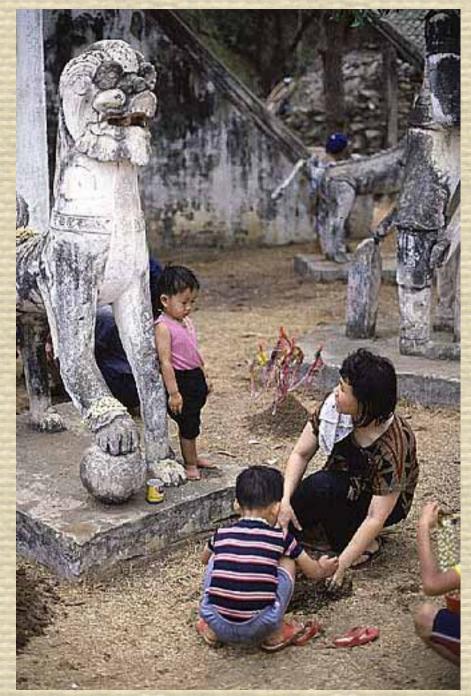


292 Lampang 1998.



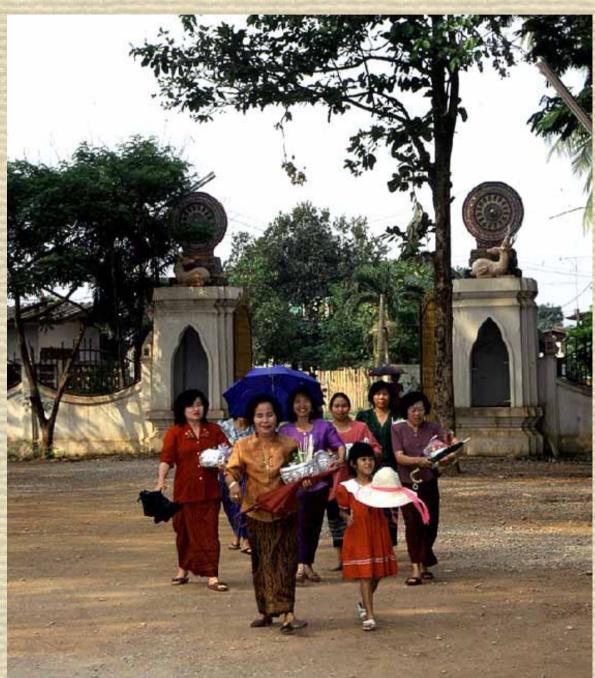


294 Lampang 1998.

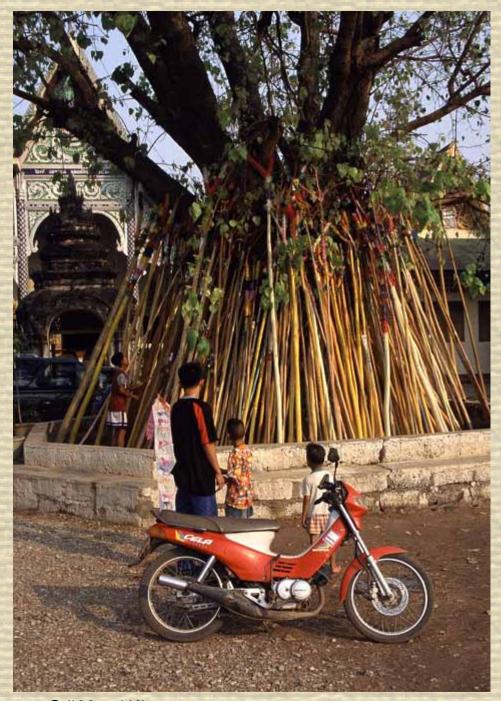


295 Lampang 1998.

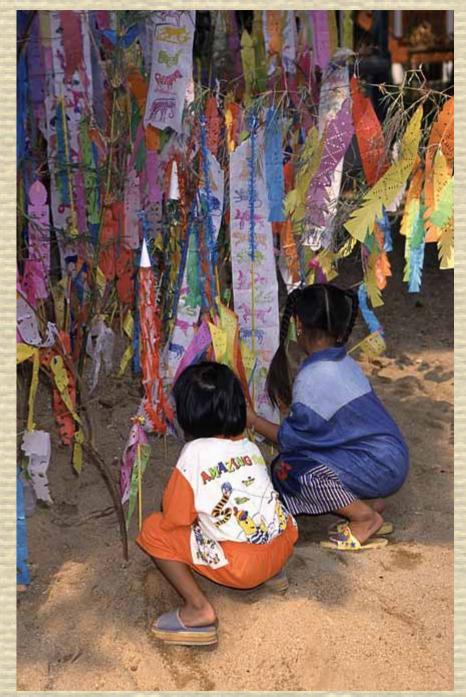
Photos 296-305. The Bho Tree festival. Hundreds of supports are brought to the Bho Tree (297). Children erect a banner at the sand stupa (298), a candle offering at the temple steps (299-300) and a floral offering at the temple door (301-303). Making a money tree (304), offering of 'uncooked rice' at Wisaka Bucha (305).



296 Srii Muod Klao 1998.



297 Srii Muod Klao 1998.



298 Srii Muod Klao 1998.



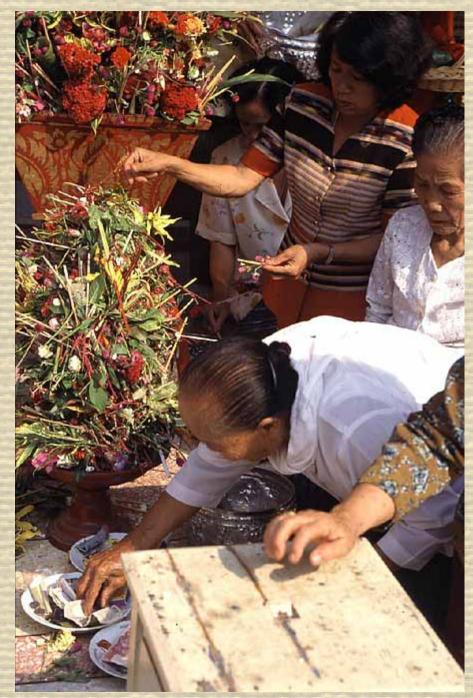


299 Srii Muod Klao 1998. 300 Srii Muod Klao 1998.



301 Srii Muod Klao 1998.





303 Srii Muod Klao 1998.



304 Srii Muod Klao 1998.



305 Srii Muod Klao 1998.

References

II. Community culture

- **22.** Compound, family and kinship group: Haas 1951. Rajadhon 1968, 255-; 1961. Kingshill 1960. LeBar Hickey Musgrave 1964. Hanks, J. 1964. Hanks Hanks 1964. Wijeyewardene 1965. Hamburger 1965. Ayabe 1966. Mizuno 1968; 1971. Kemp 1970; 1982. Turton 1972. Davis 1973. Foster 1975a; 1982. Keyes 1975. Potter, J. 1976. Potter, S. 1977. Hale 1979. Mougne 1984. Podhisita 1985. Thorbek 1987. Smuckarn 1998. Rhum 1994. Matrifocality e.g. Davis 1973. Mougne 1984. Cf. Freedman 1970; 1971.
- **23.** Civil servants have pensions; private employees/employers have pension insurances; from 2002 all businesses must pay employees' social security payments. Statistics also show that children take care of their parents: Report of the 1994 Survey of Elderly in Thailand, National Statistical Office, Table 4.
- **24.** In research on Thailand, most debate has been engendered by the concept of a "loosely structured" community (Embree 1950), that was said to reflect the whole culture of Thai villages. Characteristics of looseness were e.g. 'loosely structured' extended families and foster children. An extended family is not a 'loose' structure, discussion e.g. Moerman 1964;1969. Hamburger 1965. Evers (ed.) 1969 (Cunningham, Kirsch, Mulder, Phillips, Piker). Suwanajata 1976. Bunnag 1979. Vaddhanaphuti 1980 etc. Swidden culture has been small-scale diversified economy, where all family members participated in making a shared living, nobody was 'useless'. (Cf. Sarmela 1979a; 1987; 2000a,20-).
- 25. Bangkok Post e.g. 17.5.1999; 17.4.2000. Pyne 1994.
- 26. Cf. Anderson 1980: 1998.
- 27. Education in Thailand 1997. Statistical Reports of Changwat Lampang.
- **28.** A cultivated person, who engaged in self-improvement, physical discipline, hygiene and good manners has above all been a 19th century European (German, bourgois, middle-class) human ideal (the advent of which in the Nordic countries was amusingly described by e.g. J. Frykman O. Löfgren 1979, 1987). A meritocrat is defined as particularly an American idol who succeeds through his own abilities and energy (cf. McNamee Miller 2004). In business, the postlocal human type is a global level performer, who is capable of operating (in his own technosystem) everywhere in the world (Kanter 1995).
- 29. On education and training: Hanks, L. 1959. Hanks Phillips 1961. Boesch 1962. Wyatt 1975. Watson 1980. Mulder 1997; 1999.
- 30. Mulder 1997. Goldsen et al. 1960. Guskin1964. Mole 1973. Bangkok Post 29.10.2000.
- **31.** Bangkok Post 24.11.1997; (1.3.2000).

- **32.** Anderson 1983. In a postlocal environment, nationality also unavoidably loses its significance and a new elite creates new interpretations of both history and the present.
- 33. It may also be said that media imperialism reaches Thailand too (Chin-Chuan 1980; Sarmela 1977).
- **34.** On village young people: Goldsen et al. 1960. Hanks Phillips 1961. Tirabutana 1958; 1968. Guskin 1964. Piker 1964; 1968a. Foster 1976. Keyes 1984. Thorbeck 1987. Bumroongsook 1995. Finland: Sarmela 2000a, 127-; map 37.
- **35.** On girls' idols cf. Van Esterik 1982 (articles). Keyes 1984; 1986. Kirsch 1985. Thorbeck 1988. Pyne 1994. Taywaditep Coleman Dumronggittigule 1997-2001.
- **36.** Cf. Thorbeck 1987. Taywaditep Coleman Dumronggittigule 1997-2001.
- **37.** Divorces, concubines. National Statistical Office table 1.31. Mills 2001. Van Esterik 2000. Bangkok Post 30.9.1984; 5.2.2001.
- **38.** Sarmela 2000a, 77-; maps 9-21. On Thai weddings Wells 1939, 155-. Rajadhon 1968, 255-. Tambiah 1969. Hanks, J. 1964, 11-; 1965. Potter 1976, 114-. Terwiel 1979a, 145-. Pedersen 1968, 128-. Diskul s.a.
- **39.** Taywaditep Coleman Dumronggittigule 1997-2001. Jackson Nerida 2000. Van Esterik 2000. Abortions Bangkok Post 14.8.2002 (Sanisuda Ekachai).
- **40.** Northern Thailand 1995: Sexual relations among young people in developing countries 2001. Bangkok Post 41.9.1984., Mahidol University, the Faculty of Public Health; 9.1.1999; 25.3.1999; 25.11.1999; 3.1.2000; 7.1.2000; 3.2.2000; 15.2.2000; 7.11.2000; 12.3.2001; 11.4.2001; 3.6.2001; 13.10.2001; 11.11.2002; 16.11.2002. According to a recent study, 1.6% of final year high school girl students had had sexual intercourse with their boyfriends, and at the turn of the millennium perhaps about 10-20% of girls and 60-80% of boys had generally had sexual intercourse before their marriage is made official.
- 41. E.g. Bangkok Post 1.1-11.1.2003; (8.1.2003).
- **42.** Wells 1939, 163-. Diskul s.a. Kickert 1960b. Attagara 1968, 113-. Tambiah 1970,179-. Potter, J. 1976. Potter, S. 1977. Terwiel 1979a, 180-; 1979b. Sarmela 1989; 2000b.
- 43. On Thai music Yupho 1960. Morton 1974; 1976. Phutharaporn 1998.
- **44.** Davis 1976. Wales 1983. Rajadhon 1961; 1968. Tambiah 1969; 1970. Davis 1976. Klausner 1966. Wells 1939. Kickert 1960. Pedersen 1968; 1975.
- 45. Rajadhon 1968, 37-.
- **46.** On Buddhist calendar year e.g. Wells 1939, 62-. Tambiah 1970, 152-. Klausner 1962; 1966.
- 47. E.g. Bangkok Post 18.4.2002.
- **48.** Phongpaichit Piriyarangsan Treerat 1998, 196-. National Statistical Office table 70. It is estimated that there are 10,000 women engaged in the sex industry in Finland (!). On sex tourism and changing sexual attitudes: Phongpaichit

- 1980. Thorbek 1987. Trangell 1996. Jackson Sullivan 1999. Jackson Nerida 2000. Van Esterik 2000. E.g. Bangkok Post published a special issue on sex tourism on 8.3. 1984 (Sanisuda Ekachai), new debate e.g. BP 5.4.1999; 6.4.1999; 3.7.1999.
- **49.** Female students Bangkok Post 30.7.1999; 5.9.1999; 11.4.2001. Pornography and the Internet, e.g. BP 1.10.2002; 11.11.2002.
- **50.** National Statistical Office: Education and Public Health Statistics table 6.18-20. As a rule, estimated figures are 10 times greater; in 2003 the number of people with Aids/HIV was probably around 600,000 and the number of people killed by the disease 65,000. Jackson Nerida 2000. Sarmela 2001. HIV Prevention 2001. Bangkok Post e.g. 26.1.1999; 14.5.1999; 28.7.1999; 3.8.1999; 17.3.2000; 23.3.2000; 9.7.2000; 15.7.2000; 22.3.2001; 20.8.2000; 30.11.2000; 3.12.2000; 1.4.2001; 7.11.2002. Sangha Metta 3.8.1999. (On organizations: www.floatinglotus.com; www.buddhanet.net/sangha-metta/project.html). On families e.g. BP 29.3.1999; 23.4.1999; 24.8.1999. The fight against Aids has continued in the media, in schools and health centres. In the 1990s, the country's 488 national radio and TV channels have from time to time transmitted a bulleting every hour against Aids, and a special education programme has been set up for schools. Ministry of Education Plan for the Prevention and Solving of AIDS Education, 1997-2001. National Plan for the Prevention and Alleviation of HIV/AIDS in Thailand 2002-2006. AVERT AIDS Education & Research Trust HIV & AIDS in Thailand.
- **51.** National Narcotics Control Board. On drug abuse by young people (schoolchildren) Bangkok Post e.g. 2.1.1985; 23.1.1985; 16.3.1999; 9.4.1999; 17.5.1999; 18.8.1999; 18.10.1999; 7.4.2000; 28.5.2000; 30.1.2001; 9.3.2001; 22.3.2001; 22.11.2001. Finland: STAKES 2003.
- **52.** On the ecology of opium farming by mountain peoples Geddes 1976. On drug-related criminality in Thailand Phongpaichit Piriyarangsan Treerat 1998, (86-).
- **53.** The real number of executed drug criminals has remained unclear. Civic organizations, such as Amnesty International, have deemed executions to contravene human rights. In his statements (e.g. Bangkok Post 2.3.2003), the Prime Minister has emphasized the explosive growth of the drug problem and the right of citizens to safeguard their children. Apparently, villagers largely approved of the war against drugs, as well as against the Mafia or the Dark Influence.
- **54.** Thailand. Ministry of Public Health, Department of Mental Health (statistics). National Statistical Office: suicides table 68-69, criminality etc. table 12:8,10-11. Newspaper articles: Bangkok Post 4.2.1999; 16.4.1999; 25.11.1999; 25.4.2000.

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