



Matti Sarmela

LAWS OF DESTINY NEVER DISAPPEAR

Culture of Thailand in the postlocal world

Helsinki 2005

952-91-9353-X

Ban Dong 1985

Srii Muod Klao 1985

Srii Muod Klao 1985

Ban Dong 1985

Lampang 1985



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Original book: *Matti Sarmela, Kohtalon lait eivät katoa. Elämää Pohjois-Thaimaan kylissä.*
Published by the Finnish Literature Society and the Finnish Anthropological Society 2004.
ISBN 951-746-603-X (SKS) ; 952-9573-25-1 (SAS); ISSN 0355-1768

Layout Hemmo Vattulainen
Helsinki 2005

ISBN 952-91-9353-X (PDF)
ISBN 952-91-9354-8 (HTML)
ISBN 952-91-9355-6 (CD ROM)

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Matti Sarmela

Research group

Interviews	Wiwien Wongsansern (1984-1985, 1997-1999) Sayom Munnam (1997-1999)
Questionnaires	Manas Indaphan (1972-1973) Supong Nilobol (1982, 1984-1985) Phan Sreesura (1997-1999)
Photos	Matti Sarmela (1972-1999)

Material archived in The Museum of Cultures, Helsinki

Fieldwork team



Wiwien and Mr. Laa. Ban Mae Kong Nya 1998.



Sayom and Mr. Thongchai. Ban Srii Muod Klao 1998.



Phan and Dr. Matti. Lampang 1998.

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Part I.

A VILLAGE IN NORTHERN THAILAND

**Environment of life
Villages and houses
Work of the rice farmer**

Part II. COMMUNITY CULTURE

Part III. VILLAGE RELIGION

Contents

Foreword 9

Tracing modernization 9 * Theoretical perspectives 11 * Fieldwork and the research group 15 * To the reader 18

I. A VILLAGE IN NORTHERN THAILAND

Environment of my life (interviews) 20

About experiences in my life * Young people don't want to farm * Life is dying out from irrigation canals * Should we have more development

Villages and houses

Place for a human community 51

Culture of the river valleys 51 * Lampang Province and City 52

Three villages 53

Ban Srii Muod Klao, central plains village 53 * Ban Mae Kong Nya, village of northern plains 57 * Ban Dong, the last forest village 58

Village houses 62

Traditional pillar house 62 * Modern houses 63 * Return of the pillar house 64 * Building practices 68

Equipment of living 69

From buffalo to motor car 69 * Conveniences of living 71 * Triumph of home entertainment 73 * Structural change of living environment 75

Pictures 77-107

Work of the rice farmer

Structural change in farming 108

Local rice farming 108 * Hierarchy of rice 110 * Buffalo or ploughing machine? 112 * Delocal production farming 114

Iron claws of the market 116

Crop trends 116 * Costs of production 117 * Intensive farming and the environment 118

Future of agriculture 119

After modernization 119 * How much is enough? 121

Pictures 124-173

References 174

II. COMMUNITY CULTURE

Being human (interviews) 6

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

The arc of life

Family and community 41

Women's compound 41 * Making a communal living 43 * Childhood environments 45 * From village school to university 46

School of life 47

From villager to citizen 47 * From citizen to globality 51 * Virtual civilization 53

Marriage 55

Romantic love 55 * Village wedding 57 * Marriage and morality 59

Pictures 62-128

Death

Death rites 129

The wake 129 * The funeral celebration 130 * The cremation 131 * Extinguishing the ashes 132 * Hundredth day memorial rites 132

Message of death 133

Final passage of human life 133 * The deceased in kinship culture 134 * The deceased in village culture 135 *

Focus of life 136

Pictures 138-171

Inside the village community

Annual festivals 172

Farmer's festival calendar 172 * Modern annual festivals 173 * Chinese New Year 175

Songkran 176

New Year of Thai culture 176 * Programme of the Water Festival 177 * Bodhi-tree festival 180

Dangers of life 182

Attraction of sex tourism 182 * Fated to contract Aids 183 * Drugs and the village community 185

Pictures 188-216

References 217

III. VILLAGE RELIGION

Faith around me (interviews) 5

We used to have words for everything * Supernatural guardian of our family * I don't believe everything sorcerers say

* What Buddha taught us

Pictures 54-93

Supernatural environment

The invisible world 94

Supernatural guardians of the environment 94 * Phii and souls of the kinship group 96 * Supernatural forces in nature 98

Between two worlds 99

Village sorcerers 99 * Mediums of the deceased 101

Strata of local belief 102

Heritage of shamans 102 * Power of sorcerers 103 * From tradition to belief in development 104

Buddhist religion

Buddhism of the village community 107

From local religion to national faith 107 * Temple monks 108 * Ordination of monks 110

Power of the community 113

Human being in a village community 113 * Life of a good person 115 * Facing postlocalism 118 * Finalization 120

References 123

Appendix 130

Bibliography 157

Tables

1. Framework of structural changes	I. 13	7. Domestic appliances	I. 72
2. Recorded interviews 1984-1999	I. 16	8. Home electronics	I. 74
3. Thailand material 1972-1999	I. 17	9. Structural change in rice farming	I.113
4. Three villages	I. 55	10. Perspectives of village communities	II. 50
5. Popularity of house types 1982-2000	I. 66	11. Basic wedding format	II. 58
6. Means of transport	I. 70	12. Strata of world views	III. 105

Foreword

Tracing modernization. Near the close of the rainy season thirty years ago, I stepped out of a Chinese hotel in Sob Tui, near Lampang station, and crossed the road to the corner of the Phahonlyothin road. It was midday and the heavy heat shimmered around me, the shop next to me sold dried fish. With my wife and two small sons, I had arrived in Lampang on the night train from Bangkok, and stood there after an ill-slept night, not knowing what to do. Indeed. What would I do in this strange country? Where would we live? This had to be lunacy. I had set off to carry out cultural anthropological fieldwork in Thailand. No science called cultural anthropology existed in those days in Finland. I looked along the Phahonlyothin to the railway crossing; the countryside seemed to start beyond it. There, behind the railway, near the village of Ban Srii Muod Klao, we found a home in the house of the rice merchant Kitti Hunkittikul. Our life in a strange country began. The railway level crossing is still there, it is as potholed as before, but the Phahonlyothin road has become a wide boulevard. Where there used to be junk shops and repair workshops, rows of modern car showrooms now stand, and the incessant roar of motorways is an auditory backdrop to everything.

I have made five trips in all to Northern Thailand and collected material on people's lives in three villages in the province and in its centre, the city of Lampang, and archived everything in a Finnish museum. I came from Finland, wealthy Scandinavia, a country that believes in development, modernization, globalization, a planetary future. In Western development statistics, Finland is near the top, currently the leading country in competition for state-of-the-art technology. In international rankings, Finland is the least corrupt country in the world, an efficient high-tech culture, where all society's problems should be resolved by scientific-technological development. Finland has wanted to imitate global development in everything, to free the country to unlimited international competition, to centralize, privatize, democratize. It has implemented individual freedom, a free upbringing revolution, a sexual revolution, an all-permissive revolution, in order to free consuming man from the lifestyle of former village communities. In Finland, the countryside is threatened by desertion, as people move into 'growth centres', metropolises. International development has rendered locality, village and municipal communities, even the national state, old-fashioned; the Finnish elite is now integrating its country into the European Union, a continental state, part of the European United States. Finland also has the most museums, it has the world's largest collections of folklore, and research institutions are continuously collecting information on the lives of modern Finns.

In European welfare states, an individual's life and future must be secure, planned and controlled. People are accustomed to demanding ever more benefits, social and health services, higher wages and bigger pensions, compensation for not finding work. The citizens are looked after by a growing multitude of professional helpers, doctors, therapists, instructors, who are in possession of the latest scientific-technological information and know-how. Modern societies exercise family planning, marriage guidance, palliative care. Young people grow up in a 'free world', where the individual need not adhere to the norms of

morality that existed in the Christian villages of the past or in the Buddhist communities of this book. Never has so much information and research been produced on how an individual might be liberated, develop, grow to become a creative being, how he might achieve a balanced, healthy and good life. And yet, it is precisely in the Western countries that ever more people are unwell.

Modern research finds ever more problems in Western countries, sickness, violence, repression of women, paedophilia... Statistics show that Western people suffer from increasingly from mental health problems, they are exhausted by their work and using more and more psychiatric drugs and alcohol. Human environment contains ever more risks, security systems, iron fencing. In cities, almost half of all marriages end in divorce, an increasing number of children are abandoned, old people are excluded from useful society. More and more young people fall by the wayside in the competition for higher education and start drinking or using drugs ever younger. In many countries, including Finland, young girls of the new, free generation have adopted behaviour patterns of gender equality and seek sexual experiences in the same way as boys; according to latest research, women will soon drink more alcohol and smoke more than men of the same age. In recent years, Western people have been shocked by murders and manslaughters committed by juveniles; blind destruction, as if killing was just play, a computer game, or a unique, exciting, extreme experience. A final experience. Western societies contain more and more young people who want to destroy their own destiny, their future, who have nothing to live for. Society has become permeated with selfishness, cynicism, an anxiety-inducing loneliness.

International consciousness industry has created the idea that rich Western life consists of continuously buying cultural enjoyment and producing experiences for the self, worshipping one's own body, buying newer and newer technological equipment, constantly changing relationships and sensations, marriage experiences, adventures in the virtual world created by mind engineers. Convention-breaking art, cinema, the whole of Western consciousness industry live off sex and violence, compete in their depiction of evil and degeneration. Western culture is something abnormal; it must be ever more provoking and stimulating art or entertainment, sold to consumers that are ever more perverted and detached from reality. The same products of the consciousness industry are marketed to all nations in the world, the same violence and immorality, the same circus amusements, the same global imitation and uniformity of consumption. In such a world, culture no longer entails the lives of ordinary people, ordinary fathers, mothers and children. Culture has the same function as drugs: obliteration of everyday life.

Is it all repeated in Thailand? This land, dubbed the Asian Little Economic Tiger, because it is following in the footsteps of great Japan? Or are Asian cultures stronger, are they able to choose their future, to hang on to their local structures, their own ethnic landscape, the customs of local communities and human values? The information on Thailand churned out by modern information industry tells us only about sex tourism, drugs, Aids, child labour... as if the Western reader only wants to know

about the downside of other nations, as if the evil was spreading there from somewhere other than Western countries. In the final analysis, what is reality both in Western countries and elsewhere? Which parts of Western culture are public, superficial exterior, sensation industry, which parts of innermost human life? What is, ultimately, life worthy of human beings? The people of this book are still a long way from final Western development, but they talk about it. Western values are present in all the accounts and the villagers know that before long, they or their children must adapt to the shared development of mankind and live within the same commercial culture as all the world's nations.

Theoretical perspectives. The original academic working title of my research project was *Structural Change in Local Culture*, and based on the 1972-73 material, I wrote a book of the same title (*Paikalliskulttuurin rakennemuutos*), published in Finnish (1979; 1985). At the time, I was interested in the way the structures that had maintained the villages' self-sufficient lifestyle changed as people adapted to 'modern development', their global economic, technological and cultural environment. Later, the project title changed to *Constructing Future in Thai Villages*. Now, I want to know how local people are coping and constructing their own future. What in these villages constitutes a good life, and what is a good future? What does structural change in culture mean to local people, what do they lose and what gain instead?

This book represents environmental anthropology, but I do not consider as fundamental the adaptation of human communities to surrounding nature, the habitat, but to 'reality', those economic, political and social conditions that the natural environment also impacts upon. The real environment of cultures has been continuous change, and man has not been able to adapt to some existing state, but to a future that is within sight. I have often used the philosophical term Umwelt to describe the environment of human communities. To me, culture does not consist of traditions maintained by societies, but of human activity, directed at creation and maintenance of a secure future in a constantly changing environment.

As individual people and communities adapt to changes in the environment, a new cultural response is created, a new human ecosystem, where old structures no longer function. Scarcely any of the material or social structures that used to govern the former way of life remains in the new culture. In the cultural history of man, great technological structural changes may be discerned, when the environment and society were wholly recreated. The latest great structural change took place after the Second World War. It marked the beginning of the era of technology based on oil, and today's modern development culture was created. Now the fossil fuels are running out, we will move on to the post-oil era, and societies will be faced possibly with even greater structural change than the post-war one. In today's scientific-technological visions of the future, mankind is about to move into the era of hydrogen power, to a superculture of digital, automation or genetic technology, development moves to the start of finalization, attainment of perfection.

I have distinguished local, delocal (centralized) and postlocal human environments. Local cultures adapted primarily to their

own geographical environments, local natural resources and the local future. They created cultural responses, coping strategies that functioned within their own geographical environment. Thus were created ethnic cultures, their distinguishing features; the many thousands of human forms of living, village landscapes, different languages and dialects, different folk music, the whole diversity of local cultures that has existed on Earth. The Second World War was followed by a structural change that has reached people's life environments everywhere in the world. Industrializing nations began to assimilate into an external, delocal environment: demands of international trade, scientific-technological development, or a utopia of development. The environment was somewhere outside locality, and living conditions of individuals, too, were determined outside local communities, now even nation states. In the delocal era, national culture superseded local communities, and in international competition, national economies have been continually forced to grow and centralize; the basic technological and cultural model of society has been the production line, an endlessly rolling production process.

Delocal culture consists of centralizing organizations, technosystems controlling various areas of life, that everywhere adapt to structurally uniform international development. Local people are replaced by 'developers', organizers, bureaucrats, technocrats, new ecological winners whom I have named meritocrats. Centralization has spread across all areas of culture. Local communities have been superseded by centralized production and administrative structures: central administration, central offices, central organizations, central stores, central schools, shopping centres, cultural centres, centres of excellence and centres of well-being. In Finland, for example, village schools, shops and other local structures have almost completely disappeared; culture is centralizing, fusing, integrating. Centralization is the cultural law of meritocracy.

In the postlocal world, centralization continues and nation states are replaced by continental states, enveloped by a global market economy and universal development. Universal technosystems take ever more total control of a certain living environment, its knowledge base, technology and future. Cultural diversity consists of ever more autonomous production, administrative and cultural technosystems that no longer adapt to a local or national environment, but the environment is adapted to suit their requirements. What is more, this development cannot stop until nature and man are totally under the control of technosystems.

Table 1

Framework of structural change

A. Local culture

Local environment - local resources and energy - local know-how and technology

Local means of production - ideology of self-sufficiency - local division of production - mutual neighbourly assistance - natural occupational years and work periods

Local communities village administration membership of family and neighbourhood - community control - local hierarchy

Local religion - village temples - family rites and rites of passage within village - ethics of fellow man - community morality - community tradition - village festivals (shared meals) - temple festivals - village weddings - village funerals - housewarming parties

Local identity - local language (dialect) - local concepts, cognitions and categories

Folklore supporting community - localization of storytelling - moralistic narratives local heroes - local history

B. Delocal culture

Non-local (national) environment - external resources and energy - scientific-technological skill and knowledge - uniform education

Mass industry production line technology - national division of production - occupational differentiation - industrial concept of time, schedules

Centralizing national culture - metropolitan structures - central administration central organizations (corporations) - municipal centres - operational centres - state control

National developmental ideology - national developmental ritualism - political sociodramas - state, national cultural hierarchy - ethics internal to technosystems - individualistic morality

National cultural industry - occupational culture - media culture (TV) - mass events (festivals) - cultural services

Meritocracy - organizational integration and identity - language of technosystems, official national language - political world views - national utopias

National media lore - national art and entertainment - consumer culture - national heroes and idols - national history

C. Postlocal culture

Global environment - urban technonature - global resources - universal know-how and education

Transnational production structures - digital technology, space technology - automation, robotics, biotechnology

Continental states - universal technosystems - Internet, global networks - universal science - global databases ('World Brain') - global hierarchy

Planetary developmental ideology - supernatural engineering, re-created flora and fauna, cyborgs, nano-machinery, chemical consciousness - scientific-technological ethics - biological morality

Universal consciousness industry - scientific-technological mind control - shared audio-visual world of experiences and symbols

Universal man - world language - global concepts and categories - universal utopias of the future

Representations of world culture - transnational heroes, world leaders - world history

The structural change from locality to overlocality has affected all elements of culture, society, lives of individual people, religions, explanations of existence. The change embraces all people, not just the adapters, winners or innovators. Every Thai person, too, must seek out new opportunities in his changing environment. The change is most beneficial to those who are the first to adapt, who purchase the first ploughing machine, educate their children, move to the city... Every cultural system has its ecological winners, the successful human species, and its own religion, a mythology that justifies the new hierarchy and gives the winners the right to take over the environment, exploit the new resources, subordinate other people. The real religion of modern society is development religion. Meritocracy has made development religion the power system of our time, the church of development, where innovation and technological development equal utmost power and highest rationality. Global culture is directed by the miracles of development religion. Faith in development gives technosystems the right to define their own truth and morality, shared benefit and the right development.

Cultural hierarchy becomes globalized, too. In a transnational economy, the greatest importance in the consciousness industry or the rankings of news production is on 'world's biggest', that which is sold and consumed the most. Only billions are culture. The postlocal cultural system becomes monopolized into a structurally uniform world culture of technosystems, the future of all nations is governed by the eschatology of development religion, the same illusions of the paradise of a technological future, and development cannot end in anything other than perfection, finalization.

In the 1970s, the villagers of this book lived in an almost self-sufficient agrarian culture. Their daily experience or 'life world' was limited to their own village and its immediate surroundings, they did the same rice farming work, helped each other reciprocally,

spoke the local dialect. The marriage partner was usually found in their own village, and even after death, villagers wanted to remain in the locality of their forebears and families. In the 1980s, the villagers' environment began to delocalize, and in two decades, the villages have become part of a modern, centralized national culture. Villagers are turned into citizens of a nation who show solidarity to Thailand and are prepared to lay down their lives for their shared motherland. In recent years, structures of a postlocal culture have also begun to rise above national Thailand. The instruments of culture, technology, knowledge, skills and the culture industry are becoming international, globalizing. In Asia, too, a common free trade area, ASEAN, is being established, evidently to become a continental state akin to the European Union in the future.

Today we ask, what does a global person identify with, what are his safety networks? Will local morality be replaced by biological morality, and will it mean the death of the ideology of humanism? In Finland, we like to talk about the multicultural or multilocal Euro-citizen with a multi-layered identity and who lives in a multi-linguistic cultural environment. In virtual reality, the Internet, cyber- and global networks, man of the future is able to live simultaneously in different parts of the world. Optimists believe that as cultures meet, everyone will emphasize his own ethnic culture ever more, and appreciate the value of diversity. Global culture would be more multifaceted than before, and nothing of the past would lose its significance. In my view, national structures will gradually stop functioning in continental states. Post-local man no longer has "birthplace, domicile or burial place" (1975); even the marriage partner is ever more often chosen from a foreign country. The citizen of a continental culture lives ever more closely within his own technosystem, and as economists say, the successful performer is 'world class', he is able to build his future in all modern environments, everywhere in the world.

In the future, Asia will be the world's largest and most powerful economic area, technologically the most advanced continental culture. As continent states collide, many fundamental questions will emerge. Maybe then it will not be so important which continent has the greatest economic growth or where the world's greatest achievers, leaders and mass idols reside, but how morally sustainable an ordinary human being perceives his own cultural environment to be.

Fieldwork and the research group. Thus, I have observed how people's lives in the villages of Lampang Province, Northern Thailand, have evolved during three decades. During five visits, I have collected a corpus of ethnographic material, incorporating questionnaires, recorded interviews, photographs, press cuttings (Bangkok Post, The Nation) and even some artefacts. As is the wont of anthropologists, I have kept a diary of events in the country. As for fieldwork technique, I have returned to the tradition of explorers - having spent decades teaching methodology of cultural anthropology. For my Thailand project, I wanted to amass documents that will remain archived as source material for use by anyone who is interested. For me, it was not enough to observe the lives of village communities as an outside researcher, but I wanted to hear and record life histories of local people, the story of all the villagers, their own interpretation of their own life. The material was collected by

local interviewers; in these accounts local people are speaking among themselves.

In this work, as in all my other research projects, I have endeavoured to obtain comparative data from several localities or over a long period, and also to use statistical methods. In Lampang Province, I have compared three villages that I assumed would differ from each other and to represent typical communities in their local environments. The largest of the villages is Ban Srii Muod Klao, situated on the central plain near Lampang city. The second village, Ban Mae Kong Nya, might be described as a medium-sized plains village, located on a tributary river plain more distant from the city, and the third, Ban Dong, is a small forest village in the mountains skirting the north-eastern parts of the province. In my previous study (1979) I applied non-parametric statistical analysis, but the present project contains only frequency data reflecting the relative prevalence of phenomena in different villages and different decades.

Table 2

Recorded interviews 1984-1999

Years Village	1984-85	1997-98	1999	Total
Ban Srii Muod Klao	45	98	24	167
Ban Mae Kong Nya	49	66	17	132
Ban Dong	31	28	7	66
Total, persons	125	192	48	365

My research assistants were *Manas Indaphan* (1972-1973), *Supong Nilobol* (1984-85), a veterinary sanitarian already retired and who formerly worked e.g. as the inspector of elephant health for the Ministry of Forestry, and headmaster *Phan Sreesura* (1997-1999); he had retired from the post of principal of the McKenzie School, Lampang's oldest secondary school, but was still active e.g. on the city council. In 1984-85, pastor *Wiwien Wongsansern* interviewed 125 people altogether in all three villages, accumulating about 70 hours of field tapes. During 1997-1999, *Sayom Munnam*, an undergraduate, joined us, starting interviewing in Ban Srii Muod Klao, and Wiwien continued the work in Ban Mae Kong Nya and Ban Dong. On that occasion, the total of 240 people were interviewed and 190 hours of recordings collected. Thus, all in all, 365 villagers were interviewed during the fieldwork; only a small fraction of the material is included in this volume.

In recording the villagers' accounts, we kept the interviews free and thematic, starting from the interviewee's life history. The

interviewers had in their minds a lists of topics and questions I had prepared, which they could use to move the discussion forward, but the informants were also able to decide what they wanted to talk about. In 1997, Thailand experienced an economic slump that also affected the villagers' lives and is reflected in their accounts. Comparative statistical data was collected by questionnaires which were returned by more than 800 people from the different villages. In order to monitor changes, we used the same questions in the questionnaires since 1972, even though some of the questions have already become meaningless to young respondents. In this book, only limited use is made of the questionnaire material, e.g. in describing changes in popularity of house types, or villagers' increased ownership of consumer goods.

Table 3.

Thailand material 1972-1999

<i>Period</i>	<i>1972-73</i>	<i>1982-83</i>	<i>1984-85</i>	<i>1997-98</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>Total</i>
Questionnaires	200	-	200	180	-	580 persons
Pilot questionnaires	-	180	-	-	75	255 persons
Interviews	-	-	70	160	30	260 hours
	-	-	125	192	48	365 persons
Slides	1,100	1,200	6,300	4,700	600	13,900 items
Photos	500	1,000	2,000	2,500	100	6,100 prints
Films/videos	2	-	2	-	12	16 hours

The inhabitants of Lampang plains villages belong to the yuan people and the original field tapes are in the local dialect (*by myang*). The interviews from the years 1984-85 were translated into Finnish by *Raili Salmenkivi*; the recordings from the years 1997-1999 were translated from local dialect into Thai by *Runaphan Hellsten* and the 1997-1998 material by *Yrjö Pajunen* from Thai language into Finnish. The 1999 material was translated into Finnish by *Birgit Laine-Kamolmatayakul*. For this volume, *Annira Silver* has in turn translated the interviews from Finnish into English. In selecting villagers' accounts, I have attempted to include different life stories and informants of different ages. The interviews have been condensed and some of the interviewers' questions omitted, but each account is preserved as a whole and placed according to the main topic selected by the informant.

Over the years, the collection of photographs has grown to more than 20,000; I have taken pictures of e.g. questionnaire respondents to present them as mementoes. Of the photographs, the actual documented collection comprises 13,900 colour slides for which I have written explanations. This explanatory text comprises about 750 pages of ethnography of Lampang

local culture. The collection contains few films and videos, although in 1999 I recorded 12 hours of video in all, using a digital camera. The corpus of fieldwork material is archived in the collections of the *Museum of Cultures* in Helsinki, and archive copies of the field interview tapes are deposited in the recordings archive of the *Finnish Literature Society*.

To the reader. In this book, we hear the voices of local people, villagers. Listen to their talk about life, the past and the future. They have lived in their own village, with their family, relations and neighbours. Their ancestors had a place in the village and paddy field. They are not ashamed of their own culture. With the stubbornness of local people, the villagers still gather for funerals and temple festivals and Songkran processions, and want to live in their own villages. The young want to respect the old, take care of them, as well as of their sisters and brothers, all their relatives. And when people's lives end, the whole village escorts them from this world to eternal life. Local people are used to coping alone, in their own environment. None of them expect the state or municipality to help them. They gather the opportunities they have at hand. Many of the informants of the book, people of my generation all around the world, have witnessed the greatest structural change of mankind. They have been forced to destroy the culture in which they grew up. The people of this book want justice, that a moral order should prevail in their new environment, too. And they still want to decide their own future and influence what they see as coming, and to find a place for themselves where life continues. The stream of Destiny flows on.

As author of this book, I address Western readers who are interested in Thailand, the land of the white elephant. In my account, I cannot include a great deal of theory of cultural anthropology or research into Thailand, but the bibliography contains literature on the subject. I have been most interested in comparing the culture of Lampang villages with ancient Finnish tradition and changes that have taken place in Finland. It may interest some researchers, too, to ponder why the deceased are symbolized by white flags or pennants both in Thailand and in Finland, why Lampang Chinese and Orthodox Karelians hang pennants on the graves of their loved ones when they go to share a meal with their ancestors on memorial day, why similar white cord or twine is used in rites involving sorcerers, why beliefs involving the sorcerer, souls of the deceased and supernatural guardian spirits of agrarian cultures or on the other hand swidden cultures, as well as modern thinking, share similar philosophical structures on opposite sides of the globe.

From 1973 for almost thirty years I was Professor of Cultural and Social Anthropology at the University of Helsinki. The decades cannot be reclaimed and nothing can be redone. My destiny has been to search for the human being among all nations. I found the villages of this book in Lampang, having set foot on the Phahonlothyin road. For me, this land, Lampang Province and its three villages mean numerous friendly people, many of whom I met again and again. And my respect for the villagers' strength and courage in living out their own destiny will never cease.

For my field trips to Thailand, I have received grant assistance from the *Academy of Finland* (1972-73, 1984-85 and 1997-98), the *Nordic Institute of Asian Studies* (1972 and 1982), and the *University of Helsinki*. The *Niilo Helander Foundation* has contributed to the cost of translating the book. I wish to extend my warmest thanks to my Thai and Finnish friends and all those who participated in the work, and particularly to Annira Silver who in her brisk and purposeful way has dealt with the task of translating the book into English.

This book is dedicated to my wife, Leena.

Helsinki, 15 December 2004
Matti Sarmela

I. A VILLAGE IN NORTHERN THAILAND

Environment of my life

About experiences in my life. * Young people don't want to farm. * Life is dying out from irrigation canals. * Should we have more development.

Ban Srie Muod Klao 1984. Mr Phat, 66.
I have been village chief for 13 years.

I am a farmer. I have 12 children in all, but two of them are dead, six sons and four daughters. All are already married. Two of them are policemen and they have studied in secondary school for three years. The other children have attended elementary school for four years. Personally, I only spent two years at school. I was born here in the village of Srie Muod Klao, but then later on, mother and father moved to Chae Hom because food was in short supply here.

In my lifetime, a lot of changes have taken place in the village. Before, there were only about 100 houses, almost all of them with grass roofs, there were only a few small roofs made of concrete tiles. We didn't have irrigation then and farming was totally dependent on the rains. If it didn't rain, we couldn't grow rice. Often, there were crop failures and then people had to go elsewhere, to Chiang Mai, to buy rice. The area of this village was dense forest. In those days, building was easy, because there were large trees nearby. The pillars were made of big tree trunks, but the walls and floor were still made of bamboo.

Why didn't you use teak?

Even then, the authorities arrested you for it. It's easier now, you can put the timber quickly on a vehicle and get away, but before when we only had buffalo, if you managed to load the teak on the cart, there was no time to get away, the authorities would catch you and fine you. This current house of mine is completely made of recycled materials. I used to have a house elsewhere. Then I demolished it and rebuilt it here.

In my lifetime, people's lives have changed a great deal. One could say that they are as different as heaven and earth. It's changed for the better. Now we have cars, it's easier to get around. Before, we used to have to walk and carry the goods. It was a long way to the market. When the wife went to the market to sell produce, she was gone so long that I couldn't wait. I had to make dinner myself before she returned. In those days, you didn't need to buy land. You could build a house where you wanted and farm land where you wanted, too. If we had food, if we had rice, all was well. Now food isn't enough. Now we must have money, too.

We used to use buffalo to plough the fields, but the buffalo tires easily. We used to plough for a while in the morning and then again in the evening around sunset. At midday, in the heat, the buffalo couldn't work. Now we have machines and they are very good. Although I have heard that somewhere in the south, where they started using machines earlier, they have found that rice crops became poorer and they have gone back to using buffalo. Of course, if a machine breaks down, repairing it is expensive. A buffalo, on the other hand, is easy to care for. If you don't need it, it can be slaughtered for meat or sold.

As a young man, I used to do business by buying good buffalo calves from Phayao, and then I raised them and sold them in the south, in Kamhaeng Phet. Today, hardly anyone in this village keeps buffalo. Everyone wants machines. Many have sold their fields because they think that rice growing doesn't pay. And, if you have to use hired manpower for ploughing, hire the machines, pay the planters and harvesters, all that takes so much money that it doesn't pay. The profits are so small. It's better to sell the fields and buy rice for food. And then you don't need to worry about the harvest and work out there in the hot sun.

I have been village chief for 13 years. I had nine villages under my direction altogether, but it was easy then. The village chief's assistants got the people to work. Everybody was willing to co-operate and hard-working, but today it's not easy to be village chief. People have been to school and consider themselves learned and don't want to obey anybody.

A couple of decades ago, it was hard to find anybody in our village who had been to school for four years. Going to school wasn't considered important. Children went to school or didn't go. Those who didn't complete their four years could carry on at the temple until they learned to read. Before, children were allowed to stay away from school for months and people waited and hoped for holidays so children could work at home, help with looking after the buffalo. Nowadays people hope that children stay at school. They shouldn't even have Saturdays or Sundays off, as children are disobedient.

The village chief used to have a lot of work, he had to be policeman and judge, sort out the village disputes and crimes. It was rare that even criminal issues were notified as far as the amphoe (municipal). They were resolved within the village.

There used to be more criminals then, too, than today. Drug addicts in particular used to steal buffalo and sleep at the roadsides, and they might be killed just like that. Today, too, if the police don't take matters up, the villages take care of things themselves and punish criminals.

The village road used to be very bad. In the rainy season, you couldn't walk on it with shoes on. It was narrow, too. Repairing the road took around twenty years in all. When we tried to widen the road, none of the villagers were willing to move their fences and give up any space. In the end, I had to threaten them with the authorities and everyone gave up the extra land for widening the road for nothing. We only got the road surfaced about two or three years ago. And if I had the power, I'd want the road still improved and widened, because now, if there is a fire, there isn't enough room for a fire engine. I would also want a new fence for the temple, so people couldn't wander in and out as they please.

About 15 years ago, there were no lavatories here in the village, and when as village chief I tried to get people to build them, nobody wanted to. Then I asked my acquaintances, those who were my friends, to watch out for who goes crouching in the fields and forest to do their business, and catch them and notify me. So, little by little, we got lavatories in the village. Also, wells used to be just water holes, they had no ring linings. They were done, too, while I was village chief. We lined the wells and surrounded them with concrete. We got electricity in our village in 1967. In addition to government aid, the villagers collected 5,000 baht altogether, to get the electricity. Usually, getting government aid takes years. You have to ask and ask, before finally anything comes.

In what ways has people's nature changed?

People used to be very generous. If they had something good to eat, they would invite the neighbours for a meal or give them some. Today, they are much less willing to give. Here in the country, perhaps some, but not at all in cities. That's because there everything has to be bought and everything is expensive. In the past, money was worth a lot. Now it's pretty worthless. For instance, 20 baht used to be a lot of money. When someone had built a new house and there was a housewarming party, they used to hire dancers for it. Then the men could dance with them for a fee, and for instance for 20 baht you could dance all evening. That way, the house builder got help from the villagers for building costs.

I was village chief for 13 years, three months and 20 days in all, but then I got tired of it and asked to be released. There was a funny incident when I was talking to nai amphoe (municipal chief). He was asking me how many soldiers we had in the village. I said, lots, and many policemen, and at least six or seven teachers. Actually, there were no soldiers, nor policemen or teachers. When the chief realised I was joking, after that the matters concerning our village made better progress. He organized more help.

In the old days, when there were festivals or funerals in the village, the young and old together would join the procession. Today, the young hardly participate at all and only a few of the older folk. Before, people used to drink spirits only before festivals, for instance before going to the temple to make an offering, but today people drink both before and after, and they even drink in the temple. Women drink, too. Women didn't used to drink, but used to say spirits smelled bad. Now it looks like they like it a lot. Same with tobacco. One of the reasons I got fed up with being village chief was the villages drinking alcohol. Spirits were made at home in the past, now they use bought alcohol. Myself, I don't drink at all now.

Which style of house do you like best?

The two-storey style, it's good. You can store a lot of stuff in it. The kitchen and water and everything is close by. You only need to climb upstairs to sleep. Before, when we used to have open houses built on pillars, the stairs used to be poor and slippery in the rain, and the downstairs was dirty. Now, if you need something from upstairs, the grandchildren run and get it. When I was a child, we still had some Thai style (dragon roofed) houses in our village, but there are none today. They are old-fashioned and not very pretty either. It's impractical and the roof leaks. If I could build now, I'd build one of those bungalow-style houses. I think it suits a village landscape, too. Here in our village, we only have one house with a grass roof. A very poor family lives there. The villagers do help that family.

Ploughing with buffalo and a ploughing machine give the same results in my opinion. I think that buffalo will disappear. In our village, use of fertilizers is quite common. My family has used only improved seed ('Wonder Rice') for quite some time now. I only grow enough rice for our own consumption. Others in our village also grow for sale. Of vegetables, I now grow bakhardon (Chinese leaves), garlic and onions for sale. Bakhardon is very profitable. It fetches a good price. I used to grow tobacco, too, but not any more.

Ban Srii Muod Klao 1985. Mr Vong, 75. Cruelty comes from animal milk

My parents are from this village and I have lived here all my life. In my time, I used to farm fields and dry swidden. Farming has changed a great deal. In the old days, you could farm even if you had no money. Today, a farmer must have capital before he can farm. We used to do the work ourselves, now they hire others to do it. Field and swidden work used to take a long time, but now everything must be done in a few days. We used to use buffalo for ploughing, but now it's machines. I have two ploughing machines.

Which is better for ploughing, buffalo or a machine?

I think that both are good, but when the field is very weedy, the buffalo can't plough it. Nowadays, since we have water, the weeds grow more than before and that's why it's hard to plough them with buffalo.

Will buffalo and zebu die out?

I'm sure that they will, as so many are slaughtered and you hardly ever see them kept. Families that get water for their fields from the irrigation network move over to machines. Here in Sri Muod Klao it's hard to keep buffalo today, because there is no free pastureland. Everywhere is under some crop and so one is forced to search for and cut grass for the buffalo. Finally, you tire of it and the animals must be sold.

I have six children in all, three sons and three daughters. They are already married. My youngest daughter has come here to live with me. All my children have been to school only for four years. In those days, elementary school was only four years. Myself, I haven't been to school, but as a young man I was a novice at the temple and learned to read. I can read pretty well. At the temple, I learned to read and also to write old Thai language.

Traders used to load their wares on the backs of buffalo or zebu, and would go about selling their wares that way. Business used to also often be done by bartering. Very common goods for sale in those days were salt and soured fish, fermented fish. Today you don't see traders with their wares on buffalo and zebu. Today, goods are transported by motor vehicles. I used to go to Lamphun with a cart selling my wares. It used to take five days and five nights to get there, so one had to spend nights on the way and same again on the way back. I used to go via Hang Chat and spend the first night there. There used to be a lot of buffalo thieves, so the buffalo had to be carefully guarded. The thieves used to be very clever, they used to get close by crawling and rolling along the ground.

Life used to be very pleasant and fun, in my opinion. We used to do all kinds of things together here in the village. In the evenings, we used to walk along the road, musicians used to play old folk instruments and the others follow them, dancing. That way we used to collect money for the temple or celebrate for other reasons. Play music, sing and dance it was great fun. Today, you don't see such things any more. Today people use cars, while in the past, we used to walk. Today, everything must be so easy. Today, people go to watch films in the evenings.

People are working all the time, they have no time for days off or resting. Life used to be much easier and more pleasant. In the dry season in February, there was no work to do. We'd sit in the sun, or bring buffaloes to fight and watch them. If people did that

today, there wouldn't be food to eat. I can't say which is better: life in the old days or life today. There's been a lot of development but life is very hard, when there is never time to rest, but people must work all the time.

In the old days, if someone was building a new house, he'd call on neighbours for help and that way he got the house built and there was no need to hire anyone for the work. This house of mine is built together with the neighbours, too. Nowadays, you either have to hire building workers or contract the job out. I have lived in this house here for about 27 years. Today, one would have to pay house builders tens of thousands of baht. This house of mine is built from teak; I sawed the boards myself from tree trunks, and now, if I was to sell this house and ask 200,000 baht, the buyer would be unlikely to argue, but would hurry to buy a good house.

Have people changed?

People have changed a great deal. People used to be happy to help others, love each other, there was a good community spirit. But today, there is no love of neighbours at all. Today, people say that each for himself and mind their own business. Today, people like to boast about how clever and wise and strong they are, and about their courage. They also use weapons very easily and for a slight reason, but people can't take it themselves, they're not thick-skinned. But it was different before, we used to have such thick skin that a knife didn't cut it nor the bullets of firearms. It was a kind of inner strength.

Tattoos used to be very popular and fashionable, and while the tattoos were being done, powerful words were repeated. Some people had their bodies completely tattooed, for example some had so many tattoos that from a distance it looked like they were wearing shorts, although in reality they had no clothing on. From the knees to the waist the whole area was full of tattoos. The tattoos used to be pictures of animals and the writing that was included was old language, some writing was in new language, too. Tattooing was so fashionable then, but now it is considered very ugly. Before, tattooing was considered beautiful. In the old days, people didn't like to kill each other or do it easily, but today you only need to have a slight argument, and people grab weapons and threaten with them and also kill often (meaning general increase in violence in Thailand).

Father, why do you think people have become more cruel?

Babies used to drink their mothers' breast milk, and that way human closeness was maintained, and humanity was kind of passed in the milk to the child. But today there are all kinds of milk. Children are fed with animal milk and the animal qualities and cruelty are transferred with it, from the animal milk into the children. People become cruel by nature, and another reason surely is that today's young people receive influences, they study and read, see on TV customs and beliefs of many strange countries and peoples, and absorb them and abandon the traditional good manners. Today's youngsters admire other

countries' models and imitate them and everything that is old is discarded. And then there is no peace, but fighting and war and discord.

Father, do you think that development is still taking place here in the village?

Yes, I'm sure that there will always be development and change. The old is forgotten and the new takes its place. Evil and cruelty in this world is unlikely to end before the divine redeemer is born. Now we wait all the time for the divine redeemer. It's already the year 2527 and he still isn't born.

Is Buddha the divine redeemer?

Maybe he was, but he died and now we await his rebirth as divine redeemer. The books say that he who is born dies, and when one dies, one is reborn. But I'm not quite sure that when a person dies, his soul is reborn in some other person. I'm not sure that reincarnation exists. If we think of sin, death, rebirth, nobody can say of sin that here's that sin now as a being, any more than of goodness. It's an idea and not a being, a thing, it has no form. We can see the consequences of evil and goodness, but life after death, we can't see that. It's hard for us to say anything certain about it. Five hundred lives or five hundred reincarnations, it's only book knowledge. I've read about these things in old writings when I was at the temple.

There are three types of house in the picture. Which would you build for yourself, if you had the chance, which do you like most?

I think they're all good. The two-storey house is good, because you can store things securely downstairs. We used to build mostly pillar houses and they're still popular now, but people build more two-storey houses today, since they don't have buffalo and zebu any more that need to be kept downstairs. If I was rich, I'd build a two-storey house. In a two-storey house, you can store things downstairs, they are safe. But if you have things down below in a pillar house, you don't sleep well upstairs, as you worry all the time about the things. Everything used to have to be tied up below, so thieves couldn't steal them easily, but a two-storey house has doors and windows downstairs, and so it's easy to store things there and you can sleep in peace. There are no Thai style houses here, but there are some to the south from here. In the past, houses used to be a little like the Thai style house, with roofs like in temples. I don't think Thai style houses will disappear. There are always people who like them and build them. Here in Srei Muod Klao there is no large Thai style house, but there are some small ones and they are like summer cottages, holiday homes of the rich.

We have a television set and the young people watch it, but I don't care to watch. Sometimes if I'm visiting somebody, I might

watch it. I stopped watching TV many years ago. I think television is a good thing. You can see the news from our home country and abroad and learn all kinds of things about how people live all around the globe. There are all kinds of programmes. Whoever has the money, it's a good thing to buy and you have something to boast about when you own a television. I think that TV programmes are mostly good. It's our human nature that as long as we live, we have wants and needs, we want to acquire things as long as we stay alive.

Ban Srie Muod Klao 1998. Mr Samran M., 31.
You need to carry a bottle of water all the time

I am precisely 31 years old. After we married, we moved here to the wife's home village. We have been married for ten years and we have two children, a boy and a girl. My daughter is a student in the fourth year of elementary school here near my wife's home.

How long had you known each other before you got married?

About two years. In that time, we got to know each other's character. But the first meeting took place at a temple festival. There I saw this girl for the first time and became interested in her and started to find out where she lived, in which house. Once I found the house, I began to visit every single evening. Visiting so often, I got to know the girl's mother and father, too. Once we knew each other sufficiently well, I was able to ask permission to become engaged to the girl. After the engagement, we didn't have any particular wedding ceremony. About ten years ago, weddings weren't very popular or common. The relatives and parents did get together for the engagement party, and I had to pay a certain amount for the girl. I was obliged to give her mother and father the weight of one baht in gold and also 5,000 baht in cash.

How is your financial situation at the moment?

At the moment, my financial situation is miserable, as it's difficult to find work. Things aren't how they used to be. It's hard to earn a living today. Eating and the cost of living have gone up. The prices have gone up, but wages haven't gone up much. In fact, wages have remained the same, but all the prices have gone up.

How has the economic situation affected your life?

It has affected all aspects of our lives and existence and caused a lot of problems. Sometimes, I have worked and not received my wages. Later I was just told that the factory had gone bankrupt or they say that my work wasn't productive.

I haven't looked for work elsewhere any more, but stayed here in the village and tried to do any work that's possible here. And we try to save wherever we can. My plan is to work on the fields, to start farming. It's much better than working in factories or for someone else. I think that farming will pay right now, because the price of rice has gone up everywhere. The price of rice has risen considerably. In this situation, farming is a solution for the economic recession.

I've been working on building sites in many surrounding villages. From now on, I daren't take any more building contracts, because I've often found that when the house is finished, the owner had no money to pay the workers' wages. However, I'm involved in a building contract at the moment.

What has changed in these last ten years?

There's been a lot of development, especially here in my village. Today, even students have their own dormitories. Many people who are studying in the technical schools and the teacher training college have come and rented properties in this village to live in. The dormitories are used by students who have come from other places. We have cleaner air here than downtown. Rents are even higher there than in our village.

Are there any other changes, any other development?

Yes, industry. There used to be nothing much here, bar one factory. Now it and others have grown large. Now we also have a good road network and transport and almost every house has a telephone. We didn't have them ten years ago.

What is best about this development? What do you like the best?

That communication is easier. Today you can call on the phone, you don't need to go out in the car to look for work. Now you can call on the phone and ask. This easier communication in itself has been a great help and I think it's a very good thing. There's an old proverb that says that a light fruit sinks to the bottom, but a stone rises up.

What do you think this old proverb means?

What is light today, will really sink, to the bottom. What is heavy today, or people's opinions and what people today want, will rise to the surface. Or, people's values have changed a lot. Great changes have indeed taken place. Very many people buy cars today and these issues are now on the surface.

What do you think about this development?

Such development has both pros and cons. It has brought many new things that are good, but it also has its own problems. For example, development has brought good roads right up to our village. Before, roads used to be really potholed, narrow and dusty. But now they are well surfaced and that's a great thing.

What about the problems?

Today, the wealthy buy a lot of land and build on it, and there isn't much field or forest left. One old person said that if this continues, there will be no land left in the world for farming, and fruit can't be grown, because everyone just wants to build great brick buildings. Beautiful trees and beautiful nature is being destroyed all the time. An example is this factory in our village called Ceramic. Originally, the site was good forest and a lot of fruit, and you could walk and eat there. People had a good living and managed well. Now all the trees have been removed, chopped to the ground.

If it was possible, I'd like to go back in time to how it was ten years ago. When we still had buffalo and zebu, chickens, and land that we could farm. Even if you had no money, you managed and had something to eat every day. You just went to the field to fetch vegetables and ate them, or you went fishing to get yourself some fish. Today, if you have no money, you can't manage. Because to buy things you need money. You even have to buy water and pay for it. Before, you just went to get a drink from a spring or any other place where there happened to be water.

I miss the good old days. Then, people had peace and joy in their lives. Keeping buffalo was easier then, too. It was easy to find grass for them to eat. But today, if you raise buffalo or pigs, they have to be fed special feedstuffs, it's expensive and difficult. Meat used to taste much better. Today, meat is spongy. Pigs are fattened extremely quickly and they're even given injections to make them grow faster.

Do you believe that other villagers think like you do about the changes?

Yes, we all think this way. We think of these things a great deal. We'd like to return back to the old time. In the old days, there were insects in water buffalo dung and we villagers used to like to eat them, but today there are none in the droppings, because the vegetables and feed that the buffalo eat, all the grubs and other insects have been poisoned from them. As an old person said, today we can't eat vegetables. They are so poisoned. Even all the small creatures have died from them. The old person believes that the poisoning should be stopped, a law made to prohibit it. It's harmful to people and animals. Because they are dangerous for other animals in the field, too. On top of everything else it's a sin, because it destroys life.

Today, when we go to the fields, we have to carry a bottle of water with us. We used to be able to drink any water in the natural environment. In those days, you could drink it, but not today. The water in canals and ponds contains so much poison and fertilizer that you can't drink it. Before, there were bees and we often found honey, there were beehives. But today they are very rare. The same has happened to fish. There's no fish at all now in these waters. We used to have many kinds of fish. Today, you find hardly any, because they have been killed by poisons and fertilizers. An older person told me that someone had died after eating poisoned vegetables. Many animals have died, too, that is why many people say that they'd like to return to an unpolluted environment, to what it used to be.

Do you know anyone here in your village who would use buffalo on the field?

Yes, a person called Uncle Saeng. He is the only one to still use buffalo to do work on the fields. It is really excellent. In the old days, rice tasted really good and looked fine, and it was probably due to the buffalo; when it was on the field, it also defecated there and that way, it fertilized the rice. But today, people use a tractor to do the work, and one needs capital. And hiring it is costly, too.

How do you feel about the advancing technology? That today, in many places, people are replaced by machines?

That really is the case. We can't do anything about it and it makes us people kind of paralyzed, because we don't need to do anything ourselves any more, since machines do it. It is very apparent in the planting of rice and harvesting and processing of the rice. Today, they are largely mechanized, and one of the village elders said that now we use machinery on the fields, that has its dangers, too. Many people have died because they didn't know how to operate them. The machines were used carelessly. Many people have become lame. Some have lost an arm or fingers. An old friend of mine was struck by lightning when he was on the field with the ploughing machine, and he was killed. That is why I would like to say that villagers would still be better off working with oxen again on the fields. The buffalo is a wise animal. In the old days, if you didn't have a buffalo of

your own, you could borrow one from someone who did, and it was revered as a wise animal. And when the work had been done with it, a ceremony was held afterwards, where it was offered thanks for its help. People used to believe that the buffalo is wise and that it has feelings. Sometimes, you could see clearly that it shed tears, that is why one had to speak kindly to it and hold the ceremony before returning it to its owner.

Would you want buffalo to be protected so they don't die out?

Yes, I would like to see them raised again and protected. The problem is not that there is no green fodder for the oxen, but the problem is that today farmers don't use buffalo. There are new trends and values, and the buffalo is not one of them.

What is most important today, and what do the villagers most want? And what is kind of fashionable at the moment, in order of importance? How will your children and grandchildren relate to today's culture? I mean, to conservation of nature and to preservation of the old culture.

It is unlikely to happen. When children grow up, they want to move into cities and they become alienated from this life close to nature. It is unavoidable, if the economic situation continues like this. I have also noted that today children are not so willing to do hard work, and they don't even know how. For example, when I was a child, when children went for a wash, they had to walk sometimes long distances to the water, and carry the water for themselves. Today, young people want it to come out of the shower, and there is even equipment to heat the water to suit them.

What do you wish for or need the most in your life today?

I wish that times were like they used to be. Money was worth something and it was easy to find work, and life was much more pleasant and easier in many ways. Today, there are many problems and it's hard to find work anywhere. An older person believes that everyone in this village should learn the five basic commandments of Buddhism. If we were to obey them, we wouldn't commit sins or be too selfish. And we'd become more considerate and think of others more. I believe that this way, the standard of living in the village would improve. And this economic situation would ease, too. By following the basic commandments we would experience progress and development, not only in the material, but also in the spiritual sense.

Ban Sree Muod Klao 1998. Mrs Pangoon D., 39.
I own the Ceramic Factory

We sell construction materials and sales are poor. Many building projects have been forced to cancel.

What is your occupation?

I own the Ceramic Factory.

How has this recession affected your family?

Poor sales are reflected in the whole village. I have business operations in other villages, too.

How could the situation improve in your factory?

I wouldn't like to sack anybody, but I'd propose that they should work shifts. However, their monthly pay would drop. I have been forced to lay people off. I have promised that when the economy improves, I will immediately take them back to work. For shift workers, this situation is better than having no work at all.

Has the slump affected everything?

Yes.

What could be done to improve the situation?

I don't know about the future, but if the situation remains poor, we must make new arrangements, in order to safeguard as many people's jobs as possible. The prices of raw materials have gone up. Consequently, nothing can be sold at low prices. For example, we must buy dark-blue stone from abroad. It's expensive, as it comes all the way from Canada.

How big is your factory?

We are Chinese and we have taken out a lot of debt. My father set up this factory in his time. My father died a year ago, and after that my husband took care of everything, but he died recently, too. Now my brother and his wife help me manage the factory. I

have two children, and I send them money constantly for their studies. Thanks to the factories, the village has developed.

If it was possible for you to do something else, what would it be?

I would like a more peaceful life. I have hundreds of workers and I have too much work and responsibility. Many employees have been laid off. Competition over customers is stiff now, and that is why prices of products have fallen.

What would be best of all now?

That I had some land of my own and enough money to build a house. Then I could perhaps grow something for myself, too.

What would you need most now?

I wish the economy was better and my sales were good. I would also wish for health and a stress-free life. But money is the most important. If my husband hadn't died, I would not have become ill. My husband was a clever businessman.

Where did you meet your husband?

I went to study in the city and we met there. We both qualified as teachers. I had a small business, and he used to come often to buy tobacco. We were married for 15 years. This recession is also hard because I am often paid bad cheques, and I have to go to court to get my money.

**Ban Mae Kong Nya 1984. Mr Aaj K., 68.
The machine ploughs deep**

I am a 68-year-old farmer and swidden burner, vegetable grower, and in fact I have done every possible kind of work. I have seven children, four sons and three daughters. I have attended school for four years, and I know how to read and write. I was one of the first pupils at the tambon's Nam Tau School. I was village chief for three years, and I resigned at the age of 58, because I felt that I was old and old-fashioned, and I wanted to give younger people the opportunity of taking care of village affairs. Young people are able to think more sharply. My current wife is aged 50. We have been married for 28 years. Before

that, I was married three times, but those marriages only lasted a short time. All my children have attended school for four years, and three of them are already married. I was born, grew up and lived in this village, and I have never worked elsewhere, except in nearby villages building houses, because I am also a carpenter.

How has life in this village changed in your lifetime?

When I was young, this village road was just a narrow track. I was then, at 22 years of age, assistant to the village chief, and all we villagers together widened and repaired this road. We also tried together to repair the road to the city. Then, this village was forest, and there were only a few houses here, and they were far apart. The change has really been tenfold. A great deal of progress and development has taken place. In those days, lots of great big trees grew here, so you couldn't see from one house to the next, and just that narrow cart track went through the village. Houses used to be tiny, grass-roofed bamboo huts, and it never occurred to us to build permanent houses of timber. Only after the Second World War, building practices began to change.

There were not many worries in life then. We gathered our food in the forest and if one grew one rai of rice, the harvest was sufficient to last a family for the whole year. We didn't need much money. Today, a rice harvest from 10 rai is not enough to secure a family's living for a year, because nowadays we must spend a lot of money. In the old days, farming was wholly dependent on the rains. If there wasn't enough water, the crops were poor. But when the irrigation network was built, since then, we've been able to farm even areas that could not be farmed before.

And how have people changed?

In the old days, everybody, young and old, went to the temple regularly. Today, only the old go. Before, everyone used to wear home-woven, home-made black clothes. Today hardly anyone wears them. Before, we used to wear a wide-brimmed hat made of bamboo and leaves from trees. Nowadays, that is also only worn by a few old people. Maybe they are too lazy to take care of their hat, or afraid that they'll leave it somewhere.

What about people's character?

People used to learn new things very slowly, but nowadays they seem to learn all kinds of things quickly and easily. For example, if someone learned how to drive a car, he'd be called Mr Driver. Today, even children are capable and know all sorts of things. There used to be a lot more thieves in the past than today. They used to steal mostly cattle and buffalo. People knew who the thieves were, but nobody dared expose them. If one of those known thieves came to visit, he would be received very

courteously and offered good food, to befriend him, so he wouldn't steal from you. Today, when people see a thief coming, they attack him.

What kind of change and development would you like to see in your village?

Progress in the village depends on whether villagers are willing to co-operate, and on the other hand if they are prepared to obey the village chief when he makes suggestions and gives orders.

If you had the power, what would you like to change here? What would you order to be done?

Firstly, I would want everybody to find it good to live here, and particularly I would like to help the poor, so that their situation was improved. Secondly, I would like to eliminate thieves and criminals, and thirdly, I would order that only the chief and the kamnan have power in the village. I would also like more help from the police in incidents of crime. Because nowadays every village has some rich people who hold enormous power. They do and act as they please, and nobody dares intervene in their activities or expose them.

How has farming changed in your lifetime?

Farming has changed a great deal. In the eighth or ninth month, we used to plough the fields with buffalo from early morning up till midday. Then, during the day, the buffalo were given a rest, and in the evening we used to plough again. We might plough right until dark. Ploughing with buffalo was very slow. For example, ploughing about 10 rai of field might have taken months. Today, most people here in the village use machines. A machine is good because it is fast and it ploughs deep. Even a field that is high with grasses and that couldn't be tackled at all by buffalo, a machine copes really well. We have had a machine for three years now, and it has never broken down yet. A buffalo, on the other hand, is very slow. The machine is four or five times faster.

Will buffalo disappear altogether?

If nobody uses them for ploughing, I'm sure they will disappear.

What about seed grain?

In the past, we used to only grow indigenous varieties, but today people buy improved seed varieties with a yield that's many times better. Perhaps one farmer in ten still grows the old varieties, but the improved rice varieties fetch a better price. The

indigenous varieties are cheaper.

What about using chemical fertilizers?

In the old days, we just used to use cattle manure. Today, people use a fair amount of artificial fertilizer, particularly in infertile areas.

Do you grow rice to sell?

Only a little, as there are many families living here together, and there isn't enough left over to sell. I have to employ outside labour to grow the rice, and pay wages.

What else do you grow, apart from rice?

I used to grow tobacco, but not any more now. Nowadays I grow sugar cane. It's harvested in December, next month. Some people in this village still grow tobacco, too. Of vegetables, we grow bakhat, baksii (various varieties of Chinese leaves, Iceberg lettuce), dill and peas, if possible. I have more than 10 rai under sugar cane this year.

Here is a picture of three different styles of house. Which do you think is the best?

If I had the money, I would build a bungalow-style house. It's easy to build, as it's made of bricks and concrete and they are easy to get. It suits the landscape on a good road, but not in a forest. It's quite popular today. Then about that traditional Thai house. It's like a temple. Nobody builds them any more these days, and it's difficult to build, as it's entirely made of timber, and timber is very hard to get today. It's expensive. Thai-style houses are sure to die out.

In this next picture, there's a television set, telephone, radio, typewriter, and all kinds of goods. Which of them would you like?

If I had the money, they would all be good. It would be like heaven. I'm sure everybody would buy them, if they had money. A TV set is very good. One can see and hear the news both at home and abroad. Just sitting in one place, you get to know all sorts. Before, if you wanted to see the King, for example, visiting some province or city, you had to travel there. Or if you wanted to know, see foreign affairs, you had to travel abroad. Nowadays, sitting at home, in one sitting, you can see the King and learn a lot of foreign affairs. I don't think there are any disadvantages to television. The only drawback is that it can't be left on in a

thunderstorm.

I can't say anything about the future of this village. I do believe that changes will take place, but what kind, I don't know. There have been many changes in my lifetime. Electricity came about three years ago. The population today is about 200 families. About ten cars, two or three policemen, two teachers. Many men are working in Saudi Arabia. I don't know how many.

Ban Mae Kong Nya 1984. Mr Inkaaw K., 56.
The buffalo was our property

How many children do you have?

Nine. Wait, I'll get the extract from the population register for the house. From my first marriage I have six children. My wife died, and from my present marriage I have two children. So, eight altogether, a family of ten in all. I farm fields, swidden, and grow vegetables, peanuts and garlic.

I went to school for four years at the temple. I have also been a monk there. Actually, I'm an atsaang (azan wat), a teacher. Four of the children have attended secondary school for two or three years, and one has attended for six years. Ten years ago I was assistant to the village chief. I was born in this village, later I was in Chian Rai, working on temple carvings (laikanok). Temple carvings are pictures of angels and religious stories and Thai decorations carved into teak boards. Stylish Thai decoration. I spent 10 years altogether in Chian Rai, in Ban Mae Chiang. My current wife comes from there. Two years ago, I moved back here and bought this house. The previous owner was the village chief and when he died, his wife returned to her home village.

People used to burn charcoal here from wood and make kindling for sale, but now there isn't any timber even for kindling.

Field cultivation hasn't changed much. It's like it used to be, but now we have good roads, many people go to work in town on building sites and other work. Getting around used to be difficult, because the roads were poor. People used to live in small, grass-roofed bamboo huts. Now, people build large, beautiful houses, and compete over who has the finest. And when they don't have enough money, they borrow from the bank and elsewhere. Everybody is indebted to the bank these days. Life used to be simple. We used to find our food in the fields and forests. Nowadays, the forests have been felled and turned into dry fields. People live in luxury, beyond their means.

About the future, I can't say how life will change and what will change, but I'm sure there will be further changes. In the past, changes used to happen very slowly, but now one could say that they happen in leaps and bounds, too quickly. Religious customs have remained the same.

If I had the power, I would try to improve the lives of country people and conditions of land ownership. And I would want all people to be hard-working. I would also try to find new profitable plant varieties to grow, because the farmer's life today is very hard. There are hardly any profits. I don't think there are any defects in our village. The village chief has taken care of our affairs well. Mostly, people are good, but many times the circumstances force people to steal, for instance, and to become dishonest. Probably for economic reasons, people don't go to the temple as much as before. If one goes to the temple for a day, one doesn't get paid for that day, and then there is no money for food.

I think that the buffalo is better than the ploughing machine. It's true that it's slow, but it is very suitable for these conditions. It is a local source of energy in ploughing work, and we should ensure that the buffalo do not die out. The buffalo is our property, and when we use it, we are not dependent on the outside world in any way. Personally, I hire buffalo for field work. The ploughing machine is expensive, and you have to buy fuel for it. One needs plenty of money, and using a ploughing machine, one is dependent on the outside world. The buffalo eats grass here in our own fields, and using buffalo, we are self-sufficient in our farming. I have over 10 rai of fields. I don't use any artificial fertilizer, only cattle manure. For seed grain, I use the improved variety KK6. I don't grow rice for sale. I grow vegetables for our own use and also to give to those who are less well off, the poor, in this village. I grow peanut because it is also good for the soil. It collects nutrients into the soil, and when you plant rice afterwards, it grows very well.

If I had the money, I would build a Thai style house. We should cherish our old culture and Thai heritage. They are our valuable property. The bungalow style house looks foreign. Thai style houses will not disappear completely, but people don't like them today, like they don't like Thai music. Today, they listen to disco music and it annoys me. Foreign, Western culture has arrived and almost destroyed our own Thai culture.

Is a bungalow-style house suitable for a village environment?

No, not at all. People can build them, but they're not even secure. They should think ahead when they are planning to build. Thieves can get in easily. There aren't so many thieves today, but there may be more in the future.

Are the items in this picture necessary and useful for people?

No, not at least for people in rural villages. TV is the only good thing among them. By watching it, one can gain a lot of new knowledge and become generally more enlightened. But television also has many disadvantages. Children receive bad models from the adverts - in dress, behaviour - and also in music. There is Thai music on television very rarely. Those objects in the picture are not suitable for us. They are just a waste of money. I would only buy the television and radio, so I could listen to the news. With their help, I could obtain information and keep up with the times. In my view, television should show many more cultural programmes from here, our own country, Thai music and Thai art. Even if the youngsters wouldn't like them so much, they would learn by watching television and know what our culture is like, and all the things we really possess. I watch television regularly and I bought it for the children, too, so they can follow events in their own country, the news and politics of Thailand.

Ban Mae Kong Nya 1985, Mr Kaew P., 49.

It's impossible to get out of the debt trap these days

I farm fields and swidden. I have six sons, five of them already married, one living at home. I haven't been to school much; there was no school near here then, the nearest school was in Thung Maa. We were very poor and I had to work to earn money even as a child. Sometimes, the teacher came round to ask why I didn't go to school, and then I went for a few days. All in all, I only attended school a few days a year. Nowadays, they go to school for years on end, and still don't learn much. I only went for a few days. I can't read, but I know how to write my name.

I was born in this village and I can say that things have changed a lot. We used to gather all kinds of things to eat from nature, but today you can't find much. It's hard to burn charcoal, too, as there is little timber. Costs have grown enormously. People didn't used to have many debts, but today almost everyone is indebted to the agricultural co-operative.

It's difficult to borrow money these days, you need guarantees and also a middleman (guarantor), who must be paid 5-10%. The costs of a 1,000 baht debt used to be about 10%. Now they are up to 30%. It's not really possible to get out of the debt trap at all these days. If you have no middleman taking care of the loan, getting money from the bank is slowed down. But if you have a middleman, the matter is dealt with more quickly. These middlemen came only a few years ago, when people leaving for Saudi Arabia had to borrow money for their travel arrangements. Nowadays, one has to use a middleman in all loan matters, if one wants it to make progress in the bank. One must take out a larger loan, and so the middleman naturally gets a larger fee

from a larger sum. Banking used to be honest before, but today one cannot say that, and such dishonesty is contrary to Buddhist morality.

What kinds of changes would you want in life in the village?

Improvements in the roads and in villagers' community spirit. I would like to teach people in childhood, what is right and what is wrong. This way, if morality improved, I believe that it would help, criminality would decrease. Villagers quarrel over minor issues and kill each other (referring to general increase in violent crime in Thailand). What is the use of killing people, we don't even eat human flesh. I would like to teach people so that they'd become better. I believe that to be more important than changing external things and progress.

How has people's character changed?

That is rather difficult to say. At least, people didn't used to kill other people as easily as today. In the old days, if someone was a thief, he was caught and suitably punished. Nowadays, a person who is suspected of stealing may be killed without trial, and that way, innocent people are killed too. Modern parents don't teach their children enough, but allow bad manners and inappropriate behaviour. Also, nobody is arrested or punished for doing an injustice. Real development and progress has its origin in man's moral development, growth, and such growth should start with the leaders. If the leaders are good, the subjects are good, too.

What kind of development do you think will happen in the future?

I don't know, but the debt trap is sure to continue and become worse. Already today, the deeds and ownership papers to many people's land are at the bank. In my opinion, material development that takes place through borrowed money is not very beneficial, it is pretty worthless. It's just a showy outer shell. The person himself has great problems, when he is very much in debt. People used to be afraid of debt, but today, when the poor try to be like the rich, they have to borrow money in order to buy things. For example, they may buy a vehicle, a moped or a car, on hire purchase, only to gain respect in the eyes of villagers. But then they have continuous problems with paying for the vehicle every month, and often lose it in the end back to the shop, because they can't make the payments. Only the rich used to have handsome houses in the past, now everybody has similar houses and nice cars, but that way, the poor carry a great burden of debt.

About television programs I would also like to say that they bring a lot of bad influences. Models of crimes, murders, fights and robberies are seen on television, and then the young act accordingly. In my opinion, it's the actors' fault. What we see has a

great influence on our behaviour. When I was a soldier, every Wednesday we were shown a very warlike film to give us courage, and I wasn't afraid of dying then. Now I am afraid, though.

Here in the village of Mae Kong Nya, too, almost every house has a television, and young people and children watch television programmes and copy them. Here, too, young girls drink spirits like men. The model comes from TV. When youngsters behave badly, people blame the teachers, but I think that the blame should be on parents, too, who did not teach their children enough.

Ban Mae Kong Nya 1984. Mr Lek C., 44.
The tobacco farmer dies slowly

I am a farmer. I have three children, two daughters and one son. Both my wife and I have attended school for four years. We are both from this village. My eldest child attended school for four years and is already married. The second has attended secondary school for six years. He does not have an actual job. He sells bakery products for a bakery in Lampang City. My third child is in the fifth form at secondary school, the Vitsanarii School in Lampang. I have worked in Lampang myself, too, on building sites, and also made furniture for sale. When my children were small, I was a tricycle rickshaw rider in Lampang City for nine years. In those days, one could earn a little over 30 baht a day.

I have more than 10 rai of arable land. Farming is easy nowadays, because we have the irrigation system. We used to be dependent on rain water. In my view, the ploughing machine is no match for the buffalo, even though the buffalo is slow. The buffalo has many advantages: the manure is good for plants, the meat can be eaten, and a field ploughed with a buffalo gives a good yield. The disadvantage is its slowness. The machine is fast, but it's expensive. If one doesn't know how to use the machine, one might plough too deep, and then one won't get a decent crop, because the red subsoil is mixed with the topsoil. The costs of purchasing, repairing and operating the machine are greater than the benefits. One uses the machine at a loss. A harvest from a machine-ploughed field gives lighter grains. Personally, I have used the machine for three years, and still do. However, I believe that many people will return to the buffalo, when they realize the disadvantages of the ploughing machine. One must be able to plough with a machine at the same depth as with a buffalo. By the way, I was the first in this village to buy a ploughing machine.

This year, I used artificial fertilizer for the first time. Last year, I tried out fertilizer, when I had some left over from the sugar cane. It seemed to suit rice, too. Using artificial fertilizer, the crop is good in the first year, but later the soil becomes hard and the crop is reduced. Using cattle manure, the soil remains crumbly and open.

For seed grain, I have used old rice varieties, but this year, for the first time, the improved KK6. Its grain is small and doesn't swell much during cooking. But it is tasty. If one only has a small acreage, it's more profitable to grow old varieties of rice, as they go further, since they swell up more during cooking. The disadvantage of the old varieties is that they are spiky and rough. They are awkward to cut and thresh, and the grains are hard to separate from the ears.

We used to grow tobacco in the past, but not any more, because in tobacco farming one has to use insecticides and they cause illnesses in people. My wife is very allergic to insecticide. Each time we harvested and sold our tobacco crop, the money went in the wife's hospital bills. Since we stopped growing tobacco, we have been much healthier. A tobacco farmer dies slowly, little by little.

This year, we have a couple of rai under onion, as well as peanut. Because there isn't much to do for a short period, we grow them to eat and partly for sale. However, the price of peanut is very low at the moment. But the peanut is useful in that its haulms and roots are good fertilizer for the following year's rice crop.

In this picture, you see a television set, radio, telephone, typewriter, pedigree dog, some foreign food and many other things. Are all these necessary in your opinion?

If you have the money, why not, but if you don't have money, no, they're not necessary. And they don't bring happiness. If you buy them on payment terms, it's a sorry affair. If you have the money to pay cash, then why not, it might be nice to own them. A pedigree dog would look handsome and guard the house. We have a television and I do like its programmes, the news, and by watching TV one can also learn a lot of new things. On the minus side, the flipside in my view are programmes where women dress in clothes that are too short, or too short pants. Such programmes seduce the eye. A telephone would be good. One could communicate about matters. If I could afford it, I would buy all those things.

I think that people are better today than they used to be. They didn't used to help so much in communal matters. Today, when the village chief orders it, everybody comes to work together. They didn't before.

Are there any drawbacks in village life?

None. We don't have thieves and robbers. One can leave the house for a day without a house-sitter. Our village is as good as a village can be.

Ban Mae Kong Nya 1998. Mr (Wonwut) Waalawut U., 32.
I sold cars for four years

People call me Bonni. I am 32 years of age. I am not married.

How much have you studied?

12 forms. The name of the school was Telam. In addition, I have studied at the university in Bangkok. Now I am studying at the Lampang teacher training college.

Do you intend to continue at the university some time?

No. I used to be a car trader. I sold cars in a marquee in Lampang. I invested a lot in the cars. I set up the business together with my friend. Now I have been forced to stop selling cars, and a few cars were unsold. Now, I try to sell various goods in nearby villages.

This is my mother's house, because I live with her. I have a younger sister. My parents had this house built, but I sent them money, because I was then working abroad.

In the lottery, I got the black paper, and I was then signed up to the army for two years. I was in a motorized company.

When was the effect of the recession apparent in your business?

When the government no longer supported people's borrowing. We wound up our business about 3 months ago. I won't start selling cars again. Now I'm going to do other sales work, because I still owe money to the bank for our house. I sold cars for four years.

Has the village developed in recent times?

Yes. Now the roads are good and we have electricity, telephones and a piped water system. Houses are also beautiful today. About three years ago, we got the telephones, almost every house has a phone.

You seem to have every possible household appliance, what else would you like?

I want to qualify for some profession, to give me a better prospect of earning a good living in the future. I intend to complete my studies.

How does this kind of part-time study work out?

Fine, because at the seminary the teachers understand that I also have to carry out my business.

If you were wealthier, would you move into the city?

No. I would buy a house, if I had money, and go into business selling houses. I could live in a terraced house or apartment block, if I was living alone. I'm not yet married. I'm too busy. I will marry at some point. I don't have a girlfriend yet, but I hope to find a partner before I'm 35. I don't think that I will marry a girl from this village.

What kind of a wedding would you like?

A big one. I'd invite the whole village to my wedding and video it. Maybe I'll meet a suitable girl through my friends or on my travels.

Has a deceased ancestor ever appeared to you?

No.

Do you tell the phii about your business trips?

No.

Where do you go when you are sick?

To the doctor.

Do you believe in reincarnation?

I half believe in it.

Do you go to the temple often?

No.

What did you do yesterday?

I made a sales trip.

Do you have a car?

Yes, but now I'm trying to sell it.

Do you follow the news?

Very rarely.

**Ban Dong 1984. Mr Saaw M., 48.
My life has not changed much**

An elephant was slaughtered today here in the village. There are six or seven men of us, and we've drunk some alcohol. I've been drinking since the morning, too. I don't usually drink very often, but when there is some celebration in the village, I always have a drink. I don't usually drink much, because I've had one operation, and I'm already so old that I shouldn't drink a lot. The elephant belonged to a relative of mine. He's not selling its meat, but if anyone wants elephant meat, he'll give them as much as they want.

I have eight children and I farm fields and swidden, and grow vegetables. I grow peanuts and swidden rice. I have no part in

(illegal) tree felling in the forest. My farming is pretty small, too, as I don't have the strength to work. The children are small and we are a poor, large family. I did not go to school and I can't read. My wife is from this village, too. I have never worked elsewhere, I have lived here all my life.

How is peanut grown on swidden?

First, all vegetation is cut down and burned. Then small holes are made in the ground with a wooden stick, the seed dropped in and covered. I grow tobacco only for my own use and sell some to the villagers - about 300-400 baht's worth a year. I grow tobacco because I smoke it myself and it's economic to grow it, so you don't need to buy it. I only grow a little swidden rice, too, for my own family. There isn't enough of a crop to sell. This year, the rice harvest was poor, only 10 kasop. It's only enough for a couple of months for our family, and then I must find paid work, so we can manage. Three of my daughters are already married, and one of them lives here with us with her husband. The other two have already set up their own homes elsewhere. The daughter who was recently married and her husband live here and they are a great help to the family. My daughter who was recently married is only 17 years old. At the moment, three of the children are at school and two little ones are still at home.

I don't have my own fields, but I work on other people's fields for a daily wage - that is, cash wage. On these fields, we use buffalo for ploughing. I don't think the buffalo will disappear in the future either. Here in Ban Dong, the buffalo is needed also at times other than the ploughing season. The buffalo pulls a cart and transports rice and timber and any other goods.

I like to watch TV and I particularly like boxing programmes. On Saturdays and Sundays, I go to watch boxing, but I don't take part in betting. I go to watch TV programmes for entertainment and to pass the time, and if I had the money, I would buy a TV set. I think television is very good. In the evenings, I go to watch it, because the programmes are amusing and fun. You can see all sorts of things on it, every possible thing. No need to travel. Here in our own village, one can see life in different countries and all kinds of interesting things. I can't say anything about drawbacks of television. I just want to watch it all the time.

Of those things in the picture, I would only like to buy the television. I'm not even bothered about a cassette player. The reason is that I am poor. I have always been poor, and even if I became rich, I would not be able to forget poverty. I would only get the TV, but in the future, if the children become better off and want to buy some of those other things, that's fair enough. It's their business then. It would be good if we had a TV at home, then I wouldn't always need to go to other houses to watch programmes.

My life has not changed much. It's the same as ever. Naturally, more money must be spent today than before, because I have a big family. Money also goes on clothes, and today we dress better than before. Although my family's income is small, we are

quite contented. When one has no debts, then one can be happy. We grow vegetables and fruit ourselves. This way, food costs are lower. We manage all right.

How has the village developed and what changes have taken place in your lifetime?

The road is pretty good nowadays. It's been improved a lot. Before, in the rainy season, it was quite hard to walk on it. A temple was also built in the village about four or five years ago. The last village chief, Peng Kauwphon, was very good. In his time, a lot of improvements were done here in our village. All the villagers liked him. But to this day, I don't know why he left his post. There must be some reason, but I don't know it.

I don't want to imagine what I would do if I had power. I'm unlikely to ever have power. I'm quite satisfied with my current situation. I'm content with what officials in charge decide.

Ban Dong 1984. Mr Sano V., 47.

Our swiddens are a long distance away now

Why did you come here to Ban Dong?

I used to work in Bangkok, and I came with a friend to visit Ban Dong, met a girl here and got married. And so I live in Ban Dong. I was married here 25 years ago. I have four children, two daughters and two sons. The youngest is 11. I went to school for four years myself, but all my children have attended school for six years. Children from rural villages like this rarely have the opportunity for more schooling, because the parents work on paddy fields and swiddens, and want the children to stay at home and mind the house. And often, the children are forced to be absent from school during rice farming season, because at that time, buffalo and zebu can't be allowed free on the fields. They would ruin and eat the crops. Children must stay away from school to watch the buffalo and zebu, because the parents think that more important than education.

At first, we lived with my in-laws, and they still live here in the village. But 17-18 years ago, I moved here to our own house, I built our own home. I am a swidden farmer, because here in the village we have very few level fields, there are not enough actual paddy fields for everybody. Nor do we have water for the fields to grow properly every year. We ought to get a dam, so we could store water for our crops. We have asked for it many times at the amphoe. We'll have to see if we might get it next year.

My swidden cultivation tends not to produce enough rice for the family, and so these past few years, I have also cultivated Ministry of Forestry teak plantations, where young teak trees are grown. One can grow crops there and it's not prohibited at all. On those teak plantations, one can grow rice, tomato, beans and chilli peppers, but nothing long-term, large plants like mango trees or fruit trees. One can only grow things on newly established teak plantations. So, just a year in each place, then the teak trees grow and shade the plants so much that the crop suffers. Swidden cultivation used to be easy and productive, when one could burn a new swidden every year, but now we must cultivate the same land that we have managed to stake for ourselves, because the Ministry of Forestry has planted all other land with teak saplings. Now, it's not possible to increase one's arable land, swidden area. If one wants new swidden, one must walk from the village a long, long way to find forest that may be cleared for swidden. The Ministry's teak plantations are extended every year, and each year we must go further and further to clear new swidden for ourselves.

We don't have electricity here in Ban Dong yet. For the cassette player, we must buy batteries, use battery power, and a car battery for the television. We have a TV set. The children bought it. They had saved their money and bought it. I watch the news and when other programmes start, I turn the TV off. I don't care for TV programmes much. The neighbourhood children come to our house in the evenings to watch programmes for a while, and then return to their homes.

Do you think television is useful?

Yes. You don't need to travel anywhere, one can see all kinds of things and pictures from different places and countries, and get to know news events both here in our home country and different parts of the world. Every morning and evening, I watch the news on TV and sometimes I also listen to the news on the radio. On Saturdays, when there's boxing matches on TV, and I don't have work to do on swiddens, I stay at home to watch them. Those who really like boxing don't go to work on Saturdays, even if there was much work to do, but stay to watch the matches and then lay bets on the winner - gamble by the television.

If you had the money, which of these three houses would you choose?

I think that it would be very nice to live in the two-storey house. One could build a shelter for the buffalo further from the main house. I don't have any buffalo, because the children are at work and there's nobody to mind them. Many people here in the village have 20-30 buffalo, or just a few. In the rice growing season, the buffalo need to be watched, because they can stray into other people's paddy fields.

On swidden, I grow rice and peanut, which is very cheap these days. In a year, I've made about 1,000 baht from peanuts, but I've had to buy insecticides.

And what kind of seed grain do you use?

For swidden cultivation, you need special swidden rice varieties. Swidden rice is grown by making holes, small holes at equal intervals using a planting stick, and then a few rice seeds are sown in each hole. They are not covered or levelled, but the rain is allowed to cover it with earth, and when the rain covers it, it doesn't become too compacted and hard, but the rice grows well through the soil. Usually, if you sow a bushel of swidden rice, the harvest is 10 sacks, or at best even 20 sacks. This year, swidden cultivation was particularly hard, because weeds and grasses grew so much that I had to weed them out two or three times, to get any kind of a crop. Growing rice in an ordinary paddy field is much easier, since the field is ploughed and then the rice is planted, so there's no weeding. One can leave it and just wait for the crop to ripen. In cultivating flooded fields, the heaviest and hardest stage is the ploughing, but in swidden cultivation, the vegetation must be cleared away, and even though it's burned, weeds must be removed many times after sowing.

The road is still very poor, and it ought to be improved and constructed. And also, I would like a children's day nursery here in the village. My own children are grown up, but for my grandchildren, so they would be stimulated and become clever and intelligent. I'd also like a place for reading the newspapers. It's difficult to get newspapers here and many can't read the papers for months. We just rely on television and radio news here. There are many drawbacks to television. In many programmes you see people wearing short pants. I think that it's quite indecent, but luckily the young people of our village haven't yet started imitating them and wearing such things. Films shown on TV also have many bad behaviour models, but luckily the youngsters here haven't begun to act in the same way.

VILLAGES AND HOUSES

Place for a human community

Culture of the river valleys. Lampang Province lies in the valley of the Mae Wang river in Northern Thailand. In common with other provinces in the country, it is like a 'rice bowl', separated by mountains from other river valleys, other provinces. Lampang plain is skirted by mountains to the north, east and south. The river valley opens out to the south-west, where the Wang joins the river Mae Ping, which originates from the country's distant northern mountains and flows through Chiang Mai and Lamphun plains. Mae Ping is the country's major western river. In Central Thailand, it joins large rivers from the east, and together they finally run into Chao Phraya, river of rivers, which with its tributaries flows through the metropolis of Bangkok and into the Gulf of Siam. It is the river on whose banks Siamese royal houses have built their capital cities. All the old dynasties of South-East Asia have emerged on plains of their own principal river, they have been related cultures and arch-enemies, separated from one another by the mountain chains between river valleys.

During the last century, the river valleys have turned into agricultural plains, criss-crossed by irrigation canals and chains of densely built villages with their palm trees, temples and pagodas, stupas. Here, the open vista does not extend to the horizon, but only to the next village. Rivers have been the arteries of rice farming life. Villages used to be situated on riverbanks, the rivers were waterways, and with the arrival of the rainy season, water overflowed the river banks and submerged the paddy fields. The rhythm of village life followed the change from rainy season to dry season, the rise and fall of the water; house building style, irrigation canals, the networks of dammed paddy fields were adapted to the nature of riversides, and they formed the cultural landscape of the river valleys. (1)

Lampang City lies in the heart of the plain, where many small rivers join the Mae Wang. The city area is the lowest point of the river valley, it was wetland suitable for growing water-planted rice. We can imagine that it was the starting place of a local agrarian revolution that displaced swidden cultivation and created stable, permanent rice villages. From the ancient centre of the province, habitation spread out towards the mountains following small and ever smaller tributaries running from high ground, ending on mountainsides, where a few forest villages, such as Ban Dong, were established. Up on the mountains, they met peoples engaged in swidden cultivation. The agrarian revolution afforded the people of the time endless new opportunities. There was space to clear fields, create the plains village milieus; at that time, a large immediate and extended family and kinship group was a social power and security for the future.

On the plain, the surrounding mountains circle the horizon. The nearest peaks rise to the height of more than a kilometre, but further north, the highest peak is over two kilometres. Viewed from the plain, the mountains appear to be now nearer, now further. Sometimes they shine in the sunlight above the landscape, at other times they are scarcely discernible in the shadow of the clouds. People of plains villages do not visit the mountains, they don't even really have names for them, the mountains just kind of exist. Children are taught at school that rainy season floods bring minerals from the mountains that fertilize the paddy fields of the plains. The mountains are part of the river valley ecosystem, but they also define the area to which the inhabitants of the province have been forced to adapt.

Lampang Province and City. Squeezed between mountains, Lampang Province extends a long way to the north-east, but the cultivated and irrigated central plain is not very large at about 60-70 kilometres long and 40-50 kilometres wide. Most of the province is forested highland and mountains; of its total area of 12,500 square kilometres, less than 15% is arable land. The population is in excess of 800,000, of whom about 250,000 live within the present administrative area of Lampang City. In national economic rankings, Lampang Province is not poor, but not rich either; of northern inhabitants, the people of Lampang are classified as relatively prosperous. (2 The city is at a junction of highways. Motorway No.1 from Bangkok follows the river Wang through the province to the north-east, crosses the mountain fringe and continues towards Chiang Rai, the country's northernmost city. Just before Lampang City - at Ban Srii Muod Klao - is a crossroads, where the Chiang Mai motorway branches off and travels over the Doi Khun Tan mountain range, first to Lamphun Province, and on to the country's northern capital. The old city was situated on the banks of the river Wang. Today, the old wooden trading halls at the riverside have become derelict or disappeared, and the city's new commercial centre is rising alongside the motorways. In the past, habitation spread from the centre of the province towards the mountain fringe, but now the direction has turned back, and the life of the province is concentrated in Lampang City and its environs. Gradually, the villages in the province have also turned towards the highways; they are the modern mainstreams.

The Yuan people of the plains belong to Northern Thai peoples, who have had their own history, language and cultural bonds. Lampang is part of the so-called Golden Triangle on the upper reaches of the Salween and Mekong rivers. As well as Northern Thailand, it has included the Shan state in Burma (Myanmar), Yunnan in South China, and Northern Laos. Lampang belonged to the Lanna state, founded by King Mengrai at the end of the 13th century, and including also the local centre of Mon-Khmers, Haripunjaya, or present Lamphun. As its capital, he founded Chiang Mai in 1296. Lannathai was an independent kingdom until 1557, when Burma invaded present Northern Thailand, too. Led by their national hero, Tip Chang ('The Elephant Boy'), the people of Lampang began an uprising against the Burmese in 1732, and were involved in re-establishing the Lanna state, which was yet again invaded by Burma. The Lanna state was only united with the kingdom of Thailand in the Thonburin era in 1774, when the Thai people succeeded in freeing themselves from the Burmese under the leadership of King Taksin. In

Lampang, King Taksin is the liberator and founder of the new united state; his picture is still seen in villagers' houses. The earliest habitation of Thai peoples is deemed to be South China; due to constant wars, people from China were also still evacuated to Lampang as late as the 1800s, and according to memory tradition passed down generations, the inhabitants of Ban Sree Muod Klao fled China and wandered via Burma to Lampang. The Thai Yuan, Shan and Lao (Lue) peoples have been river valley rice farmers, which distinguished them from Sino-Tibetan mountain peoples, still inhabiting the northern mountains.

Later in the 19th and 20th centuries, e.g. during civil wars in China, Chinese people have moved to Thailand. In Lampang, too, the Chinese have their own social domain and culture. Chinese immigrants were not allowed to settle in the villages at the time, because the land and farming it belonged to Thai people. Thus, the Chinese settled in towns and became artisans and business people, e.g. acting as middlemen between village producers and the markets. As if surreptitiously, the Chinese were the first to adopt the cash economy, to educate their children and to take charge of the new industrial and commercial revolution. The old shops of the centre of Lampang City and the railway station area have been owned by Chinese families. The city's Chinese have their own temples, schools and cemeteries, and they still maintain the Chinese language. The villagers do not mention the Chinese when talking about city people, and I have not observed any hostility towards Chinese business families of the city. The Lampang Chinese have wanted to adapt to Thai society, they speak the Thai language and also observe Buddhist customs. It is often said that the Chinese immigrants were mostly single men who married local girls, and hardly any purely Chinese families actually exist. (3)

The contrast between Thai countryside and Chinese city is fading. Thai people are today involved in business life and educate their children to join the city administrative and clerical sector. Chinese shops in Lampang old centre, along with all other local entrepreneurs, are faced with the large international production and retail chains that have brought their supermarkets into the city and threaten small family businesses. However, social differences do still exist. The city's rich families and leading businessmen and officials are often of Chinese extraction. From the perspective of this book, the city takes centre stage during celebrations of great annual festivals, and it includes pictures of city festivities, colorful processions and events in which villagers also take part.

Three villages

Ban Sree Muod Klao - central plains village. Ban Sree Muod Klao, also found on maps in the form Ban Sii Muod Kau, is a large plains village south-west of the city town.. Thirty years ago, I estimated that the village was about five kilometres from the city. I could not imagine then, how quickly Lampang City would grow towards the village. Today, the village is part of the city town.. In

1972, the city's commercial centre was bordered by a crossing of five roads, with the Lampang clock tower in the middle. Between Sob Tui railway station and the clock tower, there was a broad strip of field and waste land, used for grazing horse-drawn? cab drivers' horses. The village was reached via the twisting Phahonlyothin road that ran via Sob Tui over the railway level crossing. Today, the city has swallowed up Sob Tui and spread along the Bangkok motorway, way past Ban Sree Muod Klao. The edge of the village field, where the Chiang Mai motorway leaves the Bangkok motorway, now displays the insignia of new industrial life: an excavator business, two large car showrooms and two service stations. And at the start of the village road, where just a small brick factory used to smoke, a residential suburb of terraced houses has appeared. Sob Tui, the side of Phahonlyothin road, the whole new city area is built up full of factories and businesses, schools, banks, and a concentration of motor dealers and service stations. Since 1997, the heart of the area has been occupied by a huge supermarket with vehicle access direct from the motorway.

Thirty years ago, Ban Sree Muod Klao had 370 houses and about 2,000 inhabitants, in 1998, the number of houses was 670 and inhabitants 2,250. Thus, the number of houses had almost doubled since the beginning of the 1970s, but the population remained almost the same. The village is densely built up, and a network of narrow alleys criss-crosses between the houses. As the village chief said, many alleys are so narrow that if a modern fire appliance was required to put out a fire, it would probably not get through. All agree that the lanes are narrow, but many people are still unwilling to give up land in order to widen the streets, as plots are also small, and the compounds no longer have the space to build a new house. Thirty years ago, the main village street was quiet, someone might ride along slowly on a bicycle and an ox cart clatter on, raising a little dust. Nowadays, the main street is congested, as it is used as a short-cut by many motorists who don't want to wait at city traffic lights. The most serious problem of the village is posed by the traffic jams.

The irrigation network was constructed in the village in the early 1970s, and at the same time, division of land was verified for taxation purposes. In the large plains village, the average acreage of farms remained small, the chief estimated families at the time to have had on average 3-4 rai of arable land; one rai is 1.6 ares. The problem of the village was the small size of the fields, which produced sufficient rice for the families' needs, but not for the expenses that emerged in a society moving towards a cash economy. In Ban Sree Muod Klao, industrial development overtook agriculture. At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, when strong economic growth prevailed in the country, villagers moved into paid employment, and fields were vacated for use by tenant farmers or remained fallow. The slump that started in 1997 has brought a new direction. Many people who have become unemployed have returned to farm land still owned by the family. On the other hand, the village fields are threatened by the spread of the city; the price of land rises and piece by piece, arable land is consigned to industrial use or for housing estates. The fertile irrigated land on the edges of the city gradually becomes building plots.

Table 4**Three villages**

	Ban Srii Muod Klao			Ban Mae Kong Nya			Ban Dong		
Years	1973	1985	1998	1973	1985	1998	1973	1985	1998
1. Population									
Inhabitants	2000	2350	2250	850	900	1000	480	470	500
Houses	370	450	670	150	170	280	130	100	130
2. Occupation of questionnaire respondents									
Respondents (n)	50	62	70	50	56	60	50	50	50
Occupation:	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Farmer	65	40	16	80	77	28	86	82	64
Labourer	18	18	20	10	3	15	8	6	12
Entrepreneur	14	29	54	6	13	42	2	10	22
Clerical, student	3	13	10	4	7	15	4	2	2
3. Family size									
Number in family	5,9	4,6	4,3	5,5	4,9	4,4	7,2	4,8	3,9

Table 4:2. Occupation of respondents. In 1998, only 16% of the residents of Ban Srii Muod Klao were still farmers, the majority of families (54%) made their living as entrepreneurs, artisans and traders. In Ban Dong, changes have been slight; after swidden burning ended, the only way to make a living is by growing vegetables, as it is difficult to find outside work. Modern growth and development is concentrated around Lampang City. In the country's official statistics, villagers are classified as making a living from agriculture (ca 60%), although families earn their living from other work nowadays.

Table 4:3. Family size. According to the questionnaires, the commonest family size in 1973 was 7 (average 6.4; in Ban Dong 7.2); in 1985 it was 5 (4.8) and in 1998, 4 persons. The number of children began to decline as early as the 1960s and 1970s, but by the end of the 1990s, population growth had ceased almost completely. In 1997-1998, of the interviewees (total no. 180) only seven had families of three children, and only one had more than three. In 2002, the country's annual population growth was 0.9%.

The accounts of this book are headed by the former village chief *Phat Chaivanna*, to whom I first went when I began my fieldwork in 1972. He was kindly towards the foreign researcher. This meeting was important to me then, like an opening to the life of the villages. Phat was also chief in 1982 and 1984, when I continued my field project; in 1997, the chief was his son. The Chaivannas are one of the old village families, and I have numerous pictures of them in my collections.

The villagers of Ban Srii Muod Klao have been rice farmers, in common with people in other plains villages. Two or three decades ago, the only people in permanent outside employment were just the occasional driver and building labourer or night

security guard. Today, there are very few people in the village making a living from farming, and they are entrepreneurs who grow commercial produce almost the whole year round. As if to pay homage to their old culture, villagers still call themselves farmers, if they have any paddy field left. But they earn their livelihood from paid employment or their own business. Ban Srii Muod Klao is a real village of entrepreneurs (Table 4:2). Some kinds of hand-made goods are produced in almost every compound. For decades, the village has been renowned for its blacksmiths who made rice farming tools in low open-sided smithies. A couple of decades ago, when concrete became popular as building material, villagers began manufacture of house pillars, concrete bricks, pipes, well lining rings and other building materials. Cement works, too, have an old tradition in the village; roof tiles were already made at the start of the 1970s, they were then the first products of the local casting works. Nowadays, some of the main articles in the village are large concrete planters for growing flowers in the compounds. They are produced in dozens, some villagers estimate about 70 yards. The village has also had bicycle, moped and motor repair shops, and of course it has shops, eating places, barbers, hairdressers, beauty salons, small service businesses that are needed in all villages.

The village women were already sewing clothes in the 1970s, and today, too, there are many seamstresses' shops in the village, even a business manufacturing for export, and some tailor's shops. Specialized entrepreneur areas have formed in the village. Most of the seamstresses' shops are in the southern end of the village, while the cement casters have settled in the city end, around the temple. A couple of decades ago, a Lampang businessman set up a ceramics factory in the village, and it has become the largest employer in the village. Its principal products today are also ceramic building products. With expansion of the city, villagers have had an opportunity of building work and at the same time of learning the skills to become independent carpenters and building entrepreneurs, who in the years of economic growth subcontracted housing construction in nearby villages. In Ban Srii Muod Klao, too, the new generation is 'workers and clerks', today, the village also accommodates city officials and businessmen who have built themselves modern detached houses.

Ban Srii Muod Klao became prosperous in the years of Thai economic growth. As the transition to industrial society took place, it had the best opportunities of benefiting from the growth of Lampang City. Since mopeds and cars became commonplace, the city is within easy reach for work or trading. The city has provided markets for village products, and many villagers have obtained employment there. On the other hand, the village is also tied up with urban growth, and the problems of modern culture are reflected there. The villagers have specialized and privatized, they no longer have a common occupation, and families live their own lives of workers and consumers. In this village, the advent of education society was felt the strongest, as well as the chasm between generations, conflicts between young people and their parents, youth problems. And now that industrial jobs have declined, many villagers no longer have the security of farming; they are the ones most affected by the recession that began in 1997. But the villagers have not given up their community spirit, in common with inhabitants of other villages. Practically none of the villagers would like to move into the city or live in an apartment block. In the village, they have

their own yard and neighbours still help each other out. The villagers gather together for funerals and temple festivals, men's and women's associations are active. Through co-operative effort, the village has recently acquired a new, beautiful monastery that was inaugurated in 1998; there are pictures of it among the illustrations in this volume.

Ban Mae Kong Nya - village of northern plains. Ban Mae Kong Nya (Nua) is a medium-sized village about 15 kilometres north of the city, on the edge of the agricultural plain along the Mae Tui river. In 1973, the village had 150 houses in total and 850 inhabitants, by 1998 the number of houses had grown to 280 and the population is now about 1,000. In this village, too, the number of houses has increased a great deal, but the families have become smaller. The history of the village habitat is still remembered by the oldest informants. Five decades ago, the villagers farmed paddy fields reliant on rainfall, burned swidden and lived in small bamboo houses. Today, the village is part of the irrigation canal network (1982) and it is flanked by a major highway to the northern mountains. I have seen how the irrigation canal and the road have changed this landscape, too, how a new man-made environment has mushroomed along the highway and encroached towards Ban Mae Kong Nya.

Thirty years ago, the present highway was a narrow sandy track running through an almost uninhabited forest. The only signs of commercial life along its side were a few warehouses, a shop, a cattle farm and a roof tile casting plant. In the 1980s, the road was surfaced and began to sprout workshops, service stations, stores and warehouses along its sides; in the 1990s, both sides of the road are an almost unbroken ribbon of domestic dwellings, industrial premises, casting plants, market gardens, a large canning factory. The forests on the ridge have been cleared to become sugar cane plantations and orchards. In the course of the years, many old businesses have vanished and been replaced by new ones, little petrol kiosks have become modern service stations. At the side of the highway, on the edge of the Ban Mae Kong Tai field, yet another estate of terraced housing has been built, and is standing empty like so many other estates constructed in the crazy years of economic boom. The latest road building phase has been ongoing on the edge of the city, where highway no. 1157 leaves the Hang Chat road. There, at the start of the highway, I photographed the work of rice farmers in the 1980s, today, it is an urban style environment with its terraced housing and commercial buildings; just the old tobacco factory has ceased to exist. In 1997, driving to Ban Mae Kong Nya for the first time in years, I no longer recognized the roadside landscape and could not immediately find the village, thinking for a moment that I was on some entirely new highway that had not existed before.

In this village, the highway has been the key to change and development. No wonder that the villagers talk about construction of the roads when they are asked about development of the village. And today, with even the village alleys surfaced, some say that the village already has everything, no more development is required. Coming in from the highway, the first building on the right is the village school, with ever more new classroom annexes added in the last decades. Immediately at the corner of the school, the main lane turns sharply to the right, and there at the end of the straight road is the village temple, as if the road

ended there. But in front of the temple, the main lane turns sharply left, and forks after the nursery playing field. One fork runs west to the plain broken up by irrigation canals and on to villages beyond it; the other fork crosses the river and leads south to Ban Mae Kong Tai, a little hamlet, and on to Ban Pao. Such is the village framework; numerous side alleys and lanes criss-cross the main lanes, twisting around groups of houses and village backwaters, but always ending up re-joining the main lane.

The irrigation network and electricity arrived in the village in the early 1980s. When arable land was divided for permanent private ownership, the village still had few houses, and the average arable acreage ended up greater than in Ban Sri Muod Klao. The chief estimated it to have been about 7-13 rai. Today, a fertile plain stretches out to the west and south of the village, with large-scale cultivation of e.g. soya bean in the dry season. Many of the villagers were involved when the ridge to the east of the village was cleared in the 1980s for sugar cane and fruit growing, and there is a family of entrepreneurs in the village, in the business of subcontracting agricultural work with combine harvesters and large ploughing tractors.

Ban Mae Kong Nya is a village of farmers and traders (table 9:1). Thirty years ago, there were several charcoal burners in the village, who would transport the charcoal to the city on ox carts and sell it from compound to compound. The occupation of charcoal burner was not very highly regarded and the villagers do not really want to reminisce about it. However, the tradition of trading has continued. Many of the village women regularly go to the city market to sell foodstuffs, and in many houses, the men trade in agricultural produce, collecting in their vehicles vegetables, fruit and other seasonal produce and transporting it to market traders or city wholesalers. Many of the interviewed men have travelled around the province by moped or car selling goods, particularly fabrics, and there is even a young motor vehicle trader among the interviewees. There is little commercial enterprise in the village, only a small sewing shop that takes in subcontracted work, and a park with ponds offering recreational fishing; it was built by one family on a field to the south of the village. Reel fishing is an increasingly popular pastime.

The highway has made it possible to work in Lampang, and young people who have obtained places in city schools and colleges are able to live at home. The village already contains many clerks and other people in employment. This village, too, sees the people leave early in the morning by car and moped towards the city, and in the afternoon the traffic streams back. The new highway has already become congested - in accordance with the country's traffic culture, large vehicles terrorize smaller ones, and many people in a hurry overtake recklessly. In Thailand, road traffic accidents cause the deaths of tens of thousands of people annually, but driving is unavoidable. Ban Mae Kong Nya is no longer a self-sufficient rice farming village, but it, too, is dependent on development of the city and the future of an industrial culture.

Ban Dong - the last forest village. Ban Dong lies about 35 kilometres from the city. It is the last in the chain of small villages that follow the Mae Ang river in the mountains skirting the north-eastern edge of the province. Ban Dong is built on the hills

between which the Mae Ang runs down from the mountains. Behind the village, the mountains begin to rise to about 800 metres, and further north the highest peaks reach over 1,400 metres. The river is small, and its narrow valley holds only a little dammed agricultural land. Ban Dong is a resettlement village from the era of swidden culture. People moved there to do forestry work and to farm swidden; some of the incomers have remained permanently, others moved away. In 1973, there were about 130 houses and under 500 inhabitants, today the numbers of both remain roughly the same. In all these years, the village has undergone constant change, houses have been erected and demolished, only a few families still live in their old places. The village is also unusual in that it contains a small Christian parish with its own church, and the new village chief, elected in 1998, is also Christian.

From the Chiang Rai highway, before the north-eastern mountain fringe of Lampang, a side road turns off to the north, to the Kew Lom irrigation dams and man-made lake, where the irrigation canals circling the plain originate. Off the Kew Lom road, a village road forks off to the north-east, winding along the hills to Ban Mae Ang, the main village of the river valley. Beyond it, there are a couple of small villages, and the river must be crossed three times before arriving in Ban Dong. Thirty years ago, the village was only accessible by car in the dry season. The road was a pot-holed sandy track and the bridges rotten; to get across the Mae Ang, one had to leave the road and drive across the river bed. The river valley fields were already there as they are today, but here and there on the hillsides, a small swidden clearing was discernible, and in the dry season, swidden smoke rose up on the slopes. On arriving in the village, the road descended down the hill into the river valley. There, the river formed a little pond, and with its green meadow and magnificent trees, the valley was like a park from Paradise. Beyond the meadow, the road turned left to the village school, nowadays accompanied by the temple and a day nursery. The actual main lane on the right climbed up the hill, with end gables of houses rising on the slopes visible from a distance. The river valley was the heart of the village. There was an old, preserved foot-operated rice mill and places for camp fires, where people warmed themselves in the cold season. Ducks swam in the pond, buffalo were taken there for a dip, people fished and did their washing.

The road to Ban Dong has changed, too. Today, one first takes the perfectly straight Chiang Rai motorway to the Kew Lom junction, and then the perfectly straight highway towards the north. The old twisting village road to Ban Mae Ang is still the same, only it has been surfaced and pineapple plantations spread along both sides; the swidden forests have gone. Ascending from the plain, the mountains are now divided into economic zones. Where the irrigation network ends, industrial pineapple plantations begin, and have already reached the hills of Mae Ang. Before the village, the road climbs up a hill where swidden was also burned in the past. Here began in the 1980s the blackened, burned clearings of the Ministry of Forestry, and spread over the hills towards the shimmering mountainsides in the distance. Beyond Ban Mae Ang, after crossing the first bridge, begins the Ban Dong highway. It is a brand new two-lane highway with its concrete bridges and traffic signs, built towards the end of the 1990s. The road follows the route of the old village road, first through the village of Ban Na Kaen and across its only larger arable area, and then rises up the Ban Dong hills. Descending into the village, the road curves onto a wide concrete

bridge, turns right beyond it, rises along the main lane up the hill and ends at the crossroads of the lanes. There is a mandatory stop sign. The river valley pond has disappeared under the bridge, the trees of Paradise vanished.

What could I tell you about this village, considered by some authorities to be a den of forest thieves? Should I keep quiet and only write about the village life seen by a visitor, and pretend that I do not know what people say about the village? The villagers grew their daily rice by swidden cultivation, they made money by raising water buffalo and by illegal felling of teak trees in the surrounding forests. When I first came to the village in the early 1970s, young men rode around in the forests on sturdy-framed bicycles carrying teak boards between their legs. The trees were felled in the night and sawn into boards using hand saws; it was said that the sawing was done in the river, so the water washed the sawdust away. The Ministry of Forestry guards patrolled the forests and during the day, planes circled over the mountains. While walking in the area surrounding the village, one might bump into an entire army detachment searching for illegal timber stores and swiddens felled without permission.

The villagers had the right to fell trees in order to build their own houses, and the finished house could then be sold to timber buyers who went round the villages. Even today, one sees houses in the village with false walls and balconies, with hand-sawn teak boards fixed using only small nails. The boards serve as the bank for the house, to be sold if necessary. Nowadays, it is hard to 'fell' trees, and as the informants say, it is no longer practised. But illegal felling of teak has not ceased in Lampang province, as is the case elsewhere, too. The papers report how illegal timber is now obtained from nature reserves. The methods have become more technological and tougher, the villagers have been replaced by the 'mafia'. Efficiently organized felling parties use powerful open pickup trucks, chain saws, mobile circular saws and walkie-talkies; logs are collected from the mountains using elephants that are still seen in forest villages. Now that the village has electricity, the sound of electric planes is heard around the village. There, young, nimble men are constructing windows and doors from teak boards, the degree of processing is now higher and value is added before the teak is sold.

Ban Dong is a swidden village that has lost its living environment. The village's small flood and rainwater fields are situated in the Mae Ang valley, and only the oldest families have any arable land at all. Today, only one third of the families manage to grow sufficient rice to see them through the year. During the last decades, the Ministry of Forestry has felled the area's forests and turned the clearings into teak plantations, which currently already reach past Ban Dong right up to the steep bluffs of the mountains. Felling of new swidden is entirely prohibited; villagers are still permitted to cultivate their old swiddens, but the only ones remaining are far away, at a distance of about 8-10 kilometers on the mountains. The swiddens have become gardens where forest that has barely reached the scrub stage is burned, and soil fertility is maintained by fertilizers.

Efforts have been made to create development programmes for the village, in order to make farming profitable and to dispense with swidden cultivation altogether. One possible cash crop is tobacco, and there is even a drying plant near Ban Mae Ang, but

nowadays the Thai government is intent on discontinuing commercial tobacco growing completely. In the 1980s, many families tried to make a living by growing vegetables, and it was hoped at the time that an irrigation pool could be built in the village for farming in the dry season. The villagers talked a lot about the coming of the irrigation dam. A small dam has now been built below the concrete bridge, and there are a couple of rainwater storage tanks up on the slope, but they do not resolve the cultivation problems. Today, production of vegetables, spices and fruit is concentrated on large farming estates in Thailand, too. Since the village residents have no land of their own, they cannot obtain loans for farming. In Ban Dong, only peanut and maize remain, as they can be grown in dry soil.

The only legal means for villagers still to earn an additional income from the forest is by cutting bamboo. After the rainy season, villagers collect bamboo canes from the forests, to be cut at home into node-length sections and tied up in bundles. Bamboo is still required for basket work, and a local delicacy is rice cooked over a fire inside a bamboo section. On guided nature trails in the mountains, cooking rice over a fire is a part of tourists' evening entertainment. Each morning, ox carts leave village compounds and trundle off to the forests beyond the village to collect bamboo.

Villagers reminisce about the times when they could cultivate as much swidden as the family needed. Had the Ministry of Forestry not felled the forests in the area, village families could have continued their self-sufficient swidden-cultivating lives, like they did thirty years ago. But what now? How can a person here earn money for a moped, a car, fridge, television, everything that is necessary in modern culture? How can parents educate their children in this world, where young people have no future without an education? Ban Dong has been inhabited by people who had no place to go. Today, too, very few would want to move away from the village. It does still hold relatives and friends who help, there would be nobody elsewhere. In this village, people live together, seek opportunities to manage together. In the cold season, villagers sit in groups in the mornings in the sun, warming themselves. By and by, the young men disappear somewhere, to work to help a neighbour, to the forest, here and there. There is no hurry, as there is no work. Someone rides past on a moped on an errand and returns in a moment. Someone is on his way to the forest with a pair of buffalo, a long-barrelled gun on his back. The men still have old-fashioned flintlock guns and slingshots hang out of the back pockets of grown men. No birdsong is heard in the village. Young men spend night after night hunting in the forest, hoping to perhaps shoot a wild boar or a deer in the morning twilight. Now they must take anything available from nature. There are more head-lamps in this village than anywhere else.

Ban Dong is directly under the administration of Lampang City, thus, it should be the city's responsibility to ensure that the villagers' livelihood is assured. My research colleague, Phan, a city councillor, wracks his brain as to what could be done in the village. The new road has improved villagers' prospects of commuting to work elsewhere, and the best-off are those who have found work in the city or the nearby joinery factory. But it is not enough. The villagers are becoming desperate and bitter. Why did the Ministry of Forestry leave nothing for local people or even offer work to the villagers, but brought in labour from Eastern

Thailand? The forests of Thailand were felled to satisfy the needs of the growing national culture, officials, new meritocracy, but their destruction is blamed on the mountain swidden people. In this country, too, it has been easy to make swidden cultivators scapegoats and to take away from them the forests, the whole environment in which many local mountain peoples have lived for centuries.

Village houses

Traditional pillar house. In riverside villages, houses had to be built on stilts to withstand the floods of the rainy season. This was the origin of the basic Thai house type, the pillar house, which is also known in other South-East Asian river valley cultures. Houses built high above the ground had other advantages, too. As Ruthai Chai Chongrak describes, in the past, the houses of Thai extended families were built high up around a common central terrace in such a way that the floors of the living quarters were at a different height and the wind could blow above and below the floors, and naturally also through the windows and under the eaves. Such a house was cool in the hot season and dry in the rainy season; the dampness of the earth did not rise into the floor and wall structures, and snakes, scorpions and other creatures driven out of their holes by the downpours could not get in. People needed to live at least at sufficient height for the wind to blow freely under the house, and the whole group of buildings kind of floated in the air currents. (4

There are still plenty of pillar houses in Lampang plains villages, and they are built on pillars high enough to provide shaded living space underneath. Particularly in Ban Sri Muod Klao, there is usually a platform under the house, upon which people sit and work on handicrafts, and take a nap. Tools and other equipment has been stored under houses. In the past, there would be a large threshing basket, two in large houses; the ox cart would be kept there, today replaced by a ploughing machine and mopeds. The history of plains villages has seen times when buffalo and zebu had to be protected from thieves, and they were brought to shelter under the house at night. A few such houses still existed in Ban Sri Muod Klao and Ban Mae Kong Nya in the 1970s, but usually a separate shelter was built for the buffalo. In the 1970s, one might still see a pig chained in a harness under the kitchen gallery of the house, eating anything that was thrown down from above.

Entry to a traditional pillar house is via stairs situated outside the house. They lead first to a gallery covering the length of the house, with the kitchen usually at one end. There is no wall separating the gallery from the living area, but the floor of the living room is twenty or thirty centimetres higher than the floor of the gallery, providing a good place to sit. Up to the 1980s, there would be a large water crock on the ground at the foot of the stairs; one would take a coconut scoop of water and rinse one's feet before ascending to the living quarters. The house was never entered wearing sandals, but they were left on the stair, as

high up as befitted the visitor's status. The host and hostess placed their sandals on the top step. At the top of the stairs, on a shelf just below the ceiling, was a crock from which it was customary to scoop some water and drink a few sips. The water stayed cool in the earthenware container. If the visitor was a stranger, he would sit down on the edge of the living room floor. It was not customary to offer visitors to the house any refreshments, but if particular respect wanted to be shown the guest, he would be handed a glass of water.

Cattle sheds, grain stores and other outbuildings were also built on pillars. The stables of water buffalo and zebu had a loft above, where rice straw was kept. The grain store was a small, high, covered platform, containing a large bamboo basket coated with clay and cattle dung; rice kept well in such a basket. The house built high up on pillars is part of the building tradition of river valleys; the houses of swidden farmers, situated on slopes of hills and mountains, were on low pillars, and the space below the house was not used for working or relaxing. When the swidden farmers' lifestyle was still mobile and villages were moved to new places at regular intervals, the walls of houses were woven from bamboo strips. Such bamboo houses still exist in forest villages, including Ban Dong.

Modern houses. Thus, the traditional village house has been a 'single-storey' pillar house with a plain pitched roof. Single-storey means that people lived in the house on one floor on top of the pillars. When households began to acquire mopeds and ploughing machines at the turn of the 1970s - 1980s, they no longer wanted to keep them under the open house, but brick walls were built to enclose the ground floor, and the floor was laid in concrete. The window apertures downstairs were adorned with iron bars and the doorway with a sliding barred door, like city shops. Thus was born the 'two-storey' dwelling, with the ground floor made of brick and the top floor of timber. The kitchen and bathroom areas were also built on the ground floor. This type of house was the villagers' ideal home in the 1980s, by far the most popular in opinion polls (Table 5A). A couch, cabinets with glazed doors, stereo sound systems, television and refrigerator appeared downstairs; the upstairs became the bedroom, with stairs from indoors direct from the downstairs living room. At night, before going to bed, bicycles and mopeds were pushed into the ground floor and the barred door pulled shut. Such a house was 'secure'. But the change also meant that the inhabitants of the house moved to live on the ground, and the upstairs bedroom became a private, intimate space.

Building construction changed during a couple of decades (Table 5B). In 1972, all the village houses were still pillar houses (No. 1), and most had grass roofs. In 1985, of the questionnaire respondents' own houses in Ban Srie Muod Klao, 46% were pillar houses and in Ban Mae Kong Nya 60%; in 1998, the two-storey house was already the most common in the plains villages (71% and 55%). After completion of the irrigation network, the rainy season floods no longer reached the villages; today, the front of the house and a part of the yard, too, are concreted. The advantages of the new house style were justified in

many ways. The residents could sleep upstairs in cooler conditions than in houses made entirely of brick, in which the brick walls absorb heat. In the rainy season, the wooden upper floor was dry compared to the brick ground floor, and in the cool season, the ground floor brick walls gave off warmth to the upstairs bedrooms. During the hot season, the ground floor remained cool well into the morning, and the wooden upper floor, on the other hand, cooled down quickly in the evening.

Changes in building practices were also affected by the demise of forests. By the early 1980s, only very little remained of the forests of Thailand, and teak timber had become so expensive that the villagers were no longer able to build traditional timber houses. However, many old houses stood on solid teak pillars, which could now be sold and a new house built supported on concrete pillars. Building materials changed, and at this time, e.g. villagers of Ban Sri Muod Klao began to manufacture concrete posts and other cast concrete building elements.

As early as the beginning of the 1980s, low brick houses began to appear in the villages, built either from blocks or small, kilned bricks. Such houses were cheap and they were built especially by young couples and families of labourers. In their basic form, they had only one room which was divided in two with wardrobes, to form a living room and a bedroom. New, modern dwellings, bungalows, were also being built in the plains villages, similar to single family houses in cities. They were built by men who had been abroad as emigrant workers, in the 1980s, usually in Saudi Arabia. Today, new, Western-style single family dwellings mostly belong to white-collar workers or city businessmen who have moved out to nearby villages.

At the same time, a period of constructing modern Western-style single family houses began in Lampang City. The new house styles were gleaned from construction magazines, and professional house designers appeared in provincial cities, even some trained architects, creating a new housing culture reflecting international models. However, Thailand lacked knowledge of Western architectural history and styles. Builders of new houses copied different styles and combined them with forms of building that were considered to be national. This way, suburban areas were created in Lampang, with single family houses adorned with elements from several eras, as if in a post-modern style. The houses might have round turrets like knights' castles, Spanish patios, arched windows, Greek columns and statues from Antiquity. The era of mixed-style buildings gradually petered out, and in the 1990s, a local basic two-storey single-family house style was established in the city, with proportions largely the same as in the old pillar house.

Return of the pillar house. In the last decade, local building practices saw a new trend. The two-storey house lost popularity and in increasingly prosperous plains villages, a renaissance of the wooden pillar house began; in Ban Sri Muod Klao in particular, people wanted to return to the house with the open ground floor. A brick-built house directly on the ground turned out to be an uncomfortable living space, being dark, dank and unhealthy in the rainy season. Cars had now appeared in yards,

mopeds had become commonplace and lost their status as the most precious item in the household. Cars could not be driven into the ground floor for the night, but the entire yard was enclosed by a high fence with an iron gate. The security zone of the house was extended from the ground floor barred door to the roadside iron gate, and following city style, in the village houses of white-collar workers, too, the gate is always closed and a large German Shepherd dog patrols the yard behind the gate.

The current ideal house in the villages has a brick-built kitchen area with an adjoining bathroom area on the ground floor, but the rest of it is open space, and the stairs to the first floor are again outside the house. Beneath the house, there is a teak settle, a television and a fridge, sheltered from view by flower plantings that have become fashionable. One of the cottage industries in Ban Sree Muod Klao is manufacture of large cement planters for such floral decoration. The latest fashion is a wooden pillar house, with fascias and window shutters decorated with fretwork, and the roof structure may be multi-layered like in old dragon houses. Teak timber is available again, imported by Thailand from neighbouring countries with the righteousness of the more prosperous. The new decorative pillar house represents 'neo-vernacular', contemporary traditional building style, folklorism, like new vernacular style family houses in Finland. The Thai joinery industry produces decorative fascia board to be sold by the metre, likewise with stair bannisters. Mostly, however, the bannisters and newel posts are made of kilned ceramics, manufactured also by the Ban Sree Muod Klao ceramics factory. Building of a pillar house is justified in the same way as in the past. The traditional Thai house is fresh and airy, it is cool in the hot season and not as damp as a brick house in the rainy season. A timber Thai house, especially if it is made of genuine teak, is still costly, more so than a brick house, but perhaps it reflects the modern nationalistic spirit and people's desire to return to village communities of the past, their open, 'neighbourly' lifestyle.

Table 5A shows changes in favoured house types over the last twenty years. The question asked when mapping opinions was: 'Which one of these three types of house would you build for your family, assuming that you had sufficient means?' Thus, the responses reflect people's ideas as to which one was the ideal house at the time, the prettiest and most comfortable. Although the line drawings were simplified, villagers recognized the house types easily in their own villages, and also justified their choices. (5 Table 5B shows the type of house the respondents actually lived in.

Table 5.

Popularity of house types 1982-2000

A. Opinions of questionnaire respondents

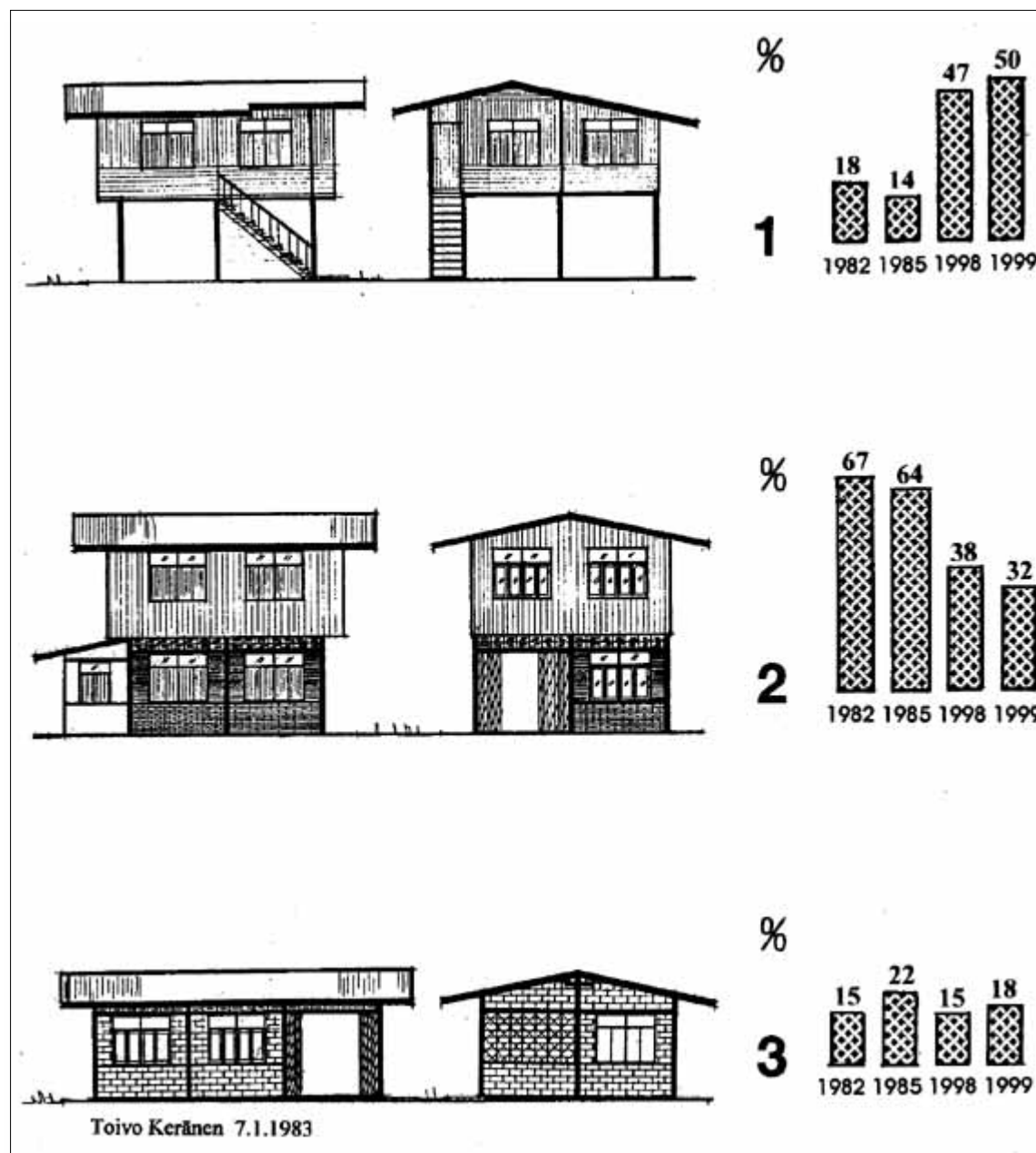


Table 5.

B. Questionnaire respondents' own houses

House type	Ban Srie Muod Klao				Ban Mae Kong Nya				Ban Dong			
	1	2	3	(n)	1	2	3	(n)	1	2	3	(n)
	%	%	%		%	%	%		%	%	%	
1972-1973	(100)			50	(100)			50	(100)			50
1984-1985	46	41	13	60	60	27	13	55	100			50
1997-1998	13	71	16	70	16	55	29	60	90	4	6	50

House No. 1. Traditional 'one-storey' pillar house of the villages. In the early 1980s, it had become old-fashioned, and nobody wanted to build them any more (Table A). Wooden pillar houses looked poor at the side of new, modern bungalows. But gradually, the open-basement house has made a comeback; by the end of the 1990s it was the most popular, with 50% of respondents, 60% in Ban Srie Muod Klao, considering it to be the prettiest. The ground floor of the new 'old-style' houses is mainly built of brick; there are only two pillar houses built exclusively from teak and decorated with fretwork in Ban Srie Muod Klao (Table B).

House No. 2. The two-storey Thai house was already the most popular in 1982. Almost 70% of respondents thought it the best (Table A), and justified their opinion usually by saying that the type was the most practical and secure. This house type is prevalent in the plains villages (Table B), but in the 1990s, it proved impractical, even unhealthy, and villagers wanted to live in an open house that felt spacious.

House No. 3. A low, single-storey house built of brick, with all the rooms on one level. The popularity of the house type has neither increased nor decreased (Table A). It is deemed to be the best by old people who say that they no longer have the strength to climb up and down stairs. It has been the 'house of the elderly'. The breeze block house shown in the picture is also liked by the young, because it is the most economical and can be self-built. The low brick houses are also damp in the rainy season, and they are nowadays built on a higher foundation than before.

There are some differences between the villages. The open basement, traditional pillar house has made the fastest comeback in Ban Srie Muod Klao, but on the other hand, it was also the first with the trend of bricking up the basements of old houses. In Ban Mae Kong Nya, all the house types had their supporters; it has the most low one-storey brick houses (29%; Table B), apparently also due to the fact that the village is situated on a dry sandy ridge. In Ban Dong, the opinions are divided roughly as

elsewhere, and many people questioned the suitability of bungalows in a forest village. In reality, this village has almost exclusively old-style pillar houses, and building practices have not changed much over the decades.

Building practices. In the era of village cultures, building materials were obtained from the surrounding natural environment, and they had to fulfil the demands of local conditions. In Thailand, houses have always been built of teak or similar oily timber, because termites, ants and other insects quickly destroy softer wood. The framework of the building was constructed in such a way that the joints in load-bearing structures were solid without the need for nails or metal fixings, for example, the ends of floor joists were slotted through the main pillars. The roof was made of grass, as it is cool in the hot season; grass roofs are still used in many workshop premises, such as smithies. Upper-class houses used to have multi-paned, curved, so-called dragon roofs, like those still seen today on temples, and they were also constructed almost completely without nails. A dragon-roofed, traditional pillar house was a demonstration of craftsmanship, particularly its complex roof structure, and it required a lot of timber. Such houses were extremely rare in Lampang villages, but there were some in the city. In people's general consciousness and villagers' accounts they are the authentic Thai style houses that are a part of the country's cultural heritage. Building a timber house has been a skill possessed by village men. In the past, every son-in-law had to build his wife a house in her parents' compound; it was proof of husbands' ability. In the dry season, there was time for building, and then voluntary working parties were held in villages, when neighbours and relatives came to help, and at least the main pillars of the new house would be erected together. In Ban Dong, I have photographed heavy teak beams being manhandled into upright positions, using an ox cart as an aid. Erection of the pillars has been an occasion exclusive to the men, and if the house was being built by a new son-in-law, by gathering together, the working party accepted him into the company of the married men of the village. At the start of the building work, an offering was made to the *phii* of the compound, the supernatural guardian of the place, in whose domain the new family was coming to live, and the souls of ancestors have also been asked to protect their kin in the new dwelling. Some researchers have maintained that an important issue used to be that the house was built correctly aligned to certain directions, but in these Lampang villages the direction of the house was immaterial.

Thirty years ago, co-operative building parties were common, but they have gradually died out. Nowadays, building requires professional tradespeople: bricklayers, joiners and fitters. Village houses, too, are equipped with opening glass windows, wiring for electricity and water pipes. A rule seems to prevail in the villages that it is acceptable to build one's own house, and even to ask friends and relations to help temporarily, but it is not fitting to organize a general voluntary building party, with possibly the exception of erection of the pillars. Building is paid employment of construction workers, and, as in farming, reciprocal voluntary working parties would adversely affect their livelihood. In their place, people have housewarming parties. The neighbours come to view the new house and to celebrate with the hosts. Today, monks are also invited to housewarming parties, and they follow the same celebratory format as other occasions where monks are present. The celebration begins in

the morning, and after the monks have conducted a service, they are offered a meal at about 11 o'clock, when others also share a meal. The most affluent may also hire a band for the occasion. After the monks have departed, the guests sit at tables, drinking spirits and other refreshments, talking among themselves, until one after another, they leave to go home. The guests contribute to the costs of the housewarming celebration by making a cash gift and helping with food preparation in the same way as at weddings or funerals. Mutual relations of friendship and neighbourliness are now created through monetary gifts, and the amounts are carefully memorized.

Equipment of living

From buffalo to motor car. In the villagers' accounts, old people recall how they used to walk everywhere. Then bicycles arrived. When a rice farmer, householder of the 1970s, set off to the fields or forest, his outfit consisted of blue short pants, a blue cotton shirt and a wide-brimmed bamboo 'coolie' hat. That was the dress of an Asian peasant. On his shoulder, he carried tools or carrying baskets, on the other shoulder hung a water bottle made of a node section of a bamboo cane, and on his back in a raffia sheath, a large machete made by the village blacksmith. The carrying baskets were used to transport home the daily vegetables from the field, and rice after it had been threshed. In those days, carrying baskets hung from a pole across the back were everyday tools of women, too. Women also used a strong basket carried on the head, in which they carried soil, sand and even bricks on building sites; women's carrying baskets have helped build village roads and irrigation dams, they have been used to do the earth-moving works of their time. Goods were transported on zebu or buffalo carts. Zebu were used on longer journeys, because it walked faster than the water buffalo. Right up to the 1980s, buffalo and zebu carts could be driven on roads, and they were seen in suburbs delivering charcoal, sand and other building materials to houses. Today, driving buffalo on public roads is prohibited, because they slow down traffic and are an accident risk. Buffalo and zebu have disappeared altogether from plains villages, as well as carts, yokes and old local tools. And the carrying baskets on women's heads; in the 1980s, the human environment was constructed by caterpillars, in the 1990s by excavators.

Today, when a farmer goes off to his fields, he rides there on a moped, a ploughing machine or an open pick-up truck. The ploughing machine has replaced the buffalo and cart, it acts as a tractor and pulls a trailer, the iron-spiked wheels just need to be exchanged for rubber tyres. Table 6 shows that ploughing machines have not increased in the near plains village; it only has few farmers left. Elsewhere, too, the ploughing machine is not regarded so essential that every landowner had to buy one, but a tractor and driver are hired. People would rather save their money for a car. According to the questionnaires, village families owned the following vehicles:

Table 6.**Means of transport**

	Sri Muod Klao		Mae Kong Nya		Ban Dong	
<i>Year</i>	<i>1985</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1985</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1985</i>	<i>1998</i>
Families (n)	64	68	59	60	52	51
<i>Household has:</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%
Ploughing machine	13	12	8	38	-	20
Bicycle	84	76	61	60	60	53
Moped	75	99	59	90	13	67
Car	16	50	5	40	-	24

Many older informants remember who was the first person in the village to own a motorbike. In the 1970s, the bicycle was the most important means of transport; with a basket placed on its rear rack, it was used to get to and from the fields. Mopeds and motor cycles became common in the 1980s, and in the 1990s, cars began to appear alongside mopeds. Nowadays, every house in the plains villages has a moped, and almost half of the respondent families own a car, too. The chiefs estimated that the number of cars in Ban Sri Muod Klao in 1997 was 175, and in Ban Mae Kong Nya 157. Conversely, the number of bicycles has declined; they are only ridden within the village, and in many houses they have been abandoned to rust. Bicycle repair shops are also hard to find in the villages.

The moped is the means of transport for the whole family, used by women as much as men; perhaps it is left more to the women, the men prefer to drive cars. Young girls and old people alike ride mopeds, and the whole family is often transported by one moped. The moped is used by mother or father to take the children to school and nursery, the smallest sitting on the driver's lap, the bigger children behind. For years, moped riders have been encouraged to wear helmets, but the transition period has been extended by necessity many times, and the helmet has only become more common in recent years, after the police tightened up on traffic surveillance.

These villages are home to the first generation of car owners, to whom the car means freedom of movement and maybe also the opportunity of doing some business. During the last decades, a massive road network has been built in Thailand. When talking about development, the informants always mention the roads, they are pleased that there are good roads everywhere, and even village lanes are surfaced with concrete. Now the villages are facing traffic problems. The moped is no longer enough for young boys, they must have a real motorbike. In Bangkok, and probably soon elsewhere, too, young people's motorbike gangs are a problem. Young people, and older men, too, killed in road traffic accidents are talked about in the villages of this book. Accident statistics in Thailand are among the highest in the world, and the annual toll of traffic victims in Lampang

Province alone equals that of the whole of Finland. Sometimes one felt that the safest place to drive in was Lampang City, as the traffic crawls slowly along its narrow streets. On the highways, one regularly saw young motorists who literally raced with death.

Conveniences of living. Thirty years ago, village houses rarely had furniture other than a cabinet with glazed doors, where bedding, dishes and the offering bowl were kept. Meals were taken on the floor sitting on raffia mats, beds were made at night on the floor on raffia mats, the food was prepared on a charcoal burner on the floor of the kitchen gallery. Thai people are accustomed to sitting on the floor. In houses, people have eaten on the floor, worked on the floor; even today, artisans do not sit at workbenches, but on the floor. When I bought a computer in a shop, it, too, was assembled on the floor of the shop.

At first, village houses had little tables with chairs, at which schoolchildren did their homework. Living room sofas came with television. In the 1980s, people began to buy upholstered leatherette sofas and couches, but they were dusty and harboured insects. In the 1990s they were abandoned, and replaced by heavy solid teak furniture decorated with carvings. A well-to-do villager's living room today is furnished with a teak three-piece suite, glazed cabinets, chests of drawers and, of course, the TV and stereo equipment. In the hierarchy of living space, the premium position is held by the room with the television set. Bookcases are not yet found in village houses, nor paintings - the walls are hung with pictures of the king, pop singers and film stars, and calendars, but some have acquired carved teak plaques depicting national (Buddhist) themes and blending in with the style of the carved furniture.

A similar change has taken place in the kitchen. In the past, the only kitchen equipment were a charcoal burner, water containers, baskets and a low wooden block for chopping meat, all on the floor. Gradually, the kitchen has acquired the same equipment as anywhere else in the world: sink, worktops, cabinets and a gas stove. The water crocks have gone, and the water scoop is made of plastic. The only thing not to have changed in the villages is the custom of eating on the floor. In 1998, almost all still reported that in the evening, with their own family, meals are taken sitting on the floor and watching television. And from the bygone age of pillar houses, the custom of never entering the house wearing shoes has remained.

Ban Srii Muod Klao was the first of the villages to get electricity in 1967, Ban Mae Kong Nya next in 1982, and Ban Dong at the end of the 1990s. Once they had electricity, acquisition of household electrical goods began; the following table reflects their popularity:

Table 7.**Domestic appliances**

<i>Year</i>	Sri Muod Klao		Mae Kong Nya		Ban Dong	
	1985	1998	1985	1998	1985	1998
Families (n)	64	68	59	60	52	51
<i>In the household</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%
Fridge	44	100	19	100	-	51
Gas stove	20	99	-	98	-	29
Water pump	6	93	5	90	-	45
Washing machine	-	37	-	30	-	8
Vacuum cleaner	-	3	-	-	-	-
Air conditioning	-	-	-	-	-	-

The most important piece of equipment of everyday living in today's households is the refrigerator. It is a 'necessity', after the television. In the plains villages, every family that participated in the questionnaire had a television set and a fridge (Tables 7-8). The fridge keeps cool not only the drinking water, but also Pepsi Cola and even beer that was never drunk at home in the past. In the 1970s, village people used to bring home ice cubes in insulated containers from city ice shops, to put in soft drinks on the rare occasions they had them. In 1985, fridges were already coming to the plains villages. In Ban Sri Muod Klao, 44% of households had a fridge, 75% owned a TV set, in Ban Mae Kong Nya almost 20% had purchased a fridge and more than half the village families had a television. Ban Dong had no electricity, and a battery-operated television was only acquired by shopkeepers, in whose premises the villages gathered to watch TV. Since electricity came, almost all the families have purchased a TV, and half the families also have a fridge.

The refrigerator is gradually bringing a profound structural change in the villagers' food management. Before its arrival, meat, fish and fresh vegetables would be fetched in the mornings from the market, and fish was preserved by drying. The villages had no dairy products at all, and bread was not used either. Today, one can buy milk, butter and cheese. Department stores and grocery stores have opened in the city, selling all the same foodstuffs and ready meals as Western countries, their sale being based on the fact that homes have refrigerators. Dried fish is only available in few shops today. In the villages, traditional food management has been preserved longer, and many housewives still visit the market in the mornings to buy ingredients for the sauce to accompany rice. The fridge is used mainly for bottles of drinks; cold water and refreshing drinks are life's pleasures particularly in the hot season.

The gas stove is a new household convenience, but it is also a necessity. In the 1980s, the forests began to run out, and

charcoal burning was considered to pollute the environment. At that time, a large gasometer was built in Lampang - I took photos of its construction in 1985 - and the government provided assistance for households to change over to gas. Nowadays, in plains villages food is cooked on gas, and charcoal burners have been discarded from everyday use. The first to use gas were the households of Ban Sree Muod Klao. In 1985, charcoal burning was still common in Ban Mae Kong Nya, and the only gas cooker was in the house of two teachers. In forest villages, gas is still not used, as it is too expensive.

The most important convenience in villagers' kitchens, after the fridge and the gas stove, is running water. In the 1990s, municipal water pipe networks were laid in plains villages, and the draw wells have become almost obsolete. In Ban Dong, too, wells have been sunk, and electric pumps raise water to ever more houses. However, the tap water is not drinkable, but drinking water is bought in large bottles. The next household purchase is the washing machine, the women see to that. The villagers have not been enthused by vacuum cleaners, as it is easy to sweep out the pillar houses; a tiger grass broom is still adequate cleaning equipment. Air-conditioning equipment has become popular in recent years in city houses and apartment blocks, but not in the villages for the time being. Many of the informants say that living in the villages is cooler than in the city, because in the country, houses are made of natural materials and shaded by trees. An air-conditioned house must be well insulated, the doors and windows must be kept closed. Such living is not yet a part of village lifestyle, and many people find the cold, dank air produced by coolers unpleasant.

Triumph of home entertainment. One of the greatest inventions of the post-war years was the transistor radio. It quickly spread across Thailand, too. The transistor radio was small, light and was taken with people even to the fields. In the village soundscape, cockerels, hens and dogs competed with radios, melancholic Thai music and public speaking. After that came the movies, live entertainment also in Lampang villages in the 1970s, and some young people might have visited the cinema every week. The city had at least seven cinemas, and it was also common practice for pharmaceutical companies to tour the villages with their cinema vans to show free films on school playing fields, at the same time advertising their products. Courting habits of the young began to change, too, the girl and boy would go to the movies together.

At that time, it was possible to watch television in the city. Many restaurants and shops had a TV to tempt in customers, and electrical stores left a TV switched on in the evenings in their shop window. When the villages got electricity, households bought their own televisions; it was even something of a necessity to prevent the children from forever running round next-door to watch television.

Table 8.**Home electronics**

Year	Sri Muod Klao		Mae Kong Nya		Ban Dong	
	1985	1998	1985	1998	1985	1998
Families (n)	64	68	59	60	52	51
<i>In the household:</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%
Television	75	100	53	100	13	86
Radio	83	82	71	60	67	59
Stereo equipment	34	65	8	62	4	35
Video equipment	-	28	-	13	-	6
Telephone	-	30	-	37	-	-
Computer	-	-	-	-	-	-

As television became more commonplace, cinema-going ended, like elsewhere in the world, and in recent years, only one cinema has operated in the city. Almost every household has a radio, as part of cassette and CD players or stereo equipment, but it is no longer listened to as avidly as before. In most houses, the TV is on all the time, whether people are watching it or not. The stereo equipment is mandatory if the family includes teenagers; music is a part of youth culture, and pupils in schools have their own bands as they do in Western countries. In the 1980s, video rental and sales shops appeared in the city - at first, they were everywhere, but in the 1990s, video viewing has levelled off, too, and villagers have not generally bought video equipment. The media environment of the houses is dominated by television.

The latest piece of equipment the villagers regard as a necessity is the telephone. A telephone network has been installed in the plains villages in recent years, and a third of the families have acquired their own phones; when discussing development, the telephone is frequently mentioned, and many wish that more telephone kiosks were provided in the villages. Villagers did not yet have mobile phones. There are computers in schools, and the government considers it important that young generations should integrate in global computer culture. Home PCs are already used by city families of clerical workers and business people, and young people visit internet cafes and shops to play games and surf the Internet. However, at the time of interviewing, there were no computers in the villages.

Economic and cultural globalization has also reached Thailand. The villagers' life environment, too, has become modernized, and their everyday lives are becoming commensurate with the demands of international consumption. Commercial development is present in village houses. During the interviews, villagers talked a lot about money and recalled how money

used to have value in the past. This means that the need for money was small. Today, nothing can be done without money, not farming, running a household, living or dying. In the village homes, too, an endless stream of bills is pushed through the door. They must pay bills for water and electricity, children's school fees, monthly payments for the television, fridge, ploughing machine and car... Money worries were present in the interviews, in addition to all other worries. The villagers' culture has become materialistic; in international rankings, their lives, too, are evaluated based on how much they are able to consume.

How much entertainment and convenience does a human being need? During the interviews of 1984-1985, the informants were shown pictures of goods that belong in Western homes as a matter of course. Very many, most people, thought the goods useful, or at least nice to have, if someone has the money to spare. But in the final analysis, essential goods are very few in Thai conditions. However, convenient living requires ever more domestic electronic goods, and many living rooms are today crammed full of heavy furniture and ornaments. In accordance with international culture, ever more fashion and interiors magazines are published in Thailand, and their influence reaches everywhere. The models of home are being internationalized and the ideals of living follow the ideology of consumer society. The house, living room, car, they display the family's prosperity, and human life should be in every way 'comfortable' and 'pleasant'; everyday life should be managed with as little effort as possible. Daily work is no longer a way of life, but a kind of necessary evil, and real life consists of pleasure, entertainment, everything one can consume, and what is outside everyday life. The villagers, too, must ask ever more frequently, what is a good life and what is a successful life?

Structural change of living environment. The oldest informants of the plains villages remember well the old bamboo huts with grass roofs in which people lived in their youth. The villages were surrounded by large forests, the village roads were muddy ox cart tracks. There was sufficient farmland and there was no need to own it. Thirty years ago, the houses in Ban Srie Muod Klao were pillar houses, and as I was seeking interviewees, I assessed the social status of the families according to whether their houses had grass or tiled roofs, and how many threshing baskets were stored under the house. For people of the swidden era, the house was just a place to eat and sleep. In Ban Dong, this is still the case. The village men live 'outdoors', do some work out in the compound, wander around the forest. Before television sets and fridges, there was nothing to safeguard, no doors or locks. The plains rice farmers' houses have gradually become the 'fortresses' of consuming man, private space of the family, where they live 'indoors' and which is equipped as if for eternal good family life. In the new industrial culture, ever more household electrical goods are needed, as well as furniture, a moped or car for commuting to work; ever more security of life, iron fences. The peasants' buffalo stables have disappeared, there are no grain stores in the villages any more, either. The only outbuilding is the car port.

In the 1990s, city businessmen built their palaces, real dream homes, in Ban Srii Muod Klao, with solid teak furnishings, massive teak stair cases, perfect living rooms and dining rooms with their teak furniture, bar, and valuable objets d'art in their display cabinets. The inhabitants of these houses have nothing whatever to do with villagers. The village and the city, the new urban environment, is now divided into areas of different status, from slums to upper-class residential areas. The city sprouts ever larger commercial properties, hotels and supermarkets, monuments for the new centralized power. The new hierarchy of development inundates every part of local people's environment. The centre of village life is transposed to the city, too.

On Lampang plains, the structural change in natural environment was set into motion by (1) decimation of forests, and construction of (2) regulating dams and (3) roads. The villages have gradually moved from river banks to roadsides, and after the canal network was completed, villagers no longer needed their traditional pillar houses and descended to live on ground level. After teak timber ran out, concrete and brick replaced local natural resources, and they were exchanged for industrial building materials. On the other hand, (4) economic growth, (5) technologization of farming and (6) new instruments of culture, domestic electrical goods, motorbikes and cars have revolutionized everyday life. The structural change in living affects everything. The transition to a society of wage earners and consumers has created a new rhythm of life, new kind of usage of time, new living and eating habits.

The same sociological terms apply to the changes in village lifestyle as in Western countries: the community becomes differentiated, families become privatized, and everything is infiltrated by the culture of consumption, consumerism. Village families are starting to divide into different occupational and interest groups, to live within their own technosystems and consumption classes. Coping within a consumer environment demands ever more focused work, ever more efficient exploitation of arable land, looking after one's own advantage, and succeeding both in one's education and career, doing better than other villagers or neighbours. But it is a part of structural change and the development that has everywhere become the utopia of the future.

In spite of the changes, the villages of this book have retained their own local character, they have their local ethnoscape that is recognizable on arrival in the village. (6) When one has battled through the motorway jams and reaches Ban Srii Muod Klao, one arrives in a familiar village; it is still there, although none of the houses of the 1970s remain, apart from the temple. The villages still have the old landmarks, same network of lanes, same rivers and canals; private compounds change continuously, but the basic street plan that evolved early on remains, or changes much more slowly. For the villagers, their own village still exists as it used to, its houses and compounds are etched in the minds of villagers, they know their own village and its inhabitants, and all the progress that has taken place in the village milieu. To the villagers, change has equalled progress, and many are not interested in how it used to be decades ago.

I. VILLAGES AND HOUSES

Photos 1-7. Environment of rice farmers. The network of irrigation canals criss-crosses around the plains villages (1-5). Dammed paddy fields follow tributaries, finally turning into dry fields and small swidden clearings on the mountainsides (6-7).





2 Srii Muod Klao 1973.



3 Kew Lom 1973.

4 Mae Kong Nya 1985.





5 Mae Kong Nya 1985.

6 Ban Dong 1973.



7 Ban Dong 1998.

Photos 8-14. Trip to a village. The main village lane of Ban Srie Muod Klao thirty years ago (8). Today, the Bangkok - Chiang Rai motorway runs behind the village fields (14).

Road to Ban Dong 1973 and 1998 (9-13). The little pond with its meadow used to be the centre of the village (11). In 1998, a new two-lane highway sweeps across the river, and the pond has disappeared under the road (12-13).



8 Srie Muod Klao 1972.



9 Ban Dong 1973.

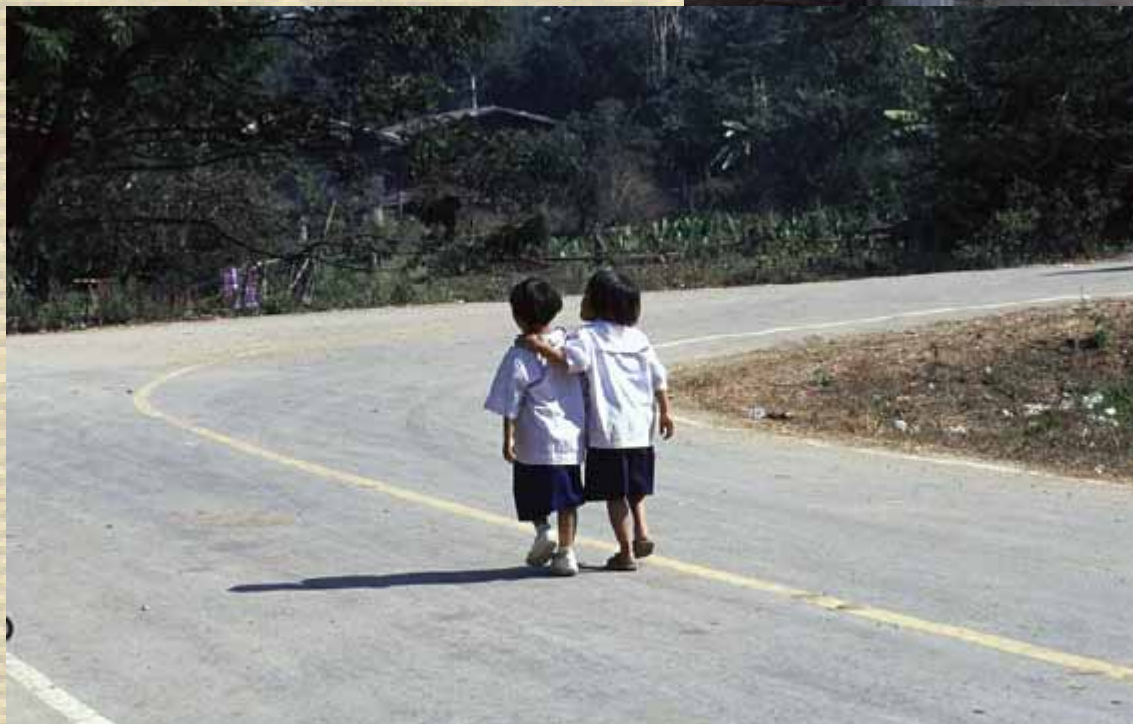


10 Ban Dong 1973.



11 Ban Dong 1973.

13 Ban Dong 1998.



12 BanDong 1998.



14 Lampang (Sob Tui) 1998.

Photos 15-35. Styles of village houses. Traditional houses built on pillars (15-23). The ideal house of plains villages in the 1980s (24-28). The ground floor of the pillar house has been bricked up.

The bungalow is the house type favoured by young families and the elderly (29-31). The new ideal house with its iron gates at the end of the 1990s (32). The old-style wooden house has made a comeback (33). Houses of urban elite in the village (34-35).



15 Mae Kong Nya 1973.



16 Mae Kong Nya 1985.



17 Mae Kong Nya 1973.



18 Srii Muod Klao 1984.



19 Ban Dong 1973.

20 Ban Dong 1985.





21 Ban Dong 1973.



22 Ban Dong 1998.



23 Ban Dong 1998.



24 Srii Muod Klao 1982.



25 Srij Muod Klao1984.



26 Srii Muod Klao 1998.



27 Ban Dong 1998.





29 Srij Muod Klao 1984.



31 Srii Muod Klao 1998.



30 Mae Kong Nya 1985.



32 Sri Muod Klao 1998.





35 Srii Muod Klao 1998.



34 Srii Muod Klao 1985.

Photos 36-47. Inside village houses. Transformation of the stairs (36-38). Living in an old pillar house (39-42). After the TV set, people require living room furniture (43-45). Solid teak furniture became fashionable in the 1990s (46-47).



36 Mae Kong Nya 1985.



37 Ban Dong 1998.



38 Srii Muod Klao 1998.



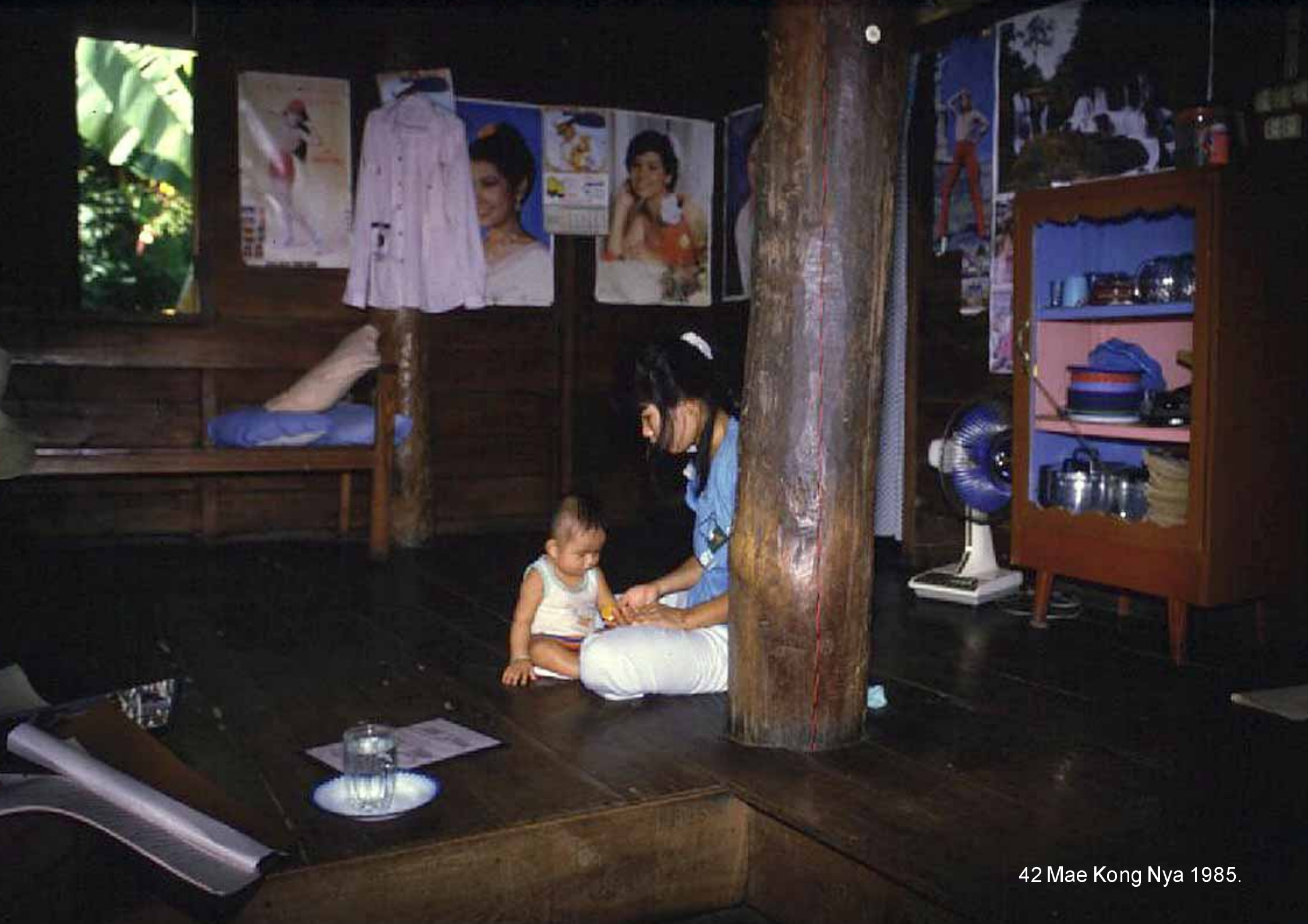
40 Ban Dong 1985.



41 Ban Dong 1998.



39 Ban Dong 1973.





44 Mae Kong Nya 1998.



43 Mae Kong Nya 1985.



45 Srii Muod Klao 1985.

46 Srij Muod Klao 1985.



47 Srij Muod Klao 1998.

WORK OF THE RICE FARMER

Structural change in farming

Local rice farming. The foundation of the plains villages way of life is so-called wet rice or transplantation farming. This cultivation technique involves growing the rice seedlings separately and transplanting them in an irrigated field, where they grow in water. A 'nursery' bed is selected where the rice is sown very thickly; in the past, the seedlings were often grown in swidden which produced disease-free seedlings. All available cattle manure is collected into the nursery, getting the seedlings off to a good start. They are grown on in the nursery bed for about 40 days. In that time, the field is ploughed and harrowed, and the rice seedlings grow on safely through the critical period of the start of the rainy season, which often brings violent storms and downpours. Often, the field was ploughed with buffalo several times over. After the first ploughing, grasses and old rice roots were raked into heaps, the field drained, and the weeds allowed to decompose. The sun would cleanse the soil. By careful cultivation over a long period, weeds and plant diseases were minimized.

The seedlings are pulled up just before transplanting, tied into bundles and cut to uniform height. In Lampang, rice is always transplanted by women, and no exception is made to this custom to this day. Men carry the bundles of seedlings to the field, the women plant them. The seedlings are planted well spaced, to allow the rice space to bush out. Rice growing in water demands little care; a few withered seedlings may need to be replaced and watch kept for birds; in some years, some weeding might be necessary. In Lampang, rice is ready for harvesting at the end of November, in 6-8 months; by using local varieties ripening at different times, it was possible to spread out the harvest over a longer period, also making reciprocal working parties possible. Rice was cut, and still is, using a sickle, and threshed by hand using a flail. For threshing, bundles of cut rice are gathered in the field in ricks where they keep for a long time, and there is no rush with the threshing.

There were many shared stages of work in traditional farming. The irrigation dams were repaired and the canals cleared as a joint effort, the rice was planted and reaped in communal working parties. Thirty years ago, almost all everyday work could be done communally, if necessary. Relatives and neighbours formed reciprocal assistance networks, and mutual helping had its own unwritten rules.⁽⁷⁾ Local farming techniques followed a natural work rhythm, and the working year was adapted to the natural cycle of the seasons. Busy periods could be evened out by using local cereal varieties that ripened at different times and by a system of reciprocal communal working.

Local farming was based on community knowledge and skill that was passed on within the community to future generations.

The occupation of a farmer was learned through taking part in the work from an early age. In the system of local farming, the highest authority was lodged with the elderly. It was considered that knowledge accumulated with age, and that old people had the widest experience both in farming and in village social relationships. The older generation had created the networks of neighbourhood assistance, and old people possessed most knowledge of how similar situations had been dealt with in the

past. The elderly had memory knowledge on weather and the signs of weather to come, they knew how to determine when the annual work should be started; particularly in agrarian cultures, knowledge of weather wisdom and calendar folklore were extremely important. The villagers farmed together, and together they solved any practical problems they came across during the year.

Along with farming, local communities exploited their natural environment in diverse ways, and sought alternative means of coping. In a rice village of the past, man lived together with his domestic animals; pigs and chickens were kept in the compounds, and various foods were foraged from the surrounding nature, such as fruit, berries, vegetables, roots, crustaceans, frogs, ants and other small creatures with variable availability according to the seasons. The natural environment of Thailand is among the richest in the world. (8 In these interviews, too, old informants reminisced about foraging for food in the forests, and not only in forest villages, but also on the plains. Fields and forests, all the surrounding nature, belonged to the village. For many informants, the forest was like a bottomless food store.

In Thailand, too, villagers have wanted to be self-sufficient. In the terminology of national economy, the village has produced and consumed together; in cultural anthropology, it has been termed a redistributive exchange system that was employed within village communities. The villages of this volume coped together, like self-sufficient agrarian villages everywhere. Local environmental systems created a culture that included shared events of the farming seasons, their own village temples and monks, shared temple festivals. Villagers were united by the same work, a shared religion and way of life. Particularly in agrarian villages, the norms of good behavior, good manners and family values prevailed; without community ethics, the villagers would not have had a shared future.

Hierarchy of rice. In ecological terms, rice is the most versatile of cereals, as it has adapted to the most diverse environments. Rice can be grown on mountain swidden, dry fields and dammed paddy fields. Growing times of different rice varieties vary, too, with the quickest ripening in three months, making even three rice harvests a year possible. There have been tens of thousands of local varieties of rice in Thailand. It is said that every swathe of arable land had its own rice varieties that thrived in their local micro-environments. The old varieties were resistant to plant diseases, pests and even drought, but did not yield as much as new, so-called improved varieties. Due to its genetic adaptability, it has also been easy to develop new varieties suitable for industrial cultivation, the most famous being the so-called 'wonder rice' varieties. In the 1950s, an international testing station was established in the Philippines, financed principally by large Western manufacturers of tractors and agricultural machinery. By crossing local varieties from different parts of Asia, new, high-yielding wonder rice varieties were developed, hailed as bringing a 'green revolution' and saving the world's developing countries from famine. (9

Of the new rice varieties, KR22 and 23 are well known, as well as in Lampang KR6, mentioned by the informants of this volume. According to the advertisements, the new standardized and patented varieties had all the good qualities of a crop suitable for intensive farming at the time. They had high yields, ripened quickly, and had short, sturdy stalks in common with Western cereals designed for mechanized harvesting. But it turned out to be only advertising hype. Farmers growing the new rice found very quickly that without artificial fertilizers, the wonder rice did not perform any better than local varieties, and did not succeed without biocides. In order to grow it, it was necessary to move over to chemical intensive farming.

The wonder rice varieties have brought about a real revolution in the lives of Thai rice farmers, too. Today, only the new standardized varieties or Jasmine rice are acceptable for exporting. Government agricultural centres supply farmers with the seed, and new seed must be purchased at least every three years, as seed collected from their own fields stops germinating, goes 'hard', as the villagers put it. Provincial agricultural statistics show that before the recession, mainly only the local glutinous rice was grown in Lampang. In Northern Thailand, this rice has formed part of the staple diet, being suitable for villagers' traditional eating habits and also tastier than commercial standard varieties. Glutinous rice is cooked only once a day, early in the morning, and kept in a covered basket that can be taken along to the fields. At meals, glutinous rice is compressed to make small balls and dipped in various sauces. Using glutinous rice facilitated women's work, it suited traditional cuisine and maintained old local food culture. Commercial farming, increased during the slump, may effect a change, as farmers in these villages also change over to Jasmine rice, due to its steadily rising market price. Local rice varieties may disappear completely, and the staple diet of villagers consist of white, mechanically shelled and polished rice, up to now only served on special occasions, at weddings and funerals.

Rice fields have their own hierarchy. In Thailand, in common with other parts of the world, hillsides and mountain slopes used to be cultivated as swidden. Swidden cultivation was also the farming method employed on hillsides in Eastern Finland and Karelia, discontinued in the 1800s, when the timber industry began to compete over exploitation of the forests. The same has also happened in Thailand. In swidden cultivation, an area is cleared in the forest, the felled trees and scrub burned, and the cereal crop is grown in the ash layer. In the period of self-sufficient swidden cultivation, the same swidden clearings were usually cultivated by allowing them to regrow in between. Only a special variety of rice succeeds in swidden, and the seed is sown directly in the ash, or planted using a planting stick, as is the custom e.g. in Ban Dong. There was no need to plough, drain or dam swidden fields, and farming required few tools apart from an axe or a billhook, a planting stick and a sickle. A good swidden produced a very abundant crop with very little work and small investment. In Thailand, as in Finland at the time, swidden farmers have been accused of destroying forests. By pointing a finger at swidden cultures, the timber industry has been able to present itself as a modern and advanced utilizer of forests and to divert attention from reality. Self-sufficient swidden farmers have not destroyed forests, rather the contrary. New, healthy forest would grow in the ash. Before commercial cultivation, swiddens were small, and swidden farmers only burned certain types of areas suitable for cultivation that were

allowed to regenerate at intervals. Compared to swidden farming, modern forest economy entails total exploitation of nature and modification of the environment. (10

It was also possible to grow rice on dry fields, but their cultivation was difficult before the advent of large agricultural tractors. In monsoon areas, the most important form of farming is irrigated cultivation. So-called wet rice, or varieties that grow in water, can be grown on fields irrigated by rain or flooding. Rain fields are dammed fields that are on higher ground out of reach of river flood waters, and that are farmed relying on the rains. If there is insufficient rain, it is difficult to keep the water level high, and the crop suffers from drought. The dammed fields in Ban Dong are mainly such rain fields. Flood fields have the advantage of additional water in the rainy season, directed along canals and dykes, enabling control of the rice growing conditions. The most productive and valuable is irrigated land, with water available throughout the year. In theory, it is possible to grow even three rice crops a year in areas covered by the irrigation network, but in Ban Sree Muod Klao, for example, rice has not been grown in the dry season, but vegetables and other cash crops. In spite of the irrigation, rice does not grow in the dry season as well as in the rainy season, and growing it demands a lot of fertilizers and biocides. In 1998, about 60 of the village farmers had decided to grow a second rice crop. In modern agriculture, the hierarchy of rice fields is more pronounced. Rice varieties grown on swidden and rain fields become of commercially low value, only fit for local consumption, and commercial rice growing is concentrated in areas covered by irrigation networks.

Buffalo or ploughing machine? Twenty years ago, most villagers were against the ploughing machine and swore that the buffalo would never disappear from Thai villages. For 3000 years, it had been a part of rice farming, Thai culture, and it could not disappear unless Thai culture disappeared. However, events proved otherwise. The buffalo, as well as the zebu, have entirely disappeared from plains villages. The water buffalo is becoming an endangered species.

The buffalo was habituated to the existence that followed seasonal changes. In the dry season, buffalo were kept on the fields, grazing on rice stubble and grass growing on the dams. In the rainy season, when rice was growing, the buffalo had to be herded elsewhere, and it was work allocated to children. They had time for it, as there were no schools, and even later on, their school attendance was not considered to be important. The buffalo is an undemanding animal, eating whatever nutrition was available in the environs of the village. In the dry season, the buffalo was satisfied with rice straw that would otherwise have been unused. Buffalo and zebu dung was used in seedbeds, fields and vegetable patches. Many of the informants pointed out that the buffalo fertilized the field even during ploughing, and in the water the dung was well mixed in the soil. Buffalo dung also harboured insects that were a local delicacy.

Table 9.

Structural change in rice farming

Traditional farming	Technological production farming
Local environment	Global environment
1. <i>Local technology</i> : local rice varieties water buffalo and zebu insecticides and herbicides not essential low energy consumption	1. <i>Delocal technology</i> : varieties of wonder rice mechanical cultivators and harvesters insecticides/herbicides increasing energy requirement
2. <i>Soft rhythm of work</i> : natural working year interspacing of work co-operation; working parties	2. <i>Hard rhythm of work</i> : farming throughout year accumulation of work mechanization of work
3. <i>Community independence</i> : local, self-learned knowledge communal, independent organization economic independence	3. <i>Dependence on outsiders</i> : external knowledge and technical skill organizational hierarchy economic dependence
4. <i>Ideology of self-sufficiency</i> : communal thinking kin- and community-centredness community-preserving competition	4. <i>Ideology of consumerism</i> : investment-return thinking egocentric enterprise thinking community-destroying competition
(Sarmela 1979a, 127-)	

Of the 1984-85 interviews, the majority believed that a field ploughed by buffalo grew a better crop and the rice was tastier than from a field cultivated mechanically. The old buffalo plough and wooden harrow were efficient in a muddy field, and the work was done at a leisurely pace. One of the disadvantages of buffalo brought up was that it had to be cared for throughout the year, even when it was not needed for work. In the evening, the beasts were brought into the compound and in the morning they had to be taken back to pasture; in the heat of the day, they had to be allowed to bathe. At ploughing, the buffalo was slow and tired to the degree that work had to be stopped at midday.

Villagers were all agreed that the ploughing machine was faster than the buffalo, and it could work twenty-four hours a day if necessary. It ploughed deeper than a wooden plough, and once artificial fertilizers were adopted, the fields were invaded by such tough grasses in the dry season that it was impossible to plough through it using buffalo. Generally, everyone complained that the ploughing machine was expensive, more than ten times the price of a buffalo, and that it consumes expensive fuel and

oil, as well as costing money in servicing and repairs. In the early days, the ploughing machine was usually hired, and young village men did business by ploughing villagers' fields with the machines. Using an expensive hired machine, the fields were cultivated and finished quickly, preferably on the same day, and the weeds had no time to rot down. Weeds and plant diseases had to be destroyed by chemical means. Some people thought that mechanical ploughing caused the soil to silt up too much, or that the iron wheels of the ploughing machine compacted the soil so that the field gradually became hard, and the engine dripped oil and polluted the field.

Later, at the end of the 1990s, nobody really wanted to discuss the pros and cons of the buffalo and the ploughing machine. The ploughing machine had remained, to be possibly replaced by large agricultural tractors with disc ploughs and harrows. When farming throughout the year became customary in irrigated areas, there were no more pastures for the buffalo, and even the forests surrounding the villages had been turned into arable land or building sites. And finally, after school attendance became mandatory, children no longer had time to mind the buffalo. In the modern living environment, the water buffalo has no place, not on the fields nor in the compound. Its place outside the house has been taken by the car.

The ploughing machine was the first link in the chain of new machinery. Because there are no water buffalo, a machine to cut the rice stubble is required, and a clearing saw for cleaning out the dams. The new rice varieties will not grow without fertilizers and chemical biocides, in farming a single standard variety, harvesting creates a work overload, and the cutting, threshing and cleaning of grain must be done mechanically, in order to cope with the urgent work stages. Villagers believe that in Lampang, too, all the stages of rice farming will become mechanized. To date, the transplanting of rice has been the only job for which there is no machine, or one has not yet been seen in this province. (11

Delocal production farming. In my book *Paikalliskulttuurin rakennemuutos* (1979a), I compared local agriculture of the villages at the time with technological production farming that was only just beginning in the early 1970s. I wrote roughly as follows: Traditional and new methods of rice farming are structurally diametrically opposite cultural-ecological systems. Traditional, 'soft' farming methods are adapted to local natural environment and utilize almost exclusively local energy, such as water buffalo, and the use of artificial fertilizers can be restricted to the minimum. Modern, 'hard' production farming is adapted to the environment outside the local community, commercial markets, universal development. The real or dominant environment is somewhere else, in cities, outside national borders, and local people have no way of coping except by changing their way of life and acquiring technology that is effective in the new delocal environment.

Delocal technology demands an endless array of new technological equipment, new crop varieties, ever more powerful artificial fertilizers and biocides, and more and more efficient machines for every operation and work stage. Of the farmer's

income, an increasingly large proportion is spent on purchasing external energy and new technology, and in order to cope with the costs, he must be capable of producing more and more. Thus, a new ecosystem is created, in which production must grow constantly. Continuous growth is only possible with increased efficiency and exploitation of nature. Only large farms can survive within the new system, and the development in Lampang is the same as elsewhere in the world: land ownership is centralized and farming becomes more specialized. The cultivated environment, too, becomes ever more of a technoscape. Fundamentally, development means scientific-technological invasion of the environment, ever more systematic control of nature, production and human being.

Reciprocal working parties have completely disappeared in Lampang villages. In the 1970s, they were a salient part of rice farming, they united neighbours; in the 1980s, family working parties were still common, when even the younger generation that had moved away came to help their parents with the harvest, perhaps taking their annual supplies of rice back to the city with them. Harvesting parties maintained the mutual connection between kinship groups. With the advent of cash economy, however, reciprocal assistance between neighbours and relatives has caused breakdowns in relations between villagers. Old people who are accustomed to agricultural work live in the villages, and for them the only means of earning an income is through daily hire of their labour. It is more honourable for farmers to pay daily workers, rather than try to manage with voluntary help. Commercial farming has irrevocably led to farmers being dependent on outside labour and external production relationships.

In commercial farming, every farm forms its own separate production unit which must operate like an industrial production plant. Agriculture, too, must comply with an efficient work schedule, an industrial concept of time. Production must roll on regardless of seasons and times of day, the conveyor belt must never stop. Hard technological production farming is based on investment-and-return thinking, and in planning for the future, the choices are primarily determined by profitability in terms of market economy. Farming methods are standardized from start to finish from seed grain to combine harvester and all farm work must be precisely timed to fit in the production schedule, planned usage of time and commercial rationality.

Adaptation of farming to local natural environment engendered diverse local solutions and maintained villagers' mutual sense of belonging. Commercial production farming is based on scientific-technological knowledge, environmental knowledge and farming skill are produced elsewhere, outside local communities. Farmers must have faith in external development, that there is a technological solution to every problem, that it will always be possible to produce a new super-poison, new plant variety, new technological innovation. In terms of knowledge and information, villagers are dependent on organizations that produce the means of agriculture: cereal varieties, fertilizers, machinery, and the associated technology. Faith in development contains a powerful message of salvation. Through new technology, the farmer is able to control his environment, to secure a good future. Old people no longer need to sit in temples during the Buddhist Lent, praying for sufficient rain for rice to grow well and to

safeguard the village from adversity.

In self-sufficient communities, villagers gained respect, social prestige, by sharing with neighbours anything that was surplus to their own requirements. Today, too, some of the surplus from production is shared within the community, when villagers organize village festivals or maintain their own temple, their own culture. But the modern production farmer is in a different position from that of the rice farmer of bygone days. In order to succeed, he must give preference to investing in machinery, in maximizing his own production and consumption, rather than social activities of the village community. New competitive production is egocentric, farmers endeavour to acquire the prizes of consumer society, to raise their own standard of living and to compete with other occupational groups. Villagers are no longer spurred on by their own community, local self-sufficiency, but financial profit which they compare with the income level of wage earners.

All over the world, farmers are increasingly forced to become a part of the 'superculture'; they become specialized professionals in a centralizing agricultural technosystem, a network of the food industry and organizations controlling agriculture. Within this system, the farmer himself is able to keep an ever diminishing share of what his land produces. Farmers have the disadvantage in competition with external agents, experts and organizations over sharing out the products of his land. They are forced to fight for their lot, to seek information from agricultural advice centres and to put their trust in those selling them new technology. The young generation no longer grows into its work, and expects society to provide it with vocational training in the field and to solve farmers' problems. The new generation of farmers is no longer united by the village, but its own interest group, the trade union, which looks after their interests in the allocation of resources among technosystems. Farmers are able to cope by recourse to their own organizations and their political collective power, no longer to their neighbours or other villagers. Local unity, local shared culture must be organized by means of setting up associations; community spirit consists of recruitment of members, payment of membership fees, contributing to costs.

Two decades ago, talk of delocal agriculture was a source of aggravation to cultural anthropologists, who believed that old cultures do not disappear, but reproduce themselves endlessly, and also to meritocrats to whom modern development is necessary, as only technological development will lift villages from poverty and backwardness. Agricultural modernization has now taken place also in Lampang Province, with all its multiple consequences. But thirty years ago, I could not have imagined how quickly the water buffalo would disappear from villages of Thailand.

Iron claws of the market

Crop trends. In the 1980s, a period of vegetable growing began in Ban Sree Muod Klao, and the villagers grew a lot of Chinese

leaves, iceberg lettuce and other leaf vegetables that had previously been quite unknown. The nutritional habits of city dwellers changed, and a diet was considered to be healthy with the inclusion of more fresh leafy salads. Growing of salad crops was organized into contract farming, middlemen travelled the villages daily in their vehicles collecting vegetables. In the years of economic growth, markets for a variety of new agricultural products were created, and farmers of the plains villages tried out new cash crops which were marketed by Japanese agro-business. Potatoes have also become popular in Thailand, and some have tried growing them, although potato farming succeeds better in the mountains. During the golden age of commercial farming, farmers on the plains and mountains of Thailand started growing new fruit, berries and root crops, every imaginable kind of produce brought in from abroad, and Lampang market places offer e.g. strawberries, blackcurrants and apples. Lampang Province is one of the centres of Thai canning industry.

When the economic depression struck, the farming contracts no longer held, and many agencies also ceased to operate. Tobacco farming has stopped almost completely, the new trial crops have disappeared from the fields. The old crops have remained in cultivation in dry season: garlic, onions, various chillies (peppers, phriks), red peppers, yardlong bean and peanut, that have been grown for generations. Of new crops, in Ban Sri Muod Klao at the end of the 1990s the most enduring was commercial outdoor tomato growing. In Ban Mae Kong Nya, salad crops never became common, and today the village fields are largely under soybean; peanut is also still seen, but it has mostly been replaced by soy. In Ban Dong, villagers are encouraged to grow peanut and maize, which has also become one of the crops grown in Lampang in the last decades. Farming has returned to the safe crops that are suited to local conditions and food preferences.

Nowadays, farmers are chary and unwilling to sign contracts, but endeavour to sell their produce to market traders or agents as early as possible, to be the first, because prices are usually higher at first, and drop as soon as supply increases. Farmers have been inclined to copy each other and to grow the same things as their neighbours, causing a drop in sale prices. Many items, such as tomatoes and lettuce, are still farmed to order and for the price one can get on the city market place at the time. Factories and agencies order the produce and villagers grow it; in Ban Sri Muod Klao the procedure is reminiscent of a blacksmith's commissions. Thus, farmers are at the ready and waiting to see what happens in the markets, somewhere outside the village. Thai people have also found that whoever owns the seed is also in control of its farming. The genotype of Jasmine rice has now (2001) been sold to the USA, where the intention is to use genetic modification to produce and patent a variety suitable for American conditions. Potential cultivation of Jasmine rice by American superfarms will pose a threat to Thailand's export trade, villagers' livelihoods, the cornerstone of the country's national economy. (12

Costs of production. In the interviews, farmers concentrate on enumerating the cost of the various stages of rice farming, fertilizers and biocides, how much the farmer must invest in order to grow rice. They are well aware of the cost of a ploughing

machine or its hire, the wages of daily workers; they weigh up what crops are worth while at any given time, and try to ascertain future prices in city market places. When planning their farming, villagers calculate the costs and estimate the likely profit, the share they are left with after everything. Prices of fertilizers and biocides have continued to rise, and their use must be continuously stepped up. Hiring of outside labour is a large cost item. Planting, harvesting and even threshing of rice is impossible with their own resources. Additional labour is required in dry season farming, because e.g. tomatoes ripen at the same time and must be harvested in a day or two. Garlic, soy and tobacco must be cleaned and bundled, and that also requires labourers.

Many of the interviewees felt that farming costs have risen more than income from sales, and that farmers are treated gratuitously when they offer their produce for sale. Young farmers in particular have no capital savings, thus they are forced to borrow in order to buy seed, fertilizers and biocides, and to pay wages. In the 1980s, banks demanded that farmers had a guarantor before granting loans, and this system aroused bitterness. The guarantors operated as middlemen and creamed off their own fee based on the size of the debt. During the banking crisis at the end of the 1990s, lending was operated by loan sharks who took the majority of farming profits. The farmer is often a labourer of the investor. Businessmen provide the seed, fertilizer and biocides and the farmer is allowed to keep a part of the crop as his wage. Usually, it is a considerably smaller share than the one taken by the investor. The so-called village businessmen are just this kind of investors and moneylenders. The interest rates in the country have been extremely high, up to 20% in bank loans, and commonly 40% in private loans. These are the conditions under which farmers operate. The farmer obtains his own share only after the crop is sold.

Some estimated that the capital requirement is half of the income from the crop. So, a farmer needs to have access to 15,000 baht in initial capital, if he intends to make 30,000 baht. In order to get started, farmers borrow 50,000 baht over five years, making repayments 10,000 baht and interest of 4,500 baht a year. The average rice harvest in the province has been ca. 500 kg/rai, or about 550 kg/rai (0.16 hectare) when using high-yielding varieties. (13 Many interviewees question: what is left for the farmer from the income from the crop? In rainy season rice farming, yield is higher, and the average earnings of farmers perhaps reach about 40,000 baht, before deduction of costs. Cultivation of dry season crops returns about 10,000 baht per rai, but arable acreages are smaller, two or three rai on average. This is how farmers themselves describe the prospects of their own livelihoods.

Intensive farming and the environment. In villagers' cultivated fields, too, the race is on between pests and biocides. In Thailand's climate, the fields are quickly invaded by biocide-resistant insect pest and disease populations, and farmers must obtain new repellants or increase the quantity applied. For example, the outdoor tomato is plagued by new mildews and fungal diseases, on which only a new biocide is effective. As the soil becomes poorer, use of artificial fertilizers must be doubled or

even quadrupled on previous years. It has long been known that tobacco kills its farmer, as well as the smoker. Only pristine leaves of Virginia tobacco are acceptable to world markets, and growing them demands so many pesticides that farmers themselves are exposed to and that destroy their health. The situation is the same in fruit growing. Organically produced oranges and many other fruits, too, are ugly to look at, with unevenly coloured skins. Buyers will not select them on supermarket fruit counters. Growing a perfect, beautiful orange demands ceaseless spraying with insecticides. Their own health, the debt burden, dependency on machinery salesmen and buyers of agricultural produce make increasing numbers of growers consider alternative methods of cultivation, escape from the iron claws of the markets.

Nothing will grow without artificial fertilizers and so-called plant protectants, environmental poisons. Interviewees from Ban Sri Muod Klao are already pessimistic, many would like to return to farming ways of the past, to the time of the buffalo. Today, food cannot be gathered from the fields like before. Insects and small creatures, field frogs and moles, that used to be collected for food, have disappeared, water is polluted, fish have died from the canals, bees have died out, drinking water must be bought in bottles. And in spite of all that, some new pestilence, insect, fungus or bacterium is likely to turn up and set to work on destroying the crop. The ecosystem of the poisoned fields is unbalanced. Snakes that used to eat mice and moles on the fields are disappearing, and field rats, the new pestilence, are destroying ever more cereal. When the hoardes of rats appeared, farmers took poison bait to their fields, usually poisoned grain. Mice, rats and other small mammals dying of the poison are devoured by snakes, small mammals and birds die of poisoned grain, and man himself is not untouched by environmental pollution. Various allergies have increased dramatically, particularly among children. National papers report that about 80-90% of northern farmers have health problems caused by agricultural chemicals. (14

Farmers themselves have no choice. They cannot afford to lose one harvest, and intensive farming can offer no salvation other than biocides. Small farmers of poor villages find it impossible to move over to organic farming at the drop of a hat, as they live from hand to mouth, and future crops are collateral on their loans. Decontamination of land for organic farming takes at least three years. And how could anyone farm organically, if he must obtain his water from the plains' common irrigation canal network, the final destination of all environmental pollutants?

Future of agriculture

After modernization. At the beginning of the year 2000, the average arable acreage of the remaining Finnish farms was 30 hectares, about 180 rai, with at least an equivalent area of forest. Farm buildings and the environment are tailored for combine harvesters and tractor shovels; it is an industrial plant of which a village in Northern Thailand could only accommodate a few.

But it is not enough either. In its own postlocal environment, a Finnish farm does not provide a livelihood for the owner's family without continuous agricultural subsidies from the European Union and the Finnish government, without external financial aid. What is the finalization of farming? How much paddy field must a Lampang farm own, in order to be able to sustain all the scientific-technological development necessary in global production farming? And what will happen when fossil fuels begin to run out and costs exceed all the resources the Lampang plain is capable of providing?

In the conditions of Lampang Province, the small size of the fields prevents technology from triumphing. It has not been worth buying or even hiring large agricultural tractors and combine harvesters. Threshing machines operated by tractors have been used, but their hire has declined and many contractors have been forced out of business. The recession may have contributed, but the main reason is that the combine harvester and threshing machine shred the straw that is needed in dry season vegetable cultivation, and that mechanized threshing of rice does not substantially reduce the required manpower. A threshing machine demands a lot of labourers around it. Most farmers still thresh using a flail, and the villagers feel that the grain is more carefully collected when threshing by hand. The number of ploughing machines has stabilized and they are no longer acquired as keenly as in the early days. But is it possible for development to halt?

In the villages of this book, young people are only ever seen in the fields at rice harvest time. Farming work is principally done by older people, they are the labourers of agriculture and at the same constitute skilled manpower. And it seems that they are best equipped to doing monotonous physical work in hot fields. Among the young, tanned skin is the sign of a person doing menial outdoor work. The older generation has grown up with rice farming. They belong to the era when a peasant's work was valued and village life revolved around farming. Many of the interviewees felt that farming had no future; at least in Ban Sri Muod Klao, young people will not continue with it. At the turn of the millennium, many did continue, as the economic slump first took the paid employment the villagers had done, and not all villagers have sufficient education to be employable in the city.

Now, it is education that sorts people into those who are forced to farm land and those who are able to obtain other work. Value attached to farming has continued to fall and the number of farmers in Thailand, too, is rapidly falling (cf. Table 4:1). Thirty years ago, more than 80% of Thai people made their living by farming, at the turn of the millennium the figure was approximately 50%; in Western countries, only a few percent are farmers. How much longer before the proportion of farmers falls to e.g. 20%, and who will then farm the fields in Lampang Province? New opportunities of making a living are now created in cities. The key to the development of Thailand is massive education and production of an urban workforce. (15

Theories of cultural ecology consider the choices made by individual people to be the foundation of change. In adapting to change, villagers or families make their own decisions, modify their thinking and their cultural interpretations. (16 But how often is it possible in reality for members of a culture to have the choice, or to influence the process under which a new environment

and new circumstances are created? Nowadays, local people are forced to adapt to an environment that is becoming uniform everywhere in the world. The rice farmers of Lampang and European farmers have had to make similar choices. They have been forced to abandon everything that constituted local agriculture, communal rice farming, their old domestic animals, the natural environment that used to surround the villages. If current development continues, agricultural entrepreneurs in Lampang, too, will have no choice but to acquire ever more agricultural land and ever more powerful machinery. The few agricultural entrepreneurs remaining in the villages will need combine harvesters, a rice planting machine, a small truck. And the present ploughing machine will no longer be adequate, they will need a real tractor, a disc plough and a spraying attachment for biocides, a tractor shovel. And machines for processing soy, onion, garlic and peanut. And modern irrigation equipment. Thus, technological development continues on the plains of Lampang, modernization is followed by agricultural finalization, unlikely to be stopped even when fossil fuels are exhausted.

After modernization, a new agricultural technosystem evolves, once more changing the cultural environment of the plains. Productive land is transferred to large farms or the control of agricultural industry, Lampang plains become closed production zones controlled by global food industry. And technological development will continue until rice farming is automated, as will be the case with agriculture elsewhere in the world. Villagers, ordinary people, will no longer have access to fields, techno-nature, nor any contact with recreated commercial animals raised in centralized production systems. Of animals, too, only top performers, world's best racehorses, will reach the consciousness of the masses. Global technosystems will also produce new explanations. New biological ethics will categorize animals, too, as computers; they are controlled by complex genetic and chemical programs only understood by state-of-the-art science. Postlocal experiences of nature will be produced by the consciousness industry; in the new cyberworld, animals are Donald Ducks, monsters in computer games, ever jolly animal clowns or scientific miracles restored from extinction by biotechnology.

How much is enough? Social critics in Thailand have declared that globalization is only a new name for colonialism, and that the country's governments have only been capable of following a developmental strategy of vassal states. The government, led by economists, has only been concerned by the future of international large-scale industry, and is waiting for demand of foreign markets to pick up again, and for new investment, new export industries in the country. Dissenters say that the slump in Thailand was not the result of the government becoming debt-ridden, as the official explanation would have it, but the fact that international businesses invested using borrowed money, and as the "trends became unfavourable", pulled out and left the Thai people to foot the bills. I, too, believe that Western economic policy is behind the depression in Thailand, a fact the International Monetary Fund is loosely trying to cover up. Thailand is one of the first victims in the economic war between continents, as USA and the European Union attempt to repel the threat of Asian economic tigers from their own markets.

On the occasion of his 70th birthday (5.12.1997), the King of Thailand made a speech defending self-sufficiency. He put the question to his people: Must our country be an economic tiger? Would it be sufficient if everybody had enough to eat and to live on? A self-sufficient economy would provide just that. It would help the country to stand on its own feet and to produce enough for common consumption. The King thought that a quarter of the country could be detached from the market economy and secure the economic independence of the nation. The people listen to the King of Thailand. His speech was the culmination of criticism prominently voiced by environmental organizations and many researchers, Buddhist monks and village schoolteachers, who understand the problems of local people.

More and more village farmers have found that they have scarcely any rights in their world markets-dominated environments, and they make almost nothing from their farming when all the costs have been deducted. Resistance movements have sprung up in the country, wanting out of externally controlled economy. The Government of Thailand, too, has gradually begun to believe in a more natural agriculture, which in official language is called "organic farming". The aim is to use biotechnology (genetic modification) and large composting plants to create a new, chemical-free farming method; it would be the country's new asset in the competitive markets of the food industry.

A great deal has been written about the economic development of Thailand, particularly the slump and its consequences, and the rice farmer cannot be ignored in this country where the majority of the population still lives in villages. (17 During the recession, Dr. *Prawase Wasi*, a dissenter, has constantly appeared in public demanding a new, ethically and ecologically just economy. The country must begin its reconstruction from the basics, from local economy and civic communities which are capable of creating a new social morality. The present economic system destroys people's social ties, families, villages, and in the end, their ethical ties to both society and surrounding nature. In his view, local economy works even when large-scale industry stagnates. Buddhism has thrived in village communities, and its ideology supports the ideal of self-sufficiency. The Buddhist *Sisa Asoke* movement is active in Thailand, and its members have run self-sufficient village communities for decades. Village economy is based on chemical-free farming, they have their own schools and communal rules; for example, the villages have no need for money at all.

Co-operative loan funds have also been set up in Thailand, with the intention of helping villagers to break free from the power of the banks. One of the biggest is the 'Honourable Savings Bank' established about ten years ago by the Buddhist monk *Subin Paneeto*, and already operating in more than a hundred villages. The bank is operated by villagers themselves, and the members are able to take out loans at low interest rates (1-2%) at any time to equal their own contribution; for larger loans, guarantors from the village are required. Half of the bank's profits go to make up a social fund, providing help for e.g. members' hospital costs when required. Illness often means a financial catastrophe for families. A common fund allows villagers the opportunity of helping each other and teaches them to trust in others, it is reminiscent of the reciprocity, spirit of coping

together, that was part of peasant village life of the past. (18

Self-sufficient village communities are still historically close in Thailand, remembered by the informants of this book. Escape from the domination of commercialism is still possible, and evidently many parents dream of returning to peaceful village life after they have succeeded in educating their children. Another issue is what is likely to happen to the natural environment of Thailand if the current intensive farming continues. Some private farmers have experimented with returning to natural farming and started growing vegetables and fruit without fertilizers and biocides. Thai organic farmers maintain that fields and gardens form a balanced subterranean and superterranean micro-environment, with its own bacteria, insects, birds and reptiles, provided it is allowed to live and the natural order is not interfered with. Those engaged in self-sufficient market gardening do not have busy harvest periods, because the work is evenly distributed throughout the year. They have a sense of pride because their life is on track. They do not need to destroy life in the soil, nor gradually poison themselves or their environment. And when an eco-catastrophe does happen, they have a prospect of coping. I believe that many of the interviewees of this volume would not feel that their lives are impoverished, if they had the chance of returning to self-sufficient farming, to rediscover the slow pace of bygone days, and the natural environment that once surrounded the villages.

II. WORK OF THE RICE FARMER

Photos 48-69. In the paddy field. Wet rice is growing (48). Ploughing and harrowing with water buffalo 1973 (49-50). Buffalos have disappeared from the plains. The ploughing machine does not tire, only people do (51-52). Before transplanting, the rice seedlings are pulled up, tied in bundles, trimmed to even height (53-54), and planted (55-57). Transplanting is always done by women.

Rice is still cut with a sickle (58-59), and threshed in the field. In the 1970s, a threshing basket was used, today the ground is covered with a large tarpaulin (60-62). Cleaning the rice with a fan (64-65) and winnowing machine (68). In Lampang fields, man has beaten the threshing machine (63). Threshing by hand continues. Carrying the new rice crop home (66-67), an old rice mill (69).





49 Lampang 1973.



50 Lampang 1973.

51 Srii Muod Klao 1998.



52 Lampang
1984.



53 Srij Muod Klao 1985.

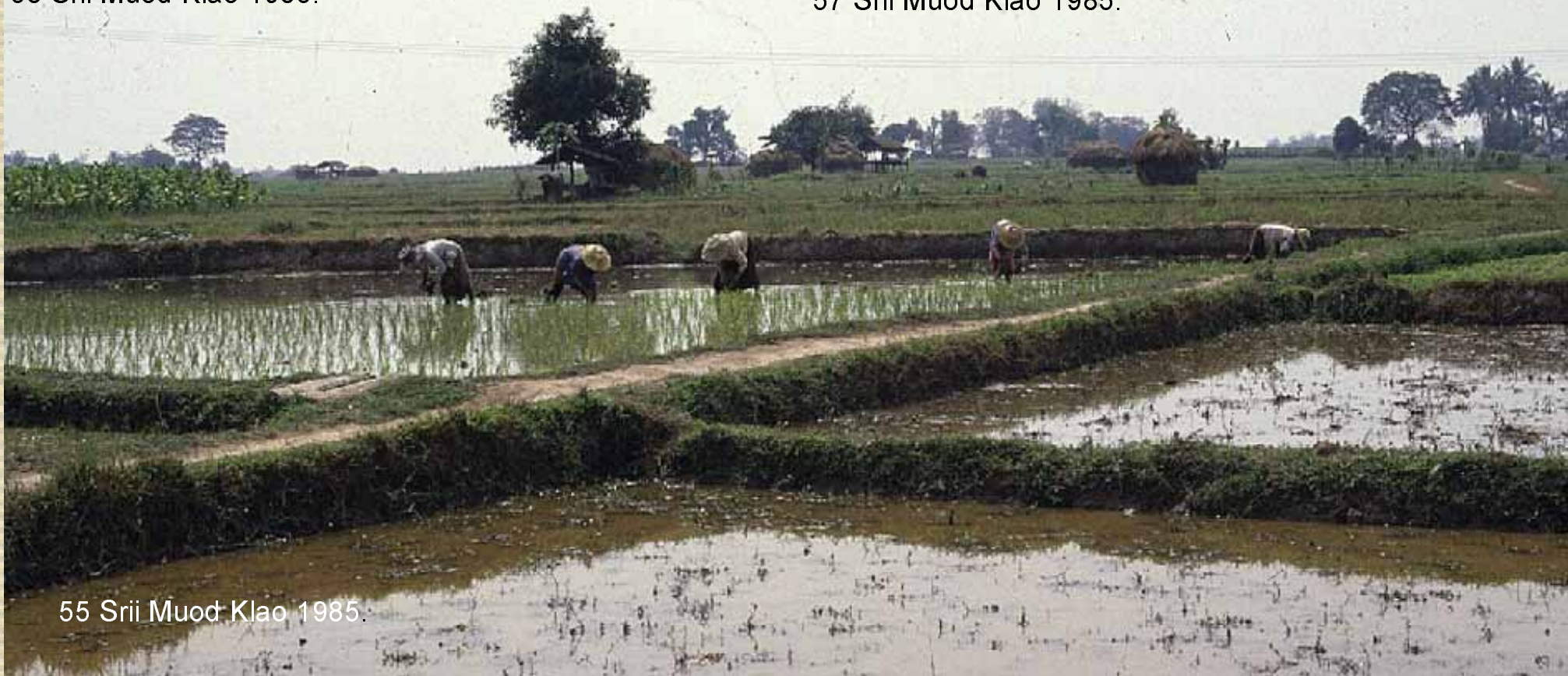




56 Srii Muod Klao 1985.



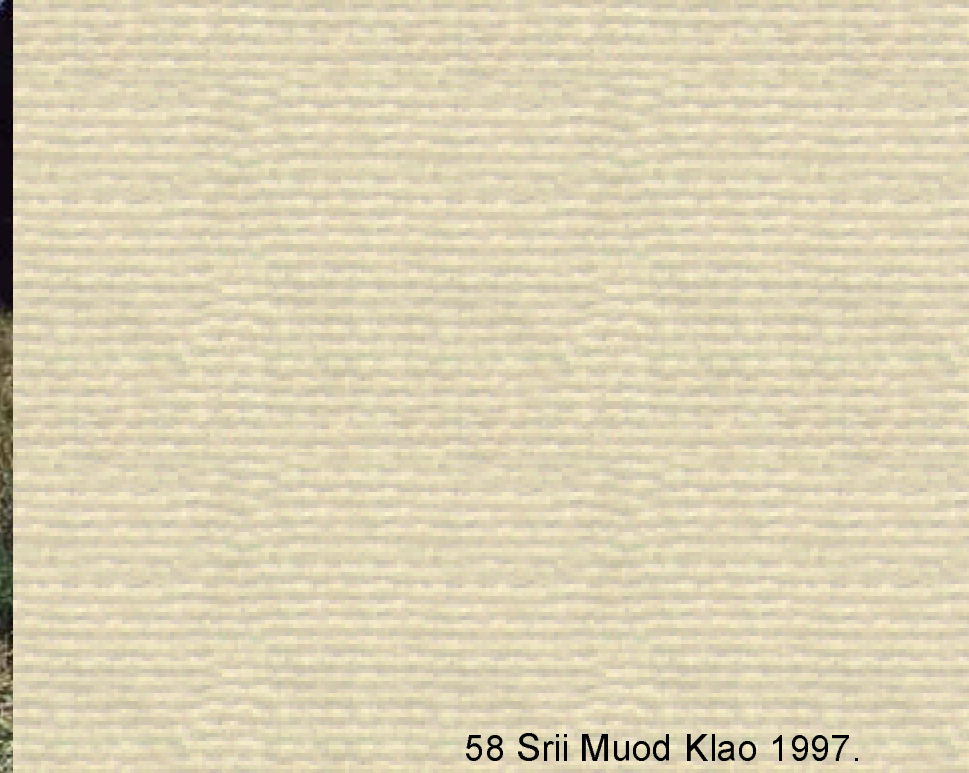
57 Srii Muod Klao 1985.



55 Srii Muod Klao 1985.



59 Srij Muod Klao 1997.



58 Srij Muod Klao 1997.





60 Mae Kong Nya 1984.



61 Sri Muod Klao 1984.





63 Mae Kong Nya 1997.



64 Lampang 1972.



65 Lampang 1972.



66 Mae Kong Nya 1985.



67 Mae Kong Nya 1985.



68 Mae Kong Nya 1985.



69 Ban Dong 1985.

Photos 70-82. Cash crops. Vegetable growing is still women's business (70, 73-76). Because there are no water buffalo, a machine to cut the rice stubble is required, and a clearing saw for cleaning out the dams (70-71). Onion, garlic (72-73), soy, yardlong bean, red pepper (74-75) and peanut (77) are still common vegetables in the garden, tobacco cultivation (76) has ended. At the end of the 1990s field tomato became a popular crop (78-79). Plantations of sugar cane (80-81) and pineapple (82) spread on the hills.



70 Srie Muod
Klao 1999.



71 Lampang 1998.



72 Mae Kong Nya 1997.



73 Srii Muod
Klao 1985.





75 Mae Kong Nya



76 Srij Muod Klao 1985.



77 Srii Muod Klao 1973.



78 Srij Muod Klao 1998.

79 Srij Muod Klao 1998.





80 Mae Kong Nya 1985.

82 Ban Dong 1998.



81 Mae Kong Nya 1985.

Photos 83-85. Farm animals. The zebu cow (83), water buffalo (84) and elephant (85) have been part of villagers' lives for centuries. Today, they have no place in human culture. Stables for zebu and buffalo (15-18, 23) have gone.



84 Srie Muod Klao 1985.

83 Srie Muod Klao 1973.



85 Ban Dong 1984.

Photos 86-87. Natural resources. There is no more forest around villages, fishermen have disappeared from the banks of canals.



86 Srie Muod Klao 1973.



Photos 88-99. Industrial occupations. Men have done temporary work mainly in the construction industry (88-90) or as truck loaders in town (91). Driver and mechanic have been desirable occupations (92-93). Women have worked at home or in village shops (94-99).



88 Ban Dong 1973.



89 Ban Dong 1998.



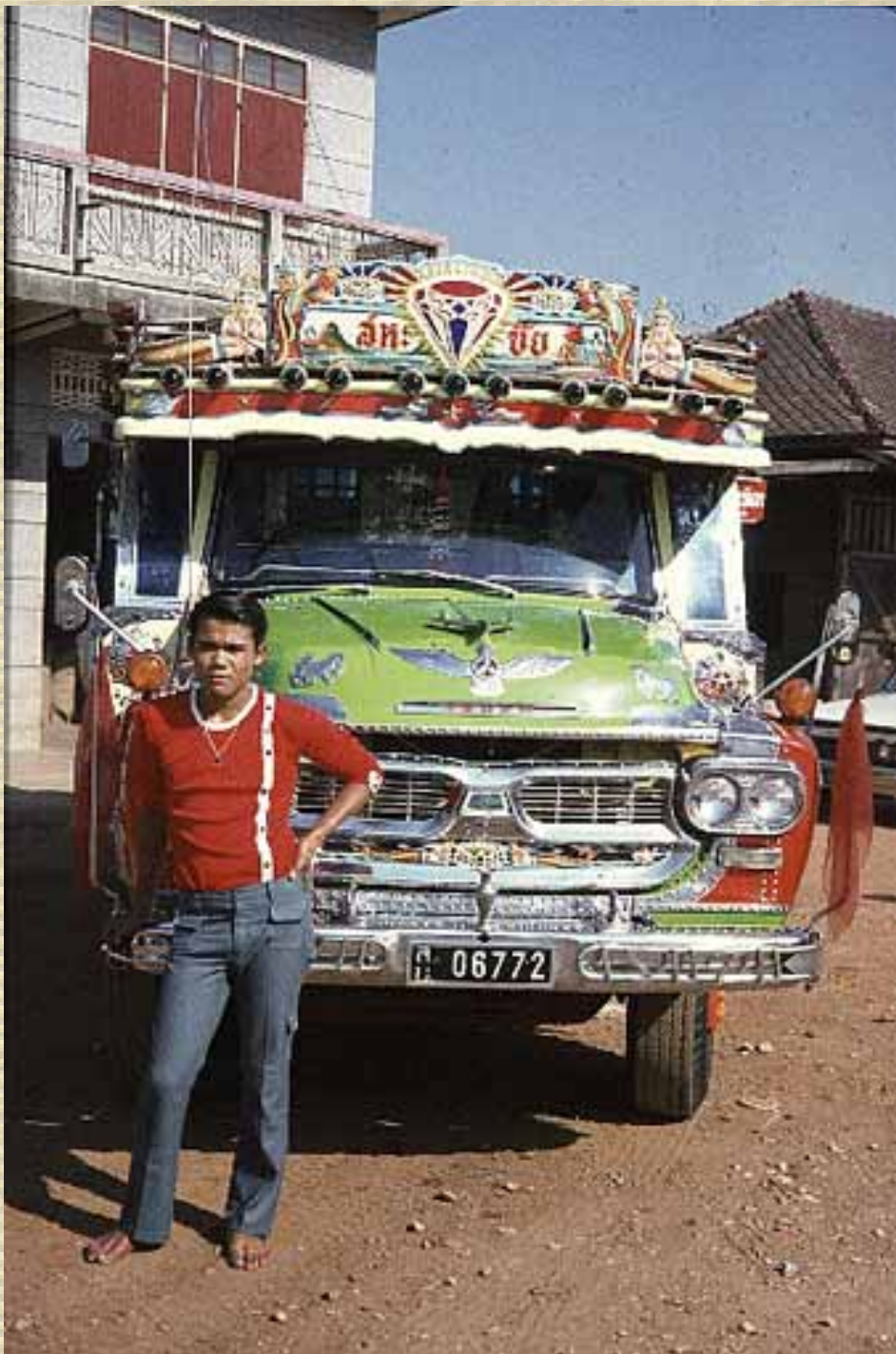
90 Srii Muod Klao 1998.



91 Sob Tui 1973.



90b Srij Muod Klao 1998.



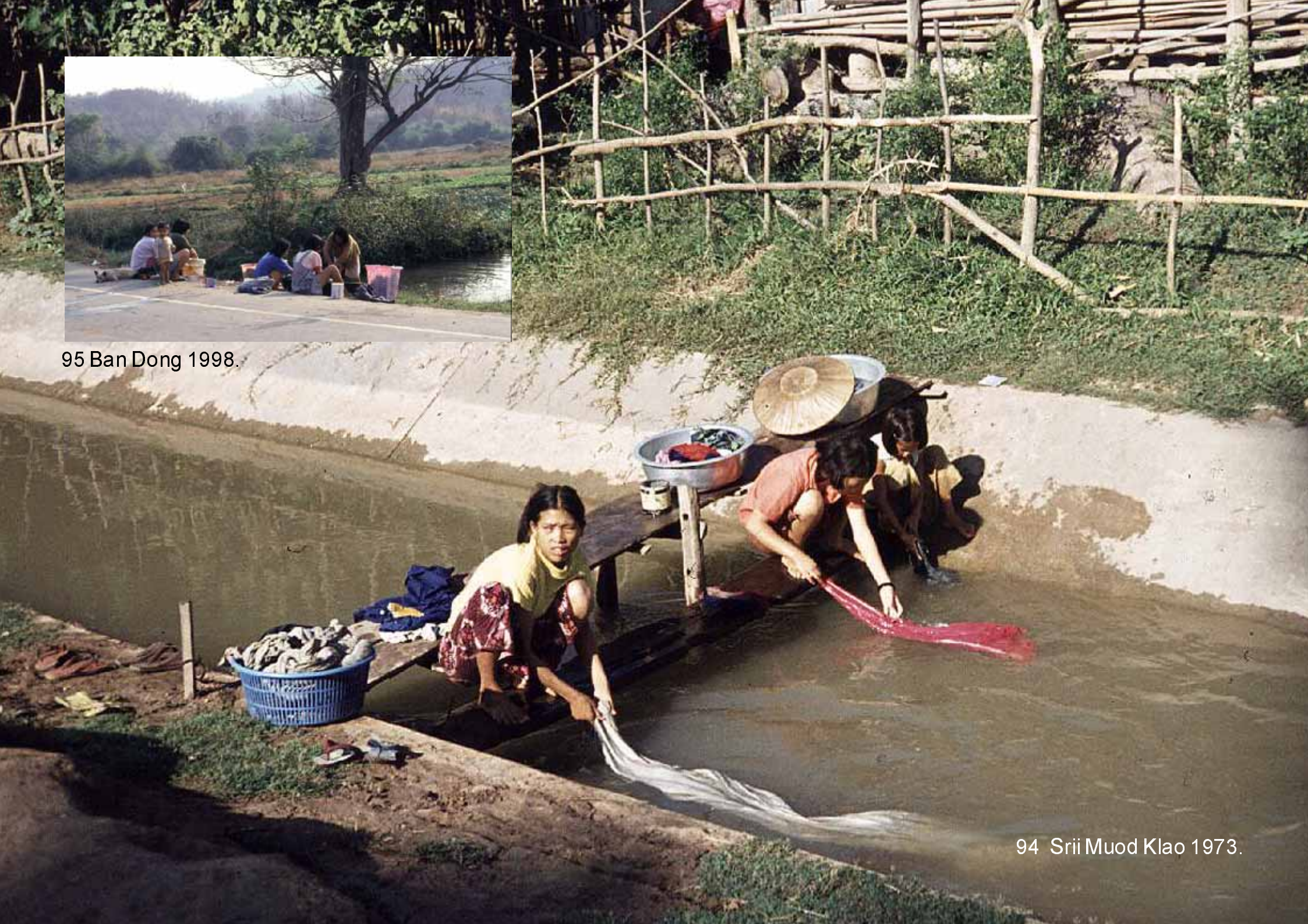
92 Sob Tui 1973.



93 Srie Muod Klao 1985.



95 Ban Dong 1998.



94 Srij Muod Klao 1973.



96 Ban Dong 1998.



97 Ban Don 1998.



99 Mae Kong Nya 1998.



98 Ban Dong 1998.

Photos 100-105. Village vendors. Many village women go to the city market in the mornings to sell their produce (100), and return after midday with their empty carrying baskets (101-102). Village vendors sell their products on the streets or in the special market places (103-105).



100 Srii Muod Klao 1973.





103 Lampang 1985.



102 Sri Muod Klao 1973.



104 Lampang 1973.

105 Lampang 1973.



Photos 106-112. In entrepreneurs' compounds. Burning and selling charcoal has been a common trade in Ban Mae Kong Nya (106). In Ban Srii Muod Klao many blacksmiths have worked in their low smithy shelters for decades (107-108). Nowadays the village has concentrated on production of concrete building materials and patio pots (109-111).



106 Mae Kong Nya 1973.



107 Srii Muod Klao 1973.





109 Srii Muod Klao 1998.



110 Srii Muod Klao 1998.



111 Srii Muod Klao 1998.



Photos 113-120. Technosystem. After elementary school, village young people go to work in the factories. The ceramic factory is the biggest employer in Ban Srii Muod Klao (113-117). Machines replace physical work (118-120).



113 Srii Muod Klao 1998.



114 Srii Muod Klao 1985.



115 Srii Muod Klao 1985.



116 Srij Muod Klao 1998.



117 Sob Tui 1985.

118 Ban Dong 1973.





119 Sob Tui 1985.

120 Sob Tui 1998.



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With reference to ancient Finnish folk culture, my only source is *Finnische Volksüberlieferung. Atlas der Finnischen Volkskultur 2* (Sarmela 2000a), which contains a list of references. Statistical data on Finland is produced by Statistics Finland (www.stat.fi) and STAKES, the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (www.stakes.fi); on Thailand by the National Statistical Office of the Prime Minister (Thailand Official Yearbook; www.nso.go.th).

Foreword

1. The theory is based on e.g. my Finnish language work *Rakennemuutos tulevaisuuteen. Postlokaalinen maailma ja Suomi* ['Structural change into the future. The postlocal world and Finland.'] (WSOY 1989), in which I have described environmental systems of various periods and their structural changes starting from the Nordic hunting culture and ending with the postlocal era, more briefly in the article *Postlocal Culture* (1991); and in the Introduction to my work *Finnische Volksüberlieferung* (2000a). Theoretical applications in e.g. Sarmela 1979a. Julkunen - Sarmela 1987. (www.kolumbus.fi/matti.sarmela/index.html)
2. The concept of *meritocracy* is used in a wider sense than to mean officialdom that has risen through education and its own ability, as distinct from hereditary aristocracy (Young 1958). A meritocrat is a type of person who operates in delocal and postlocal organizations, through history in e.g. military, religious, political or today in scientific-technological and economic technosystems; the opposite is a human being who is adapted to local communities.
3. Sarmela 1977; 1978. In reality, scientific-technological development, economic growth and centralization continue, technological determinism has rather become a more predominant *cultural domination* (Kaplan 1982) and will apparently end in final world domination.

I. Village in Northern Thailand

Monographs on Thai villages and village culture: Benedict (1945) 1963. Sharp et al. 1953. De Young 1955. Kickert 1960a. Kingshill 1960. Kaufman 1962. Ayabe 1962. Huzioka 1962. Hanks – Hanks – Sharp 1965. Sarmela 1979a-c. Gidal – Gidal 1970. Mizuno 1971. Klausner 1972; 1981. Wijeyewardene 1967. Van Roy 1967; 1971. Moerman 1968.

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4. Statistical Reports of Changwat Lampang 1972/1985/1996/1997/1999. Thailand Official Yearbook. National Statistical Office: 2003 Agricultural Census (Northern region)

5. Penth 1994. Joel John Barlow, History of Lanna. Chiang Rai Guide 2004 (www.chiangraiprovence.com).

6. On Thailand Chinese e.g. Skinner 1951; 1957; 1958; 1964. Landon 1941. Coughlin 1960. Kiong – Bun 2001.

7. On village building traditions: Chongrak 1977. Boeles - Sternstein 1966. Turton 1981 (1978). Izikowitz - Sörensen 1982. Sarmela 1984. Hamilton 1987. Rhum 1994.

8. Sarmela 1984.

9. On the concept of ethnoscape: Appadurai 1991; 1996.

10. Of descriptions of village rice farming, I would specially like to mention Rajadhon 1961. Moerman 1968.

Wijeyewardene 1965; 1967. Hanks, L. 1972. Also Adams 1948. Hirsch 1960. Janlekha 1955. De Yong 1955. Kaufman 1962. Bissing 1962. Amyot 1965. Ivanova 1966. Silcock 1967; 1970. Sarmela 1969ab; (1988). Van Roy 1971. Jacobs 1971. Changrien 1972. Evers 1973. Judd 1974. Rubin 1974. Skinner – Kirsch 1975. Potter 1976. Podhisita 1985. Mekchaidee 198?

11. On reciprocal working parties and village work communities e.g. Sharp et al. 1953. Kaufman 1962. Moerman 1968. Mizuno 1968. Potter 1974. Foster 1975b. Turton 1987.

12. The International Rice Research Institute or IRRI, which directed improvement of rice, and the concepts of 'wonder rice' and the 'green revolution' it marketed have from the beginning also engendered criticism, e.g. *Agricultural Revolution* 1969. Walters – Willett 1971.

13. On agricultural changes, e.g. Janlekha 1955. Moerman 1964; 1968. Smuckarn 1972. Changrien 1972. Evers 1973. Rubin 1974. Piker 1975. Pongsapich 1976. Murray 1977. Fessen 1978. Sarmela 1979a-c. Tomosugi 1980; 1995. Warr 1980. Kuwinpant 1980. Van der Meer 1981. Podhisita 1985. Gohlert 1991. Vitoon 1991; 1992. Nartsupha 2000. On economic development of rural areas and agrarian policy e.g. Wyatt 1969. Ingram 1971. Fuchs - Vingerhoets 1972. Lengel 1976. Amyot 1976. Fessen 1978. Unger 1998. Ganjanapan 1989. Hirsch 1990; 1994. Warr 1993. Sarntisart 2000. Phongpaichit – Baker 1998; 2001.

14. Statistical Reports of Changwat Lampang, e.g. 1996: 2,4.

15. On swidden rice farming see Hanks, L. 1972. Judd 1964. (Geddes 1976). On ecological and social elements of swidden culture Sarmela 1987; 2000a.

16. Newspaper reports e.g. Bangkok Post 22.10.2001; 4.11.2001; 26.10.2002; 26.11.2002.

- 17.** In Thailand, a group of researchers put out the first public warning in 1985 of the harmful effects of plant biocides on Thailand's nature and people's health, e.g. Bangkok Post 7.1.1985, but the general view is that intensive farming is necessary for rice exports, e.g. Bangkok Post 6.2.1985. Now the effects of biocides are recognized, although they are rarely discussed in the media.
- 18.** On social and economic change in Thailand in general, e.g. Cruagao 1962. Bissing 1962. Davies 1967. Silcock 1967; 1970. Van Roy 1967; 1971. Blanchard 1968. Noranitipadungkarn 1970. Jacobs 1971. Smuckarn 1972. Evers 1973. Scott 1976; 1985. Mulder 1978; 1996. Girling 1981. Ekachai 1990. Gohlert 1991. Kulick - Wilson 1992. Parnwell 1996. Sarntisart 2000. Phongpaichit - Baker 1998; 2001. Mills 2001. Tanabe - Keyes 2002. McCargo 2002.
- 19.** Steward 1955. Bennet 1976. D'Andrade 1997. Shore 1999.
- 20.** Sisa Asoke, e.g. Bangkok Post Outlooks 7.12.1997; 21.3.1998; Heikkilä-Horn 1996; 2002. (Sarmela 1998.) There is also much information on the Internet (e.g. Suwida Sangsehanat, An Alternative Social Development in Thailand: the Asoke Buddhist Community).
- 21.** E.g. Bangkok Post 30.3.1998 (banks); 5.1.1998; 20.1.1998; 1.2.1998; 16.3.1998; 17.4.1998.

Bibliography Part III. 157-