

by the Lao who came later. If we visit their old villages we meet Lao as the majority in the village. The descendants of original settlers will be found at the newly opened villages nearby. To sum up, we find some general patterns in the Lao occupancy of lands in the Khorat. Without exception such villages had previous contact with the Lao through bartering or trading.

In the case of MB/K of *Suai*, Kantharalak in Sisaket, they often exchanged their chillies and cotton for salt from Lao, Ubon Ratchathani. Then a Lao married couple came to ask to share the land to cultivate and to live. After staying with them for years, they sold the land to other Lao emigrants who came to the village later. In a third stage of this migratory process, the Lao men began to come to marry the women of the villages. As the number of Lao increased, Lao language became the *lingua franca* in the village. Some *Suai* and *Khmer* were assimilated into the Lao, while others decided to move out to seek another compound.

In extreme cases, some original villagers decided to move out to seek another compound. The non-Lao people therefore generally see the Lao as nomadic peasants who have moved continuously seeking for better land on the Khorat. Moreover, in non-Lao eyes, the Lao are not only peasants but also a skillful people who can expand their network to get better commercial activities. That is, as a consequence, they try to seek better paddy land not only for self-sufficiency but also for individual property to improve their livelihood in each locality. Such strong inclination to commercial activities on the Khorat is obvious in what follows below.

Mr. B, at MB/KY, T. KY, A. Khuang Nai, Ubon Ratchathani, born in 1909, recalls his father's days.

"My father often went out trading (*pai kha khai*) to the northern part of the Khorat. He then had the chance to look at and observe many villages. He knows very well which villages had good paddy fields. He had his own bull cart. In the dry season my father took his friends in the village KY to go together in their 7-10 carts. On the way they purchased numerous local goods (e.g. rattan, forest products, torches, and *kaen khun*) around there. Sometimes they reached Bun Kham of Mae Khong River. They sold those things on the way home. The journey usually took around 15 to 20 nights. My father was the leader of the caravan. As he went every year, he had broad, real knowledge of local conditions. In former days *Isan* had plenty of land. Most of the villagers wanted to go see the outside and they tried to convert the forest to paddy land. *Chao Nai* (local chiefs) at that time also encouraged us to do so."

The villagers of MB/KY, Ubon Ratchathani, had never been to the South to search for new lands. They believed that there were many bandits in that area. They said, in particular, many bandits were around Surin where the *Khmer* and *Suai* people resided. When villagers decided to move out, they liked to go north, using Roi Et as their base camp. At the same time some villagers were afraid to go because they believed malaria would kill them.

However, not all of the Lao could do such activities. Some could, but others could not due to the lack of money to purchase carts or boats. In this sense, Nai Hoi are the successful traders, with their trade based on surplus rice to sell.

4-2: The *Kula* and the Thai-Lao

Among some village elders, the term *Kula* immediately recalls the wandering traders who often came to sell clothing and who took their rest in the village temples (“*kula thiao khai pha non thi wat*”) (K). Until the outbreak of WWII, the *Kula* (literally, comes from *kala*, “strangers”, in Burmese; *Tai Yai* traders who had Burmese nationality at that time), were a wandering group of traders from Burma, who visited numerous villages along the Mun River Basin to sell clothes, gongs, silver ware, jewelry and the like. In the eyes of the Lao there, the *Kula* were tall men, tying white cloth around their head and wearing earrings. They did not ride bull carts but traveled on foot with *haap*, hanging a pair of baskets bigger than those of the Lao. Without exception, they were also thought to be people who had strong *wisa* (folk religious knowledge of protective power) like the *Kha*, *Phuthai*, and *Khmer* in the eyes of the Lao generally. Above all the *Kula*, foreigners for the Lao (*khon tang dao*), were regarded as courageous, manly men who could go far without concern about crossing national boundaries. The Lao men accordingly were sure of their powerful protective knowledge.

Some of the *Kula* married Lao women around MB/NC and MB/NY, A. Khuang Nai of Ubon Ratchathani and MB/BK, A. Maha Chanachai of Yasothon. They gave good impressions to the Lao in general. For instance, “*Kula* men were rich and good. They had silver and gold ... they had everything (*mi ngoen mi thong mi mot*). They were very industrious. They did not leave their Lao wife and their families at home. Therefore many Lao women wanted to marry them”. After they married with the Lao, some *Kula* cultivated the land of their wives’ parents. Some could not transplanting work, complaining that hard soil in the region damaged their nails. During the leisure season for the peasants, they went around on foot selling, carrying surplus rice, cane sugar pellets and other things in their *haap*.

The *Kula* made great contributions to repair village temples and donated some Buddhist texts in the Tai Yai/Burmese script. They also brought new dietary habits to the Lao villages. Some examples include eating boiled vegetables, pork dishes cooked with sesame oil (*han le*), drinking tea, smoking long size of banana-leaf tobacco and so on. Especially the *khao cao Kula* called by the Lao, a rice variety of non-glutinous type [see TABLE, U007] was well known among the Lao villages that had contact with the *Kula*. Mr. B of MB/NY, A. Khuang Nai, Ubon Ratchathani, born in 1913, can recall each name of the 12 *Kula* who came to stay in his village when he was twelve years old. According to him, they included... “four monks and the others were lay traders. One monk later derobed and married a Lao woman. Three other monks stayed and died here without derobing. The lay traders sold cotton clothes and silk clothes which were bought from villagers in the North and the Northeast. When they came for the first time, they accompanied some other villagers, coming

from Chiang Mai and Lampang, to help carry goods in their *haap*. They were called *luk nong* who were paid 12 *baht* for a year”.

In following years, when the *Kula* built a Buddhist temple (Wat Thung Kula) in the village, his parents began to plant *khao cao kula* (in 1928). His family and other Lao villagers also ate *khao cao Kula* for dinner, while glutinous rice was used for breakfast and lunch. At that time his parents at that time cultivated this variety to about 20 % of total rice cultivation (the proportion of the rest was as follows: 60 % *khao i tom* and 10% of *khao do* of a glutinous type and 10 % of *khao pountong*, a non-glutinous type). The proportion did not change until very recently.

“In those days the Lao villagers had two kinds of work, rice cultivation and trading. Trading was difficult for us. We sold fish, pork, beef, hens and ducks around the village. But we could get only 4-5 *satang* at most per day; 1 *baht* 50 *satang* were needed to get a bull in those days. Some tried to do silversmithing and goldsmithing in addition to rice cultivation, but the profit was small. What I wanted was money. When I was 20 years old [1933], I started to sell sets of earrings and a necklace (each was sold for 10 *satang*) around villages of the Northeast during the leisure season (December to April). Since then I and 4-5 of my friends have gone out to sell something every year. We could earn money 12 to 30 *baht* per year. The *Kula* in my village also went out by themselves in the same period. Their way of trading is different from ours. We would return to our village immediately upon selling all the things we had prepared, but the *Kula* would buy other things where they visited, using their profit from selling the prepared things, and sell to other places again. The *Kula* trading took a longer way than that of the Lao but it seemed that their final profit was not so big.”

The technical knowledge of black-, silver- and goldsmithing had been widely thought to be resources to generate significant amounts of money at that time. The smithing skills were introduced to Lao villages by some Chinese traders in Ubon Ratchathani or by Lao who had experience from Savannakhet in Laos. In MB/NY, almost the half of the householders (about one hundred) who had learned from them could do some work in the 1930s. Some elders said that three months was enough to learn the craft. Then a period of apprenticeship for three to four years was needed to be a real professional. In the case of goldsmiths, as there was no place to get gold even in the city of Ubon Ratchathani, they then bought it from Bangkok. (7)

In the villages of the *Phuthai*, MB/NH, A. Pla Pak, Nakhon Phanom, there were people called *Nai Hoi Kwian*. They went to westward to Moulmein in Burma, and also eastward as far as Vientiane of Laos. *Phuthai* in MB/NH in Nakhon Phanom had never met *Nai Hoi Lao* coming to their villages. For non-Lao/ non-Tai people, *Nai Hoi* was ascribed to the Lao and the *Phuthai*. “*Nai hoi* of *Suai* and *Khmer*” were very scarce in the Northeast, while they too, had traveled selling wares around the region.

4-3: Rice Varieties in Inter-ethnic Relations

The TABLE shows the folk terms for rice varieties cultivated around the 1930s and 1940s in the villages surveyed. At every villages we asked the name of those varieties that were “known to have been popular about fifty years ago”. Without exception, all of those questioned had a great deal of knowledge, and could classify the rice varieties in detail, most of which are extinct today. Some gave comments on each variety. In general, the Lao and *Phuthai* people eat glutinous rice as their staple food. When they refer to the name of a variety of rice, they do not put “*niao*” (sticky) to glutinous type, while they do put “*cao*” to non-glutinous types without exception. The *Khmer*, on the other hand, eat non-glutinous rice. Traditionally, however, the Lao and *Phuthai* also grew a few non-glutinous varieties, the most popular being *khao cao daeng* [TABLE, U003] to make rice noodles (*khao pun*; *khanom cin*) which is needed for ritual occasions. Conversely, the *Khmer* made also used some glutinous types to make confections in annual festivals.

No matter which ethnic group they belonged to, the people on the Northeast in general categorize paddy fields into three main types; 1) higher landform units, with poor water conditions and poor soil fertility, 2) intermediate landform units where water supply and soil fertility are moderate, and 3) lower landform units having plentiful water and fertile soil, then various miscellaneous types according to individual topographical characteristics.

The local varieties of rice to be planted were also numerous, correlating to the conditions of the fields. The Lao have broad classifications of rice varieties such as *khao do* (early-maturing type), *khao kang* (medium-maturing type), and *khao nak* [*khao ngan*] (late-maturing type) which are, roughly speaking, applicable to the aforementioned classifications of the paddy field. It is frequently observed that some early-maturing varieties in one place are used as those of medium-maturing type in another place, and some of medium-maturing type is also planted as late-maturing type in another place. Most of the non-Lao minorities also have such basic classifications of rice varieties, whereas the *Suai* have no original terms for them.

As is shown in the TABLE, whether Lao or non-Lao, they had great interest in those varieties which can be harvested even in the draught years, as was seen several decades ago. Most of these are early-maturing types (*khao do*) such as *khao do hang hi* [M019], *khao hin(g) hi* or *khao ni ni* [M025], the same glutinous type, which can grow in scarce water conditions like upland or paddy fields in the forest (*na dong*) and can be harvested within two months.

As for varieties of upland glutinous rice, the dominance of the early-maturing variety is obvious. The TABLE shows also that they often got some varieties from another ethnic groups in their relationships. The *Khmer* have gotten glutinous rice types from the Lao of Ubon Ratchathani. Some villagers of the Lao got both glutinous and non-glutinous varieties from the *Phuthai* and the *Kula*, wandering traders coming from Burma. The *Phuthai* gave some varieties to the *Nyo*, and so on. It is very interesting to note that even some upland, non-glutinous rice such as *khao nang ok* [U025], was brought to the *Khmer* by the Lao. It suggests that nomad peasants like Lao had taken

and distributed some varieties in their successive migrations to the fringes of the dry zone of the Khorat.

With the introduction of the present hybrid varieties (e.g., *ko kho hok*, *khao hom mali*) to the region, most of the local varieties, which had been frequently exchanged among the groups, were quickly extinguished. Colloquial folk-terminology among the Lao and *Phuthai* today, calls glutinous rice “rice to eat”(*khao kin*), whereas non-glutinous rice is called “rice to be sold”(*khao khai*). At the same time, the Lao actually began to eat non-glutinous rice at dinner a dietary habit newly observed in younger generations. For instance, the Lao village head of MB/T, T. Kut Nam Sai, A. Kho Wang, Yasothon, who cultivated 22 *rai* of paddy field in 1992, got a harvest of 250 *mun* (1 *mun* is equivalent to 12 kg) of non-glutinous rice (*hom mali*) from 14 *rai* of field and 120 *mun* of glutinous type (*ko kho hok*) from 8 *rai* of field. He sold 180 *mun* of non-glutinous rice and 20 *mun* of glutinous type. The 65 *mun* of non-glutinous rice 100 *mun* of glutinous rice were consumed by his family members (8 persons). The remains were kept for the relatives or guests to eat in religious ceremonies.

He said that the villagers, until the middle of the 1950s, cultivated eighty-percent glutinous rice and the rest for non-glutinous types. But since 1957 the villagers have planed non-glutinous rice to sell on the market. Today, his children and grand-children like to eat non-glutinous rice rather than glutinous rice. As a part of such change, he today plants only one variety of glutinous rice (*Ko Kho 6*) and of one non-glutinous rice (*Mali*). The former local varieties are totally lost. The older variety could keep its quality for only three years, gradually became tough and lost its fragrance. Amphoe officers have offered new varieties since 1984.

As a whole, the local varieties shown in the TABLE have rapidly disappeared in the Khorat in the 1960s. The *Khmer* villages were no exception. A *kamnan*, or the district officer, residing at MB/DT, T. Wiang, A. Kantharalak, Sisaket, has 32 *rai* of paddy field today, cultivates non-glutinous varieties of rice such as *khao dok mali* (60 *krasop*) [1 *krasop*: equivalent to 60 kg] and *khao pin kao* (50 *krasop*) to sell. In former days, *khao dok cok* [U015], a non-glutinous type, was planted for self-consumption. He said this variety was tough in the case of floods. But the villagers did not know this variety until they got it from the Lao of Ubon Ratchathani. They planted other varieties of non-glutinous upland rice such as *khao dok fai* and *khao hom sawan* [U016, U017]. In the early 1960s, however, kenaf plantations replaced all kinds of upland rice.

The extinction of numerous local varieties of rice, whether wet rice/upland rice or glutinous/non-glutinous type, reflects the transformation of peasant society in the Northeast. As the new high quality hybrid varieties were introduced by the government, the Northeast became one region of the country which did not need to share local knowledge between groups. The standardization of society has gradually occurred in parallel with the invasion of the world market economy. However, ethnic differences in the Northeast are still accountable in terms of the economical condition of the

region. In that sense, Lao cultural dominance is still evident, even though all the people of the Northeast have shared the same regional identity of being *Isan*, the people of the Northeast.

5. DISCUSSIONS

My hypothesis was that describing one's process of stereotyping others becomes one of the central themes necessary to understanding the observed peoples in the building of their own culture, including their languages at that locality. This is the background for focusing on the ways of seeing "others" in subjective narratives among both the Lao and the non-Lao. In this sense, I followed Leach's viewpoint. Because he shows how an ethnic group (*Kachin* people) could be understood only in relation to their opposition to the other group (the *Shan*) [Leach 1954]. As the data shows, their views of others are, without exception, stereotyped views in an ethno-centric perspective.

The cultural peculiarities of "Lao-ness" among villagers cannot be found anywhere even if this abstract question is asked to both Lao and non-Lao people. There is no way of looking for what the researchers want to get. Rather, its configuration comes out in the villagers' recounting of their memories relating to their experiences. That is, when we talked with the "non-Lao" people about the "Lao", the Lao distinction appears in their talking about their own personal histories. In other words, when non-Lao people try to reconstruct their own family histories or village histories, "Lao" as "they are them" appears in the narratives as foreigners, or later followers to the land, and the terms differed from the terms for non-Lao people.

In the villagers' memories, ethnic relations can be observed in activities such as bartering, trading, inter-marriage, journeys in search of new varieties of plants, and migrations searching for better land or refuge from war. Such kinds of relations extend from negotiations with neighbors, --- different peoples living next to each other --- to the wider anonymous relations with states which control the status stratification of ethnicity. Economic relations like bartering and trading to deal with individual surplus or shortage, discussed elsewhere, are closely linked with ethnic relations. It also appears to be a material means to get riches and wealth for strategic activities (8). Moreover, migration or moving may be of special importance. As Izikowitz shows, such motives stem not only from a greater need for natural resources but above all from the longing for a higher status in that locality [Izikowitz 1963: 182, see also Le Bar 1967, and Hayashi 1993(1985) for the Thai-Lao case in northeast Thailand].

Through these relations, most of the minority people who once had been the majority in a region have been absorbed into the dominant group. This process is called assimilation, which is generally understood in terms of the culture of a technologically advanced group being spread at the expense of local culture practiced by less aggressive indigenous peoples, and in extreme cases wiping out their indigenous culture. Typical in the process of assimilation is that the indigenous people gradually lose their former ethnic identity, and begin to regard themselves as the more superior

group. More or less, descriptions of ethnic minorities in mainland Southeast Asia have remained within this scheme of assimilation [cf. Hallet 1890, Seidenfaden 1958, Young 1961].

However, such views are inappropriate mainly because they presuppose a static ethnic culture from the beginning. Thus this perspective often over-emphasizes total absorption of the minorities into the dominant group, and refers to only one phase of what really happens. The minorities not only imitate and borrow the culture of the superiors --- in particular the language --- but also modify or even invent meanings and uses in their own version. Even though they speak the majority language fluently in public, they use their native language in private. I have observed many cases among *Khmu* who have long been described as the most Tai-ized *Mon-Khmer* people in Luang Prabang, northern Laos (9). They also sometimes dare to use their newly-invented ethnic labels, those formal designations listed in the state references, in order to get rich and take advantage of its political fruits for them.

We also should remember that the process how of constructing ones cultural distinctiveness occurs terms of “they are them” or “we are us” in their everyday life. That process itself might be ephemeral but be totally different from the ethnic labels that are propagated by the historical polity or the distinctiveness given by those peoples who have political and cultural power.

Objective concepts of “blood lineage” and “common culture” are highly imagined and subjective manifestations. The process of identification are made by parentage, language, religion, and a “shared” collection of customs and practices, from mythology to ways of making dishes, which are addressed and referred to in everyday conversation. In general, both the powerful majority and the weakest minority in any locality tend to discuss themselves as a single line of descendants, assigned to notions of “flesh and blood”(10).

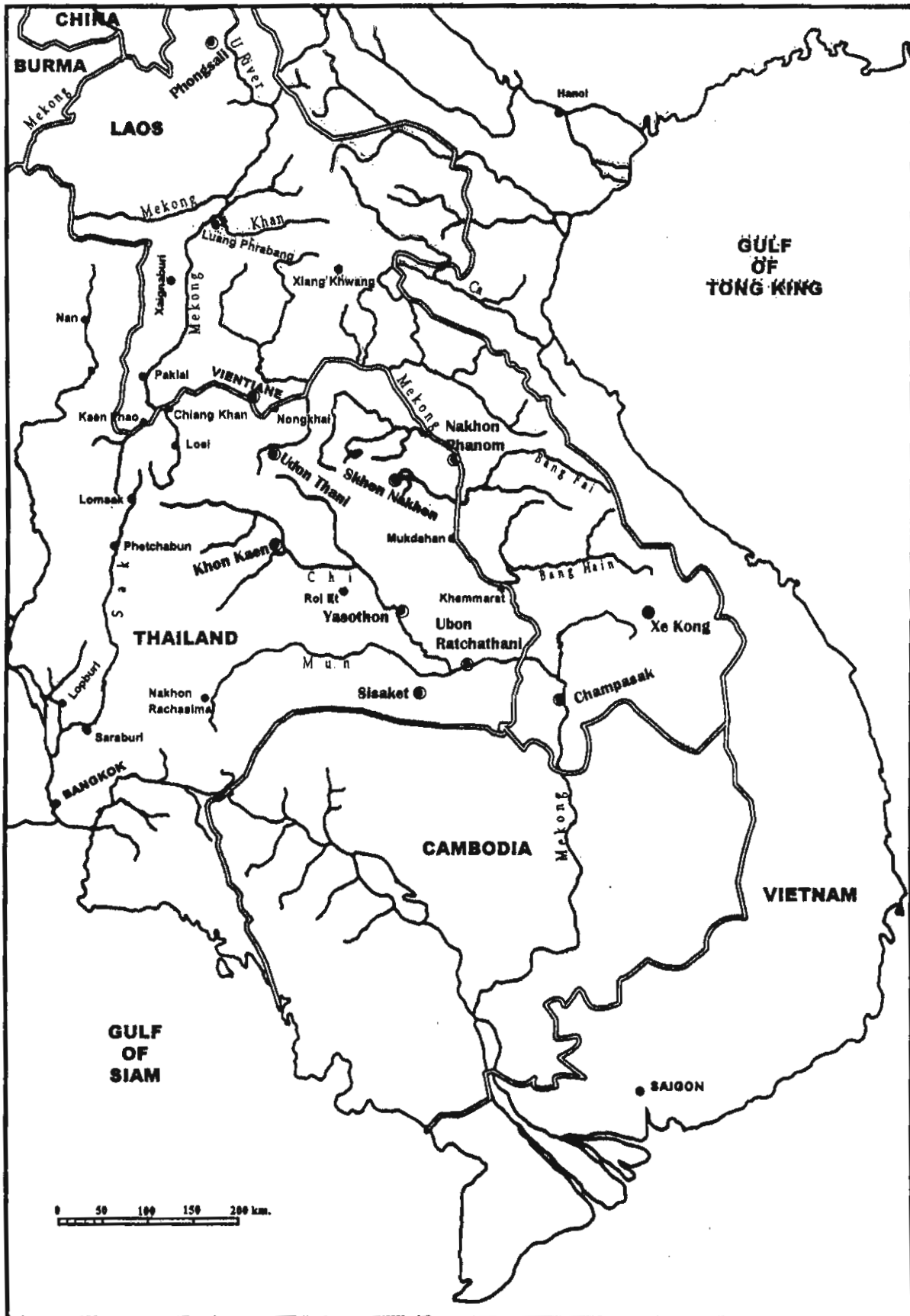
Like the historical formation of languages, ethnic groups of mainland Southeast Asia, “have been in intimate contact with each other for ages, as peoples migrated in search of new land, coexisted for a time with local populations, re-migrated, got dislocated through wars, conquests, forced or voluntary resettlements” [Matisoff 1983: 60]. As the outcome of interactions, various ethnic labels have emerged in the arena of socio-political competition.

The ‘standardization’ of society has gradually occurred in parallel with the invasion of the world market economy. Furthermore, the recent development of nation-centered tourism along the Mekong River accelerates the invention of regional-cultural identities in different ways [MWM 1997, SWTT 1997a; 1997b]. The commercialized versions of ethnic cultures among minorities in particular are also employed to show their cultural peculiarities. Those objects, which are based on the elite view that ethnicity and regional peculiarities are the cultural capitals, do not necessarily hold the peoples objectified regardless of their own participation about the propagation. The multiple realities found in a language group is not due to such recent

movements around the national boundaries.

Lao societies are making in the concrete relationship between the neighbors in the regions. Perspectives and stereotyped views to others, which have been accumulated between them, set out boundary markers for each other. Some markers are active and others are discarded. They not only express their cultural distinctiveness to others but also help to invent national identity in the age of consumerism today. That is, Lao identification is an expression of their various ways of usage in differentiating themselves from others in terms of socio-economical and political-cultural superiority to the non-Lao. It is rooted in their shared memories and experiences of relations between people in particular regions. Ethnic differences in the Northeast are accountable in terms of the economic condition of the region. In that sense, Lao cultural dominance in the locality is invisible but evident, even though all the people of the Northeast have shared the same regional identity of being *Isan*. The mode of preservation and manifestation of their cultural practices mostly depends on their views in this context. We see such 'skill' on their part as a strategy to adapt themselves to the inter-active social system as well as the changing outside world. That is, the internal/external division of the ethnic group develops along this aspect.

MAP: Research Sites



NOTES

(1) This paper does not presuppose unchanging Lao-ness and nor concerns with refugees across the national boundaries [cf. Mayoury and Pheuphanh 1994, Waters 1990]. Most of the data including villagers' narratives used here were obtained from my field research in both countries. The researches in northeast Thailand were conducted in December 1992 and October to December in 1993. The total number of villages surveyed during the period is thirty-four villages, those which are located in Yasothon [17], Ubon Ratchathani [8], Sakon Nakhon [5], Sri Saket [3], and Nakhon Phanom [1]. The ethnic groups include the Lao, *Khmer*, *Phuthai*, *Suai*, *Kaloeng*, *Nyo*, *Yoi*, *So* and the descendants of *Kula*. As for the Lao data were obtained during 1990-1992 and 1996, one month to two months survey in each year under the permission of Department of Museum and Archaeology, Ministry Information and Culture, Lao P.D.R. The main data related here came from Xe Kong, Attapeau, Bo Kaeo. I appreciate very much the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) Visit Plan Program which gave financial support to carry out the research. I am also in great debt to Mr. Chumphon Naeochampa, Suksanithet Ubon Ratchathani, who assisted my work very much.

(2) According to the Lao census 1995, 48 ethnic groups (*son phao*) are recognized; *Lao*; *Phuthai*, *Khmu*, *Hmong*, *Leu*, *Katang*, *Makong*, *Kor*, *Xuay*, *Nhuane*, *Laven*, *Taoey*, *Taliang*, *Phounoy*, *Tri*, *Phong*, *Yao*, *Lavae*, *Katu*, *Lamed*, *Thin*, *Alack*, *Pako*, *Oey*, *Ngae*, *Musir*, *Kui*, *Har*, *Jeng*, *Nhahem*, *Yang*, *Yae*, *Xaek*, *Samtao*, *Sida*, *Xingmoon*, *Toum*, *Mone*, *Bid*, *Nguane*, *Lolo*, *Hayi*, *Sadang*, *Lavy*, *Kmer*, *Khir*, *Kree*, and Others (transliteration of each name is followed by original data). See also other sources which show different numbers and designations of *son phao* in Lao P.D.R. [WTS 1992; Chazee 1995; Chayan (ed) 1991].

(3) The influx of Lao emigration to northeast Thailand began at the beginning of the eighteenth century in the wake of the disintegration of the Lan Xang Kingdom. Migration increased several times in parallel with long term competition of administrative centralization of Siamese state through the 18th and 19th centuries [Sisak 1995]. Before the Lao migration had begun in earnest, the Northeast had already had earlier arrivals. They are thought to have been *Mon-Khmer* speaking peoples. The Lao both in Laos and the Northeast call them *Kha* (literally slaves, a pejorative term) for all of them in general. Sucit stresses that the Northeast between the 16th and 17th century had been settled by a few *Rhade* and *Kha* [Sucit 1995: 52-54]. Thirachai has also suggested that, around the present Yasothon in the early eighteenth century, there were several conflicts between the "spirits" [*phi*], supposedly aboriginal people, and immigrant groups of Lao nobles to the region [Thirachai n.d.: 3-4].

Such facts are substantiated in the oral histories of the village elders which I collected in several parts of the present Northeast. My data tells that village elders in of several provinces --- Ubon Ratchathani, Yasothon, Sakon Nakhon and Nakhon Phanom --- saw the "return" of *Kha* groups to Lao villages in their childhood. They are called by numerous names. In the villages of *Kaloeng* and *Phuthai*, and among the Lao of the Songkram River Basin, unexpected visitors of *Kha Taoi* and *Kha Hang* were dominant, whereas those of *Kha Rhade*, *Kha Song*, *Kha Paisong* and *Kha Ton Luang* were popular around the Lao villages of the Mun River Basin. Most of them, crossing the Mae Khong River, visited villages to search for their old jars and gongs, important ritual items as well as ancestral property in their society. They believed that their ancestors had buried them in the village compound before moved to other places in present-day Laos.

A *Kaloeng* elder, born in 1902, recalled how a group of *Kha Taoi*, unexpected visitors around the 1920s, maintained that his *Kaloeng* village had once been their natal village many years before. A certain number of Lao villages in Ubon Ratchathani and Yasothon also had visits of *Kha Song* and *Kha Ton Luang* in a similar manner around the 1920s and 30s. In another case, the village elders of *Phuthai* in Nakhon Phanom said that when they had received *Kha Hang* and *Kha Taoi* people coming from Sarawan, Laos, in the 1930s-40s, they carried small quantities of herbal medicine and baskets to sell and wanted to

get good quality silver in Thailand.

The recollections of *Kha* people in so many villagers' narratives share several similar distinguishing features. The *Kha* had darker skin and long hair, wore a loincloth and hung a long covered basket on their back. They often carried crossbows and long spears. Some of them could speak a little Lao but when they spoke their own language it "looked like birds singing". The village women who saw them at that time believed that their long baskets were used for kidnapping. The record of their last visit to the Northeast, as far as my current research shows, is concerned, is that of 1905. Since the middle of the 1950s onward, it seems that they have totally ceased to visit their old home in the Northeast.

(4) This paternalistic views of Lao-ness have been reproduced for decades in terms of the reflection of Lao subjective view. However, exactly speaking, these only show their self-image to the Siamese or people who live in central part of Thailand. See [Keyes 1967, Breazeale 1973, Brown 1994].

(5) For the Lao in Laos, this interpretation is quite misleading. It was propagated by Siam. The word "*cao*" putting the rice originally does not mean the noble or chief at all. *Khao cao* among the Lao society means rice to be boiled and rice that difficult to harden (personal communication with the late Mr. Bunheng Bouasisenpasot, the former deputy-director, Department of Archaeology and Museum, Ministry of Information and Culture, Lao P.D.R., 1993).

(6) Most of the data below firstly appeared in my working paper presented at the Work Shop on "Dry Areas in Southeast Asia" held at Kyoto University in 1996 [Hayashi 1996b].

(7) In the early 1920s the cholera epidemic had occurred in MB/NY. The villagers believed that this epidemic came from Bangkok. It shows their another perception to the capital at that time. At the same time, we can see the money had become the metaphor of ambiguous spirits (*phi*), which are thought to be supernatural things to bring fertility as well as disaster to their life-world of the Northeast.

(8) On recent changes among the highlanders in the case of Northern Thailand, see [Dessaint and Dessaint 1982: 82-83]. On relation between trade and ethnicity in the broader perspective, see also [Evers and Schrader 1994].

(9) Wijeyewardane also observes such preservation of their own language as part of their domestic culture. "[I]n Chiangmai there are families which would speak one language within the household (for example, *Yorng*), another in the market-place (*kham muang*), and would learn a third (official Thai) at school" [Wijeyewardane 1990: 69]. See also the linguistic case study in [Miller 1994].

(10)

In that sense, the role of the Chinese, who dispersed in the Northeast and developed contact with the Lao to trade at that time, seems to be crucial in understanding the origin of Lao ethnicity in the non-Lao people (cf. Srisakra 1995). Their living ethnicity may be represented in their relationships with various groups reflexively. On the other hand, it seems to be very interesting to compare the *Khmer* case in Cambodia. The stereotype of the *Khmer* as "passive lotus-eater" is a constant and hardly unchanging component of the construction of national identity in Cambodia.

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TABLE: RICE VARIETIES PLANTED AROUND THE 1930S-1940S

(data obtained from interviews at 34 villages in 5 provinces of Northeast Thailand)

A: GLUTINOUS TYPE (120 varieties including 17 of upland rice)**A-1 WET RICE**

[A-1-1] "khao do" --- early maturing variety

M019 khao hang hi [5] Lao * "planted especially in the season of rainfall shortage"

M025 khao hing hi (khao ni ni) [1] Lao * "can cultivate within two months"

M005* khao daeng suwang [1] Lao

M043 khao i tom (khao khi tom) [4] Lao

M068 khao luang kao [4] Kula→Lao、Phuthai+Kaloeng

M010 khao do dam [2] Lao * "khao mak muai noi follows as early maturing variety"

M016 khao do sam duan [2] Lao

M009 khao do daeng [1] Lao

M011 khao do dang [1] Lao * "produced formerly at the paddy in the forest(na khok)"

M012 khao do khao ngu [1] Lao "taste like khao sanpatong"

M013 khao do khi sut [1] Phuthai

M021 khao hom do [1] Phuthai

M027 khao hom nang nuwan [1] Kaloeng

M028 khao hom thong [1] Kaloeng

M032 khao i hao [1] Khmer

M035 khao i nok (throh do) [1] So

M038 khao i pon [1] Lao

M042 khao ii tok [2] Lao * "used to plant in the most bad paddy land"

M044 khao i tu [1] Lao

M052 khao kap nyang [3] Lao+Kaloeng

M055 khao khao do [1] Lao

M059 khao khi [1] Lao

M062 khao khiao ngu [1] Lao

M063 khao kon bung [1] Lao

M069 khao luk phung [1] Lao

M070 khao ma kham [1] Lao * "it was planted in the paddy lands in the forest"

M071 khao ma yom [1] Phuthai

M079 khao mak muai noi [1] Lao

M083 khao man ngua [1] Phuthai

M084 khao matun dam [1] So

M085 khao mon khai [1] Lao

M087 khao nam pun [1] Lao

M088 khao nam phung [2] Lao * "used to plant in the paddy lands in the forest"

M091 khao nang suan [1] Lao

M097 khao nok kot [1] Phuthai

M102 khao p(l)a kheng [1] Lao

M112 khao phun [1] Lao

M001 khao bak muai [1] Lao

↓

M113 khao pong eo [8] Kula→Lao、Swei * early/medium maturing character

M078 khao mak muai (throh a muai) [8] Lao+Swei

M073 khao mac hang [2] Phuthai+Lao

↓

↓

[A-1-2] "khao kang"--- medium maturing variety

M031 khao i dang [3] Lao
M007 khao dam daeng [1] Lao
M008 khao dam phaa [1] Lao
M015 khao do noi [1] Lao
M022 khao hom klang [1] Phuthai
M031 khao i dang [3] Lao
M033 khao i khao [1] Phuthai
M039 khao i pong [1] Phuthai
M041 khao i tok [1] Lao
M048 khao in tok [2] Phuthai
M053 khao khaen ngu [2] Lao
M056 khao khao nyai [2] Lao
M077 khao mak kham [1] Lao
M101 khao nyai lao [1] Lao
M103 khao pla kheng [1] Phuthai
M104 khao p(l)a lat [1] Lao
M109 khao pho khen [1] Lao
M115 khao ta mai [1] Phuthai
M116 khao tap moei [1] Kaloeng

↓

M081 khao mak pho [1] Lao * medium/late maturing character
M060 khao khi tom [4] Lao
M054 khao khao [2] Lao
M034* khao i mum [6] Lao

↓

[A-1-3] "khao nak <ngan>" --- late maturing variety

M051 khao kam [8] Lao+Khmer+So
M114 khao sethi [3] Lao
M005* khao daeng suwang [1] Lao
M006 khao daeng suwan [1] Lao
M002 khao chanpatong (Khao sanpatong) [1] Lao
M003 khao daeng dok can [1] Lao
M004 khao daeng kon [1] Lao
M017 khao dok du [1] Kula→Lao
M018 khao hang dok [1] Phuthai
M029 khao i dam dang [1] Lao
M030 khao i bu [1] Lao
M057 khao khao khung (khao khao kung) [2] Lao
M058 khao khao thip [1] Lao
M061 khao khi tom khao [1] Lao
M064 khao sanpatong [1] Lao
M065 khao kung [1] Lao * "can grow even in the season of drought as well as flood"
M066 khao ling haet [1] Lao
M072 khao ma yaeng [1] Lao
M074 khao mae hang nyai(throh ngan mae hang phut: So) [1] So
M075 khao mae hang noi(throh ngan mae hang koei: So)[1] So
M080 khao mak nyom [1] Lao→So
M082 khao mak pho [1] Lao
M086 khao nam an [1] Lao
M089 khao nang kuak [1] Kula→Lao
M090 khao nang nuan [1] Lao
M092 khao ngan nyai [1] Lao

M094 khao niao nyai [2] Lao *"not delicious but planted"
 M095 khao noi [1] Lao
 M100 khao nyai (khao i mum) [1] Lao
 M105 khao phla lat [1] Lao
 M106 khao phama [2] Kula→Lao
 M107 khao phama dam [2] Lao
 M108 khao phama khao [2] Lao
 M110 khao phua [1] Lao
 M111 khao phua mia [1] Lao
 M117 khao thip [1] Phuthai
 M118 khao thua lian [1] Phuthai *"the best variety in the past"

[A-1-4] floating rice variety

M067 khao loi [1] Lao *"not delicious but easy to cultivate"

A-2 UPLAND RICE

[A-2-1] "khao do" --- early maturing variety

M024 khao hin hi [2] Lao "can cultivate within two months"
 M093 khao ni ni [1] Lao
 M014 khao do niao [1] Lao *"being needed to get sufficient rice when make new paddy fields"
 M020 khao hao [2] Phuthai+Kaloeng *ear plucking among the Kaloeng
 M023 khao hao mak kok [1] Phuthai→Lao
 M036 khao i non (thrau i non: Khmer) [2] Lao+Khmer
 M037 khao i po [2] Phuthai→Lao
 M040 khao i rai (thrau i rai: Khmer) [1] Lao→Khmer
 M045 khao i tui [1] Kaloeng *ear plucking
 M046 khao ibu do [1] Kaloeng *ear plucking
 M076 khao mak hing [1] Kaloeng *ear plucking
 M098 khao non hai [1] Lao
 M099 khao nong du (tharao nong: Khmer) [1] Lao→Khmer

[A-2-2] "khao kang" --- medium maturing variety

none

[A-2-3] "khao nak (ngan)" --- late maturing variety

M034* khao i mum [1] khmer *"all of the glutinous varieties came from outside"
 M047 khao ibu ngan [1] Kaloeng *ear plucking
 M049 khao ken du [1] Kaloeng *ear plucking
 M050 khao keo ma [1] Kaloeng *ear plucking

B: NON-GLUTINOUS TYPE 32 varieties including 9 of upland rice

B-1 WET RICE

[B-1-1] "khao do" --- early maturing variety

U014 khao chalik (tharao chalik: Khmer) [1] Khmer

U015 khao dok cok [1] Lao→Khmer

U020 khao mali kao (tharao mali: Khmer) [1] Khmer

U021 khao mali do [1] Lao

U023 khao mao mali (tharao mali tae noep: Khmer) [1] Khmer

U026 khao pin kao [1] Lao * "rice to sell as like khao dok mali today"

[B-1-2] "khao kang" --- medium maturing variety

U022 khao manphet (tharao klantia phet: Khmer) [1] Khmer

U027 khao sam phuan [1] Lao→Khmer

[B-1-3] "khao nak (ngan)" --- late maturing variety

U003 khao cao daeng [21] Lao+Phuthai+Kaloeng+So

(khao chao phan thong; khao cao khao pun)

(throh ya daeng: So)

U004 khao cao khao (throh ya klok: So) [4] Lao+So

U007 khao cao kula [3] Kula→Lao

U013 khao cao saen phan [3] Lao

U005 khao cao khi khwai [1] Yoi

U006 khao cao ko kho Jisip sam [1] Lao

U009 khao cao luang [1] Lao

U010 khao cao luk p(l)a [3] Lao

U011 khao cao mae hang [1] Lao

U012 khao cao nga sang (khao nga sang; khao dok ka yom) [1] Lao

U018 khao khao noi [1] Lao

U024 khao nang kham [1] Phuthai

U029 khao ta haeng (khao sai bua) [2] Lao * it needs ample water

[B-1-4] "khao loi" --- floating rice variety

U008 khao cao loi, khao cao loi nam [2] Lao *late maturing type, 4-6m height

U002 khao cao cek soei [1] Lao *planted in the ill-drained land (na nong)

B-2 UPLAND RICE

[B-2-1] "khao do" --- early maturing variety

U016 khao dok fai (thrau phakha krabash: Khmer) [2] Khmer

U030 tharao chaloei phut [1] Khmer

U032 thrao poe [1] Khmer

[B-2-2] "khao kang" --- medium maturing variety

U017 khao hom sawan (thrau hom sawan) [1] Khmer

U019 khao khrap throp [1] Lao→Khmer

U025 khao nang ok [1] Lao→Khmer

U028 khao sathuan [1] Lao→Khmer

U031 tharao throp thraep [1] Khmer

U033 thrao khuar [1] Khmer *extinct in 1969

[B-2-3] "khao nak (ngan)" --- late maturing variety

none

ไทดำใน สปป.ลาว (พิธีกรรมและความเชื่อที่สำคัญ)

ผศ.ประชัน รักพงษ์

สถาบันราชภัฏเชียงใหม่

ไทดำ หรือผู้ไทดำ เป็นกลุ่มไทโบราณกลุ่มหนึ่ง มีถิ่นฐานดั้งเดิมอยู่ในเขตสิบสองจุไทย บริเวณลุ่มแม่น้ำดำ และแม่น้ำแดง ในเวียดนามภาคเหนือ ซึ่งเป็นถิ่นที่อยู่ของ ไทดำ ไทแดง และไทขาว ไทดำตั้งถิ่นฐานอยู่ที่เมืองแกง เมืองควาย เมืองตุง เมืองม่วย เมืองลา เมืองโมะ เมืองหวัด(เมืองวาด) และเมืองชาว¹ โดยมีเจ้าเมืองปกครองที่เป็นอิสระต่อกัน เมื่อฝรั่งเศสเข้าปกครองเวียดนาม ได้เรียกชนเผ่าที่อาศัยอยู่ลุ่มแม่น้ำดำว่า ไทดำ ที่เรียกว่าไทดำ เพราะนิยมสวมเสื้อผ้าสีดำ ซึ่งย้อมด้วยต้นหอมหรือนิล แตกต่างกับชนเผ่าที่อยู่ใกล้เคียง เช่น ไทขาวที่นิยมแต่งกายด้วยผ้าสีขาว และไทแดงที่ชอบใช้ผ้าสีแดงขลิบตกแต่งชายเสื้อ

ในสปป.ลาว ไทดำได้อพยพจากเมืองไลเจาและเมืองแกง(เดียนเบียนฟู) ของเวียดนามเข้าสู่หลวงน้ำทาใน ค.ศ.1895 เพราะเกิดศึกสงครามแย่งชิงอำนาจกันระหว่างบรรดาหัวหน้าของไทดำกลุ่มต่าง ๆ เข้ามาตั้งถิ่นฐานครั้งแรกในหลวงน้ำทาที่บ้านปุง บ้านทุ่งดี บ้านทุ่งอัม บ้านน้ำแ้ง และบ้านทุ่งไ้ไ้ ต่อมาเกิดความไม่สงบในสิบสองจุไทขึ้นอีก เนื่องจากศึกย้อซึ่งเป็นพวกกบฏได้เผงที่ถูกทางการจีนปราบปรามแตกหนีเข้ามาปล้นสดม และก่อความวุ่นวายในเขตสิบสองจุไท ทำให้ชนเผ่าไทดำอพยพจากเมืองสะกบและเมืองวา แขวงไลเจา เข้ามาตั้งถิ่นฐานอยู่ที่บ้านปุง บ้านนาลือและบ้านใหม่ ใน ค.ศ. 1896 เมื่อมีประชากรเพิ่มมากขึ้น จึงได้กระจายกันออกไปตั้งหมู่บ้านอยู่ทั่วเขตทุ่งราบหลวงน้ำทา ได้แก่ บ้านทุ่งไ้เหนือ ทุ่งไ้ไ้ ป่าปวก ทุ่งดีเก่า ทุ่งดีใหม่ นาน้อย บ้านแป บ้านใหม่ บ้านปุง ป่าสัก ดอนแล นาลือ น้ำแ้ง ทุ่งอัม หัวขัว และทุ่งก่าง ในช่วงเกิดสงครามเดียนเบียนฟูระหว่างปี 1953 - 1954 ไทดำส่วนหนึ่งได้อพยพหลบหนีการเกณฑ์ทหารของฝรั่งเศส จากเดียนเบียนฟูเข้ามาอยู่บ้านน้ำแ้ง เมืองหลวงน้ำทา และบ้านหนองบัวคำ ในเขตเมืองสิง² ปัจจุบันไทดำได้ตั้งถิ่นฐานอยู่มากที่สุดในแขวงหลวงน้ำทา นอกจากนี้ยังตั้งบ้านเรือนอยู่ในแขวงบ่อแก้ว แขวงอุดมไซ แขวงพงสาลี และแขวงอื่นๆในภาคเหนือของสปป.ลาว

ในประเทศไทย คนไทยเรียกไทดำว่า **ลาวโซ่ง** คำว่า โซ่ง คงจะมาจากคำว่า ชวง หรือ ช่ง ซึ่งเป็นภาษาไทดำ หมายถึงกางเกง ไทดำได้ถูกอพยพเข้าสู่ดินแดนของประเทศไทยตั้งแต่ สมัยพระเจ้ากรุงธนบุรี ใน ค.ศ.1779 เมื่อกองทัพไทยไปตีเวียงจันทน์ แล้วกวาดต้อนไทดำที่ อพยพมาจากสิบสองจุไท ส่งไปตั้งถิ่นฐานที่เมืองเพชรบุรี ต่อมาได้กวาดต้อนเข้ามาเพิ่มเติมอีก ในสมัยรัชกาลที่ 1 ใน ค.ศ. 1792 และสมัยรัชกาลที่ 3 ใน ค.ศ.1838 ซึ่งตั้งถิ่นฐานกระจายกันอยู่ ในพื้นที่หลายจังหวัด เช่น ราชบุรี นครปฐม สุพรรณบุรี พิจิตร พิษณุโลก กาญจนบุรี ลพบุรี และสระบุรี

ไทดำมีลักษณะทางวัฒนธรรมที่เป็นเอกลักษณ์ของตนเอง เช่น ภาษาพูดและภาษาเขียน อาชีพ การแต่งกาย ขนบธรรมเนียมประเพณีและพิธีกรรมต่างๆ การดำรงชีวิตประจำวันยังคงผูกพันกับประเพณี พิธีกรรม และความเชื่อดั้งเดิมอยู่เป็นอันมาก ลักษณะทางสังคมของไทดำ ยังคงรักษาขนบธรรมเนียม จารีตประเพณี และพิธีกรรมไว้อย่างเคร่งครัด ซึ่งเป็นปัจจัยสำคัญในการดำรงรักษาเอกลักษณ์ของกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ แต่อย่างไรก็ตามวิถีการดำเนินชีวิตของไทดำใน สปป.ลาว ปัจจุบันกำลังเปลี่ยนแปลงไปตามอิทธิพลทางการเมืองการปกครอง และกระแสการเปลี่ยนแปลงจากภายนอก

ยึดครองประเพณีที่สำคัญ

ประเพณีการเกิด³

นับตั้งแต่เริ่มปฏิสนธิจนถึงวันคลอด ผู้เป็นแม่คงทำงานตามปกติไม่มีการพักผ่อน โดยเชื่อว่าการออกใช้แรงงานนั้นจะทำให้คลอดลูกง่าย เมื่อมีอาการเจ็บท้องก่อนคลอดจะทำพิธี เช่น ฝีเรือนเรียกว่า 'วานขวัญฝีเรือน' การประกอบพิธีกรรมให้หมอขวัญเป็นผู้ทำพิธีฆ่าไก่ 1 ตัว เช่น ให้ฝีญาติพี่น้องที่ตายต้องกลม หรือตายในขณะคลอดลูกกินก่อน เพื่อไม่ให้มารังควาญ รบกวนในขณะคลอด เมื่อเด็กคลอดพ้นจากครรภ์มารดาแล้ว ตัดสายรกซึ่งเรียกว่าสายแห้วาว ประมาณ 2 ข้อมือ อาบน้ำเด็กน้อยด้วยน้ำอุ่นแล้วนำไปวางไว้ในกระดัง รอกจนกระทั่งสายรกลหลุดออกมา เมื่อสายรกลหลุดพ้นออกจากครรภ์แล้วนำไปล้างบรรจุ ใส่กระบอกไม้ไผ่ที่เตรียมไว้ นำไปแขวน ไว้ที่คอกไม้ใหญ่ในป่าบังแห่ ซึ่งเป็นป่าสำหรับทิ้งรกเด็กแรกเกิด แขนงสูงจากพื้นดิน

ระดับเสมอศีระคนเดินผ่าน ส่วนแม่ล้างชำระทำความสะอาดร่างกายเล็กน้อย แล้วนั่งอยู่ไฟ เรียกว่า อยู่กรรมเดือนเมื่อถึงเตาไฟให้หันหน้าเข้าหาเตาไฟ เอามือคักเขมาควันไฟมากิน หลังจากนั้นต้มน้ำร้อนอยู่ไฟและอาบน้ำร้อนที่ต้มผสมใบไม้ซึ่งเป็นสมุนไพรพื้นบ้านจนครบเดือน

การอยู่กรรมหรืออยู่ไฟ ภายหลังคลอดเริ่มอยู่ไฟตั้งแต่วันแรกเป็นเวลา 30 วัน ในระยะแรกการอยู่ไฟจะนั่งอยู่ที่เตาไฟตลอดเวลา 3 วัน เรียกว่า 'อยู่กรรมไฟ' แม่กรรมเดือน ต้องระมัดระวังเรื่องอาหาร รับประทานได้แต่ข้าวเหนียวหนึ่งกับเกลือคั่วหรือเกลือเผา จนครบ 3 วัน จึงออกกรรมไฟ ในระยะนี้จะมีญาติพี่น้องและผู้ใกล้ชิดมาเยี่ยมเยียนและอยู่เป็นเพื่อนตลอดเวลา เมื่อออกกรรมไฟแล้วไปสระผมที่ท่อน้ำแต่จะไม่อาบน้ำ ใช้ผ้ารัดเอวไว้ผืนหนึ่งพร้อมกับ คาด ผ้าฮ้ายผืนใต้ไฟ (ชุดติดไฟ) ทับไว้อยู่ข้างนอก เพื่อให้เกิดความอบอุ่นแก่ร่างกาย เมื่อกลับมาถึงเรือนแล้วทำพิธีเซ่นผียาไฟโดยใช้ไข่ไก่ 1 ฟอง ไปวางไว้ตรงที่ทารกคลอด ทำพิธีสู่ขวัญให้แก่เด็กน้อย สู่ขวัญนมและสู่ขวัญที่นอน เพื่อให้ดูแลรักษาและเลี้ยงดูเด็กน้อยที่เกิดใหม่ให้ปลอดภัย ส่วนแม่ใช้ไข่ไก่ต้ม ข้าวต้ม ขนมน จัดใส่สำหรับทำพิธีสู่ขวัญ หลังจากนั้นเมื่อถึงเวลากลางคืนก็ให้แม่และเด็กน้อยย้ายไปนอนบริเวณที่นอนตามปกติ แต่ผู้เป็นแม่จะต้องอยู่ไฟต่อไปจนกระทั่งครบ 30 วัน จึงออกจากกรรมเดือน

อาหารการกินในเวลาอยู่ไฟจะไม่รับประทานเนื้อสัตว์ใหญ่ รับประทานได้แต่ผักและปลาบางชนิด เช่น ปลาดิ่ง ปลาแก้ม โดยนำมาปิ้งเมื่อครบ 20 วัน ฆ่าเปิด 1 ตัว ทำพิธีเซ่นผีเต่าแล้วเริ่มรับประทานเนื้อสัตว์ได้ โดยเริ่มจากเปิดก่อนต่อมาเป็นไก่ หมู ปลาย่าง ปลาไหลย่าง

ห้ามรับประทานเนื้อสัตว์ใหญ่ เช่น เนื้อวัว เนื้อควาย จนกว่าจะออกจากกรรมเดือน โดยเฉพาะเนื้อควายเผือกห้ามรับประทานเด็ดขาด เพราะจะทำให้มีอาการแสดงอาจถึงตายได้

การเลี้ยงดูทารก แม่จะเลี้ยงดูลูกน้อยด้วยนมแม่เป็นหลัก ต่อมาจึงให้อาหารเสริม จนกระทั่งเด็กเดินได้หรือเริ่มตั้งครกใหม่ จึงหย่านม

ประเพณีวัยหนุ่ม

การศึกษาอบรม ลูกชายพ่อจะสอนให้รู้จักการทำไร่ไถนา จักสาน เช่น สาน กะเหล็บ กระบุง ช้อน ไซ และภาชนะต่าง ๆ ส่วนลูกสาวแม่จะสอนให้รู้จักเย็บเย็บการเรือน บั่นฝ้าย เลี้ยงไหม สาวไหม ทอผ้า การประดิษฐ์ลวดลายต่าง ๆ บนผืนผ้า

เลือกคู่ครอง เมื่ออายุย่างเข้าสู่วัยหนุ่มวัยสาว ผู้สาวจะชวนเพื่อน ๆ ไปลงช่วงปั่นฝ้าย เป็นกลุ่ม ๆ ยามค่ำคืนในฤดูหนาว ส่วนผู้สาวก็จะชวนกันไปเที่ยวสาวปั่นฝ้าย โดยเป่าปี่แล้วขับ โทดำนวนเวียนไปตามช่วงนั้นบ้างช่วงนี้บ้าง มีการขับโต้ตอบกันไปมาระหว่างหนุ่มสาวจนดึก ค่ำจึงกลับขึ้นเรือน โดยมีผู้สาวที่ชอบพอกันติดตามไปส่ง กระทำเช่นนี้เป็นกิจวัตรประจำจนเกิด ความรักซึ่งกันและกัน ฝ่ายชายจะเล่าให้พ่อแม่ฟังเกี่ยวกับเรื่องที่ตนไปรักมักผู้สาวแล้วอยากได้ เป็นภรรยา หลังจากนั้นพ่อแม่ก็จะไปปรึกษาบรรดาลุง ป้า น้า อาที่นับถือ แล้วแต่งพ่อใช้ไป ถาม ผู้ใหญ่ฝ่ายหญิง 2 - 3 ครั้ง โดยปกติการไปถามครั้งแรกครั้งที่สองพ่อแม่ฝ่ายหญิงจะ ยังไม่ตอบตกลง อาจบอกปิดก็ได้ดังนั้นก็ไปถามอีกเป็นครั้งที่สามเรียกว่า **ถามขาด** เมื่อพ่อแม่ฝ่ายหญิงตอบรับก็เป็นอันว่าตกลงให้แต่งงานกัน หลังจากนั้นจะเตรียมพิธีกินดองน้อย

กินดองน้อย เป็นพิธีสู่ขอเรียกว่า **ไปสอง** ฝ่ายชายจะจัดเตรียมพาข้าวหรือ ช้นหมากสู่ขอ โดยฆ่าไก่ 4 ตัว แยกเป็น 4 ห่อ สิ่งของประกอบพิธีสู่ขอจะทำเป็นห่ออย่างละ 4 ห่อ ได้แก่ ปลาปิ้ง 4 ห่อ หนังกาด 4 ห่อ (เปลือกไม้ใช้เคี้ยวกับหมาก) พลุ 4 ห่อ เหล้า 4 ขวด จัดใส่สำหรับมอบให้แก่ญาติฝ่ายเจ้าสาว แล้วมอบตัวเป็น **เชยกว้น** ในวันนั้น เพื่อเตรียมพิธีกินดองใหญ่ (แต่งงาน) ต่อไป เชยกว้นจะอาศัยอยู่ที่บ้านเจ้าสาวเพื่อ เตรียมตัวเข้าสู่พิธีกินดอง โดยใช้เวลา 2 เดือน ถึง 1 ปี บางรายอาจใช้เวลา 3 - 4 ปี ยัง ไม่มีสิทธิ์อยู่กินกันฉันสามีภรรยา เพราะผิดผีเรือนจะต้องนอนอยู่ทางกว้น (ปลายเท้าของพ่อ ตาแม่ยาย) หลังจากพิธีสองฝ่ายหญิงยังมีสิทธิ์เสรีในการพูดคุยกับผู้สาวคนอื่นที่มาเกี่ยวพาราสี โดยที่สามีจะต้องทำเป็นไม่รู้ไม่เห็นและไม่โกรธ ทั้งนี้เพื่อทดสอบความอดทน อดกลั้นใน อารมณ์⁴

พิธีแต่งงานหรือกินดองใหญ่ เป็นพิธีแต่งงานของไทยดำ มีกำหนด 3 วัน บางครั้งจะจัดพิธีพร้อมกับการเซ่นเรื่อน วันแรกฝ่ายชายจะทำพิธีเซ่นผีเรือนที่บ้านเจ้าสาว โดยฆ่าหมู 1 ตัว ไก่ 8 ตัว ปลาบั้ง 8 ห่อ หาด 8 ห่อ พูล 8 ห่อ เหล้าไห 2 ไห พร้อมกับเงินสินเลี้ยงหรือค่าน้ำนม 5 หมัน 2 ปี ฆ่าควาย 1 ตัว เลี้ยงแขกที่มาร่วมงาน วันที่สองสะใภ้ใหม่จะไปหยามเรื่อนพ่อปู่แม่ย่า คือ ไปเยียมยามพ่อแม่ของสามี ตั้งแต่ตอนเช้าเพื่อเคารพ กราบไหว้ สะใภ้จะต้องมีของไปฝาก เช่น ผ้าเบียว (ผ้าคลุมศีรษะของสตรีเผ่าไทดำ) ผ้าปู ที่นอน ชินใหม่ เสื้อ ถักย้อม ที่ทำจากฝีมือของตนเอง ส่วนพ่อปู่แม่ย่าจะให้เงินรับไหว้จำนวน 5 - 10 หมัน หรือให้สิ่งของตอบแทนตามสมควรแก่ฐานะ หลังจากนั้นจะไปบไหว้ญาติผู้ใหญ่ ของสามี จนกระทั่งถึงตอนบ่ายจึงเดินทางกลับไปรับประทานอาหารเรียกว่า **กินงายหัว** ส่วนวันที่สามของพิธีแต่งงานเป็นวันสรุปเพื่อเก็บของที่เยี่ยมมาจัดงานส่ง ทำอาหารเลี้ยงผู้ที่อยู่ช่วยงาน ส่วนมากจะเป็นญาติพี่น้อง เพื่อนสนิทและเพื่อนบ้านใกล้เคียง

ธรรมเนียมดั้งเดิมของไทยดำ ผู้เป็นชายจะต้องอยู่ที่บ้านของพ่อตาแม่ยาย มีกำหนดนานถึง 12 ปี จึงมีสิทธิ์กลับคืนไปอยู่กับพ่อแม่ฝ่ายสามี หรือปลูกเรื่อนใหญ่อยู่ใกล้ ๆ กับพ่อแม่และญาติฝ่ายสามี ต่อมาลดลงเหลือ 8 ปี ปัจจุบันลดลงเหลือ 4 ปี เมื่อลงเรื่อนจะต้องเสียค่าแต่งงานกลับคืนปีละ 5 หมัน และค่าน้ำนม 5 หมัน 2 ปี หมูอีก 1 ตัว เช่น อยู่กับพ่อตาแม่ยายได้ 2 ปี จะพาภรรยากลับไปอยู่เรื่อนพ่อแม่ของตน หรือสร้างบ้านใหม่จะต้องเสียค่าแต่งงาน 6 ปี เท่ากับ 30 หมัน และจะต้องเสียค่าน้ำนมอีก 5 หมัน 2 ปี ฆ่าหมูปอกกล่าวผีเรือน 1 ตัว โดยปกติเมื่อแยกที่ตั้งครอบครัวใหม่ พ่อตาแม่ยายจะแบ่งทรัพย์สินให้ ได้แก่ แม่ควาย 1 ตัว แม่หมู 1 ตัว แม่ไก่ 1 ตัว พักลูกเปิดให้ 1 ชุด พร้อมกับมอบของใช้ในครัวให้อีกจำนวนหนึ่ง เช่น หม้อ ชาม ถ้วย ช้อน เครื่องนอน เพื่อให้ไปตั้งครอบครัว แต่ถ้ามีฐานะยากจนก็อาจมีให้เล็กน้อย ส่วนพ่อแม่ฝ่ายสามีจะแบ่งมรดกมรดกให้ตามฐานะ เช่น แบ่งที่นาให้ทำกิน ควาย 1 ตัว⁵ ส่วนลูกชายที่อยู่เลี้ยงพ่อแม่จะได้รับส่วนแบ่งมรดกมากกว่าพี่น้องคนอื่น กล่าวคือ นอกจากได้ส่วนแบ่งเท่ากับลูกชายคนอื่น ๆ แล้วยังมีสิทธิ์ได้ครอบครองในส่วนแบ่งที่เป็นกรรมสิทธิ์ของพ่อแม่⁶

มานทาง หญิงใดมีท้องนอกสมรสเรียกว่า มานทาง จะถูกสังคมลงโทษ โดยถูกอำนาจการปกครองของหมู่บ้านปรับไหมทั้งชายและหญิงเป็นเงิน 1 หมัน 5 ปี เรียกว่า เงินล้างน้ำล้างท่า แล้วให้อยู่กินเป็นสามี - ภรรยา กัน ถ้าหากฝ่ายชายไม่ยอมรับเป็นภรรยาจะต้องเสียค่าปรับไหมให้แก่ฝ่ายหญิงเป็นเงิน 30 หมัน กรณีหญิงนั้นตายจะถูกชาวบ้านปรับไหมเรียกว่า เสียขาว ฆ่าควาย 1 ตัว เพื่อเลี้ยงผู้มาช่วยงานศพแล้วมอบความรับผิดชอบการจัดงานศพให้ฝ่ายชายรับภาระทั้งหมด

ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างสามี - ภรรยา หลังจากแต่งงานแล้วจะต้องซื่อสัตย์ต่อกัน สามีจะไม่ไปติดพันหญิงอื่น ส่วนภรรยาก็จะไม่ไปลงช่วงบ้านฝ่ายอีก ทำหน้าที่เป็นแม่บ้านแม่เรือน ที่ดี จะไปไหนมาไหนในยามค่ำคืนต้องบอกกล่าวขออนุญาตสามี หากสามีไปเป็นชู้กับหญิงอื่นที่มี สามีแล้ว หรือกรณีภรรยามีชู้จะถูกปรับไหมเป็นเงิน 60 - 120 หมัน ⁷

ประเพณีการตาย

ประเพณีไทดำเมื่อมีคนตายในหมู่บ้านจะมีการยิงปืนขึ้นฟ้า 3 นัด เพื่อเป็นสัญญาณบอกกล่าวชาวบ้าน ซึ่งทุกคนจะหยุดทำงานจนกว่าจะนำศพไปฝัง ภายหลังตายบรรดาญาติพี่น้องจะช่วยกันอาบน้ำศพ จากนั้นก็แต่งตัวด้วยชุดเสื้อผ้าของเผ่าไทดำ นำผ้าแพรสีขาวมาเย็บเป็นถุงบรรจุศพแล้วใช้ไหมเย็บติดให้เรียบร้อย บรรจุลงในโลงศพโดยใช้ผ้าคลุมหน้าศพไว้ผืนหนึ่ง กรณีเด็กน้อยตายจะไม่ประกอบพิธีกรรมตายวันไหนให้นำไปฝังในวันนั้น ส่วนคนหนุ่มสาวถ้าตายตอนกลางคืนในเช้าวันรุ่งขึ้นฆ่าหมูหรือวัว ควาย 1 ตัว ทำอาหารจัดสำหรับเซ่นอุทิศให้ผู้ตาย กินเรียกว่า "เฮ็ดงาย" พอถึงตอนเย็นก็นำไปฝัง ส่วนคนวัยกลางคนหรือผู้สูงอายุตายเก็บศพไว้ที่บ้านของผู้ตาย 1 - 2 คืน แล้วจึงนำไปฝัง ฆ่าหมูหรือวัวควาย 1 ตัว เฮ็ดงายให้ผู้ตายเช้าของวันที่จะนำไปฝัง การทำพิธีฝังฆ่าหมู 1 ตัว อุทิศให้เรียกว่า หมูเข้าชุม หลังจากนั้นอีก 3 วัน จะทำพิธีเฮ็ดเฮียว อุทิศส่วนกุศลให้ โดยนำเครื่องเฮียวไปส่งให้ที่ป่าช้า

พิธีบอกทาง เป็นพิธีส่งวิญญาณผู้ตายไปสู่สวรรค์ จะประกอบพิธีกรรมที่เรือนผู้ตาย หลังจากฝังศพแล้ว 3 วัน เริ่มจากการจัดเตรียมสิ่งของที่ใช้ในพิธี เช่น เฮียว เงิน ของใช้ใน

ครัวเรือน เครื่องมือประกอบอาชีพ สัตว์เลี้ยง โดยทำเป็นสิ่งของจำลอง กระจาดและกระจับปี่ใส่อาหาร บรรจุเสื้อผ้าและข้าวเหนียว อาหาร น้ำ และสิ่งของเครื่องใช้ส่วนตัว เหล้า 1 ขวด เมื่อได้เวลาแล้วเขยยกจะทำพิธีเชิญผีเรือนมากินเครื่องเซ่นและรับเอาสิ่งของเครื่องใช้ จากนั้นจะอ่านคำบอกทางจากสถานที่อยู่ปัจจุบันไปยังเมืองใด เมืองแกลง ซึ่งเป็นถิ่นเดิมของไทยดำ เพื่อขึ้นไปเฝ้าแทนที่เมืองฟ้าต่อไป

เฮี้ยว มีลักษณะเป็นธงสามเหลี่ยมหรือสี่เหลี่ยม ทำด้วยผ้าไหมผูกติดกับราวไม้ไผ่แล้วขดเป็นวงกลม ยึดติดกับเสาเรียกว่าเสาหลวง สูงราว 3 - 4 เมตร แบ่งออกเป็น 3 ชนิด ได้แก่⁸

เฮี้ยวเครื่องใหญ่ ประกอบด้วยเฮี้ยวจำนวน 80 อัน ทำเป็นกอ ๆ ละ 40 อัน การประกอบพิธีกรรมฆ่าควายอย่างน้อย 1 ตัว วัว 1 ตัว เป็นเฮี้ยวของสิ่งล่อคำ ซึ่งเป็นสิ่งตัวที่สืบเชื้อสายของชนชั้นปกครอง หรือเจ้าผู้ครองเมืองในเขตสิบสองจุไทในอดีต

เฮี้ยวเครื่องกลาง ประกอบด้วยเฮี้ยวจำนวน 40 อัน การประกอบพิธีฆ่าควายหรือวัว 1 ตัว เป็นของสิ่งผู้น้อยหรือสิ่งกว้าง ซึ่งเป็นตระกูลของไพร่ ถ้าหากมีคนในตระกูลสิ่งล่อคำและสิ่งผู้น้อยตายในระยะเวลาใกล้เคียงกัน จะต้องทำพิธีกรรมอุทิศให้สิ่งล่อคำก่อนแล้วจึงทำพิธีอุทิศให้สิ่งผู้น้อย ถ้าทำพิธีให้สิ่งผู้น้อยก่อนเชื่อว่าจะไม่ได้รับส่วนบุญส่วนกุศล เพราะสิ่งล่อคำหรือสิ่งตัวจะแย่งไปกินหมด

เฮี้ยวเครื่องเล็ก ไม่ทำพิธีเฮ็ดเฮี้ยว แต่จะฆ่าหมูเซ่นอุทิศให้ ถ้ามีฐานะยากจน อาจจะไม่ฆ่าหมูก็ได้ จัดสำหรับอาหารเล็กน้อยอุทิศให้ตามฐานะของครอบครัว

ธรรมเนียมการจัดงานศพของไทยดำ 'เขยยก' จะทำหน้าที่เป็นแม่งานทั้งหมด กล่าวคือเป็นผู้ควบคุมการดำเนินงานให้เป็นไปด้วยความเรียบร้อย เขยยกคือผู้จัดการงานศพของไทยดำ ได้แก่ สามีของลูกสาวคนโตของผู้ตาย ถ้าไม่มีลูกสาวคนโตให้สามีลูกสาวรองลงไปเป็นเขยยก กรณีที่ไม่มีลูกสาวจะมอบให้เขยที่เป็นญาติใกล้ชิดทำหน้าที่แทน บรรดาญาติฝ่ายเขยหรือ สะไ้ทุกคนจะแต่งกายด้วยเสื้อผ้าชุดสีขาวไว้ทุกข์ เขยยกจะใช้ผ้าสีขาวคาดศีรษะไว้เป็นสัญลักษณ์ให้สังเกต ในขณะที่นำศพไปเผาบนภิกขุที่ป่าช้า ญาติจะจัดสำหรับอาหารไปเซ่นอุทิศให้ผู้ตาย ก่อนชุดหลุมฝังศพจะทำการเสี่ยงทายด้วยการโยนไข่ไก่ลงพื้นดินเพื่อเลือกหาทำเลที่หลุมฝัง ถ้าหาก

ไข่แตกตรงจุดใดก็ขุดหลุมฝังบริเวณนั้น จากนั้นใช้เชือกไหมเรียกว่าสายใจผูกมัดร่างศพ แล้วหย่อนศพลงสู่ก้นหลุมกลบดินฝัง พูนดินกลบให้สูงเหนือระดับพื้นดินเล็กน้อย สร้างเรือนจำลองหลังเล็ก ๆ ครอบหลุมฝังศพ นำสิ่งของเครื่องใช้และเงินจำนวนหนึ่งเรียกว่าเงินเลียนใส่ไว้ในเรือน โยงสายใจที่ผูกมัดร่างศพต่อขึ้นไปบนเรือนจำลอง แล้วผูกต่อขึ้นไปยังปลายเสาหลวงเพื่อส่งวิญญาณผู้ตายขึ้นไปยังเมืองฟ้าเมืองสวรรค์ บนปลายสุดของเสาหลวงทำหุ่นจำลองม้าสีหรือเก้ายืนตั้งไว้ โดยมีร่มอันเล็ก ๆ กางป้องกันแดดฝนไว้ด้านบนสุด ถ้าผู้ตายเป็นผู้ชายจะใช้ม้าสีจำลอง ถ้าเป็นผู้หญิงจะใช้เก้ายืน โดยมีความเชื่อว่าผู้ตายจะได้ใช้เป็นพาหนะสำหรับนั่งไปยังเมืองฟ้าเพื่อพบแทน

เมื่อเสร็จพิธีฝังศพ ผู้ไปร่วมพิธีศพโดยเฉพาะผู้หญิงจะลงไปอาบน้ำชำระร่างกายและสระผมในแม่น้ำ เพื่อชำระสิ่งอัปมงคลทั้งหลายออกจากร่างกาย พอถึงตอนเย็นหมอขวัญจะทำพิธีสู่ขวัญให้แก่ครอบครัวของผู้ตาย และผู้ที่ไปส่งศพ เพื่อความเป็นสิริมงคลแก่ทุกคน หลังจากนั้นครอบครัวของผู้ตายจะจัดสำรับอาหารไปทานอุทิศให้ที่หลุมฝังศพผู้ตายเป็นเวลา 7 วัน พอครบกำหนด เขยยกจะทำพิธีเชิญขวัญ หรือวิญญาณของผู้ตายขึ้นไปเป็นผีเรือน โดยนำไปไว้ด้านในสุดของเรือนเรียกว่า 'กะลอหอง' เพื่อปกป้องคุ้มครองลูกหลานและสมาชิกในครอบครัวให้อยู่ดีมีสุขตลอดไป หลังจากนั้นเมื่อครบรอบวันตายทุก ๆ 10 วัน จะจัดพาข้าวเป็นสำรับเล็ก ๆ ทำพิธีเซ่นผีเรือนเรียกว่า เสนปาดตง หรือมือปาดตง⁹ นำไปวางไว้ที่ห้องผีเรือน โดยใช้อาหารจากที่สมาชิกในครอบครัวรับประทานในชีวิตประจำวัน ส่วนการเสนปาดตงพิเศษจะทำในช่วงเวลาที่ได้ผลผลิตจากการเก็บเกี่ยวข้าว ทำพิธีเสนปาดตงเพื่ออุทิศข้าวใหม่ให้ผีเรือนกินก่อนสมาชิกของครอบครัว เป็นการแสดงความกตัญญูต่อผู้มีพระคุณ เพื่อให้เป็นสิริมงคลแก่ ครอบครัวและลูกหลาน

เสนเรือน

เสนเรือน เป็นพิธีเซ่นไหว้ผีเรือนของชนเผ่าไทดำ ซึ่งเป็นผีบรรพบุรุษ ได้แก่ พ่อแม่ ปู่ ย่า ทวด และบรรพบุรุษของฝ่ายชายที่ล่วงลับไปแล้ว ตามปกติพิธีเสนเรือนจะปฏิบัติกันในครอบครัวเป็นประจำ 2 - 3 ปี ต่อครั้ง ทั้งนี้ขึ้นอยู่กับฐานะและความพร้อมของครอบครัว พิธีเสนเรือนเป็นการแสดงความกตัญญูต่อบรรพบุรุษ เพื่อเป็นสิริมงคลแก่ครอบครัว และคุ้มครอง

บุตรหลานให้อยู่เย็นเป็นสุข ทำมาหากินเจริญก้าวหน้า รวมทั้งเป็นการพบปะสังสรรค์กันในหมู่ญาติมิตร ผู้ประกอบพิธีกรรมคือ หมอเสน ส่วนผู้ร่วมพิธี ได้แก่ บรรดาลูกหลานและญาติ ๆ รวมทั้งแขกอื่น ๆ ที่เชิญ แขกมาร่วมงานจำนวนมากมาร่วมพิธี ในกรณีที่เจ้าบ้านหรือสมาชิกในครอบครัวเป็นพนักงานของรัฐมีตำแหน่งสำคัญจะเชิญแขกจำนวนมาก บางครั้งแขกมาร่วมงาน 200 - 300 คน¹⁰ ญาติที่มาร่วมงาน แบ่งออกเป็น 2 ประเภท คือ ญาติสืบสายโลหิตจะแต่งกายแบบธรรมดา และญาติจากการ แต่งงาน ได้แก่ ฝ่ายชายหรือสะใภ้ จะแต่งกายพิเศษด้วยชุดเสื้อสี เพื่อเป็นการเคารพ ผีเรือนและให้ผู้มาร่วมงานรู้ว่าเป็นชายหรือสะใภ้

ก่อนทำพิธีเสนเรือนจะจัดเตรียมสิ่งของที่ใช้ประกอบพิธีกรรม ได้แก่ เหล้า 1 ขวด หมู 1 ตัว ประกอบด้วยเนื้อหมู เครื่องใน หัวหมู กระดูกสันหลัง ตีน และหาง อาหารประเภท ยำ เช่น ชุบใบฝัดส้มลม ชุบหน่อไม้ แกงวันเส้น แกงผัดกุดใส่กระดูกหมู นอกจากนี้ ยังมี ข้าวเหนียว ขนม ข้าวต้มมัด เผือกต้ม อ้อย ผลไม้และน้ำ ตามปกติจะเตรียมดื่มเหล้าไว้ล่วงหน้าใส่ไหฝังดินไว้ 6 เดือน ถึง 1 ปี เพื่อให้เหล้ามีคุณภาพดี ส่วนหมูจะเตรียมเลี้ยงไว้ล่วงหน้าเป็นเวลา 1 ปี

พิธีเสนเรือน เริ่มตั้งแต่ในตอนเช้า โดยมีหมอเสนเป็นผู้ประกอบพิธีกรรมในห้องผีเรือน ผู้เข้าร่วมพิธี ได้แก่ ญาติที่อยู่ในสังหรือตระกูลเดียวกัน พิธีกรรมเริ่มจากเจ้าบ้านยกสำรับเครื่องเซ่นถวายผีเรือน จากนั้นหมอเสนจะเริ่มประกอบพิธีโดยกล่าวเชิญผีเรือนให้มารับเครื่องเซ่น โดยเรียกชื่อผีเรือนจากป้ายรายชื่อผีเรือน ให้มากินเครื่องเซ่นทีละคน ขณะที่เรียกชื่อผีเรือน หมอเสนจะใช้ไม้ทุ (ตะเกียบ) คีบอาหาร และเครื่องเซ่นป้อนให้ผีเรือนกิน โดยหย่อนลงทางช่องเล็ก ๆ ลงไปได้ถนัดบ้านแล้วหยอดน้ำตามลงไป จนกระทั่งเรียกชื่อผีเรือนครบทุกคน พิธีเช่น ให้ผีกินอาหารเช่นนี้จะทำ 2 ครั้ง คือ มื้อเช้าและกลางวัน หลังจากนั้นจะเสนเหล้าหลวง โดยใช้เหล้า 1 ขวด และกับแกล้มเป็นเครื่องเซ่น หมอเสนจะทำพิธีเรียกผีบรรพบุรุษมากินตามรายชื่อในป้ายผีเรือนจนครบทุกคนเป็นเสร็จพิธี

ขับมด¹¹

เป็นฮีตคลองในการรักษาโรคภัยไข้เจ็บของไทดำกล่าวคือ เมื่อมีคนเจ็บป่วยเรื้อรัง ในครอบครัว รักษาด้วยหมอยาพื้นเมืองแล้วไม่หาย สามีภรรยาหรือญาติของผู้ป่วยจะไปหาหมอเหยามาเสกเป่าเยียวยาแก้ไข ถ้ายังไม่หายก็จะไปเชิญหมอมดมาทำพิธีรักษา

หมอมดจะรักษาด้วยการขับมดและเสี่ยงทาย เพื่อให้ทราบสาเหตุของการเจ็บป่วย ถ้าหากถูกผีทำก็จะทำพิธีเลี้ยงผีแก้ไขอาการเจ็บป่วย เดิมการรักษาของหมอมดมีค่าคาย (ขึ้นครู) 2 ปี แต่ปัจจุบันใช้เงิน 1,000 กีบ เทียน 8 คู่ ไข่ 2 ฟอง กระเทียม 2 - 3 หัว ผ้าย 1 มัด เกลือ 1 ห่อ ข้าวสารใส่กะละมัง หวี และปอขม 1 อัน เพื่อถวายให้ผีมด¹² การรักษาเริ่มด้วยการให้ผู้ช่วยหมอมด 2 คน ช่วยกันเป่าปี หมอมดจะทำการขับมดเพื่อเชิญผีมดให้มาช่วยในการวินิจฉัยสาเหตุของการเจ็บป่วย โดยสุ่มถามผีมดว่าถูกผีอะไรทำ เช่น ถามว่าถูกผีเรือนทำไหม แล้วเสี่ยงทายหาคำตอบด้วยการสาดข้าวสารลงบนพื้น 3 ครั้ง ให้ได้จำนวนคู่ - คี่สลับกัน กล่าวคือ ถ้าครั้งแรกได้จำนวนคู่ ครั้งที่สองจะต้องได้จำนวนคี่ และครั้งที่สามได้จำนวนคู่ แสดงว่าผีเรือน ถ้าเสี่ยงทายไม่ได้จำนวนดังกล่าวก็จะเป่าปีขับมดต่อไปอีกจนจบคำขับมด แล้วเสี่ยงทายอีกเช่นนี้จนกระทั่งได้จำนวนคู่สลับคี่ตามที่ต้องการ ดังนั้นการขับมดจึงใช้เวลานานอาจใช้เวลาตั้งแต่ตอนบ่ายจนกระทั่งถึงกลางคืน เมื่อทราบถึงสาเหตุของการเจ็บป่วยว่าถูกผีอะไรทำหมอมดก็จะให้ญาติผู้ป่วยจัดเตรียมเหล้า อาหาร และสิ่งของสำหรับเซ่นเลี้ยง เพื่อให้เลิกทำร้ายแก่ผู้เจ็บป่วย

การรักษาของหมอมดไม่มีข้อห้ามในการรักษาร่วมกับแพทย์แผนปัจจุบัน แม้ว่าคนป่วยจะนอนอยู่โรงพยาบาล หมอมดทำพิธีรักษาที่บ้านคนป่วยไปด้วยก็ได้ ผู้ร่วมพิธีขับมด ได้แก่ ญาติพี่น้องใกล้ชิด เพื่อนบ้านใกล้เคียง รวมทั้งคนในหมู่บ้านจะมาร่วมโดยไม่ต้องบอกกล่าว¹³

ขับมด เป็นการรักษาทางด้านจิตใจ การเชิญหมอมดมารักษาแสดงว่าถูกผีรบกวนรบกวนทั้งมีญาติและเพื่อนบ้านมาเยี่ยมเยียนทำให้ผู้ป่วยมีขวัญและกำลังใจดีขึ้น ซึ่งอาจทำให้หายจากการเจ็บป่วย

การแต่งกาย

ธรรมเนียมการนุ่งถือของไทดำ ชายจะนุ่งกางเกงและเสื้อที่ทำมาจากผ้าฝ้ายทอมือ ย้อมด้วยหม้อมหรือนิลสีดำ แล้วคาดศีรษะด้วยผ้าโพกศีรษะเรียกว่าผ้าขันเฮี้ยว ยาวประมาณ 4 วา ตามปกติในชีวิตประจำวันจะนุ่งกางเกงขายาวถึงครึ่งหน้าแข้ง สวมเสื้อแขนกระบอก ผ่าหน้าอกติดกระดุม 10 - 12 เม็ด ทำด้วยโลหะหรือเงินเรียกว่า หมากแป้ม ส่วนหญิงนุ่งซิ่น ทอด้วยฝ้ายหรือไหม ทำเป็นแถบสลับสีดำ - ขาว เป็นลายตั้ง ต่อเชิงลายจกด้านล่างยาว ประมาณ 3 นิ้ว สวมเสื้อแขนสามส่วนทรงกระบอกสีดำหรือสีน้ำเงินเข้ม ผ่าอกตลอดติดกระดุม ทำด้วยโลหะหรือเงิน 10 - 12 เม็ด เก้ามมวยตั้งเหนือศีรษะเอียงไว้ด้านข้างเล็กน้อย ส่วนหญิงสาวจะตั้งเกล้ามวยผมค่อนไปด้านหลังเล็กน้อย ถอดปลายผมให้แผ่ออกพองาม อาจใช้ผ้า เปี้ยวคลุมศีรษะในขณะเดินทางเพื่อกันแดด การแต่งกายในโอกาสพิเศษ เช่น แต่งดอง และ งานรื่นเริงต่าง ๆ ชายจะนุ่งกางเกงขายาว สวมเสื้อฮั่นยาว ผ่าอก ยาวคลุมถึงสะโพก คอ เสื้อและแนวกระดุมประดับด้วยแถบผ้าไหมสีแดงหรือสีขาว ตัวเสื้อตกแต่งลวดลายให้สวยงาม ส่วนหญิงจะนุ่งซิ่นไหมลายตั้งสีดำ - ขาวสลับกัน ต่อเชิงลายจกด้านล่างด้วยผ้าไหมสีดำ สวมเสื้อฮั่นแบบคอกลม¹⁴

ลักษณะทางสังคมของไทดำ

ครอบครัวและเครือญาติ การจัดระบบทางสังคมของครอบครัวไทดำจะให้ความสำคัญกับเครือญาติฝ่ายสามี การสืบสกุลมีนัยทางสายพ่อ ส่วนการนับญาติจะนับเครือญาติที่มีความสัมพันธ์ทางสายโลหิต ได้แก่ พี่น้องลูกหลาน และเครือญาติจากการแต่งงานได้แก่สะใภ้ เพราะถือว่าเป็นสกุลเดียวกัน ซึ่งมีสิทธิ์เข้าร่วมประกอบพิธีเสนเรือนในห้องผีเรือน ส่วนเขยและญาติฝ่ายภรรยาจะไม่เข้าร่วมพิธีกรรมดังกล่าว โครงสร้างครอบครัวไทดำจึงถือว่าพ่อเป็นใหญ่ ดังนั้นจึงให้ความสำคัญกับผู้ชายมากกว่าผู้หญิง เมื่อแต่งงานแล้วภรรยาจะต้องเข้าร่วมนับถือผีบรรพบุรุษของสามี นอกจากนี้ในชีวิตประจำวันสามียังมีอำนาจในการตัดสินใจเกี่ยวกับเรื่องราวสำคัญของครอบครัว เช่น การจัดการมรดกและทรัพย์สินที่มีค่า ปกติเมื่อพ่อแม่ตายทรัพย์สินมรดก

จะตกเป็นของลูกชาย โดยเฉพาะลูกชายคนโตจะได้รับมรดกมากกว่าลูกคนอื่น ๆ เนื่องจากเป็นผู้เลี้ยงดูพ่อแม่ และอยู่ในฐานะเป็นผู้สืบสกุลสืบบรรพบุรุษ ส่วนลูกสาวเมื่อแต่งงานแล้วจะได้รับส่วนแบ่งทรัพย์สินให้บ้างตามฐานะของครอบครัว แต่จะไม่ได้มรดกที่เป็นบ้านและที่ดิน เพราะถือว่าจะต้องย้ายไปอยู่กินกับครอบครัวพ่อแม่ของสามี

ลักษณะของชุมชน โครงสร้างของชุมชนไทดำเป็นสังคมที่ยึดมั่นความสัมพันธ์ในระบบเครือญาติอย่างเหนียวแน่น โดยเฉพาะเครือญาติที่อยู่ในสกุลเดียวกัน บรรดาญาติจะช่วยเหลือกันในโอกาสต่างๆ อยู่เสมอ กลไกการควบคุมทางสังคมอาศัยความเชื่อเรื่องผี ได้แก่ ผีเรือน ผีบ้านและผีเมือง ในอดีตมีความสำคัญในการควบคุมพฤติกรรมของสมาชิกในสังคม รวมทั้งปกป้องคุ้มครองภัยอันตรายต่างๆ แก่ชุมชน ทั้งนี้เพราะสังคมไทดำไม่นับถือพุทธศาสนาจึงอาศัยจารีตประเพณีและความเชื่อเรื่องผีเป็นเครื่องมือควบคุมสังคม นับตั้งแต่การปฏิวัติเปลี่ยนแปลงปี 1975 เป็นต้นมารัฐบาล สปป.ลาวมีนโยบายลบล้างความเชื่อที่มลายาล้างล้าง การประกอบพิธีกรรมเกี่ยวกับผีบ้านและผีเมืองได้ลดความสำคัญลงจนทำให้ยกเลิกการเลี้ยงผีบ้านและผีเมืองไป ส่วนการเซ่นเรือนยังคงดำเนินการประกอบพิธีกรรมกันต่อไปเพื่อเป็นการแสดงความกตัญญูต่อผีบรรพบุรุษ นอกจากนี้ยังมีการทำพิธีเซ่นเหยาและขบมดตามความเชื่อดั้งเดิม เพื่อให้อยู่เย็นเป็นสุขแก่สังคม

ชนชั้นในสังคม ชนชั้นในสังคมไทดำแบ่งออกเป็น 2 กลุ่ม คือกลุ่มสิงด้าวและสิงผู้น้อย สิงด้าวกลุ่มที่สืบเชื้อสายมาจากชนชั้นผู้ปกครองสิบสองจุไทในอดีต ได้แก่ สิงล่อคำ ส่วนสิงผู้น้อยเป็นกลุ่มที่สืบเชื้อสายมาจากไพร่หรือสามัญชน เช่น สิงเลื่อง สิงวี สิงกวาง สิงลู่ เป็นต้น ความแตกต่างระหว่างชนชั้นจะสังเกตได้อย่างชัดเจนในการประกอบพิธีกรรม เช่น เซ่นเรือน พิธีศพ กล่าวคือสิงด้าวจะจัดการประกอบพิธีกรรมที่ใหญ่โตกว่า ในขณะที่กำลังทำพิธีเชิญผีบรรพบุรุษในการเซ่นเรือนของสิงด้าว จะห้ามสิงผู้น้อยเข้าไปอยู่ร่วมในบริเวณพิธี ส่วนพิธีศพของสิงท้าวก็จะจัดพิธีหรูหรากว่าสิงผู้น้อย แต่อย่างไรก็ตามการทำกิจกรรมต่างๆ ในชีวิตประจำวันจะไม่มี ความแตกต่างระหว่างชนชั้นและอาชีพ รวมทั้งไม่มีข้อห้ามในการแต่งงานระหว่างสิงด้าวกับสิงผู้น้อยแต่อย่างใด ในปัจจุบันไทดำมีฐานะทางสังคมเป็นพลเมืองเช่นเดียวกับคนลาวโดยทั่วไป บางคนที่มีส่วนร่วมในการปฏิวัติ จะได้รับแต่งตั้งให้ดำรงตำแหน่งสำคัญในท้องถิ่น เช่น เจ้าแขวง หลวงน้ำทาคนปัจจุบัน ก็เป็นคนไทดำ

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Tai Dam (Black Tai) in Lao P.D.R. (Important Rituals and Beliefs)

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Brief History (Overview)

Tai Dam or *Phu Tai Dam* is one of the old Tai ethnic groups that settled in Sip Song Ju Tai (or Sip Song Chao Tai) on the flood plains of the Dam and Daeng Rivers in Northern Vietnam. This is also the area of the Tai Daeng and Tai Khao. For instance, there are several valley settlements of Tai Dam, namely Muang Thaeng, Muang Khwai, Muang Tung, Muang Muay, Muang Laa, Muang Mo, Muang Wad, and Muang Sao. When the French colonized Vietnam they called the ethnic group occupying areas of the Dam River *Tai Dam* because of their black costumes which are colored from indigo dye (a kind of dye taken from the Hom tree). The two other Tai groups, *Tai Khao* and *Tai Daeng*, are distinguished by the color of cloth in their costumes. For instance we notice that the Tai Khao dress with white and the Tai Daeng are noted for their red dyes and fasten strips of red colored cloth to their homespun shirts.

In Laos the Tai Dam migrated from Muang Lai Chao and Muang Dien Bien Fu (Muang Thaeng) in Northern Vietnam and came to Muang Luang Nam Tha in 1895 A.D. because of inter ethnic tribal fighting. The villages that the new immigrants established included Ban Pung, Ban Thung Dee, Ban Thung Om, Ban Nam Ngaen, Ban Thung Jai Tai. Later, in the area of Sib Song Ju Tai, there was a period of fighting with the Chinese Haw who were in allegiance with the *Tai Ping Rebels*. The Tai Ping rebels fled southwards into Vietnam and took refuge in the area of Sib Song Ju Tai causing uneasiness among the indigenous Tai Dam people in this area. As a result of this annoyance another migration took place in 1896 among the people living in Muang Sa Kob and Muang Wa (presently Muang Lai Chao). They resettled at Ban Pung, Ban Na Lue, Ban Mai. When the population increased they scattered and spread in areas of the Luang Nam Tha flood plain including Ban Thung Jai Nua, Ban Thung Jai Tai, Ban Paa Puak, Ban Thung Dee Kao, Ban Thung De Mai, Ban Naa Noi, Ban Pae, Ban Mai, Ban Pung, Ban Pa Sak, Ban Don Lae, Ban Na Lue, Ban Nam Ngaen, Ban Thung Om, Ban Hua Khua, and Ban Thung Kang. During the *Dien Bien Fu War* (1953-1954), some of the Tai Dam fled from military service under the French and went to Ban Nam Ngaen (in Muang Luang Nam Tha) and Ban Nong Bua Kham (in Muang Singh). Presently, the largest number of Tai Dam occupying Laos reside in areas of Luang Nam Tha Province. In addition there are also some residing in Bo Keo Province, Udom Xai Province, Hau Phan Province, and other provinces in Northern Laos.



■ Tai Dam In Northern Lao PDR.

In Thailand, the Thais refer to the Tai Dam as **Lao Song**. The word Song might have originated from **suang** or **song** meaning trousers. Some Tai Dam were captives during the Thonburi Period when Siam's troops (1779) attacked Wieng Jan (Vien Thien) and rounded up captives who included Tai Dam in the Sip Song Ju Tai area of Vietnam. They were taken to Phetburi Province. Later during the reign of Rama I in 1792 and during the reign of Rama III in 1838 the Tai Dam were again forced to move from Laos and resettle in Rachaburi, Nakon Prathom, Suphanburi, Phichit, Phisanulok, Kanjanaburi, Lopburi, and Saraburi provinces.

The culture of the Tai Dam is unique from other Tai groups. They are different from other groups of Tai because they are not Buddhists and they have never been influenced by any other religion. The Black Tai are animists who believe in the spirits of forests, houses and their ancestors. Their ethnic identity can be seen in their spoken and written languages, their ways of earning a living, their customs, rituals, and ceremonies. However, it appears that their culture is undergoing change as the young are starting to wear Western clothes and strive for acceptance in the mainstream culture.

Some Important Traditions and Rituals of the Tai Dam in Laos

Because the Tai Dam are not Buddhists, they do not have any religious ceremonies. Instead, they have ceremonies based on their beliefs in nature and their way of life. This paper will share a few examples of some important traditions and rituals of the Tai Dam in Laos.

Traditions about Giving Birth³

When the Tai Dam woman gets pregnant she continues to work until the time she gives birth. By doing her domestic chores she feels that she is keeping healthy and it will be good for the baby. If she experiences any difficulty or unusual pain before giving birth, there will be a *sen pee ruan* ceremony called *wan khwan pee ruan* performed by *mor khwan* (calling of spirits doctor). A sacrifice of one chicken to the ancestral spirits (all those who died during the time of giving birth) while the *mor khwan* pleads with those spirits not to cause any harm to the expecting mother.

After the birth of the baby, the umbilical cord (*sai hae*) is cut with the bark of the bamboo leaving a remaining 2 inches which falls off later. The baby is placed in warm water and is washed. After washing it is placed in a bamboo *kradung* (bamboo tray) and brought to the mother for the baby's feeding. Concerning the mother, she will clean up the after birth and lay beside the fire place. She faces the front part of her body towards the fire so that she can begin the process of recovery. The high temperature is noted as a remedy to improve the blood flow and dry the body. This period in front of the fire is called *yuu kam fai* and she is called *mae kam duan*. She will take some of the smoke ash (*khamao*) and

consume it. Afterwards she spends about 1 month next to the fire recovering. She will take herbs, take warm baths and take it easy during this time.

After the first week, the remaining 2 inches of the umbilical cord falls off and the father places it inside the cut stem of a bamboo and hangs it up on a large tree in the *paa bang hae* (special area for keeping the village umbilical). The umbilical hangs above the heads of those walking on the ground.

After Giving Birth

After the child is born the mother will stay in front of the fire for 30 days. The first 3 days she stays at the fire place and this is called *yu kam fai*. She wears a piece of cloth around her waist with hot coals inside to keep her belly warm (*phaa hai fan tai fai*). She is careful about what she eats at this time, usually eating only sticky rice and salt. Relatives will stop by to see how she is doing throughout the three days. After three days she will go out and wash her hair, but not take a complete bath. When she returns to the house she will pay homage to the ancestral spirits of the house (*pee yaa fai*). She offers a chicken egg and places it where she had her baby. In addition she participates in the *suu khwan luuk* (calling of the child's power forces) *suu khwan nom* (calling of the mother's milk) *suu khwan thii norm* (calling of the power forces of the place where the baby sleeps). This is to help protect the new born child. Another offering is perform for the mother called *suu khwan mae*. An offering food tray is prepared with boiled chicken and local desserts. The *mor khwan* performs the ceremony for the benefit of the mother. The mother continues to rest by the fire place for a total period of 30 days.

During the 30 day period the mother doesn't eat large animal meat. (cow, buffalo, pig etc.) She eats fish and vegetables. After 20 days, her family kills a duck for another food offering to *peete thaa* (spirit). Afterwards the mother can eat more meat including duck, chicken, and pork. She still doesn't eat large animals and especial the meat of a white buffalo (taboo meat). If she did happen to eat this kind of meat she would die.

Child Rearing

Youth Traditions

Training: The parents have the responsibility for training their children. The father teaches his son the ways of farming, weaving baskets and fish traps. He learns about the farming equipment, plowing, planting and harvesting. While the father is busy teaching the son, the mother teaches her daughter about her household responsibilities. She learns about all the domestic chores that are required of a women. They include the complete process of cotton and silk weaving. She

become familiar with the different equipment used and learns about spinning and weaving cloth for use in the family.

Courting

Luak Khoo Khrong

When young people are old enough to court each other, the young girl will go with her friends to area called *long khuang pan fai* (an area where girls work to prepare cotton threads) located inside the courtyard not far from the house. This is usually done in the cool season in the evening. The young boys, along with his friends go out to visit the girls and entertain them with their flutes. They usually visit several places in one night. The young boy sings to his favorite girl in courting fashion called *khap Tai Dam*. The girls will respond in a sing-song way positively or negatively depending on how she feels about the boy. They do this late into the night. The boy who likes a certain girl will escort her back to her house and say good night. This process goes on for many nights. When they know that they are in love, the boy will talk with his parents. Relatives will have a discussion and decide on a spokesperson to represent the boy and ask to see if the girl's family accept him as a future son-in-law. This takes from 2-3 visits. Traditionally the family of the girl will refuse the first and second visit. The third visit is called *thaam khaad*. During this visit, which is the last, the response is sincere. If the response is yes, the boy's relatives prepare for the *kin dong noi* ceremony.

Permission for Marriage (dowry)

Kin Dong Noi:

When Tai Dam couples decide they want to get married, the relatives of the young man must prepare for the permission ceremony known as *pai song*. They prepare a food tray (*phaa khao*) as an offering to the girl's family. Four chickens are killed and divided into 4 parts. Other items are divided into 4 parts and include grilled fish, *nang haad* (a bark used in preparation of betel nut), betel nut vine, and 4 bottles of whiskey. These things are presented to the elders of the girl's family.

At this time the young man is invited to stay at the girl's house and is called *keray kwan*. He may stay for 2 months, or 1 year or 3 to 4 years. At this time he does not live there as man and wife, but as a guest for the period of engagement. Here the girl's family and the future son-in-law can get better acquainted. The young man sleeps inside the house in the area next to the stove. The rooms used by the rest of the family are areas which he may not enter. During this period the girl

still has the freedom to talk with other boys. When this happens the fiancée must be patient and ignore the suitors who visit her. ⁴ This teaches him tolerance, a good quality for the future son-in-law and husband.

Wedding Ceremony

Taeng Dong or Kin Dong Yai

Kin Dong Yai is a marriage ceremony for the Tai Dam ethnic group, that takes three days and is sometimes organized as both a *sen ruan* ritual and wedding ceremony. The first day, the groom will make a special sacrifice offering to *pee ruan* ancestral house spirits. The offering includes 1 slaughtered pig, 8 chickens, 8 sets of grilled fish, 8 bundles of *haad* bark, 8 wrappings of betel vine, 2 earthen jars of liquor and money in the amount of 5 *man* 2 *bee*. In addition one buffalo is slaughtered for the wedding guests.

On the second day, the bride goes to visit the groom's parents in the early morning. She prepares and brings with her some presents for the groom's parents such as *phaa pliew* (turban cloth for women), bed spread, silk wrap-around skirt, silk blouse, and shoulder bag. All of these things she made by herself. After presenting these presents, the groom's parents give her 5-10 *man* and some gifts depending on their status. Afterwards she visits other relatives of the groom, all through the day until evening when she returns to her home. That evening the bride and groom together eat a meal called *kin ngai hua*.

On the third day, the final day, the grand wedding ceremony takes place. Now that all the traditional obligations have been concluded between the two joining family, there is time for a large feast aimed at the working group who prepares the wedding. According to old Tai Dam tradition, the son-in-law must stay and work with the bride's family for 12 years. After this period, he has the right to return to his family and construct his own house near his parents. This tradition has changed from time to time. The period being adjusted from 12 to 8 and then to 4 years of service in the bride's household. If the son-in-law can not live up to this agreement and wants to return to his home earlier, he must pay a fee of 5 *man* per year and compensate the original *khaa nam nom* (dowry) of 5 *man* 2 *bee* along with 1 pig. For instance if he stays for 2 years and leaves early on a contract of 8 years, he must pay for 6 years. That means 30 *man*, 5 *man* 2 *bee*. Before leaving he is required to give a sacrifice offering to the house ancestor spirits including one pig. The parents of the house will give some departing gifts such as 1 female buffalo, 1 female pig, 1 hen, 1 brooding duck and some kitchen utensils including pots, plates, bowls and silverware, and bedding for her new home. Something very similar to house warming gifts. This all depends on the status and wealth of the family.

Unwed Mothers

Maan Thang: Women who have children out of wedlock are punished socially in Tai Dam society in what is referred to as *Maan Thang*. This is not acceptable behavior in Tai Dam society and so a fine is imposed by the village leader. The party is fined in the amount of *1 man* (about 6 U.S dollars) *5 bee* (10 bee equals 1 man) and this fee is called *ngern lang nam lang thaa*. After paying this fee the couple are permitted to live together. If for instance the man refuses to a partnership in marriage, he must pay an additional 3 *man*. In the case that the woman dies, the man will be asked to pay a *hiew saaw* fine that requires an offering of a slaughtered buffalo for the funeral. He is also responsible for organizing her funeral.

Husband and Wife Relationships

After the wedding, the man no longer goes looking for girls with his other friends and begins to adjust to married life. The new wife no longer goes out with her friends to the *khuang pan fai*. She does her domestic chores and tries to be a good wife to her husband. In the event one of the couple commits adultery, they are fined 60-120 *man*.

Concerning Death

If there is a death in the village, a gun is fired three times into the air to signal the villagers that someone has died. Work in the village is stopped and everyone prepares for the funeral. The corpse is washed by the relatives and later dressed in traditional Tai Dam clothing. White silk satin is sewed up into a shroud and the body is placed inside. It is then placed inside a casket with the face covered with a piece of face cloth called *phaa khum naa*.

If a child dies, it is not necessary to perform a funeral ceremony. The Tai Dam people bury the corpse immediately. If a teenager dies at night, then in the morning they will slaughter one pig or one buffalo and prepare it as a food offering for the dead person's spirit. This morning offering is called *hed ngai*. In the evening the corpse is taken to the burial ground (a wooded area outside the village called *paa hiew*). If an adult dies, the corpse is kept for 1-2 nights before it is buried. On the day of the burial 1 pig or 1 cattle is slaughtered and offered to the spirit of the dead. This food of sacrifice is called "*moo khao khum*". Three days afterwards the burial ceremony and offering to the spirit of the dead (called *hed hiew*) takes place. The *hiew apparatus* is constructed and placed at the grave site.

Sending the Soul of the Dead to Heaven

Bok Thang

Phithi Bok Thang is a ceremony to send the soul of the dead to heaven. It takes place at the house of the dead three days after the corpse has been buried. Preparation of the ritual paraphernalia includes the *hiew apparatus* (a structure with rectangular flags, some money (usually bank notes) utensils, tools of the trade, models of domesticated animals, bamboo food tray, (sticky rice, water etc.), basket of clothes with personal belongings and 1 bottle of liquor. When the appointed time is reached '*keray kok*' (person in charge of the funeral ceremony) invites the residential house spirit (*pee ruan*) to receive and consume the offerings. Afterwards he will read the sacred text for sending the soul to heaven, quoting the route from the dead person's home to Muang Lai and Muang Thaeng, the homeland of the Tai Dam in Northern Vietnam. Then the spirit (soul) is directed to go to the *Phraya Thaen* (gods of the Tai Dam) in heaven.

Hed Hiew Ritual

Hed Hiew Ritual is performed three days after the burial of the dead. This special ceremony is for sending the soul to heaven. The ritual apparatus used is called *hiew*.

Hiew

Hiew refers to the paraphernalia used in the Tai Dam funeral. A number of triangular and rectangular flags decorated with silk are attached to bamboo sticks and are positioned in a circle around the main pole called *sao luang* (about 3-4 meters from the ground). This is placed in the area in front of the grave. There are three different kinds of *hiew*.

Hiew Khruang Yai

This is the large apparatus containing 80 flags divided into 2 sets of 40 each. The sacrifice food includes 1 slaughtered cattle. This type of *hiew* is made especially for the ruling class (*Sing Law Kham* family of Sip Song Ju Tai) or other rulers belonging to the Tai Dam clan in Northern Vietnam.

Hiew Khruang Klang

This is the usual size apparatus of 40 flags. 1 cattle is sacrificed. This type is used for the common Tai Dam citizen. If a member of the upper class and common class happen to die together, then the upper class funeral must be performed first. It is believed that if the common class funeral occurs first, then the ruling class person will suffer and consequently his soul may not have the power for the long journey.

Hiew Khruang Lek

In this ceremony it is very simplified. There may only be one flag and a few things present. A pig is slaughtered. For instance, if they are real poor they may not be able to slaughter an animal, and instead offer some food to the spirit of the dead.

The traditional Tai Dam funeral is presided over by *keray kok*, the organizer of the ceremony. He makes sure everything is in order according to tradition. The *keray kok* is the eldest son-in-law of the deceased. In the case there is no eldest daughter then one of the other sons-in-laws will be asked to be the *keray kok*. If they have no daughters then they will ask a close relative to represent their family.

During the ceremony the participants must dress in special clothing. The daughter-in-law and son-in-law wear white. The *keray kok* wears a white turban throughout the whole time. The corpse is brought in procession from the house to the burial grounds with the *keray kok* leading the way. All the necessary offerings and paraphernalia are carried in the procession. The relatives prepare the food offering to the spirit of the dead. Before burning the corpse someone throws an egg to see if its a good place to dig the grave. If the egg breaks, then its a good sign and a grave is dug at that spot. If on the other hand the egg does not break, then another spot will be found.

Before the corpse is lowered into the grave, bunched up strings are made into a cord and wrapped around the breast over the heart. The body is placed into the grave and its buried with the cord coming out at the mound where a model house is place. The cord goes through the house where the dead person's belongings, and money called *ngern sien* are placed. From the house the cord is attached to the main pole (*sao luang*). This cord is the power line for sending the soul up into heaven.

At the very top of the main pole, there is a model of a horse (if the deceased was a man) or a small chair (if the deceased was a woman). An umbrella is placed over these models which are vehicles for transporting spirits up to heaven.

After the funeral ceremony is completed, all the people attending the ceremony must bath in the river before returning home. This is done to purify their

bodies. That evening, they perform the *suu khwan* ceremony which is presided over by *mor khwan* who is one of the relatives of the deceased. The others who attended the funeral will also come to get good luck from this ritual. In the morning the family of the dead will take food to the grave and leave it there. This is done every day for 3-7 days. After this period *keray kok* will visit the grave and ask spirit to return from heaven and invite it to stay in their house with the other ancestral spirits. The spirit is invited to stay in the end room inside the house. This room is called *kalahong* and it is believed that the ancestral spirits will protect the household. After 10 days offerings are given to the ancestral spirits of the house and continue every 10 days thereafter. This presentation of offerings over ten days is called *sen paad tong*. In addition to this, there is special offering given to the *pee ruan* after the harvest. Rice is offered to the spirits who will help to bring the household good luck.

Sen Ruan : Sacrifice, and Rituals of Ancestral Spirits of the House

Sen Ruan is a very important ritual among the Tai Dam group. The Tai Dam believe that every house has ancestral spirits (mother, father, grandparents, great grandparent etc.). Normally the *sen ruan* ritual (sacrifice, pay homage and appease the ancestral spirits) takes place among all Tai Dam families every 2-3 years. The size and grandness of the ceremony depends on the family's economic and social status. The *sen ruan* ritual is a celebration of gratefulness, goodness and kindness shown to the ancestral spirits. It is a very auspicious ritual performed so that the household is protected and the family lives in peace and happiness. The celebration includes a family party. The important person during the ceremony is called *mor sen*. Others who participate are the members of the family, and invited guests. If the members are government officials or belong to the upper class the celebration may include up to 300 guest. The relatives joining in the *sen ruan* are divided into two different types. The first kind are the blood relatives, and the second kind are relatives through marriage. The in-laws dress formally in special costumes for the occasion.

Before the ritual takes place preparations must be made for the sacrifice offering. These include 1 bottle of local liquor, 1 pig (pork, intestines, head, spine, hoofs, tail), food (local salad, bamboo soup, curry, vegetable soup, sticky rice, local desserts, boiled taro, sugarcane, fruit and water). Usually the liquor takes between 6 months to 1 year to ferment and the pig takes a year to raise.

The *sen ruan* ceremony begins in the morning. The *mor sen* performs the ceremony in the ancestral spirit room located in the farthest room in the house. The people who enter this room during the ceremony are all the family members who are related by blood. All the in-laws remain on the outside during the ceremony inside the room. At the start of the ritual, the head of the house lifts up the offering tray and pays respect to the ancestral spirits. After that, the *mor sen* begins the inviting of the spirits to take the offering. He calls off the names of all the

ancestors from the list of ancestors called *pab*. They are, one by one, invited to eat the offering. The *mor sen* uses chopsticks to lift up the food from the tray and gives it to each spirit to eat. The food and water is dropped down through a hole in the floor to the ground below. This ceremony is performed twice, in the morning and at noon. In the afternoon there is a ceremony called *sen lao luang*. During this time the ancestral spirits are invited to drink local liquor.

Khab Mod: Ritual Chanting to the Sick (Asking spirits about the illness)¹¹

This is a traditional medical treatment practiced by the Tai Dam group especially for ailments which are not immediately taken care of through medicines and other remedies. If this is the case the patient will go to *mor yao* (one who cast spells, and performs remedy chanting).

Mor mod will spend most of his effort chanting, questioning and making forecasts for as long as it takes so that he can find out what is causing the illness to the patient. If the problem can be easily determined, then a sacrifice will be made to the spirit causing the illness in the patient. If on the other hand the problem can not be determined, a more complex procedure must be tried. For example formally, the patient must pay honorary fee (*kha khai*) to the teacher spirit (*pee mod*) of the *mor mod* in the amount of 2 *bee* (French coins) equivalent to 1,000 keep (Lao currency), 8 pairs of candles, 2 chicken eggs, 2-3 pieces of garlic, 1 bundle of cotton, 1 package of salt, 1 bowl of husk rice, and 1 stand of hair. This is all offered in a ceremony in front of the patient at his house. Of course the *mor mod* will inform the *pee mod* shrine at his house about the ceremony.

After the sacrifice of the *pee mod*, two attendants of the *mor mod* play the local flute called *pee (pao pee)*. During the playing of the flute the *mor mod* will invite the teacher spirit (*pee mod*) to find out what is going on, and what is causing the illness in the patient. At this time husk rice is thrown to determine, and forecast odd or even numbers. Three forecasts are made and through the numbers the *mor mod* can determine the nature of the spirit, for instance, house spirits (*pee ruan*), forest spirits (*pee paa*), and others. If the numbers do not reveal the spirit name, they must continue to chant and throw the husk rice. The process may take many hours, going on from afternoon to late in the evening. When the cause of the illness is finally revealed, the relatives of the patient will prepare to offer a sacrifice to the spirits causing the illness. During this ritual the spirit is invited to leave and the health of the patient is restored.

Nowadays, the *mor mod* uses both traditional and modern method of treatment for their patients. Some patients receive treatment in the hospital while the *mor mod* may perform the ritual at home.

Tai Dam Dress (Traditional and Present Day)

The Tai Dam people have a unique identity in the way they dress. They like to wear black clothes which is the origin of their name. Traditionally, for everyday wear, the men wore homespun cotton which was dyed in indigo, baggy trousers like the Tai Yuan stretching down to the ankles, dark shirt with buttons (10-12 silver buttons called **maak paem**), and a cotton turban about 4 meters long. Traditionally women wore hand woven cotton or silk skirts with vertically stripes in alternating dark and white colors. The hem is beautifully decorated in traditional designs in an area of three inches. The female shirt has long sleeves in indigo with a red band at the wrists. The opening to the shirt has a wide red band from the neck to waist with silver clips as buttons along the mid section. Concerning the hair, especially for the women, it is made up in a bun that is slightly leaning to the right or the left. If the girl is young the hair is stylized in the front and in the back with a bun. The appearance seems to be more attractive. When departing from the house and moving around outside the women wear a turban called *phaa piew* (usually black). They have their long hair wrapped in a piece of black cloth, the same as their maternal ancestors did in ancient times. During special occasions and ceremonies, the men wear long trousers and long sleeve shirts with button down the front reaching to the thighs. The collar and the band down the front with silver buttons are usually in red or white silk. As for the women, they wear white and black tube skirts with the hem decorated in local patterns.

Nowadays the Tai Dam dress is influenced by the local Lao fabrics. We see men dressing in western style trousers and shirts and women wearing the traditional Lao decorated skirts.

Characteristics of Tai Dam Society

Family and Kinship

The husband is predominately the head of the household and therefore the family organization between family members is based on patriarchal relationships. The father ancestral spirit is the main spirit in the spirit realm and therefore is given the appropriate respect in ritual ceremonies. There are two main categories that family kinship are based on either by blood relations or through marriage. Through marriage only the daughter in law is permitted to attend the *sen ruan* ancestral spirit of the house ritual. Whereas the son-in-law and the wife's relatives are not permitted to attend the *sen ruan* ritual. Therefore the father is the important head of the household. The man has a higher position than the woman in the Tai Dam household. When they get married the wife will accept the ancestral spirit of the husband. Furthermore, in daily life the husband has the authority to make all important decisions concerning the family. For example, concerning the heritage of the family unit, things of value, The household property and valuables are passed down through the eldest son in accordance to age. Because the sons

must take care of the parents in their old age, they are therefore responsible for appeasing the ancestral spirits . The daughter who takes up residence in the husband's household therefore only receives small portions of the will such as utensils, and a few fowl or hogs. Women never inherit a house or land property.

Characteristics of Tai Dam Community

The Tai Dam community is based on kinship relations. This is especially true concerning the ancestral spirits. Relatives cooperate and help each other throughout the year depending on the situations that arise. The society is largely influenced by the different community spirits . For instance , the *pee ruan* (house spirit), *pee ban* (village spirit) and *pee muang* (city spirit). In former times , social behavior was directly influenced and controlled by the spirits and the way they were interpreted by members of the Tai Dam community. After the revolution of 1975 and change of government , the communists party abolished all animistic practices. This resulted in the stoppage of the *pee ban* and *pee muang* rituals. The *pee ruan* (*pee phor pee mae* , ancestral spirits) ritual however continued and usually tied the family unit together and therefore was not considered a threat to the government of Laos. In contrast, the other two rituals might cause revolt against the government. Other rituals which are still practiced as they have been in former times are *sen yao* (ritual of respect for witch doctors (*mor mod*) before giving treatments) and *khab mod*. These help to make living comfortable and pleasant for the Tai Dam.

Tai Dam Social Class

The Tai Dam social class can be divided into two groups. They are called the *Sing Thao* (ruling class, upper class) and *Sing Phu Noi* (general citizens, lower class). The *Sing Thao* are the ruling class who originally migrated from the area of Sip Song Ju Tai in Vietnam. For instance the family of *Sing Law Kham* found scattered throughout Northern Laos. *Sing Phu Noi* make up the common citizens of the Tai Dam communities in Laos, for instance, Sing Luang, Sing Wee, Sing Kwang, and Sing Luu. The differences between the two classes can be clearly seen in the degree of the various rituals and ceremonies . Naturally the ruling class performs their ritual in a grand and splendid way as compared with the general populace. For example the two largest ceremonies include the *sen ruan* (ritual for the house ancestral spirits), and the funeral ceremony. *Sen ruan* of the Tai Dam lower class gives less offerings than the upper class, perhaps a chicken or pig instead of cattle by the upper class. Funeral ceremonies are attended by many more people and the procedure is much more complex than the commoners. Even though there are two distinct classes , there are very little difference in day to day life. They marry together and work together as brothers and sisters. Presently the Tai Dam are citizens of Laos and are entitled to the rights of the Laotian government.

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การเคลื่อนย้ายถิ่นและความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ของกะเหรี่ยง หญิงและชายในภาคตะวันตกเฉียงเหนือของประเทศไทย

ฮายามิ โยโกะ

ศูนย์เอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ศึกษา มหาวิทยาลัยเกียวโต

บทความฉบับนี้ ได้มาจากการสำรวจเกี่ยวกับการเคลื่อนย้ายถิ่นของกะเหรี่ยง โดยกล่าวถึงความต่อเนื่องและการเปลี่ยนแปลงของการเคลื่อนย้ายถิ่นใน 2 ประเด็น คือ ประเด็นแรก มาตรฐานทางสังคมเกี่ยวกับการเคลื่อนย้ายถิ่น ซึ่งแบ่งแยกตามเพศและประเด็นที่สองความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ และเครือข่ายทางสังคมและภูมิภาคซึ่งครั้งหนึ่งเคยมีรูปแบบแตกต่างทางเพศ

การเริ่มปฏิบัติงานนั้นมีความประสงค์พื้นฐานสำหรับบทความนี้คือ สร้างข้อมูลขึ้นใหม่ซึ่งได้มาจากการสัมภาษณ์ชาวเขา ดังนั้นจึงมีความสัมพันธ์ (หรือแม้แต่เมื่ออ้างถึงการอพยพย้ายถิ่นเข้าเมือง) โดยตรงกับทัศนคติของชาวเขาด้วยการสัมภาษณ์ประชากรภายในเวลาอันจำกัด ข้าพเจ้าได้ดำเนินงานภาคสนามในหมู่บ้านกะเหรี่ยง Sgaw ในพื้นที่ด้านตะวันตกเฉียงเหนือของจังหวัดเชียงใหม่ ตั้งแต่ปี ค.ศ. 1987 ถึงปี ค.ศ. 1989 และในช่วงระยะเวลาสั้น ๆ ในปี ค.ศ. 1996 และ 1997 ซึ่งบางส่วนของเรื่องเนื่องถึงลักษณะพิเศษของหมู่บ้านส่วนกลางในงานภาคสนามของข้าพเจ้า ซึ่งมีหญิงสาวอพยพย้ายถิ่นเข้าเมืองยังปรากฏให้เห็น ข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับการย้ายถิ่นฐานลงมาจากภูเขาเพื่อเข้าเมืองยังมีน้อยมาก การเคลื่อนย้ายถิ่นอาจอ้างถึงการเคลื่อนไหวในหลายรูปแบบ จากจุดมุ่งหมายระยะทางและธรรมชาติของการเคลื่อนย้าย รวมทั้งพรมแดนที่ขวางกั้น หลังจากที่ข้าพเจ้าเริ่มสนใจจุดนี้ซึ่งเปลี่ยนแปลงความสัมพันธ์ไปสู่ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ ข้าพเจ้าได้รวมจุดมุ่งหมายทั้งหมดในการเคลื่อนย้ายถิ่น อาทิ การค้า แรงงาน ความพอใจ การศึกษาและการแต่งงาน ซึ่งเกี่ยวกับการพักผ่อนและการเดินทางในระยะเวลาสั้น ๆ และระยะเวลายาวนานของชาวกะเหรี่ยงท่ามกลางผู้คนที่ไม่ใช่กะเหรี่ยง

ดินแดน ประชากร การกำหนดทิศทาง ข้าพเจ้าได้เริ่มต้นโดยการทำแผนที่ของพื้นที่และประชากรตามแนวความคิดที่ได้คิดไว้ ว่าเป็นกะเหรี่ยงในหมู่บ้านทางด้านตะวันตกเฉียงเหนือของจังหวัดเชียงใหม่ แล้วมองในแง่มุมมองของภูมิรัฐศาสตร์ มองในด้านระยะทาง ทางภูมิศาสตร์และในแง่กลุ่มประชากรที่อยู่โดยรอบว่าถูกจัดกลุ่มอย่างไร ดินแดนและโลกตามความคิดของผู้คนในหมู่บ้านของพื้นที่ซึ่งจะทำการวิจัย ความแตกต่างตามอายุ ประสบการณ์ในการเดินทาง การศึกษาและเพศ การแบ่งแยกชาติพันธุ์ที่อยู่ล้อมรอบโดยพวกกะเหรี่ยงในบริเวณนี้ซึ่งไม่พ้องกับหลักวิชาการ ความแตกต่างทางภาษาแต่ตั้งอยู่บนความคล้ายคลึงกันในด้านประวัติศาสตร์ และความแตกต่างทางโครงสร้างของการปรับตัวทางนิเวศวิทยา และความสัมพันธ์ภายในด้วยการจัดระเบียบทางการเมืองสังคม มีระบบซึ่งทับซ้อนกันมากมาย เกี่ยวกับการแบ่งแยกทางพื้นที่และชาติพันธุ์นั้นก็คือ กลุ่มหนึ่งได้ให้คำจำกัดความ

พื้นฐานด้วยภาษาของตนเอง โดยใช้ประสบการณ์ในอดีต ของความสัมพันธ์ภายในภูมิภาค และอีกกลุ่มหนึ่งให้คำจำกัดความผ่านทางภาษาไทย โดยการอ้างอิงถึงความรู้และประสบการณ์ที่ได้รับผ่านทางกิจกรรมที่พวกเขาได้ทำในรัฐชาติไทยแบบใหม่

ความแตกต่างทางเพศในการเคลื่อนย้ายและมาตรฐานทางสังคมภายในภูเขา ต่อมาข้าพเจ้าได้วิเคราะห์มาตรฐานทางสังคมบางประเทศซึ่งถูกจัดอย่างแตกต่างกันระหว่างหญิงและชายในสังคมกะเหรี่ยง ผู้หญิงกะเหรี่ยงมีสถานภาพสำคัญและมีอิสระในครัวเรือนและชุมชน ทว่าการเคลื่อนย้ายของพวกเขาก็ถูกจำกัดเมื่อเปรียบเทียบกับผู้ชาย ผู้หญิงที่เดินทางร่อนเร่อย่างอิสระถูกพิจารณาว่าไม่น่าเชื่อถือทางศีลธรรม แต่ทั้ง ๆ ที่วางมาตรฐานไว้นั้น ผู้หญิงก็ไม่ถูกจำกัดชีวิตอยู่แต่ในหมู่บ้านแม้แต่ก่อนปัจจุบันซึ่งมีการเพิ่มขึ้นของการอพยพเคลื่อนย้าย สภาพทางเศรษฐกิจสังคมขณะนั้นทำให้ผู้คนเกิดความจำเป็นที่จะต้องเคลื่อนย้ายซึ่งเป็นหนทางที่ทำให้การเดินทางของผู้หญิงมีความเหมาะสม ยังมีคนที่กล้าทำผิดจากมาตรฐานโดยปราศจากความต้องการหรือตัวเลือก การกระทำเช่นนั้นนำไปสู่การติดต่อกันระหว่างชาติพันธุ์

การเคลื่อนย้ายจากอดีตสู่ปัจจุบัน ข้าพเจ้าจัดวางรูปแบบที่มีความแตกต่างกันระหว่างการเคลื่อนย้ายเหล่านั้นและได้สัมภาษณ์ในเรื่องที่ทำการศึกษา ซึ่งสามารถแบ่งขั้นตอนที่ทับซ้อนกันดังนี้

1. ช่วงเวลาทศวรรษที่ 60 ลักษณะของการเคลื่อนย้ายนั้นเพื่อการค้าเล็ก ๆ น้อย ๆ หรือการหาสิ่งจำเป็นในชีวิตประจำวัน

(1) การเดินทางระยะไกลเพื่อหาเกลือซึ่งส่วนใหญ่เป็นพวกผู้ชาย แต่บางครั้งจะมีผู้หญิงร่วมเดินทางด้วย ในระหว่างทศวรรษที่ 40 และ 50

(2) การเดินทางใกล้ ๆ กับหมู่บ้านภาคเหนือของไทย บางครั้งจะเดินทางเฉพาะผู้หญิง ตั้งแต่ทศวรรษที่ 50

2. ในช่วงทศวรรษที่ 70 ถึง 90 การเคลื่อนย้ายเพื่อขายแรงงานในภูมิภาค จุดมุ่งหมายของการเดินทางไปยังหมู่บ้านทางภาคเหนือของไทย ส่วนใหญ่เพื่อการขายแรงงานและความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างสองบริเวณถูกกระชับแน่นขึ้น ในขณะที่ความแตกต่างทางเศรษฐกิจกลายเป็นสิ่งที่เห็นได้ชัดเพิ่มขึ้นทุกที

...ระหว่างช่วงเวลานี้ ผู้ชายที่ชอบการเสี่ยงหรือการเผชิญโชค ได้เดินทางไกลออกไป ทั้งเพื่อการค้าและแรงงาน...

3. โอกาสสำหรับการศึกษาเพิ่มขึ้น วัยรุ่นจำนวนมากจากพื้นที่ทั้งหญิงและชายเริ่มได้รับการศึกษาในระดับประถมศึกษา แต่ไม่มีเหตุผลที่จะอนุญาตให้ลูกสาวร่ำเรียนต่อจากชั้นประถมศึกษาไปมากขึ้นกว่าโรงเรียนที่อยู่ในพื้นที่หรืออยู่ในเครือข่ายของศาสนา

(1) การห้ามปรามหญิงสาวที่เคลื่อนย้ายเข้าสู่เมืองและการเพิ่มจำนวนนักเรียนหญิงในเมืองที่มากขึ้นทั้ง ๆ ที่มีการห้ามปราม

(2) การเดินทางด้วยความพอใจเพิ่มขึ้นด้วย

(3) การต่อเนื่องในการเดินทางในภูมิภาคเพื่อแรงงานและความพอใจในสภาพเศรษฐกิจเป็นรูปแบบของการเคลื่อนย้าย

การเคลื่อนย้ายของผู้หญิงมี 2 แนวทาง และเกี่ยวกับการแต่งงานระหว่างกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ในหมู่บ้านในปัจจุบัน ประเภทแรกเป็นพวกที่ยากจนมีการศึกษาน้อยหรือไม่มีการศึกษาเดินทางออกไปขายแรงงาน ซึ่งก็คือการแพร่กระจายด้านเศรษฐกิจ ส่วนอีกทางหนึ่งคือชาวบ้านที่แสวงหาโอกาสที่ดีกว่าจากการศึกษา ซึ่งสามารถเห็นได้ทั่วไปในชนบทไทย การเคลื่อนไหวดังกล่าวจะเห็นได้ว่าเกิดจากเศรษฐกิจและหาโอกาสทางสังคม ทำให้สังคมไทยขยายตัวขึ้นในกลุ่มกะเหรี่ยงและกลุ่มอื่น

บทสรุป

(1) มีแนวโน้มของการเปลี่ยนแปลงจากการค้าแรงงานในระดับภูมิภาค และการอพยพย้ายถิ่นเข้ามาในเมืองโดยกลุ่มวัยรุ่นทั้งเพื่อการศึกษาและแรงงาน

(2) มาตรฐานการควบคุมการย้ายถิ่นของผู้หญิงไม่เพียงแต่จะมีผลกระทบต่อความคิดของกะเหรี่ยงเกี่ยวกับความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ แต่ยังมีผลกระทบที่ก่อให้เกิดเป็นรูปร่างยิ่งกว่านั้น ขณะที่มีความต่อเนื่องของมาตรฐานทางสังคม ผู้หญิงได้ท้าทายและแหวกมาตรฐานทางสังคม ดังนั้นความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์จึงเกิดคำจำกัดความใหม่

(3) การเคลื่อนย้ายถิ่นและความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างชนชาติมี 2 มิติ คือภูมิภาคด้านหนึ่งและอีกด้านหนึ่งคือการมุ่งเข้าสู่ศูนย์กลาง (ไทย) มากขึ้น ขณะที่คนในหมู่บ้านจำนวนหนึ่งได้ถูกทำให้มีส่วนเกี่ยวพันกันทั้ง 2 มิติ จึงเหมือนกับว่า เกิดการแตกแยกที่ปรากฏออกมาตามแนวทางความแตกต่างทางเศรษฐกิจ

Mobility and Interethnic Relationships among Karen Women and Men in Northwest Thailand: Past and Present*

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Introduction

The influx of young people from the hills into the northern towns and cities of Thailand seeking both education and labor opportunities has become pronounced in the past decade. Increasing pressure on land, the need for cash, and availability of primary and secondary education in the hills as well as demand for higher or better education are some of the more obvious factors. Mobility is therefore an unavoidable issue in understanding the hill population today. Yet, among the hill dwelling groups officially called “*chaw khaw* (hill tribes)”, mobility has been a constant part of their lives, be it migration due to shifting cultivation, migration to flee from battlefields or oppressive regimes, or travel for trade and other purposes. What is new is the circulatory movement seeking labor or educational opportunities to urban settings, by increasingly young people, including women. While the scale, direction, means and purposes of migration have definitely changed, the norms regarding such mobility and the paths to breach such norms demonstrate some continuity.

In order to understand the changes taking place among the hill population in both the regional as well as the wider contexts, the continuities and changes in their mobility pattern is one of the key factors. Against the background of the ethnic mosaic of this region, changes in mobility entail some reassessment and restructuring of ethnic relations, both on the local regional level as well as on the level of national policy. Understanding the scale, direction, and form of migration is crucial in formulating the regional social network and how the hill-dwellers envision their own living sphere in relation to outlying areas and peoples.

Past studies that mention mobility among the Karen rarely mention women’s mobility, and where it is mentioned, it is usually referred to as a rare phenomenon.¹ To be sure, unlike the Hmong or Akha², whose women have long been seen in Chiang Mai markets and tourist spots, Karen women have kept a very low profile outside their own villages. The increasing number of young Karen women in the city today is thus a notable change. As I shall discuss below, there are social norms that restrict women’s movement in the hill Karen villages, so that women have been far less mobile than men. Yet it is not as if their lives have been completely confined to

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¹ For example, Iijima mentions Karen women from the plains villages around Mae Sariang making trips to the market, and comments that this is “unusual for Karen women”. (Iijima 1971:115).

² Vatikiotis (1984) explains the early presence of Akha women in Chiang Mai city as arising from the social conditions in the hills across the borders: those who migrated into Thailand found it difficult to settle in the hills. For women, especially, it was a choice between complying with undesirable marriages or moving to the cities.

their natal villages. There were ways to travel without breaching the norm, and there were those who risked such breach out of necessity or choice, whose action in turn challenged and reformulated the norms and social relations.

This paper comes out of my on-going research concerning Karen mobility. It addresses the continuities and changes in Karen mobility with two points of focus: firstly, norms pertaining to mobility which are differentiated according to gender; and secondly, the interethnic relationship and social and regional network which at once shape and are redefined by such mobility differentiated by gender.³ As a beginning exercise, the primary purpose of this paper is to reconstruct data based on interviews in the hills, and thus it deals mainly with views from the hills within the timeframe of the interviewed people. Mobility can refer to a wide variety of movements, according to purpose, distance, nature of movement and boundaries crossed. Since I am primarily interested here in mobility in relationship to inter-ethnic relationship, I include all purposes of mobility such as trade, labor, pleasure, education and marriage, that involve short-term as well as long-term trips and sojourn by Karen among non-Karen peoples.⁴

Land, People and Orientation

I begin by mapping out the surrounding land and the peoples as conceptualized by Karen in the villages of northwestern Chiang Mai Province: how the surrounding geo-political space is envisioned; how geographical distances are conceptualized; and how the surrounding peoples are categorized. The region and world as according to the villagers in the research area vary by age, travel experience, education, and gender.

Among villagers above the age of fifty, the awareness and sense of distance towards Burma across the border to the west is far closer than towards Bangkok to the south. The original settlers of the village⁵ early in the century were migrants from Burma. Several men in the study village had some experience with logging companies on both sides of the border, in Shan areas in Mae Hongson and westwards, or in areas adjacent to Mae Sariang. However, it was not until the 1960s that the border began to affect their mobility. As one man who worked on the Burma side in the 50s claimed "In those days, there was no border. You never knew if you were here or there (in Burma or in Thailand). Now if we travel by the main route, we have to go past the

³ I have been conducting fieldwork among Sgaw Karen in northwestern Chiang Mai Province for a decade: from 1987 to 1989, and for short periods in 1996 and 1997. While I have come across data on Karen mobility in my research since the beginning, since 1997 I began to collect data on this issue in a more organized fashion. Partly due to the characteristic of the central village of my fieldwork, where urban migration by young women is still in its emergent stage, data on the recent urban migrants from the hills is still scant. On the urban side, I have also started conducting interviews in Chiang Mai since 1997. This paper is therefore a part of an ongoing research.

⁴ Migration due to shifting cultivation in the hills will not be included here. At least within this century, Karen in northern Thailand have not migrated great distances for shifting cultivation. Rotational swiddens at times necessitate moving the village site, but primarily within a defined territory. The Karen in the study village too have not moved as a group since they settled in the present river basin early in this century.

⁵ By "village", I refer to the community which is recognized as the largest and most basic sociopolitical unit by the Karen, and corresponds to the administrative "*muu thii*". At the time of the initial fieldwork in 1987, the village consisted of 43 households.

MYANMAR

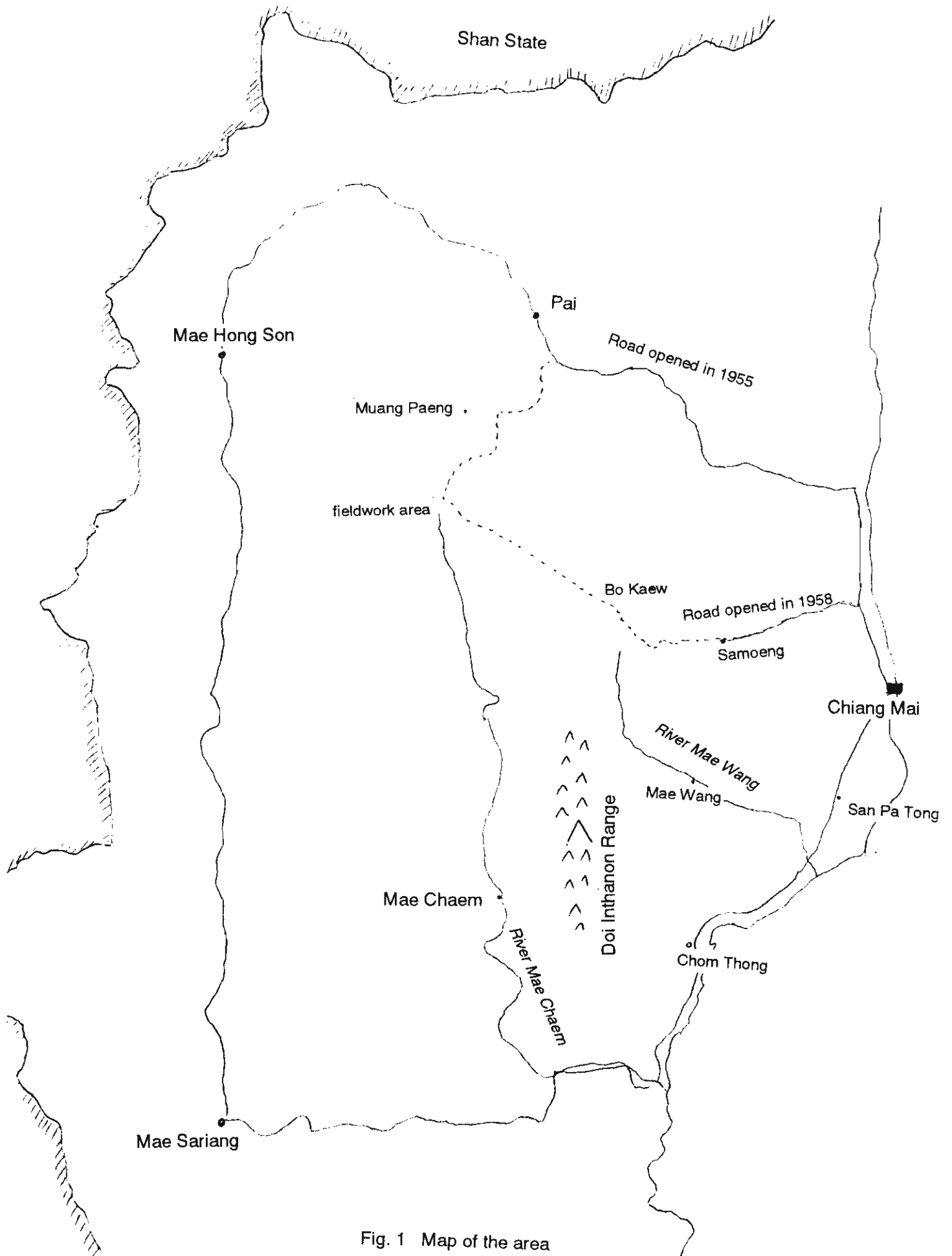


Fig. 1 Map of the area

border post, and to do that we need to take our identification cards.”⁶ Rather than discourage cross-border mobility, in some ways this clear demarcation of the border has increased movements from both sides, not only for refugees and traders from Burma. The Karen from Thailand including villagers from the study area also have reason to cross over to the other side. For example, more logging operations take place on the Burma side.⁷

The geographical conceptualization of villagers is based on the flow of rivers and streams, and the mountains that shape this flow. Villagers recognize as a geographical area, the cluster of villages interspersed in the rolling hills that constitute the headwaters of Mae Chaem, the tributary of the Ping River. Most of the villages are Karen who call the area ‘Musikee’. The closest area to the north with non-Karen elements, both geographically and psychologically, is the cluster of Northern Thai and Karen villages of Muang Paeng 12 kilometers north in the district of Pai. Beyond that, the township of Pai has today become the educational as well as medical center. Many villagers have crossed the border into Burma to the northwest, and the mainly Shan area on the other side. The path eastwards to Chiang Mai and the Karen and Hmong villages along the route such as Bo Kaew has also been well-traveled in decades of trade to the San Pa Tong area, although visits to Chiang Mai city itself became frequent only after Musikee was connected by road to Chiang Mai in the late 1970s. To the south, on the other side of the tall mountains of Doi Inthanon is the district office and a predominantly Karen and Northern Thai area, and to the west of that is the heavily Karen area of Mae Sariang, another entering point for Burma.

What I have mapped out so far is the region familiar to the Karen in this area, a region for which most adult villagers have a well-grounded sense of direction and distance (referred to in terms of how many hours or days of travel), and which they speak of with some familiarity. Other parts of northern Thailand such as Chiang Rai and Mae Sot which are also Karen areas, or Nan which is unfamiliar terrain for most Karen, are less traveled. Beyond this map, while most villagers are aware of the general direction of Bangkok, ventures as far as Bangkok have been undertaken only very recently by a few. For those without formal education, there is little sense

⁶ The national boundary in this part of Northern Thailand had already been set by 1894. However, it did not take effect on the free movement of the hill-dwellers in the area until around the 1960s.

⁷ Another forest-product that has become difficult to collect since the logging ban in Thailand is the bark of the *kor* (oak or chestnut) trees (see also Shalardchai and Virada 1992:31-3). Until the mid 1980s, this bark-scraping was extremely lucrative clandestine business in the study area; an experienced and strenuous scraper could earn from sixty to a hundred baht a day. After the ban became strictly enforced, villagers, both men and women began to go in truck-loads to the Burma side to collect the same product, staying in the forest for several days, and selling the bark on the spot to Northern Thai middlemen by the truckloads. In education also, some Christian villagers opted to study bible in Karen bible schools across the border, where tuition is much lower (500 baht per year) than the Thai side (2,500 baht). Two young girls from the study area had crossed the border from Mae Sot. However, as the fighting neared the school site, the school had to be moved to Mae Sot on the Thai side, and the tuition soared.

of relative distance, for example, from their village to Bangkok or Japan, or to the U.S., all of which seem to be far out of reach for most villagers. Other less traveled areas of Thailand, such as Isan, might be lumped together with Bangkok and further south.⁸

It was in 1978 that a government primary school was founded within the administrative village so that the earliest graduates of primary school education are today in their twenties. These primary school graduates are fluent in Thai, and when asked to explain the position of their village, it was by referring to the administrative divisions and the positioning vis-à-vis Chiang Mai, or by drawing a simple map that placed their village in relation to the national borders and the major cities, mainly Chiang Mai and Bangkok.

I now turn to the ethnic categorizations of surrounding peoples by the Karen in this area (Tab.1). “Karen” is an anglicized appellation for people who speak the Karenic languages, deriving from the Burmese term *Kayin*, while the Thai *Kariang* is said to derive from Mon. In Northern Thai, *Yang* has been more popularly used. None of these terms has been used by the “Karen” themselves. Each Karenic subgroup language has its own term, which does not necessarily coincide with those whom scholarly outsiders recognize as Karenic speakers. The Sgaw Karen use the term *pga k’nyau* (which also means “human being”) and who they recognize as *pga k’nyau* seems to vary regionally. Informants in my fieldwork area, for example, spoke of *pga k’nyau chgau* (Sgaw Karen) and *pga k’nyau pggho* (Pwo Karen), and agreed that the *bghe* (Bgwe), *tosu* (Tongsu) and *b’tau* (Padaung) were also kinds of *pga k’nyau*. Most villagers also counted the *k’wa* (Lawa) and the *kh’mu* (Khamu), both Mon-Khmer speakers, among the *pga k’nyau*. Notwithstanding the academic differentiation of linguistic groupings, perhaps the parallel between ecological adaptation and historical similarity in their historical and structural relationship within the socio-political order renders them members of the same category from their point of view.

According to legend, the Karen often speak of brothers, which include the Karen, the neighboring Tai- speakers as well as the Burmese (*bu yau*), the white foreigner (*go la wa*) and the black foreigner (*go la su*, which until recently was used for those from India). Among the neighboring Tai-speakers, informants in the fieldwork area called the Northern Thai (*khon muang*) *yau* or *zau*, and the Shan (Thai *yai*) *nyau*, both of whom in turn called the Karen *yang*. As a category, these Tai-speakers and the Burmese are the lowlanders with whom the Karen in this region have held structurally similar regional relationships. Not usually mentioned in the legends are the central Thai (*jau tae*), and a group designated as *khae*. *Khae* includes *khae* (ethnic Chinese in the area, who are mostly Haw. They sometimes appear in the legends although not as brothers but as strangers), *khae meo* (Hmong), *khae ikaw* (Akha), *khae liso*

⁸ In the Karen vocabulary, there is east (*mu hae thau*, where the sun comes from and rises) and west (*mu lau nuu* where the sun falls and enters), and west is often the favored direction: the direction from which their ancestors came. However, there are no words corresponding to north and south. The only other pair depicting direction is a pair of terms relative to specific locale: *thi khi* (source of water, upstream) and *thi ta* (end of water, downstream).

(Lisu), and *khæ muso* (Lahu). All of these people, they recognize as being of the same general type. Beyond that, the extent of recognition and knowledge of other Karenic as well as neighboring non-Karenic speakers varied by experience and mobility. Invariably, men tended to have wider knowledge than women, due presumably to their wider sphere of mobility.

Tab. 1: Classification of surrounding peoples by Karen in fieldwork area

Pga k'nyau:

<i>Pga k'nyau chgau</i> (Sgaw)	Kariang
<i>Pga k'nyau pgo</i> (Pwo)	"
<i>Bghe</i> (Bgwe)	"
<i>Tosu</i> (Tongsu)	"
<i>B'tau</i> (Padaung)	
<i>K'wa</i> (Lawa)	Lawa
<i>Kh'mu</i> (Khamu)	Khamu

Figures appearing in the legends:

<i>Yau/ zau</i>	Khon muang
<i>Nyau</i>	Thai yai
<i>Buyau</i>	Phamaa
<i>(Khæ)</i>	Ciin Haw
<i>Gola wa</i>	Farang (white foreigner)
<i>(Gola su)</i>	Farang (black foreigner, referring to people from India)

Strangers:

<i>Jau tae</i>	Khon thai
<i>Khæ Khæ meo</i>	Hmong (meo)
<i>Khæ ikaw</i>	Akha (ikaw)
<i>Khæ liso</i>	Lisu
<i>Khæ muso</i>	Lahu (Musso)

In the official appellation of the groups among those designated as *chaw khaw* by the Thai administration today, the Thai term *Kariang* is used, and this is the most widely used term today in Thailand. Recently, there is a new trend. With the increasing attention towards Karen subsistence patterns in relation to forest conservation and community forest movement, intellectuals, NGOs and concerned citizens have come to prefer the Sgaw Karen term *pga k'nyau* in place of *Kariang*.

These overlapping but different terms can be applied interchangeably by the same users for the same persons, depending on context. From the Karen point of view, *yau* and *jau tae* can be applied to the same person according to the function and capacity in which the person relates to him/her. A person in official position is more likely to be called by the distant term *jau tae*, whereas a person who speaks Northern Thai, and comes to associate with the Karen in a more familiar capacity such as traders and/or neighbors are more likely to be called *yau*. For example, a man from Isan married to one of the villagers is referred to as *yau*. Thus *yau* is applied to closeby and familiar lowlanders, *khæ* is a different category altogether, and *jau tae* are far off

strangers. Young people today who have received Thai education tend to shift usage according to the language they are using. Thus, they use *yau* in referring in Karen to Thai peoples in their immediate surrounding, while in Thai, they might refer to themselves as *khon Thai* a category whose equivalent in Karen have signified distant strangers.

Thus there are overlapping systems of spatial and ethnic categorization, which the villagers may use interchangeably according to the situation.

Gendered Differentiation of Mobility and Social Norms in the Hills

Now I introduce some of the social norms that differentially restrict mobility for women and men in hill Karen society. The Karen term for traveling varies according to purpose. When a villager travels it is either to work ("*lae ta*"), to study ("*lae ma lo ta*"), to trade ("*lae cha ta bwae ta*") or simply without specific purpose but to enjoy ("*ha*", meaning to walk, or to emphasize the purposelessness, "*ha lo lo*"). Village women often complain that men would "*ha*", while women stay put in their villages. Women who wander out of the village without specific purpose may often be referred to with some derogatory tone "*a ha na jau*" (she wanders badly).

Even as women complain about men who wander, it is, to some extent expected male behavior. Karen women enjoy considerable status and autonomy in the household and community. Their marriages are stable, and the division of labor in the household is, at least in theory, not so clearly demarcated. Yet the actual behavior especially in mobility, differ along gender lines. Young unmarried men do not have any place to sleep in their parental houses. They roam both within and outside the village, often with friends, but sometimes alone. Since post-marital residence is matrilineal, men form networks of acquaintances through such wanderings, which could include their future brides and in-laws. While mobility itself may not bring respect, the social network, experience and knowledge that may be gained through distant travels may earn his status.

Women, on the other hand, most likely will remain in their villages among their kin after marriage. Until the recent increase in educational opportunities for both women and men, women's daily life and associates did not differ greatly before and after marriage, and their life was to a large extent defined within the village sphere. As soon as they are old enough, they help their mothers around the house. A woman should not walk in the forest alone. The reason given for this is that women are weaker, and therefore much more vulnerable to the spirits and animals of the wild forest. The evil spirit of the forest include "Northern Thai men". Women who roam freely out of the village are endangering themselves to the sexual advances from Northern Thai men. The only women who walk in the forest without such dangers are old women well past reproductive age. A woman who walks alone outside the village is said to "*ha na jau*" (wander badly). Both men and women consider the Northern Thai men to be morally untrustworthy. Women, especially those without sufficient knowledge of Northern Thai language, were afraid to face, speak to, or walk among the Northern Thai. Even as they stay within village bounds, a similar norm surrounds their association with non-Karen men. When Thai officials, army personnel, police, or any other non-Karen stranger enters the village, women stay out of their way. Even those younger women who have graduated from primary school and therefore have

good knowledge of Thai will usually feign incompetence and avoid speaking to these men. With Northern Thai traders, women are less fearful but still stay reticent in their presence. A woman who speaks casually to non-Karen strangers will taint her own reputation as being too eager to speak to these strangers. Thus, both in terms of space and communication, the norms governing women's mobility are far more restricting than men's.

Karen often compare their own stable marriages with those of the Northern Thais', which they consider to be extremely unstable. While a Karen man's relationship with a Northern Thai woman could be considered a temporary and youthful adventure, a young Karen girl's relationship with a Northern Thai man is considered hazardous. As one Karen youth claimed, "no Karen man will marry a girl once taken by a *yau*."

Yet, in spite of such norms, women have not been confined to village life, not even before the present day increase in mobility. Socioeconomic conditions at times would necessitate people's movements, and there were proper ways for women to travel. There were also those who dared breach the norms, out of need or choice, and such action could be rationalized, and ultimately bring change to the interethnic contact. I now draw out the changing patterns of mobility in the study area which can be divided approximately into three overlapping phases: first, the period up to the 60s when mobility was mainly for petty trade or procuring daily needs; second, the period up to the 80s after completion of roads when mobility became primarily for regional labor; and third, the recent trends that include mobility for education, and urban migration.

Period 1: Trips for Petty Trade

By the latter half of the nineteenth century, most Sgaw and Pwo Karen in Northern Thailand had accepted rule by the Tai polities, and the majority had settled in relatively stable villages enjoying economic stability. While they were mostly self-sufficient in daily needs, items such as jewelry, silverware, lacquer ware were acquired through itinerant traders (Haw, Tongsu and others), who were involved in entrepot trade in the hills. Karen closer to lowland towns frequented the markets. They traded for salt, or paid tribute in kind with herbal medicine, cotton and in some areas, silk or iron to the lowland Tais. Karen in the latter half of the nineteenth century were self-sufficient and economically stable, so that they rarely went as hired labor for other ethnic groups. After the national administrative reform and integration, and especially after the 1920s, under Bangkok's policy of benign neglect, many Karen retreated into the hills, out of contact with the formerly ruling northern royalty, and with increasing population pressure on land in the hills, became economically hard-pressed. They sold their household treasures such as bronze drums, silverware, and elephants etc., and began to work as hired laborers in tin mines, miang plantations, and teak logging operations (Renard 1980).

A similar shift in mobility pattern from trade to labor thus described by Renard has continued throughout the twentieth century among the Karen in northern Thailand including the study villages. However, the petty trading that took place at least since the 1940s to the 70s was primarily for basic daily needs rather than for luxury items, and increasingly for rice itself, since

many of them were no longer self-sufficient by the 70s.⁹ Among elders, the memory of travel up to the 1950s is primarily associated with trading for salt, whether towards San Pa Tong via Karen villages in the Bo Kaew area in Samoeng, southwest via Chom Thong towards Mae Sariang, or to the north in the Karen and Northern Thai villages south of Pai. While such travel for procuring basic needs was usually done by men, most women told of at least one or two expeditions before marriage during the 40s and 50s, in which they participated in a large expedition. For the young girls, such trips had an element of pleasure, and became memorable occasions in maidenhood. One such expedition late in the dry season in the 1940s narrated by a woman in her seventies, consisted of ten to twenty men and younger women. They went to Mae Wang near San Pa Tong, a four day trip on foot. All members carried rice to cook on the journey, and they slept in the forest together or in Karen villages. Women carried woven bamboo mats on the way, while men carried animal hide and other forest products, and carried back salt, cotton, tobacco, chili peppers and clothes. Of the twelve women I interviewed above the age of sixty, eight had experienced similar trips, while none below fifty had. Most such trips seem to have taken place in the 1940s and 50s.

Less distant travel for petty trade were undertaken by a group of women sometimes in the company of male relatives, although some women went in groups of only women. These were mostly to the Northern Thai and Karen villages in the Muang Paeng area to the north, which could be reached by a day trip. The road from Chiang Mai to Bo Kaew (a day or two days walk from the study area) opened in 1958, so that the trips for procuring salt to San Pa Tong were no longer necessary. The road from Chiang Mai to Pai opened in 1955, and the movement by villagers in the area became northwards oriented, since the road to Muang Paeng was closer and easier to travel. It seems that it was since the 1950s that women began to frequent the Muang Paeng area. The items of petty trade were tobacco, bamboo products, forest products (beeswax, acorns etc.), and small crabs, which were traded for garlic, maize, cotton, beans, tobacco, and rice in the pre-harvest season. Such trips on foot for trading and procuring rice continued until the late 1970s.

In some areas, it has been reported that hill Karen formed ties with influential lowland entrepreneurs, who helped them in trade, providing shelter and sometimes extending credit. Karen in the Chom Thong area in 1960, 50% of Sgaw Karen families in the area had *sahais* (informal alliance with a family of another ethnic group, namely Northern Thai, that may extend over three or more generations) (Marlowe 1979:185-6). The lowlander provided food, shelter and hospitality for Karen coming down to market or to temple events, and Karen provided lowlanders with hospitality when they visit the hills. At times of need, the Karen depended on *sahai*, borrowing rice. The relationship sometimes became basis for intermarriage. While this relationship between Karen and Northern Thai was reported from Chom Thong and Samoeng, it seems to have been absent in western Mae Chaem and Mae Sariang. In the Mae Sariang area,

⁹ The villages in the area were settled by Karen in the early decades of this century by Karen from various areas. (In the case of the study village and its surrounding satellite villages, southwest of Doi Inthanon.) who came seeking land for paddy rice cultivation. The area was unoccupied when they arrived, although there are relics which the Karen attribute to previous Lawa existence.

there was trade between Karen and Lua villages, or between Karen and Northern Thai traders in town both with fixed partnership, but not *sahai* (Kunstadter 1979:143, 150).

From my own study area in Western Mae Chaem, which is on the other side of the Doi Inthanon ranges from Chom Thong, there was only one man who mentioned a Northern Thai *sahai* (see below). In the 50s, it seems that Karen women did not stay in Northern Thai houses when they visited the area. According to one woman, “they would not let us stay. It was only after some Karen from this area married into Northern Thai households there that we became able to stay like today.” However, there were trading partners, both Karen and Northern Thai, in the Muang Paeng area. As according to one woman who used to visit the area to trade rice with garlic and tobacco and to labor before marriage, “the *zau* (*khon muang*) in the Muang Paeng area all understand some *pga k’nyau* (Karen language). If they didn’t, I’d be too scared to go. I could only approach *zau* who understand *pga k’nyau*. Now that I’m married and with children, I don’t go any more. I let my husband go.” There was a network of trade partners and a sense of familiarity, so much so that when I conducted my interviews and inquired which were the places to which they had traveled, many would not refer to their trips to the Muang Paeng area unless I prompted them, simply because the area is not included in their idea of strange places.

These frequent travel to the Muang Paeng area by women, which were undertaken out of necessity, were thus justified and rationalized by proximity, not only geographical but also linguistic, and a sense of familiarity with the villages in this area that does not apply to any other Northern Thai area.

Period 2: Regional Labor

The increase in Karen hired labor, which in the area took place after the 60s, can be accounted for by improved roads and the involvement with the market economy which increased the need for cash. Moreover, with the increase in population in the hills and pressure on land, self-sufficiency in rice was no longer maintained. Although I have no supporting data, interviews with the Karen villagers suggest the increasing disparity in wealth between the Northern Thai villages and the Karen around this period. In the interviews, villagers narrated that before, the Northern Thai lived just like the Karen, but after they began to plant cash crops, their house structure, daily food and lifestyle began to change. It is from the late 1960s that the trip to the north for petty trade became combined with occasions for labor in the Northern Thai fields (planting, harvesting, and weeding in fields of garlic and beans), mainly as a means of procuring rice, but also for wages (in the 1960s the daily wage was 15 baht, in the 70s, 25 baht, and today it is 50 to 60 baht). Of the eighteen women below forty years old interviewed, ten had experienced labor in the Muang Paeng area, while only four of the twenty-six women above their forties had such experiences.

It was mainly unmarried women who went to work as well as trade in these villages. Although some claimed that married women would not stay over night but returned home, others, especially more recently and among the less well-to-do also stayed overnight. Men and young women would stay for a couple of days to over a week. They took packed rice if the stay was short, but for longer stays, they bought their own rice and vegetables and cooked their meals. In

fact, in spite of their frequent denigration of the Hmong, the villagers often compared the Hmong employers more favorably in that the Northern Thai were extremely cash-conscious while the Hmong were more hospitable in sharing food and shelter.

Since the 1970s, there have been some cases of marriages with the Northern Thai in the Muang Paeng area and the Karen of the study area, which made overnight stays more comfortable for the Karen. These marriages took place, invariably, between *khon muang* men and Karen women, never the other way around.

The movement was not completely one-sided, as Northern Thai men would visit the Karen area for trade, or simply for pleasure, and when they did, their faces were well-recognized by the Karen and differentiated from Northern Thai from other areas as “*yau* from Muang Paeng” and related to them with a little more familiarity than with other strangers. In the 1980s when there were temple events in the village such as *thoot phaa paa* villagers from Muang Paeng came to participate in the merit-making, some opening stalls to sell food and clothings.

The road was finally completed as far as the village in 1982, and the village was connected to major routes by dry-weather roads. A few villagers owned trucks, and movement to the Muang Paeng area was now primarily on wheels. The township of Pai with its medical, market, and educational facilities became accessible. More and more outsiders drove in with the same products that the villagers used to seek outside or to pick up forest products from the area so that petty trading trips to the Muang Paeng area became redundant. Shops opened in villages within the subdistrict. This also meant increasing need for cash income. Thus, hired labor increased, especially among those who could not produce sufficient rice for consumption. Swidden rice production which had shrunk in scale due mostly to government restrictions by the 1980s had, by the 1990s become almost non-existent. Meanwhile, paddy rice fields have also become small after generations of division in inheritance (approximately less than three rai per household on average in 1987).

Since households that were at least nearly self-sufficient did not need to go for hired labor, this meant that mobility for labor had, by the 1980s become a measure of poverty. Those villagers who frequented the Northern Thai villages for labor were daughters and wives as well as men of less well-to-do households. While such mobility is not condemned, young unmarried women who frequently went to work in Northern Thai villages were often referred to with ambivalence. Once, in an evening gossip session, a village woman commented that T, a teenage girl had recently become quite plump. An older man returned a joking comment that since T had been staying in Muang Paeng for wage labor for long stretches of time, perhaps, she had become pregnant. T is a hard-working daughter of a household of opium addicts, and such comments are in no way criticisms, but they express some of the villagers' feelings about women's mobility for labor.

While men also went to the Northern Thai villages for labor, another frequent destination for male labor was a nearby Hmong (*khao meao*) village which was settled in the 1950s, almost equal in distance to Muang Paeng. However, up until the 1980s, the Hmong cultivated opium, and the majority of those who went for labor were male opium addicts, who worked in the opium fields, and were paid in opium rather than cash. The Karen look down upon the Hmong, and

like to talk about the dirtiness of their lifestyle, the cruelty of Hmong men towards their women, and marriage between Karen and Hmong was quite unthinkable. Women would tend not to go to Hmong villages for labor, although villagers, both women and men, went in large groups to visit during the Hmong New Year celebration, to watch the Hmong event. This quasi-tourism by Karen villagers was curiously one-sided, as no Hmong villager ever came to visit Karen villages except for commercial purposes.

It must be noted that there is nothing that restricts women from working for money, as long as it is performed in an acceptable manner. Rather, women are responsible for looking after their family as daughters and mothers, and in order to fulfil such responsibility, they are constantly seeking petty cash opportunities. In the ten years that I have been conducting fieldwork, there have been several shops opened in the village, some of them short lived, but all of them were run and managed by women.

Distant Trips by Men

While trips for trade and labor described above were conducted by men as well as women, some enterprising men moved farther both for trade and for labor. In his teens (1940s), T (age approx. 72) traveled and traded with his father, from Chiang Rai to Laos, Mae Sariang to Burma, carrying clothes, mainly silk. In his youth, he worked with elephants for logging companies, both Northern Thai companies in the Mae Sariang area, as well as with a Tongsu company near Loikaw in Burma. He would earn eighty baht in one season, and spend it on increasing assets such as water buffalo. In his twenties he studied bible in a Karen bible school in Papun, Burma, married a Karen in Burma and had one child. Then in the 1950s he moved back to Thailand, married his present wife (then a widow with three children) and had four children. Being one of the most well-traveled men in the area, and with both the network of friends and entrepreneurial shrewdness, at the time of my arrival in the area, he owned a pick-up truck which he had bought with money gained through selling some wet-rice fields, and used the truck as further asset in business. He is the only person in the study area who had a *sahai*, a *khon muang* from Pai district. "When I was young I used to travel. I didn't want to settle down. I traveled and learned. In those days, one season of work or trade could earn big money. Today, work or trade, one only gets a meager amount. I made all the money I could in my youth, bought and accumulated, and now they are all gone to my children who can't make a decent earning for themselves. They don't know what to do with their assets. They don't think. They never travel. So young, and they're already married. They are only interested in getting married and settling down."

S (age approx. 55), born in a Shan-Karen area in Pai district, also walked far and wide from Chiang Mai to Mae Sariang and Mae Hongson in the fifties. He bought clothes and thread in Chiang Mai, beads and ornaments from Shan in Mae Sariang, or from Burma, and sold or traded in the hill villages. N (age approx. 55) had been in Burma in the 60s for eight years, working for a logging company, had married there with a Bwe Karen woman and had one child, after which he returned to his relatives in Thailand, and married his present wife. Such marriages in strange land are narrated with some pride. Men are not only much more mobile, but their activities away are never questioned.

Men with assets such as elephants also traveled widely to work for logging companies. C (age approx. 52) went to work in logging operations across the border until the 1980s with his elephant during the dry season. In some years, he rented his elephant to companies based in Lampang, in other years, he went himself to work in the Shan State of Burma. He also allowed his son, who had been educated in Wat Sri Soda as a novice and was therefore fluent in Thai, to take his elephant to work in the tourist elephant camps.

With or without purposes of trade or work, most men would walk (*ha*) farther than women and therefore had seen Chiang Mai, and the eastern fringes of Burma. Women in the villages would often speak enviously of men's adventures, and the reasons they gave for not going themselves were that they did not have enough money, they could not speak the language, they did not know the way, that they would get car-sick, or, simply that "women do not walk like men."

Period 3: Mobility in the Nineties (Education and Urban Migration)

The subdistrict (or area called Musikee by the inhabitants) had been inaccessible and distant from outside contacts except for religious influences up until the 1960s. However, with changing policy and the coming of roads, involvement with various public projects began in this area in the 1970s: education; Kings Project; health care; Buddhist mission (Thammacarik) etc. While the economically hard-pressed continue to frequent the Northern Thai villages for labor, sons and daughters of better-off households began to attend primary school in the village founded in 1978, and then subsequently, some of them continued for further study outside the village. There are two secondary schools (up to the first three years of secondary education) in the subdistrict, both in Karen villages, one founded by the Karen Baptist Convention, and the other public. In either case, students must board, either at the school dormitory, or with relatives in the village. In Pai, there is a Christian Karen dormitory, and some Karen from the area attend higher level secondary school from there.

In spite of the norms that restrict women's mobility, regarding education and schooling, there seems to be no more stress on educating sons than daughters, at least up to the secondary level. There are several reasons for this. First of all, the earliest opportunity for education was brought in by the Karen Baptist Convention, which founded a school in the subdistrict, and also for further study provided Karen dormitory and bible school in Chiang Mai. Girls from Christian households tend to follow paths provided by Christian organizations: going on to Bible school after primary or secondary schools, or attending higher level schools from Christian dormitories. Either way, they can stay within Christian Karen settings as they receive education.¹⁰ Secondly, villagers have seen examples of educated Karen women earning salaries through jobs such as teachers, development workers, health workers, or workers in the Christian organization: in other words, respectable jobs that allow them to stay among their own people. Thirdly,

¹⁰ For non-Christian villagers, the earliest opportunities were restricted to boys, by sending them to be novices at Wat Sri Soda, the Thammacarik temple in Chiang Mai which provided both religious and secular education.

education is a means to increase earnings, and as I mentioned above there is much incentive for women to earn cash for their families. Several of the young mothers today participate in weekly classes for adult education to earn secondary diplomas which may give them a better chance when the opportunity arises. Furthermore, the girls are eager to study because they have little other paths to enjoy and widen their possibilities. According to interviews performed in the city, in many of the home villages, girls who leave for education in Chiang Mai outnumber boys, while boys tend to circulate between city and hills according to job availability and other reasons. For girls, education provides respectable reasons to move to the city, whereas boys do not need such reasons. Yet, in higher education after the secondary level, the gender ratio becomes reversed.

While the decision to send daughters up to secondary level education in the region is not so difficult, the threshold for sending girls to Chiang Mai, and to higher education is higher. Deterrents for girls' moving to Chiang Mai are many. Life in Chiang Mai is considered to render the girls' sexual lives unaccountable, and this is why the availability of Christian Karen dormitories or the presence of Karen relatives or co-villagers make a difference. Such sexual dangers are related in horror stories concerning girls from the same area, concerning their unwanted pregnancy, contracting AIDS, or involvement with prostitution. The threat of AIDS has especially become acute, and even though from this area the victims have been primarily men and their wives, the rare case of an unmarried girl contracting AIDS has become a favorite narrative for dissuading girls from going to the city. The government sponsored Karen radio station also cautions young Karen girls from going to the city without reliable elders. There was a radio skit that was played repeatedly about a young girl (who does not speak Thai) who is lured by a Karen girl (a city girl who speaks fluent Thai) to the city and is deceived by the latter into prostitution and returns to the village HIV positive. Life in the city is thus strongly associated with AIDS, degeneration of morals. Girls in the city are often criticized for forgetting their daughterly responsibilities and Karen tradition.

In the hills, marriage age has been extremely low, so that girls well into their twenties were under much pressure. Going to the city can become a way to evade such pressure for girls, but it also meant delay in their marriage, and also limiting their marriage prospects. Thus, in villages where going to Chiang Mai is still a rarity for girls, young women find partners and choose to settle after graduating from school in the region. A study performed in the mid 1980s among Karen youths who migrate to Chiang Mai for education mentions that in the interviews, some young highly educated Karen women felt that they were not well received in their home villages (Renard, Prasert and Roberts 1987:67). Even a highly educated woman who is well respected among her peers in Chiang Mai is not exempt from the standards and norms of her own village when she returns. M, for example, graduated from the Teachers' College in Chiang Mai. She returned to her village, one of the pioneer villages in terms of sending girls to the city. After returning to her village, she chose to live in a house by herself rather than with her parents, where she receives friends from the city. Villagers speak of her free ways in derogatory tone, and she has become an often cited case in speaking of the demerits of girls receiving education in Chiang Mai.

Yet, once the threshold is crossed by some members in a village, it is not long before most of the youths from the village would be gone to Chiang Mai. While it is impossible to come up with figures indicating the urban Karen population, the increase from the times of an earlier study is obvious: a study in 1981 estimates one hundred Karen (although not including students in dormitories) in Chiang Mai out of nearly seven hundred highlanders, which is not only low in real numbers, but also incredibly low in percentage considering the Karen constitute more than half of the highland population (Vatikiotis 1984:200). A study report written five years after Vatikiotis' research claims there is a definite rise in the number of Karen youths in Chiang Mai, although among the respondents they chose, four fifths were men, and the researchers mention that Karen girls are not encouraged to study in the city (Renard, Prasert, and Robert 1987:34). While I have no way to assess the accuracy of such figures, from the interviews and from the fact that the Catholic dormitories greatly expanded their capacity in the eighties, it seems that the increase in the percentage and number of Karen girls in the city began in the late 80s and took a leap in the 90s.

While some girls whose parents have stable salaries, or who have received scholarships may come down simply to study, most begin by attending night school while working during the day. The kinds of jobs that Karen girls are involved in include maids, school errands, services at gas stations, hotels and restaurants, factory work, and hospital help. While the hill youths tend to be hired with lower wages, those with Thai education are better able to compete for lowland jobs.

Those youths who study in Thai schools and begin to seek opportunities outside the Karen world will meet both Karen youths from distant villages as well as non-Karen youths with similar experiences. Thus, interethnic marriage is on the increase among these youths, who meet partners from other ethnic backgrounds in the Thai context. Even though most of the girls interviewed in the city claimed they preferred to marry Karen men and live in the hills, their urban experiences and education limit their prospects in the hills, while opening the possibilities of interethnic marriages based on ties formed in the Thai context. There was such a case in the subdistrict, where an educated Hmong boy and Karen girl married, to the horror of most villagers. However, the norms of the hills are not totally absent in the city. Karen men in the city, when referring to girls who go out with Northern Thai men, will talk about their "fall", presumably referring to a moral failure to guard their sexuality from Northern Thai men. A few girls I interviewed in the city admitted that back in their home village, the adults would not welcome Northern Thai husbands.

Besides the mobility of youths, there is increase in travel for pleasure to the towns and cities among the Karen, including women. Those women whose husbands own trucks, or have official duties that call them to the city may accompany their husbands to the city, and experience the city for the first time. Christian meetings and Buddhist ordinations may also take them to Chiang Mai, or as far as Bangkok. When I held interviews with villagers and asked each the same question "which is the farthest place you have ever been to?", those young women with little experience of travel became objects of much joking. These women were from the less well-to-do households, had no education, could not speak sufficient Thai, and were therefore doubly restricted in mobility. Thus, even though on the one hand there is ambivalence towards

women's rising mobility, on the other hand, mobility with the proper procedure is not condemned and could even be demonstration of status. The adventures by unmarried women in the 1940s and 50s I mentioned above are now taking a different shape, as women invariably visit Chiang Mai before or after marriage. Twelve out of eighteen women in their twenties and thirties have been to Chiang Mai for pleasure, whereas only five from all above generations have ever been.

The frequent trips for labor in the Muang Paeng area still continue among those women and men without education and means, and the division between those widely mobile and educated villagers on the one hand, and the less mobile laboring villagers on the other, has become quite clear within the past decade. Interethnic marriages have increased among the latter group also, as regional movement by both Northern Thais and Karen have increased. This is quite different from the interethnic marriages that are increasing in the Thai context mentioned above. Rather, Northern Thai men come to Karen villages specifically to look for Karen brides, sometimes in truck loads. For a Karen woman, such marriages may provide a possibility for moving up the social and economic ladder, while for the man, it provides a cheaper marriage with an obedient wife.

There is thus a two-way split in women's mobility and related interethnic marriages in the village today: the one by the economically hard-pressed villagers with little or no schooling, which primarily involves labor where the ethnic divide is also the economic divide; and the other by relatively better off villagers seeking better opportunity through education, where interethnic relationship takes place primarily in the Thai urban setting. Such trends in mobility highlight the increasing stratification and differentiation in economic standing as well as in social adaptability to the wider Thai society among the Karen and between Karen and others.

Concluding remarks

This paper has been a beginning attempt to understand recent trends in mobility among the Karen. In outlining the changes that have taken place in a specific hill village, we have seen the changing trends from trade to labor on the regional level, and the increase in urban migration by youths for both education and labor. The norms governing women's mobility not only reflect Karen notions of interethnic relationship but also shape them. Furthermore, while there are continuities in the norms, women themselves challenge and breach such norms and through this process, interethnic relations are redefined. We have also seen that today there is a double sphere of mobility and interethnic relationship: the regional on the one hand, and the more center-(Thai)oriented on the other. While some villagers are involved in both spheres, there seems to be an emergent split along lines of economic differentiation.

As an ongoing research, this study still needs data collected from those hill villages from which more girls have already migrated to Chiang Mai, from the Northern Thai villages to which Karen often travel for labor, and from the city of Chiang Mai itself.

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