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การศึกษาชาวเขาดอยมูเซอในแม่สอด จังหวัดตาก ประเทศไทย



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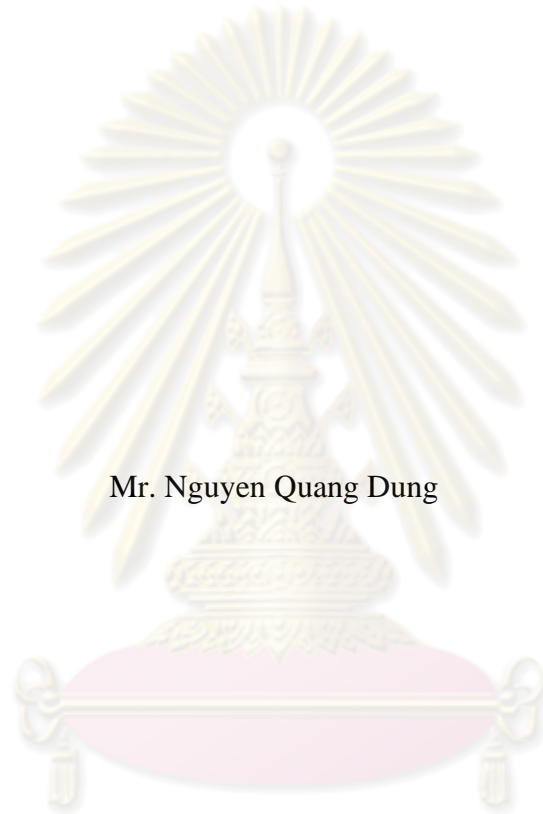
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**THAI EDUCATION POLICY AND ITS IMPACT ON ETHNIC
MINORITY CULTURE: A STUDY OF THE MUSER HILL
TRIBE IN MAE SOT, TAK PROVINCE, THAILAND**



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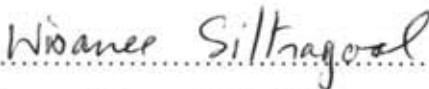

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เหียงน กวาง หยุง : นโยบายการศึกษาของไทยและผลกระทบต่อวัฒนธรรมของชนกลุ่มน้อย: การศึกษาชาวเขาดอยมูเซอในแม่สอด จังหวัดตาก ประเทศไทย (THAI EDUCATION POLICY AND ITS IMPACT ON ETHNIC MINORITY CULTURE: A STUDY OF THE MUSER HILL TRIBE IN MAE SOT, TAK PROVINCE, THAILAND) อ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก: ผศ.ดร. มนริธา ภาโท, อ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์ร่วม : น.ส.พรพิมล ตริโชติ, 143 หน้า

วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้มุ่งวิเคราะห์นโยบายการศึกษาของไทยต่อชนเผ่าและอิทธิพลของนโยบายดังกล่าว ต่อวัฒนธรรมชนเผ่าจากกรณีศึกษาของชาวมูเซอในอำเภอแม่สอด จังหวัดตาก ประเทศไทย อีกทั้งยังมุ่งศึกษา กระบวนการอนุรักษ์ บูรณาการ และกลืนกลายทางวัฒนธรรมของชนเผ่ามูเซอผ่านรูปแบบทางการศึกษาทั้งในรูปแบบที่เป็นทางการ ไม่เป็นทางการ และการศึกษาอิสระ ทั้งนี้ ผู้วิจัยจะวิเคราะห์ปฏิกิริยาของชาวบ้านในหมู่บ้านต่อการเปลี่ยนแปลงทางวัฒนธรรมอย่างละเอียด การศึกษาชิ้นนี้เป็นการศึกษาเชิงคุณภาพโดยใช้วิธีการศึกษาจากเอกสาร ทฤษฎี นโยบายทางการศึกษา การสังเกตการณ์ การสนทนากลุ่ม และการสัมภาษณ์ในเชิงลึก รวมทั้งการนำเสนอบทวิเคราะห์จากข้อมูลที่ได้จากการเก็บข้อมูลภาคสนาม

จากการศึกษา ผู้วิจัยพบว่า นอกจากความรู้ต่างๆ ที่ได้ส่งผ่านการเรียนภาษาไทยแล้ว นักเรียนยังได้รับการปลูกฝังในเรื่องของอัตลักษณ์ไทยผ่านคำสอนของพุทธศาสนา ความเชื่อเรื่องคุณธรรม จริยธรรม และค่านิยมของวัฒนธรรมกระแสหลัก รวมทั้งอุดมการณ์ชาตินิยม การศึกษาส่งผลให้เกิดอัตลักษณ์เชิงซ้อนในหมู่นักเรียนใหม่ของชาวมูเซอ ซึ่งเห็นได้จากทัศนคติของพวกเขาต่อวัฒนธรรมและชนบดั้งเดิม และความยึดหยุ่นของมุมมองที่พวกเขาเห็นว่าตนเองเป็นทั้งไทยและมูเซอตามบริบทเฉพาะที่แตกต่างกัน ในขณะที่วัฒนธรรมดั้งเดิมค่อยๆ เลือนหายไปจากชาวมูเซอจากรุ่นหนึ่งสู่รุ่นอีกรุ่นหนึ่ง งานวิจัยพบว่าอัตลักษณ์ของวัฒนธรรมมูเซอ เช่น อาหาร ดนตรี คติชนวิทยา ศาสนา ภาษา และเครื่องแต่งกายนั้นสะท้อนในชาวมูเซอรุ่นใหม่น้อยลง อัตลักษณ์ใหม่สะท้อนให้เห็นจากรูปแบบวิถีชีวิตและพฤติกรรมแบบใหม่ ค่านิยมและความเชื่อที่แตกต่างจากเดิม ตัวอย่างที่ชัดเจนได้แก่ ความเชื่อในพุทธศาสนาที่เพิ่มมากขึ้นในขณะที่เดียวกันความรู้และความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับวัฒนธรรมดั้งเดิมลดน้อยลง รวมไปถึงผลกระทบต่อการใช้ภาษามูเซอในชีวิตประจำวันน้อยลง อย่างไรก็ตาม ปัญหานี้ไม่ได้เป็นปัญหาของชาวมูเซอเท่านั้น หากแต่ยังเป็นปัญหาของหน่วยงานที่รับผิดชอบและวางนโยบายที่ต้องร่วมกันพิจารณาและดำเนินการเพื่อช่วยอนุรักษ์มรดกทางวัฒนธรรมของชาวมูเซออย่างเหมาะสม

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

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NGUYEN QUANG DUNG: THAI EDUCATION POLICY AND ITS IMPACT ON ETHNIC MINORITY CULTURE: A STUDY OF THE MUSER HILL TRIBE IN MAE SOT, TAK PROVINCE, THAILAND. THESIS ADVISOR: ASSIST.PROF. MONTIRA RATO, Ph.D., CO-ADVISOR: PORNPIMON TRICHOT, 143 pp.

This thesis aims to examine Thai education policy towards the hill tribe and its impact on ethnic culture with the case study of the Muser, Amphur Mae sot, Tak province, Thailand. It also studies the process of cultural preservation, integration and assimilation of the Muser hill tribe through formal, non-formal and informal education. The response of local villagers to cultural change is thoroughly examined. The study adopts a qualitative research method, documentary research, the study of theories and educational policy, participatory observation, focus group discussion and in-depth interviews. Findings from the fieldtrip are presented through analysis description.

The study finds that besides knowledge conveyed in central Thai language, Thai identity is inculcated in students in forms of Buddhist teaching, mainstream ethical and moral values and nationalist ideology. Education results in double-ethnic or combined identity in the young Muser, which can be found through their attitude towards their traditional culture and the flexibility in which they perceive themselves as Thai or Muser up to different contexts. Meanwhile, traditional culture fades away gradually after generations. Elements of Muser traditional culture such as cuisine, music, folklore, religion, language and costumes are represented by the young Muser to a lesser extent in comparison with their seniors. New identity comprises of new style for living, new behaviors, different values, beliefs and world views. The most evident examples for new identity are greater belief in Buddhism, the lack of knowledge and understanding about traditional culture, and greater loss of Muser ancestral language in daily conversation. However, it is not an issue for only Muser local people but also for policy makers to have appropriate considerations and then take action to help preserve Muser hill tribe's cultural heritage.

Field of Studies: Southeast Asian Studies

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Academic Year: 2008

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In mainland Southeast Asia, ethnic groups are undergoing significant social, cultural and economic changes as a result of rapid development in the region. Modernization to a certain extent brings about the loss of indigenous culture and marginalization of hill tribe groups. Nationalism with hegemonic purposes and the implementation of government policies tend to emphasize assimilation of the hill tribes into the nation-state. In this context, the hill tribes in Northern Thailand are no exception.

A greater interaction between hill tribe people and the main stream society through increasing trade and tourism results in more economic benefits. At the same time, hill tribe people are adapting to their changing conditions and attempting to take advantage of the economic and educational opportunities. Besides, education introduced to the remote villages exposes the young generation to the outside with new knowledge, information and values. In classrooms, teachers convey to hill tribe students values of the dominant culture. Such education has an emphasis on fundamental knowledge and national identity based on mainstream culture. Indigenous knowledge system which has existed for centuries has been intervened with new values in both positive and negative way. Integration through education is appropriate in the sense that it encourages the process of natural integration without force and it appears to be acceptable to the highlanders themselves. This led to cultural assimilation and a diverse identity among individuals especially the youngsters who are educated. However, the negative impact is that the younger generation tends to look at their tradition, cultural beliefs and practices as backward and old fashioned (Elawat Chandraprasert, as cited in McCaskill, 2008: 91).

The first government initiatives were made in 1951 with the aim of providing welfare services in remote communities. Later in 1959, the Hilltribe committee was established as the first national level organization to take charge of formulating policies on the hill tribes (Duncan, 2008). From the 1970s to the 1990s, opium eradication became a major focus of Thai government policy towards ethnic policy

(McCaskill, 2008). From the late 1980s to the present, government policies have been concerned with national resources and drugs. According to McCaskill, the Thai state has used three main mechanisms to assimilate non-Thai people, especially highland ethnic minorities into the Thai-nation. These are the state documentation project, public education and Buddhism.

The process of cultural integration and assimilation of the Muser hill tribe, also known as Lahu, in Huaiplalod village has been done under such three mechanisms. Huaiplalod village belongs to Tumbol Dan Melamaw, Amphur Maesod, Tak province. The Muser hill tribe has lived here over 100 years (around 1918 till now). The inhabitants here all receive Thai nationality according to the Act passed in 1913 during the reign of King Vajiravudh. Thailand's first compulsory Education Act appeared in 1912, but it was not until the year 1957 that government officials introduced education to the Muser in Tak province. However, the Huaiplalod village was not included that time. On 26 January 1974, His Majesty the King and Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhornthe made a royal carriage to the village and then it was decreed to establish educational base there. Then, the contemporary school of Huaiplalod was built under the umbrella of Public Welfare Department, Interior Ministry.

On the 1st of May 1988, the school was moved to be under Tak provincial Office of primary school education, National committee of Primary school, Ministry of Education. In October, 1988, Phra Ajarn Den Nanthiyo, Phra Phisudsong and the local people set up the canteen where students can have lunch. From 1996 to 1998, Phra Ajarn Den was the founding master of a two storey school with the expense of 5,000,000 Baht without any assistance from the government. Apart from nationality identification and education, Buddhism as the state religion of Thailand is another mechanism to assimilate highland minorities to become Thai. Thammachakri, a major Buddhist missionary project, was launched in 1964 targeting at highland and peoples in remote areas. It is a part of psychological development program to unite all distinctive cultural groups under the one nation (McCaskill, 2008).

In the case of Huaiplalod village, the arrival of Buddhism was different. In the year 1986, there occurred an epidemic that killed a lot of children in the village. Thanks to the help of public health staff and Phra Ajarn Den, the epidemic was stopped. The honored monk asked the local people to build a Buddha statue and enshrine at the centre of the village so that epidemic would not come back. This can

be seen as the milestone of the introduction of Buddhism into Huaiplalod village. This Muser group is not Christianized. They maintain their animistic system mixed with Buddhist practice. Buddhism has been introduced to the villagers especially the younger generation through education with the same curriculum as lowlander students over the decades. Finally, they turned into Buddhist, became culturally Thai and adopted typical value of the dominant Thai society. The youngsters now become fluent Thai speakers who can work in downtown for labor wage or trade with the lowlanders without any difficulty in communication. There is a stronger sense of belonging to Thai state under the loyalty to His Majesty the King. They pay worship to the Buddha besides spirits. However, they are also proud to be Muser when dressed in black Muser traditional costume on many occasions especially when they show off to other different tribes. They join and follow the practice of many animistic ceremonies. However, there will be a risk that they can not themselves perform such practices in the future.

From such above-mentioned background, it is useful to do a research on ethnic minority culture and their multi-dimensional responses to nationalism, cultural assimilation and development through education. As for the black Muser, the aspect of cultural assimilation and integration into Thai mainstream culture is left unexplored. A case study of Thai education policy towards the black Muser community in Huaiplalod village could fill this gap.

1.2 Major arguments

As a consequence of national development, indigenous people have been culturally integrated into the national mainstream at the expense of their local culture. Along with economic development, education policy has brought them material and non-material gains. However, education policy also has impact on the transformation in their customs and way of life. Like many other hill tribes in Northern Thailand, the Black Muser on Muser Hill, Tak province have been undergoing a development process in which education plays an important role. Since 1974, a contemporary school in the village has been extended to a well-facilitated two storey school with a rising number of students.

Education has brought significant changes to the community as a whole and each individual in particular in terms of culture. For example, some animistic

ceremonies have been made simpler. The teaching of Thai language has had some impacts on the locally spoken language that does not have its own script. Likewise, the introduction of Buddhist teachings and nationalism with hegemonic purpose of shaping Thainess into the village has created changes in indigenous beliefs. Meanwhile, the old values began to be combined with these newly introduced doctrines.

The existence of traditional culture of a community is based on individual knowledge about local beliefs, values, attitudes, rituals, teachings and codes of behaviors. However; formal, non-formal and informal education bring about a gap between the elders and young generation in terms of identity. At the same time, the process of development and cultural transformation has also made the Muser community to be more conscious of their cultural identity and put a greater effort to preserve their indigenous values.

1.3) Objectives:

- To investigate the Thai education policy towards ethnic minority culture in general and the Muser hill tribe in particular.
- To identify the influence of education policy on the Muser ethnic culture.
- To study the process of cultural preservation, integration and assimilation of the Muser hill tribe.

1.4) Review of literature

Although there have been many academic works on the Lahu in Northern Thailand, the Lahu on Muser Hill, Tak province have been by and large left unexplored. There have been also many studies about ethnic culture and state policies towards the hill tribes of the North in general and the Lahu groups in particular. However, there have been no specific study about the Black Lahu in Tak province regarding state policies especially education policy and its impact towards their indigenous culture. Likewise, the questions on education for ethnic minorities with its hegemonic and cultural assimilation and nationalistic purposes, though being touched upon in several academic works, have not been discussed thoroughly and systematically. Possibly, the most related and up-to-date studies focusing on the

influence of development, modernization and state intervention appear in the publications which McCaskill (1997 and 2008) acts as the chief editor.

Other empirical academic literature and arguments about Southeast Asian government policies and specifically Thai state policy towards the hill tribe can be found in “Civilizing the Margins : Southeast Asian Government Policies for the Development of Minorities” by Christopher R. Duncan (2008). However, the related literature in this publication just mentioned Northern Thailand. The author tells about all hill tribes and a general view regarding Thai state hill tribe policy before discussing the influence on ethnic culture as well as economic and social structure.

From my survey of the literature related to my topic, I hereby divide the literature review into two main sections: 1) studies on the Lahu and 2) studies on education and ethnic culture.

1.4.1 Studies about the Lahu

Most of the books or research project reports by forefront pioneer anthropologists specializing in Lahu groups such as Anthony Walker or Gordon Young are related to Lahu groups locally based in Chiangmai and Chiangrai. Some other research projects sponsored by the Institute for Development Programs of Thailand are mainly done in Chiangmai, Chiangrai, Tak and Maehongson.

Some researches are written by Anthony Walker, for example, *Lahu Nyi or Red Lahu Rites to Propitiate the Hill Spirit* (1997), *The Propitiation of the Lightning Spirit in a Lahu Nyi (Red Lahu) Community in North Thailand* (1997), *Na Ha Hku Ve: A Lahu Nyi (Red Lahu) Rite to Recall the Soul of a Gun: Two Lahu Texts and an Ethnographic Background* (1978), *Farmers in the hills : Upland Peoples of North Thailand* (1981 and 1986), *The Highland Heritage : Collected Essays on Upland North Thailand* (1992). There are some other related books providing valuable information about the Lahu groups in Northern Thailand and interesting details about the Lahu Nyi which Anthony Walker had put much focus on. Anthony Walker’s findings can be good readings for those who would like to conduct a research about the Lahu groups. His works provide a clear explanation about Lahu history and immigration, ways of living and general information. As for the Lahu Na or Muser Dam (black Lahu), he provides us a description and an overview picture, especially the groups in Chiangmai and Chiangrai. Apart from, Anthony Walker, Gordon Young is also a pioneer expert in hill tribes of Northern Thailand. General information,

covering religion, ways of living, ceremonies, tradition and so on, about many hill tribes including Lahu Na can be found in his study.

However, it can be observed that experts tend to ignore the Muser villages in Tak Province, and pay more attention to Chiangmai and Chiangrai due to unknown reasons. In my view, an explanation would be the density and diversity of Lahu groups in these two provinces were more attractive to those scholars.

To the best of my ability and the best availability of libraries, one most related thesis about the Lahu Na on Muser Hill of Tak province is “A comparative Study of Thai and Lahu Folktales in Tak province” by Orathai Saipen (1985). The author explores the similarity and difference of the Thai and Lahu worldviews through their folktales. The finding reveals that there are some paralleled elements among the folktales of the two groups. They share the common ideology that man is dualistic in nature and the world is governed by a certain regulation or law. As for the difference, the Lahu believe in emphatically Kamar orientation while the Thai believe in the Law of cause and consequence rather than the Law of God or the gods. The two groups explain that many phenomena are manipulated by supernatural or magical powers. However, supernaturalism is sometimes within man’s reach and control. The knowledge about those beliefs and values are passed on from generation to generation. Both groups of people consider it important to search for peace through a repression of one’s desires and crucial to conduct the moral codes as an absolute value.

Other studies are related to the Lahu in Chiangmai or Chiangrai. *Diversity of hill tribe people in the town - the Lahu* by Panida Bunyananay and Miyum Choemue (2005), Social research Institute, Chiangmai University is possibly the most recent book about the Lahu ethnic groups in urban Chiangmai and nearby districts. The research provides basic up to date information about contemporary Lahu people as well as the historical context, belief system and lifestyle. The adaptation of the Lahu people is also examined and the result shows that values of Western Christianity have a considerable impact on their daily life and belief system. The Christian Lahu in Chiangmai are mostly low-educated or uneducated. The education is limited to primary level. Regarding urban Lahu in Chiangmai town, they earn their living by wage labor working or doing small business as street sellers. They build their network by kinship, occupation, religion and form new social groups. Their main activities are

occasional social gatherings which help maintain their close relationship with each other and with their original families and villages.

A study on the Lahu in Chiangrai by Chaninthon Sawanaphakdi (2003) focuses on the aspect of Thai naturalization. The author shows that current process does not categorize the Lahu status. The Lahu residents still do not get Thai nationality but the Lahu immigrants who migrated into Thailand just a few years ago already received Thai nationality and that causes complicated problems in the later generations of Lahu residents. The laws applied to status categorization cannot measure the Thainess of the Lahu people. The law demands accurate time limit and valuable papers, which is difficult for them. The papers are means of communication between ethnic minorities and the state. The hill people cannot get whatever papers the state want, though the paper might signify nothing about their real status. The state applied expatriation policy to these immigrants as a consequence of the fear that they might cause rapid exploitation of country's natural resources. The authority is in the hand of local officers so that they can bargain for money. The study finds out that there are mistakes in documentation process and incorrect status specification.

Chaninthon suggested that the rights mentioned in the constitution related to hill people should be improved. Although the Lahu do not have equal rights to Thai people, but at least they should be protected in their life and property as well. Also, there should be improvement in the laws and regulations related to nationality grant. There should be synthesis of policies which help improve the categorization system. Therefore, hill tribe residents should be categorized into Thai society and prevent the new immigrants from buying the documents and asking for Thai nationality. And last but not least, officers' attitude towards hill people should be changed while they contact hill people. More knowledge about the hill tribes will help them make investigation more effectively. It is much better to have a positive relationship than to consider hill people problematic. Regarding the case of the Lahu in the study, they are under the protection of Thai law but are not granted full Thai citizenship. Therefore, the solutions drawn by the author are that the standard of Lahu presidential qualifications and timing conditions should be re-considered. Also, full Thai citizenship should be granted to successful Lahu applicants.

Moving into cultural aspect of the Lahu, Athida (1996) mentions the Muser Dam and Muser Luang in Chiangrai province in terms of cultural conservation in the context of modernization and development. The Bala community, Thakoe village,

Mae Suai Amphur, Chiangrai province comprises of the Muser Luang (Yellow Muser), Muser Dam (Black Muser) and the Iko. The Muser Luang was the first to settle down at the locality. In the study of the two Muser tribes, the finding shows that the Muser identity is based on local language, housing style, traditional costume, religious ceremonies which the two Muser tribes set up as important regulations in daily life and as the basic activities that each individual must perform.

These two Muser tribes identify the difference between themselves and they accept it. However, they share the same characteristics in some aspects, especially in the New year celebration. The difference stems from several factors such as historical background from different immigration records, being Christian Baptist or Roman Catholic, the spoken dialect that changed after a long period of separation from the original tribe and different immigration routes. Regarding house structure, these two Muser tribes have different ways of building their house. The way they divide the interior structure and the way they set the floor are different from each other. Even the material is also different. The roof the Muser Dam is made of wood while the Muser Luong use metal sheet. The way they dress are distinguished especially by the costumes of women with different decoration patterns and colors. Muser Luong dress in brighter colors like white, yellow, and red while Muser Dam use blue, black, white and red. Color difference in costume dress is an important factor to show the identity characteristic of each tribe.

As for moral standards and ethical and social values, the two groups have their own distinctive system. The way they work, pay respect to the elder, teach children and their attitudes toward wine drinking are not the same in two groups. In terms of ethical or moral values, the Muser Dam take them more seriously. Even in the dancing ceremonies, the Muser dam consider Muser Luong's dancing which allow some male and female contact movements unacceptable and impolite. All of the differences mentioned above contribute to the dividing line between the two groups in the domain of ethnicity and social distance between. An interesting evidence found is that there is no record of cross-marriage between the two groups.

Another distinctive dividing factor found after the intervention of government into the village through development projects is that the Black Lahu are more responsive to the development. Their active response and their hard working character bring them economic benefits whereas the Yellow Lahu tend to be more culturally conservative. The high conservation of the Yellow muser makes it difficult for them

to integrate into the development brought into the village by the government's programs and policies. In this case, high conservative attitudes tend to be an obstacle for development.

Another study related to the culture of the Lahu in Chiangrai was done by Yoichi Nishimoto (1998). The author examines the way in which the social experience and historical consciousness of Christian Lahu in Chiangrai province have been created in the history of their relations with the mainstream society and the presence of Christianity in the community. The study also explores how uniquely Christian Lahu discourses have emerged from the interaction of their social experience, its expression and Christianity, and the people as human agency. The study aims to examine not only cognition but also feelings and expectations of the Christian Lahu. People's cognition, perception, desire, and feelings about history are described.

The study also reveals that behind the apparently negative self-determination there exists a positive perception of the people. After a long process of Christianization in which missionaries have been applied "civilizing" policies emphasizing on formal education and knowledge in written form. However, the Christian Lahu still conduct "offstage" resistance, in which they stress original values as the foundation of Lahu people identity. On the other hand, transformation in mythology, notions of time and history and millenarianism has occurred due to the introduction of Western literacy, education and Church ceremonies.

Therefore, from the study, we can see that the Lahu people are still aware of their own values despite the presence and impact of western values and the Christian church. This can be seen through narratives describing their history, cognition, perception and desires and feelings. This is a crucial part of the conservation of their ethnic identity.

There have been many other studies about Lahu groups, in particular the Christian Lahu groups in Chiangmai and Chiangrai. Most of the studies mentioned earlier discuss the process of cultural changes. However, it seems that none of them refers to the role of education in the Lahu's cultural transformation. Likewise, the research on the black Lahu in Tak is still very limited.

1.4.2 Studies on education and cultural adaptation of the hill tribes

Lue Vang (1995) and Thawit Chatuwopaphtuck (1995) mention the Hmong and Lisu in Thailand respectively. The authors highlight their cultural adaptation and change. These works are helpful for my study. Their findings can be the good references when it comes to explain and analyze the contemporary identity of the Muser hill tribe in Tak province. The process of cultural adaptation in the Hmong and Lisu groups shown in these studies is involved with education and development policy. Therefore, the cases can share some characteristics with the Muser in my study.

In his research, “A cultural interpretation of Thai Hmong: Beliefs, Traditions, and values about education and leadership” Lue Vang emphasizes the understanding of the rationale and consideration that frame decisions about entering and completing post-secondary education of Hmong tribe in the north of Thailand. However, the author proposes that his arguments and suggestions can be applied to all the groups of Hmong scattered all over the world. The author is himself a Hmong person, therefore, in this study he provides us deep insights with the viewpoint of an insider and a well-educated outsider.

The author points out that traditional beliefs, behaviors, and values exert powerful influence on leadership and decision-making. The decision to support children in pursuit of higher education came over two or three generations and was often influenced by connections with non-Hmong. The obstacles to academic success were entrance examinations, lack of financial resources, separation from the family, and lack of student self-discipline. Membership in groups, reputation, and trust are also key factors to affect decision making. Parents and families sacrifice finance for their children and do not want them to bring shame to the family and group. The families with successful students become examples for others to follow. These students become the connection between the traditional past and the unknown future, between the non-literate and the literate, between cultivating and working for wages, traditional family and a new kind of family, and between group identity and individual aspiration.

The problem of change and conservation of Hmong identity in this study can be explained as the problem of change in each educated individual. Roles are changing, for the elder and the younger, male and female, for kinsman and neighbors, leader and follower. They have already changed and are changing everyday. Hmong have lived

their lives by following cultural rules passed on from generations to generations for more than 4 thousand years. However, the traditional ways to earn a living do not work any more. Despite of the effort of the government to bring them into the mainstream of the Thai society; there have been not yet many Hmong working for wages to improve their economy. They can do this only when they have education. The Thai Hmong who continue to higher education in mainstream society encounter and experience changes. However, they can help retain knowledge of languages and tradition. And therefore, they become the generation bridge between the past and the future. As concluded by the author himself, Thai Hmong today, with education, attempt to find a way to change, but at the same time to maintain identity as Hmong. There is a need to foster identity in the group of Hmong.

It can be said that education brings change to each individual, especially those who are highly educated. Becoming educated enables changes in Hmong individuals and their relationships to groups. Being Hmong means speaking Hmong, understanding and knowing rituals and recognizing what is appropriate in Hmong life. The new Hmong will have to be Hmong and Thai and this up to the context. Thereby, the author gives suggestion that the traditional values of the group such as reputation, identity, and following the example of others should be maintained. To do this, it is necessary to trust each other, share ideas and strength and the utmost thing is to maintain a common language that allows communication across international boundaries.

Meanwhile, Thawit Chatuwopraphtuck (1995) from Chiangmai University with the study “Ritual of reproductive ethnicity among the poor highlanders: A case study of cultural adaptation of the Lisu in Chiangmai” provides deep insights into the power of ritual in which the Lisu people reproduce their identity. In the process of adaptation, the poor Lisu hill tribe people are conscious how they would not sacrifice their distinctive characters. Rituals are crucial part of a culture; they play paramount role in maintaining and conserving ethnic identity. Especially in the time of modernization, state policy with hegemonic purpose and market intervention into the village, the cultural identity stands the risk of being negatively influenced. As a result, this fact brings about the context that the villagers have lost their control over resources and individuals began to lose their identity.

This anthropological study analyzes the roles the rituals that are performed as the rescuing factor for the Lisu identity. The finding shows that the hill tribe

community of Lisu is structurally paralyzed to the extent that they are unable to have any control over their life. Poor Lisu villagers are alienated, marginalized. They are, moreover, losing their identity. To identify themselves as the Lisu people is the most important thing that they have been trying to do. Active participation in rituals helps them reproduce their ethnicity and cosmology, and revitalize their social roles. The reproduction of rituals includes the reconstruction of cosmological order through the process of localization in which Thai cultural forms have been gradually localized to the Lisu cultural context.

Buddhism is introduced into the community and the Buddha role is seen in the local myth as the younger brother of the ruler. This kind of reinvented myth is considerably effective in terms of religious integration. A mixture of Buddhism and animism brings a new form of religion and animism is definitely not intact any more. The fact that the Buddha altars are set close to the spirit altars, but in the lower position is the most obvious example for this mixture.

In addition, the reconstruction of cosmological order, the Lisu reinterpret their ethnicity which is studied under three circumstances in the study. First, Apamuhi (the guardian spirits' house) which is the symbol of Lisu ethnicity was reconstructed and modernized under the changing social conditions. Second, the way new products have been made and sold as the antiques is interpreted and defined in the ritual as the behavior that causes bad fate because it violates customary law and demolishes Lisu ethnicity. Third, the low status of the male is defined as resulting from the fact that no respectable and honorable jobs for men. This caused a loss in men' dignity, social status and sex roles.

Along with the reconstruction cosmological order and the reinterpretation of ethnicity, the transformation of power relations within the community is related to the state power, such as increasing friendly contact with government officers. Welcoming and complimentary ceremonies are formalized and performed annually on the occasion of new year celebration create a closer relation between the community and the governmental officers. However, it does not mean that they conform to power at all. At the communal level, the stigmatized households had been constructed way-side shelters as the common property to chase away their bad luck and purify the polluted social life. Regarding gender relationship, Juepia or the ritual of the bad luck had been performed to strengthen the status and roles of the masculinity and familial relationships.

Thawit shows us the progress in social and cultural movement of the Lisu in which they adopt themselves to the change brought about by development and the intervention of state policy. While development projects are carried out by government, business and international organizations focus only on public security, resource control and changing force towards capitalism. Later on, the environment conservation became popular, and it is a claim to exclude the hill tribes from the share of resource. This fact diminishes the capability of the Lisu resource management and the power to control their own lives. While the government desires them to be assimilated as Thai which is in line with hegemonic purpose, the Lisu people are still conscious about ethnic identity and do not want to be like the others. Through cultural adaptation, ethnic reinvention and identity maintenance, the Lisu can gain their confidence.

The Lahu groups in Northern Thailand have been touched upon since 1970s by forefront Western experts and then Thai scholars. The coverage of Lahu groups in those studies mostly scatter in provinces of Chiang Mai, Chiangrai and Mae Hong Son whereas the black Lahu on Muser hill in Tak province tend to be rarely mentioned. More or less, there were reports done by government agencies such as Institute of Hill tribe's research on the establishment of schools in the two villages and general information about the locality. Another example is the admirable comparative folktale study by Orathai Saipen from Chulalongkorn University in 1985 as mentioned above. The Thai state policies towards the hill tribes in general and their influence on ethnic culture and transformation of identity in the period of modernization have been a focus in some academic works edited in McCaskill (1997 and 2008) and Duncan (2008).

In these writings, the aspects of cultural identity change among the Akha, Hmong, Karen, Lisu and Christian Lahu groups in other northern provinces, excluding Tak, are explored and discussed. There is a limited number of academic literature dealing directly, comprehensively and systematically with the topic of education policy and its influence on ethnic identity of the Lahu in general and the Lahu in Tak province in particular. Thus, the study will hopefully contribute to our academic knowledge and provide further understanding about ethnic education and ethnic identity change.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The outcomes of the development policies bring indigenous people to the process of cultural integration and assimilation into the national mainstream at the expense of their local culture. For decades, nation-states of Southeast Asia in general and mainland Southeast Asia in particular have paid much attention to economic and social development of the hill tribes. Programs, projects, economic, social and educational policy have brought them material and non-material gains. However, these policies and programs also have impact on the transformation in their customs and way of life. Many scholars have studied and analyzed the reasons of such impact as well as provided deep insights into the process of ethnic community development and ethnic culture in the stream of integration into a broader hegemonic society in a globalized world. The effects on ethnic culture or the change of ethnic culture are the results of various processes. That is to say, cultural assimilation, nationalism, pluralism, cultural adaptation, acculturation, cultural integration and double ethnic identity are the main processes that count. The locus of traditional culture of a community arises from individual knowledge about local beliefs, values, attitudes, rituals, teachings and behaviors. However, in such unavoidable processes brought in by the nation-states, individuals of communities have their responses but mostly the impacts come naturally to them and more or less make a change in their own identity.

In the making of the modern nation-states of Southeast Asia, hill tribes in all countries have been the matter of concern of development policy. McCaskill (1997) argues that each country has its own way to develop. In this process, different theories or practices of economic development at both macro and micro level are applied. Local communities including highlanders or hill tribe communities have been receiving the attention from the central governments in forms of economic opportunities, infrastructure building, and the improvement of living standards and etc. McCaskill goes on to say that the common method to integrate ethnic minorities into the mainstream society regarding all aspects such as economy, education, culture and others, each state institute its own policies. Reforms and projects have been carried out with the aid from central budget as well as foreign organizations and countries. Development theory in most countries is prone to “western and scientific notions of nature and human interaction, which emphasize the malleability of social processes, the predominance of material aspects of human existence and the

desirability of change, understood as a progressive movement toward modernization.” (McCaskill, 1997)

Don McCaskill also points out that the process of development and modernization tend to destroy traditional culture, which is often seen as an impediment to the development process. Meanwhile, local community residents are rarely given any role in decision making. There is little room for traditional indigenous culture as the penetration of capitalism extends even into the remotest communities as part of the emerging global society” (McCaskill, 1997: 28).

McCaskill explains that there are three ways that nation states deal with the relationship between the state and their indigenous peoples:

- 1/ **Hegemony:** Which recognizes only one identity as legitimate. The national culture is the culture of dominant groups.
- 2/ **Uniformity:** Which demands the renunciation of older culture and their replacement by a new synthesis based on physical type, language, or culture which takes the place of the old cultures.
- 3/ **Pluralism:** Which involves the recognition by the state of legitimate sub-cultures within the state, usually in the form of minority groups. These subgroups often possess beliefs, values, and behavior distinct from members of the dominant society. Fundamental to these ideologies is the degree to which the dominant society believes a particular set of values is superior to a variety of sets of values among minority groups within the state.

In those three above-mentioned ways of treatment, the hegemony and pluralism ways are relevant to this research focusing on the case of Thailand and the Muser hill tribe. These two concepts can be used to study the relationship between the nation-state of Thailand and the Muser hill tribe and how they interact with each other. Pluralism and hegemonic purpose go together in the process of state's involvement for development of the hill tribe.

The hegemonic purpose is to enhance nationalism. Each state since its official establishment of freedom or its independence, has put forth to the creation and maintenance of a sense of belonging to a viable nation-state as a central concern. All minority groups with distinctive cultures in a country's border are included. State nationalism in each country remains a force that greatly affects the lives of ethnic minorities.

Regarding Thailand, McCaskill (2008) stated that government policy towards ethnic minorities tends to emphasize the need to assimilate them into the economic and social life of the larger society. This purpose has led to the creation of conceptual mechanisms and hegemonic ideologies being adopted by Thai government to legitimate their definitions of reality and protect their culture. These include such measures as adopting a centralized common curriculum in schools and so forth. Cultural values are on the agenda as “economic and political power are always backed up by cultural power to ensure consent, by implanting images, which sustain political power to ensure consent and remove unfavorable counter-images” as Worsley argued (cited in McCaskill, 2008: 285). The states instill a sense of national identity among its population and assimilate them. As he put it: “This will be the case particularly where democratic principles of freedom of expression, recognition of collective and individual rights, and equality of opportunity operate within a framework of multiculturalism.” (McCaskill, 1997: 29)

As for pluralism, M.G. Smith (as cited in Richard, 2008:29) explains that pluralism can be distinguished into three types as follows:

- 1/ **Cultural pluralism:** although a society is composed of different ethnic groups, these are not relevant in the political sphere or as a criterion for citizenship.
- 2/ **Social pluralism:** in this situation, although ethnicity is relevant in terms of political organization, it does not affect citizenship, the incorporation of individual members of ethnic groups into the state.
- 3/ **Structural pluralism:** ethnicity directly affects citizenship and the incorporation of collectives into full membership of the state

The research will focus on cultural aspect, with regard to pluralism in the case study of Muser hill tribe and the concept about cultural pluralism will be the leading tool. In this case of cultural pluralism, nation-states and their polices mostly claim that the government want to develop the hill tribes in the aspect of economy. In the meantime, attempts are made to uphold and preserve traditional culture. We can see such cultural pluralism as a basic ideology of most nation-states in their policies towards ethnic minorities. It can be seen as dynamic and minority groups participate fully in the dominant society. For example, they can get the same education curriculum, citizenship, the right to vote and so forth yet maintain their cultural differences. Cultural pluralistic society means where different groups can interact while showing a certain degree of tolerance for one another. Apart from this, in a

pluralistic society different cultures can coexist without major conflicts, and minority cultures are encouraged to uphold their customs.

However, through education or other economic and social policies, values of the dominant mainstream society are conveyed and taught to the individuals and create a sense of belonging to a nation-state. In the case study of my research, educational activities in the village, to a certain extent, create a sense of belonging to a multicultural society. However, that tends to be the appearance. The state has been using homogeneity as the inner core of education to culturally assimilate the ethnic minority. Therefore, concepts about cultural pluralism is used to analyzing education policy's impact on Muser hill tribe culture. From that point, I would be able to distinguish between cultural pluralism on the appearance and homogeneity as the main ideology of education policy. In addition, concepts about social pluralism and structural pluralism are also useful when I analyze the change education brings about in terms of social structure and political participation. Democratic practices are taught at school so that the students can learn how to vote and join political activities like the lowlanders. The social management structure is different from the previous one. The young headman of the community is a striking example. Those three types of pluralism are interrelated and can substitute each other when it comes to analyze cultural change of an ethnic minority, especially the impact of education on culture.

The term cultural pluralism is related to multiculturalism, which a nation-state certify equitable status for cultural and religious communities. According to Amara Phongsapit (as cited in Chaninthon, 2003:6), multiculturalism is related to two anthropological concepts: evolutionary theory and cultural diffusion concept, that is to say, evolutionary theory refers to the evolution of humankind from the status of savagery to the status of civilization. Different environment originated different evolution and culture. The productive culture or material culture has influence upon other social and cultural aspects. There are two kinds of evolutions that are specific and general; these two classifications are related respectively to the change at local and global level. The degree of development in each society depends on the limit in environment with the following factors:

- Band
- Tribe
- Chiefdom
- State

Regarding cultural diffusion concept, Rao and Walton (as cited in Chaninthon, 2003:6), assert “while social evolutionary theory attempted to explain difference among peoples throughout the world, diffusionism focused on their similarities. Diffusionism is the idea arising independently through invention, spread from one society to another through forms of contact”.

Amara Pongsapich further classified cultural interaction as follow (Amara Pongsapich, 1991: 16-22):

- **Adaptation:** the relationship between human and environment have changes in some parts in order to have proper relationship. Adaptation includes material and non-material culture, thoughts, beliefs, ways of life and behaviors of society’s members.
- **Acculturation and Assimilation:** the cultural interaction between two groups, which accept each others’ culture. In case one society is more powerful, it can influence the other and draw the inferiors into its culture. Meanwhile, they can also exchange their culture. Finally, if these two sets of cultures are mixed, it become cultural assimilation
- **Cultural integration and Double Ethnic Identity:** the cultural integration accepts cultural diversity and cultural identity. If different ethnic groups within one state accept each other in their cultural interaction, this means cultural integration or cultural pluralism. Cultural conflict might arise if the members within the group do not accept each other in the context of migration, war, colonization and communication.

Apparently, multiculturalism or cultural diversity is a basic factor for the nation-states to implement their policies towards ethnic minority. They always state that ethnic cultural identities should not be discarded or ignored, but should be maintained, nurtured and valued. However, the process of acculturation is still happening. The continuous contact between a hill tribe with the dominant society can cause acculturation in terms of cultural change. The beliefs and customs of the minorities may, to a certain extent, merge with the mainstream culture of the state. The

minorities absorb the cultural patterns through many forms such as education, mass media and other related activities.

As for the states, according to McCaskill (1997: 26-60), when cultural differences might lead to conflict, their policy is to restrict the political activities of indigenous peoples, while allowing them to maintain their culture. To gradually assimilate members of minority groups, the nation state resort to acculturation through education, government services, mass media, economic opportunities in the language and lifestyle of the dominant society, urbanization, co-optation of minority leaders, and encouragement of intermarriage. In this process, “commodification” of culture can bring substantial benefits to indigenous people. In some hill tribe communities, bilingual language education is compulsory, while values of the dominant culture of the large society are taught and absorbed by the young generation. In particular, the larger culture offers many more in occupational, cultural and recreational opportunities in the contact between the two communities. Therefore, cultural values of the large society are introduced to the minorities and finally make a change in each individual identity. The concept that individual identity is a crucial and basic factor to form the identity of a whole community explained by Lola Romanucci (2008) and McCaskill (1997). This can help us analyze the impact of development policy towards ethnic culture from the most basic element – individual of that culture.

As cited in McCaskill (1997), Goerge Marcus and Michael Fischer (1986) assert that culture for development theorists constitutes primarily a category of resistance, which must be taken into account when planning for change. McCaskill further argues that development and changes brought about indigenous cultures through the process of development are not only inevitable, but also, to a large degree, desirable. He gives an interesting explanation about culture and individual that culture provide the individual with design for living. A recipe for appropriate behavior and alternative recipes are based on different values, beliefs, and world views present themselves as viable path to follow. According to McCaskill, “the locus of traditional culture has rested in the communities, where individuals such as elders were recognized as knowledgeable about local beliefs, values, attitudes, rituals, teachings and behaviors. In short, it can be referred to as the “truth” of the group. This included sacred as well as secular understandings that were grounded in nature and a sense of place. An individual’s identity was rooted in the ‘local knowledge’ and spiritual worldview. A sense of collective identity was reinforced in face-to-face community interactions and

rituals which confirmed one's membership in a particular group" (McCaskill, 1997: 28). This argument by McCaskill is an appropriate concept to the fundamental understanding of the formation of a community's identity, which comprises of binding similar individuals' identity. However, identity also has its flexibility especially in the modern time. Identity is constructed over time and long contact with other societies. This explains why hill tribe people are sometimes flexible to integrate in specific contexts. Meanwhile, binding similar individuals' identity makes every community have its distinct traditions, values, and norms.

McCaskill (2008) identifies ethnic culture as poorer culture and overtime, the larger, more powerful, or wealthier culture upsets the balance of forces that ruled over smaller or poorer culture. The poorer culture begins to direct its outputs toward the tastes of the richer culture. Communication with the outside world makes the smaller culture less distinct. In many cases, cultures are not destroyed but rather transformed to meet the new conditions. In this context, cultures adapt, and individuals not only respond to their situations, but also resist, negotiate, incorporate, reject, interpret, and generally make sense of their changing circumstances. Cultures are the contexts within which everyday life presents itself as reality interpreted by individuals as subjectively meaningful to them. This reality of everyday life is shared with others whereby there is an ongoing correspondence of meaning among actors. In the case study of my research, the Muser village have undergone such context. For example, the villagers, especially the headman, resist the influx of Christianity. They make sense of the future circumstance if they accept to follow Christianity. They know that they will stand the risk of losing their original culture. That is how individual construct their reality and identity. Therefore, this concept by McCaskill is useful to analyze the consciousness of educated Muser hill tribe people in the current context.

Lola (2008), like McCaskill, identifies ethnic identity as individuals' identity that are constitutes of the whole community's identity. Ethnic identity, like any form of identity is not only a question of knowing a person is subjectively, but of knowing a person is seen from the outside. Ethnic identity requires the maintenance of sufficiently consistent behavior so that others can place an individual or a group in some given social category, thus permitting appropriate interactive behavior. Identity involves some internally socialized consistency with respect to behavioral norms so that the individual and those with whom one is in contact know what to expect in international relationships. Changes of ethnic identity, therefore, may seem somewhat

artificial and external if the changes are assumed after personality structure has rigidified into the consistent pattern of an adult. A sense of identity is, by definition and by implication, a conscious part of the self rather than the operation of unperceived automatic mechanisms. It is a conscious awareness of what one is in relation to a social group. An ethnic identity is developed through time and takes on various meanings in the course of one's life experience, as a person contrasts his or her social group in some measure against the dominant culture and against other groups within it. There are levels and modes of cultural separateness in one's sense of self. We can not, therefore, consider the other realms of identity except insofar as they reflect our particular concern. Black African's several alternative levels of belonging in modern society are the striking example that illustrates this concept. One goes from a community or so-called tribal group into a broader identity with a nation-state, or a group of similar nations (all of black Africa, for example), or even with an entire continent. According to Lola, an individual can move from one such realm of identity to another without conflict, for one of these identities can be contained within the other. In the case of mutually exclusive ethnic identities, however, there can be crises in which the behavior demanded on one level is inconsistent with the behavior expected on another. And, in some circumstances, a dual or combined identity is not denied but encouraged.

From the concepts by two above-mentioned scholars, we can trace back in an opposite direction and can find such concept is vital when we want to have a clear insight into elements of a ethnic culture and see the whole culture from the smallest cells that make – the individual identity. Communities provide a wealth of organized and deep rooted knowledge, which is accumulated from countless interactions of various socio-political, socio-economic, and socio-cultural attributes that occur over time. This knowledge is conveyed through generations after generations by formal or informal occasions or activities taking place internally in the community. This helps uphold the tradition and maintain the characteristics of culture. Therefore, this kind of knowledge becomes the property of that particular community and plays an important role in shaping the identity structures of its members. The interaction of various sub-identities of an individual through his/her membership in a community continuously shapes the learning, thinking, and perceptual environment, which forms the nature of experiences, value preferences, and knowledge arrangements. This is a process of

socialization that shapes the identity of a person. The acquisition of knowledge in a different social context leads to the formation of individual identity.

In the case of young generation of a certain ethnic community, that they receive education and can read the main language of the state, watch movie, listen to the radio, participate into activities of the larger society gradually makes them become persons with double ethnic identity as shown in Amara Pongsapitch's explanation of cultural interaction. Therefore, when one wants to study the impact of education policy towards ethnic culture, one needs to look at the study of change in individual identity as a result of what they are taught and what they think. The knowledge from school contributed to a person's knowledge that he or she belongs to a social category or group.

In the case of Muser hill tribe people in this research, the young generation who received formal education may have "combined identity" or "double ethnic identity" in each individual as explained by Lola and Amara Pongsapich. Both McCaskill and Lola acknowledge the active factor of individual response to the influence of community development and state's policy. The response is the extent that individuals accept the values from other culture. Sometimes, it is how they conceive who they are, Thai or Muser. This factor is necessary for us to judge the change of culture or identity of a community. In other words, with this active factor of each individual, we take it as a fundamental element to rate the extent of identity change in each individual and the community as a whole.

Moving onto education and the hill tribe people, McCaskill considers it as **"participatory development"** or **"popular participation"**. As cited in McCaskill's work, Paulo Freire (1970) puts that the hill tribe people exist in the state of oppressed consciousness or "culture of silence" which must be overcome to fulfill their true humanity. According to Freire, "the development of critical consciousness through an education process should be the goal of authentic development; the participatory approach to development entails the people being "developed" with an "ownership" of the issues in their communities. As he put it, "It involves the peoples' own ideas being the basic of development, as well as the people playing a significant role in the decision-making process in the project" (as cited in McCaskill, 1997: 36). Therefore, another problem is the lack of recognition and the involvement of the people involved in the development. When an ethnic community has many youngsters with education, they can get much more involved in development programs and have

their own initiatives for their own community development. In the case of Thailand, the fact that education brings growing acceptance of Thai language instruction in schools, exposure to modern knowledge and other religions like Buddhism, and the lack of communication between the Thai-speaking younger generations and the "illiterate" older generations are regarded the signals for the loss of identity more or less.

However, Freire's concept of the participatory approach to development and people's significant role in the decision-making process can be found in the educated staff and especially the young leader of Muser community, the case study of this research. This is a striking example of people whose initiatives and decisions are of great importance to the development of the community and traditional culture. It seems to be an orthodox when indigenous people are both passive and active regarding their community development and the risk of losing their own identity. However, with the concepts mentioned earlier about cultural assimilation, acculturation, pluralism and so forth, we can conclude that a change in identity is unavoidable but in the mean time, when people are knowledgeable, they become more conscious and be active to a certain degree in their response to that change. It is a two-side process. Also, this concept can be used to explain McCaskill's argument about ethnic identity or indigenous culture. That is to say the hill-tribe people are participating in the larger society while at the same time retaining important aspects of their indigenous culture. They can have a co-existence alongside the national cultural identity. Ethnic identities are relative and to some extent situational. Therefore, an individual can behave as a "tribal" in some situations and a city-dweller in others. They can also distance themselves psychologically, as well as socially from the threats of acculturation.

To sum up, theory and concepts are necessary when it comes to explain and analyze the changing context of ethnic culture. They are also necessary for research plan and outline. The influential factors toward a hill tribe culture stem from economic and social development, nation-state's policy and continuous contact with the larger society. Education for the hill tribe people to a certain extent makes a considerable influence to those changes. From the theoretical approach, it can be said that the process of acculturation, cultural pluralism, cultural assimilation and nationalism with hegemonic purpose through state policies bring about a change in ethnic identity from the most basic elements – individual identity. This study will

adopt the above-mentioned theory and concepts about hegemonic purpose, nationalism, cultural pluralism, cultural assimilation, integration, double-ethnic identity and popular participation or participatory development to identify and analyze the impacts of education towards the ethnic culture of Muser community.

The fundamental concepts about **individual identity** as constitutes of a community identity by Lola Romanucci (2008) and McCaskill (1997) will be applied in this study. The study will cover an analysis of individual cultural identity by examining his/her social interaction process, knowledge, behaviors, response to the changing context. It will then explore what and how education and schools introduce new values. Hopefully, this study will provide a better understanding of the dynamics of changes shaping individual and collective community identity.

1.6 Methodology

This thesis will be qualitative and apply the following methodologies:

- Analysis of secondary sources on government policy towards ethnic minority culture in Thailand
- In-depth interview and informal interview with key informants.
- Participatory observation and living among ethnic people for 2 months

Key Informants:

- The headman of Huaiplalod village (Muser Hill, Tambol Dan Mae Lamaw, Amphur Mae sod, Tak province)
- Relevant individuals of the Tambol Dan Maelamaw Authority
- Management board and teaching staff of Huaiplalod school
- The local seniors and teenagers of the village.

1.7 Significance/usefulness of research

- This study provides a broader understanding of cultural research in general and ethnic culture in particular.

- The research will be a basis for further studies on hill tribe culture and minority policy in Thailand.
- The research will contribute a broader understanding of hill tribe culture from the perspectives of humanities and social science.
- Some comments and suggestions drawn from the research will possibly be useful or can be references for policy makers and relevant agencies.

1.8 Limitations and Difficulties

This research will apply interdisciplinary approach, cultural anthropology, sociology, public policy and area studies. There are many limitations and difficulties in conducting this research.

First, the study requires a deep and broad knowledge about not only ethnic identity but also Thai state policy towards hill tribes. Various approaches have been applied in explaining and analyzing homogeneity and cultural assimilation. Secondly, the researcher has limited knowledge of language and this limits the access to Thai documents and important informants. Thirdly, limited access to key informants who are senior officials of the Ministry of Education may affect the objectivity of the research. Finally, time constraint will limit the quality of the research as well as the unfavorable cold weather and the condition of living during my fieldwork affect participatory observation.

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CHAPTER II

THE LAHU NA IN TAK PROVINCE: THE HISTORY OF THEIR MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT IN THAILAND

2.1 Background of the Lahu in Thailand and Lahu Na in Tak province

Hills and valleys make up for one-fifth of total area of Thailand in the North. There are ranges of mountains with the height from 3500 to 8000 feet in north-south direction with rivers flowing through the valleys and level plains in between. Down to south is the main rural area where Thai live and grow wet rice cultivation as the basis of their economy. On highland, hill tribes scattered all over the provinces. The Karen and the Khamu live at lower elevation of 2,000 – 3000 feet with other hill tribes including the Lahu. The Lisu and the Meo live at the height of over 5000 feet above the sea level (Patya Saihoo, 1962- 1963:9). The provinces of the North with a number of hill tribes inhabiting are Mae Hong son, Chiangmai, Chiangrai, Nan, Phrae, Lampang, Lamphun, Sukhothai, Uttaradit, Phisanulok, Kamphaengphet and Tak. According to Gordon Young (1974), there are more than twenty tribes and sub-tribes which can be roughly classified into three major groups: *Tibeto-Burman* consisting of the Akha, the Lisu, the Lahu, and the Karen with their sub-divisions; *Yao-Meo Pateng* comprising of the Meo and the Yao; *Wa* includes the Lawa, the Htin, the Khamu, and the Kha Haw, plus the Haw (Yunnese Chinese) and the Phi Tong Luang which later presumably belongs to the Wa group.

Lahu is one of the popular hill tribes of Thailand, this people ranks the third according to the Department of Public Welfare's statistics (Chanithon, 2003:33). The total number is 85.845 (1997) and continually on the rise. Based on the memoirs of missionaries regarded as unofficial sources, this people moved to Thailand 100 years ago. But according to Anthony R. Walker (1975) who focuses on the Lahu, the exact time is unknown.

Muser Dam is a Thai word for “black Muser” or Lahu Na. They are named after their tribal costume which is black, though Lahu women have white narrow strips of cloth here and there on certain parts of their black dress. The majority of Muser Dam

are now inhabitants of Fang and Mae Tang districts, Chiangmai. They are also found in Lampang and Mae Hong son provinces. The Thai Yai community and the Northern people call them Muser Dam just because their clothes contain black clothes more than other colors. Their clothes also have some white and yellow that are the accompanying colors. According to Samay Suthitham (1977), the Black Muser origins from Yunnan but they located much to Northward than the Red Muser (Muser Deng). They immigrated to the area of Thai Yai in Myanmar and then moved to Thailand. They spread to such many provinces as Chieng Rai, Chieng Mai, Mehongson and Tak. The Black Muser used to live in Pan, Chiangmai on Doi Hua Chang and then moved to Tak Province on Doi Muser.

A 1996 research report by Kumbunratana Prachuap from Chiangmai University (as cited in McCaskill, 1997:22) shows the population of the so-called major Thai hill tribes to be 790,369, constituting 1.3% of the total national population, and including the following ten major groups:

Karen	Hmong	Lahu	Akha	Mien	Htin	Lisu	Lua	Khamu	Mlabri
402,095	126,147	78,842	48,468	47,305	32,755	31,536	15,711	10,153	173

(Kumbun, Social trends of highland communities in the Next decade. Chiangmai University, 1996)

Most recent research report by Asian Development Bank and the United Nations Environment Program 2004 (as cited in Don, 2008:2) shows that the proportion of hill tribes in Thailand is as follow:

Thai	Tibeto-Burman	Sino-Thai:	Mon-Khmer	Austronesian	others
89%	1%	1%	2%	5%	2%

And the detailed proportion is as follow:

Ethnic groups	Communities	Household	Male	Female	Total
Hill tribes					
Karen	1,912	87,628	221,379	216,752	438,131
Hmong	253	19,287	76,960	76,995	153,955

Mien	178	6,758	22,896	22,702	45,571
Akha	271	11,178	33,704	34,494	68,653
Lahu	385	18,057	51,489	51,389	102,876
Lisu	155	6,553	19,082	19,217	38,299
Lua	69	4,361	10,990	11,270	22,260
H'tin	159	8,496	21,595	21,061	42,657
Khmu	38	2,256	5,357	5,216	10,573
Mlabri	2	63	147	135	282
Total	3,422	164,637	463,573	459,684	923,257

Source: Directory of highland communities in 20 provinces of Thailand, 2002. Department of Social Development and Public Welfare, Ministry of Human Development and Security (as cited in Don, 2008: 15)

The chart above shows that the Lahu is among the five most crowded minority groups in Thailand. In Tak province, one hour drive from Tak provincial center, on the half way to Maesod amphoer (Thailand-Burma border) located 2 Muser Dam villages with 7 km distance far from each other. These tow villages have close inter-connection, the students share the same school, women have their product on sale in the same market. It seems like they are members of the same village, no difference or separation avails. Actually, they are under the only one head of community. Each village covers 100 houses with 5 family members in each household; so, totally, the two villages make up for a population of approximately 1000 at the present time.

As far as the legendary goes, the Muser Dam as well as many other Muser groups believe that their origin of the community is from the God of Heaven – Ngu sa. Ngu sa is the creator of the world, the extreme supreme God of the Muser. Ngu sa created fire, water, land and wind and many other things in human world. Ngu Sa create the male body first and female afterwards, and later they fall in love with each other. Then, there came a “great flood”. They take shelter in a gourd and survive. As a result, the female gave birth to 100 children including 50 males and 50 females. When the flood receded, the gourd was floating on a high hill, all the children crawl out of the gourd and separate in couples roaming to different places and the world of human come into being. The older brother and sister stay on the hill to take care of the parents.

The largest concentration of Lahu people is in the Chinese province of Yunnan, in the district of Ssu-mao and Lin-ts'ang. This is a rough hill bordered on the west by the river Salween and on the east by the river Mekong extending northwards to about 24° N and south to the Burmese border. Tak province, at approximately 17° N, represents the furthest southern expansion of the Lahu people. Anthony Walker and Gordon Young share their common findings about the Lahu groups in Thailand as follows:

Name: the people who call themselves “La hu” are known by the Chinese in Yunnan as “Lo-hei”.

Division: the Lahu people recognize among themselves many named subgroups or divisions, Lahu Na (black Lahu), Lahu Shi (yellow), Lahu Nyi (Red), Lahu Hpu (white) and Lahu Sheh leh (meaning unknown). The reason how these divisions developed, and why some groups bear color names is unknown.

Lanague: Lahu speak a Tibeto-Burman language. It is a member of the Loloish branch of the Lolo-Burmese sub-group of the Tibetto-Burman family (Matisoff 1973, as cited in Anthony, 1986:112). In some areas, Lahu language is used to communicate as a second language by neighboring hill peoples. According to Gordon Young (1974:10), there are totally 14 villages of Lahu Na all over northern Thailand. They all speak Tibeto-Burman dialect which is monosyllabic with three tonal variations. The language has many similar words to Burmese and to the Lisu and Akha dialects, which some borrowed terms from Shan and Chinese language.

As for The Lahu Na on Muser hill in this study, they speak their original Lahu mixed with Thai vocabularies, the young Lahu can speak fluently Thai because they study Thai from school. Some adults who sell products in the market have frequent contact with Thai people. Therefore, they can communicate in Thai. Most of the youngster and some adults are bilingual. Among the young, some can speak Karen language because they study with other Karen students in the same school. English is also taught in school. The students can communicate basic conversation with foreigners. Everyday, students of all grades study some vocabularies with the same meaning in English, Muser and Karen language.

Gordon Young (1974) argued that, the inability for the Lahu to pronounce final consonant makes it very difficult for them to speak Thai dialect well. However, as for the case of the young Muser who received education, to my own experience during my stay in the community and contact with them, I find them have a very good proficiency in Thai language. It seems to me that they speak like a Thai person.

Historical background:

Initially some scholars believed that the Lahu are from Tibet on the basis of the linguistic affiliations of the Loloish languages with Tibetan and the people's own legends of migrations from the North. According to Anthony Walker (1986), who based his speculation on Chinese and western reports, reveals that during the 18th and 19th centuries the Lahu often led by "priest-chiefs" gained some notoriety as rebels against Imperial Chinese rule. Chinese government adopted a policy of indirect rule over the pacified territories and appointed Lahu headmen to administer their own people on behalf of the Chinese government. Headmen had to show a spirit of submissiveness and sincerity in embracing Chinese civilization. This was the main reason for the immigration of the Lahu people, who fought against this cultural assimilation policy and consequently moved out of China from Southern Yunnan into Burma and Laos. However, they need more fertile land for cultivating as well as they are in the habit of "*slash and burn*"; therefore, they moved sparsely to inhabited hills of southern Burma Shan states (particularly Kentung) and on into North Thailand. It is unknown when Lahu first penetrated Thai territory. According to Chinese references (china.org, 2000 as cited in Chaninthon, 2003: 33), the recent study has found some legends revealing interesting information about Lahu people. The legend tells they are skilful hunters. They migrated southward and accidentally found the fertile plain while following a red deer. Some Chinese scholars consider the Kumings who migrated into western Yunnan about 2,000 years ago during the Han dynasty might be Lahu's ancestors. About 8th century after the Talifu Kingdom in Yunnan, the Lahu were forced to migrate southward again and settled in their current livelihood.

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The Lahu were assimilated culturally by the Han¹ and the Dai² and adopted their cultivation culture as an alternative to their hunting habit. Along with their economic development, feudalism was also adopted from the Han and the Dai. According to Bunchay Sisawat (as cited in Chaninthon, 2003:34), there were several hill tribes living in Xishuangbana³ such as Khalo and Akha as the Chinese call them. Khalo or Lahu resided in Chiangrung, Mueng Ham, Mueng Yang along with Kui, Lisu, Hmong and Lua, they have no land on their own; therefore, they must serve either the king or the nobles (Natcha, 2541. as cited in Chaninthon, 2003: 34). Based on this source, it can be said that Yunnan is the original settlement of the Lahu before part of them migrated down south. Chinese government has established the Lancang Lahu People's Autonomous Region in the southeastern part of Simao, Lan-ts'sang in 1953 when the population of this people reached more than 46 % of the area. Lahu have an important voice in the administration of this country, although the government is by no means entirely in their hands. As for the other part, in Burma and Laos, domestic political turmoil make it difficult for the Lahu. In Thailand, the relatively stable political context together with uncultivated available land in the northern hills attracted many Lahu immigrants from Burma and Laos. The contact and relationship between the Lahu and Thai government administration have been on the rise with time. (Anthony, 1986: 113-114)

The immigration route of the Lahu from Yunnan to Thailand should be tracked back to the trade route between Chiangrung, the capital of Xishuangbana and other capitals in the south such as Chiangmai, Chiangrai in Thailand, and trade centers in the

¹ Han, dynasty of China that ruled from 202 BC to AD 220. Liu Pang, the first Han emperor. The entire Han era was one of political and cultural centralization and expansion (Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition. Copyright 2008 Columbia University Press retrieved October 10, 2008 from <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Han.aspx>).

² The Dai ethnic group lives in the southern part of Yunnan Province, mainly in the Xishuangbanna region. The history of contact between the Dai and Han peoples dates back to 109 BC, when Emperor Wu Di of the Han Dynasty set up Yizhou Prefecture in southwestern Yi (the name used to signify the minority areas of what are now Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou provinces). The Dais in subsequent years sent tribute to the Han court in Luoyang, and among the emissaries were musicians and acrobats. The Han court gave gold seals to the Dai ambassadors and their chieftain was given the title "Great Captain." (retrieved October 10, 2008 from <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/EthnicGroups/136902.htm>)

³ The area near the Myanmar and Laotian borders, in the deep south of Yunnan Province.

south of Shan State such as Kengtung, Mokmai. According to Natcha (1998) as cited in Chaninthon(2003), there were three routes passing Sipsongpanna , among which was from China to Kengtung. The route was set up from Pu'er and Simao in China, the passing Muang Hing, Mueng Yang, Chiang Rung, Mueng Hai, Mueng Pan, Jiangler in Sipsongpanna to Kengtung where there'd be other routes to trade centers in Shan State and to Chiangmai. Thereby, the Lahu's migration route from Yunnan 200 years ago should start from Simao the passed Chiangrung before going to Chiangmai. This argument was supported and clarified by McCarthy (as cited in Chaninthon, 2003:42). The Lahu followed the same trade route and settled in Kengtung and then reached Chiangmai.

As mentioned above, the reason Lahu people moved from Burma and Laos to Thailand during the World War II was political. Nishimoto (1999) pointed out the political context of the Lahu in Burma that they, Christian Lahu, joined Allied's guerillas and secret service to fight against Japanese and Thai troops that had seized Kengtung. Consequently, Lahu villages were burned down and they fled to China. In China, Lahu people was in the context of civil war between the Kok Min Tang (KMT) troop and the Communist. After the victory of communist in 1949, the Lahu fled to Shan state with the KMT troop. The KMT started fighting with Burmese troop, while the free Shan State troops had rebelled the Rangoon government. The Lahu supported both Burmese government and KMT. The Lahu National Progressive Party joined other ethnic groups to fight against Burmese government. But the Lahu force supported by Burmese army or Lahu Defense Force worked as a guide for Burmese soldiers and joined the guerillas against Shan State army and KMT. Many Lahu were forced to be soldiers by these armies. The villagers are also forced to give labor and pay tax.

The political role of Lahu people in Burma during the time mentioned is considerable. Most of the Lahu in Burma and China were Christianized by an American Baptist missionary Reverend William M. Young. He moved to Kengtung in 1901. Meanwhile, there's another missionary center in Pangwai. In 1947, Reverend Paul Lewis and his wife Elaine came to Pangwai and rebuilt the center. They focused on education to develop Christian Lahu's life. However, because of the incongruent between Pangwai and Kengtung centers, they split into two groups in 1957. The Pangwai had 180 villages and Kengtung 50 villages in control. After 1962 when Ne Win seized the control of Burma, many Lahu migrated into Thailand (Nishimoto, 2000).

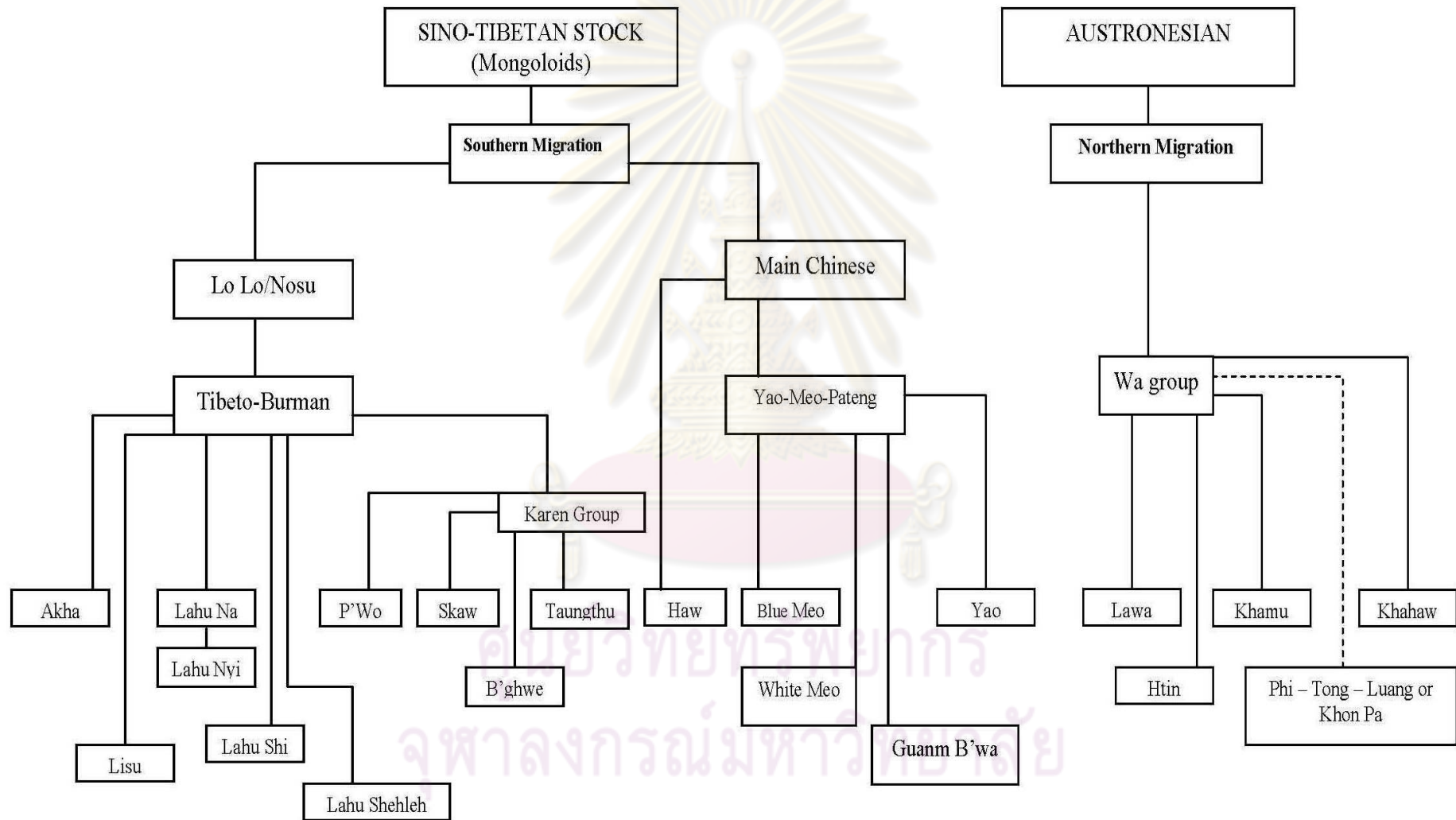
In this research, the case study of Muser hill tribe is exceptional for the above migration route of Christianized Lahu. The two Lahu villages on Muser hill remain their animism along with newly adopted beliefs from Buddhism. The head of the community and the elder in the community when interviewed, they all believe that they are immigrants from Xishuangbanna (Yunnan province) to Thailand during the end of World War I. After a period of settlement time on Muser hill, Tak province, the headman died, the youngsters competed with each other to gain chairmanship of the community or Phu Yay Ban. There arised conflict which resulted in the separation into two villages. However, they have been in close contact with each other. Students of the villages now study in the same class, adults sell products in the same market, people help each other and this close relation is like brotherhood. With historical background mentioned earlier, it can be said that the Muser hill tribe on Muser hill, Tak province has their origin traced back to the immigration route from Yunnan down south directly to Thailand. They possibly passed many places up north in Chiangmai or Chiangrai and finally settled on Muser hill. The interesting thing here is that they have never been Christianized like the other Lahu people in other provinces. The history of this village, according to the elder, should be around 100 years. Therefore, the milestone time for their immigration into Thailand should be traced back to the year 1889 when Chinese Imperial Government established a new district, Chen-pien, placing it in charge of a Chinese sub-prefect who was assisted by a civil and military staff. The move out of Lahu people from China was marked at that time. In the same year, according to Anthony (1986), the Viceroy of Yunnan wrote to his Emperor in Peking that the Lahu, although formerly “ a restless tribe of savages” living on the fringes of Chinese territory, had been reduced to subjection: and were being “gradually brought under the influence of Chinese civilization”. Looking at the animistic system of the Muser on Muser hill and their traditional culture, there reveals evidence that they migrated out of China and was able to escape from that pacification of civilization policy. And of course, this group of Lahu people was not Christianized during the time they were staying in Yunnan.



Map of Muser hill location, source: <http://www.maesod.org/map.htm>

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Table 2.1 ORIGINS OF THE HILL TRIBES OF NORTHERN THAILAND (Gordon Young, 1961)



2.2 General features of the Lahu Na in Tak province

In general, Lahu groups share many similar characteristics that make them distinct from other hill tribes. However, Lahu groups themselves have certain different characteristics to distinguish among them as Yellow Lahu, Red Lahu or Black Lahu.

Appearance:

The appearance of Lahu groups mostly differ in their dress. Regarding physical characteristics, they are similar. Gordon Young (1974) described the Lahu Na in Chiangmai and Chiang Rai as rather fair skinned (light brown). They are, by and large, an attractive, well proportioned people, but cleanliness of the individuals and especially the village grounds is lacking. In Thailand, Lahu men usually wear loose and baggy trousers which reach just below the knees:



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Lahu Na women (Huaiplalod village – Muser Hill – Maesod – Tak province) in traditional costume

These are held up by a belt of leather or, more rarely silver. Cloth leggings cover the lower leg. Black cotton jackets are the traditional top wear and are worn often by Lahu Sheleh and Lahu Na. The old fashion blue or black cloth turban is likewise being replaced by cheap cloth or plastic hats of European style. Men often wear heavy silver bracelets, and sometimes a row of silver rupees is attached to the shirt-front from neck to waist. As for women, they dress baggy ankle-length trousers and an ankle-length jacket which is split up to the waist. The dress fastens on the right shoulder in the style of Chinese cheongsam⁴ (Anthony, 1986:114). Leggings are also worn by most Lahu as part of their fancy costume although they were originally used while working in the fields to keep off the parasite flies. The Lahu make beautiful bags of various design, either had woven or from quilted material, with tassels and sometimes silver limpets attached. (Gordon Young, 1974:12-13). In comparison with the description of Anthony

⁴ This is the *qipao*, better known in the West by its Cantonese name, *cheongsam*, or as a “mandarin dress.” The *qipao* had developed from the *changfu*. A close-fitting dress made from one piece of material, the *qipao* was fastened up the right (or more rarely, the left) front side. It had a high mandarin collar, and its skirt was slit up the sides to the knee. It was made of traditional Chinese fabrics, padded in winter for warmth. At first it was a long dress, but the hemline gradually rose. (Encyclopedia Britannica, retrieved November 2, 2008 from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/171379/dress/14047/China#ref=ref294749>)

and Gordon about the Lahu appearance in general and the Lahu na in particular. The Lahu of my study on Muser Hill share the same characteristics. No difference is found. Especially, they resemble the Lahu Na in the study of Anthony and Gordon in Chiangmai and ChiangRai. To distinguish the Lahu Na on Muser hill with other hill tribes nearby, we can look at the decoration pattern on their dress, especially women's clothes. Lahu Na female dress has colorful flowers on their collars, leggings and side strips. On ceremonial occasions, all unmarried Lahu women wear as much silver jewellery as their household can afford and decorate their blouses or jackets with silver buttons and old silver rupee coins. Women of rich families show off their silver earrings, neck rings, bracelets, and finger rings as well as a belt made of silver coins when they are at work in the field. Children wear smaller styles of the adults. However, these days, when children go to school, it is compulsory for them to wear uniform like all other Thai students of the lowland. They have the chance to dress their traditional costume on some specific days of the week and the ceremonial days. For example, in Muser hill school, they get traditionally dressed on Tuesday and Friday.

Settlement patterns:

Lahu villages comprise 15 to 25 household for each and they are situated on flat of gently sloping ridges at elevations above 1,200 meters (4,000 feet). Important conditions for the location of a village are the easy access to resources of good water supply, cultivation of dry hill rice and other cereals. The Lahu Na choose flat ridge tops just below the summits of higher ranges. In Muser hill villages, water was channeled to each household by sections of bamboo system previously but now they are replaced by Poly-vinyl plastic pipe system. Their houses are built with bamboo on wood piles and roofed with thatched grass or leaves and are clustered together around the larger house of the headman. The size of the house varies according to the number of family members and does not exceed 25 by 20 meters. Chickens, ducks, horses, buffalo, cows, dogs, cats and pigs roam under the house. Pigs are the most popular in the community as they are found roaming every where. This is partly because pork is important in every animistic and ceremonial event. Horses are of medium sized build; we can hardly find any horse of big sized body.

The hearth is always built in the middle of the house, with rack hung above it on which seeds and various commodity are stored and dried. A single knoched log generally serves as the step, which approaches first an open porch on which water is stored for use in the house. The ritual center of the village lays in the central location.

The most sacred place to the community is the center of the village, the fenced dancing circle where most festivals and ceremonies take place. There are serious taboos for all the villagers in this place. For example, they are banned to set their animals on lease to hang around this place because they may harm its clean environment and cause messy things that are not suitable for such a sacred place. It is seriously a violation of the rule if a woman or an animal give birth in this place and especially no sexual activities for both human and animal. In the sacred area, there is a molehill that is the place to set the fire for festivals and to put all the offerings onto. When people dance, they dance around this molehill as a center for gatherings and the focus of the community spirit.



Here they hold the semi-monthly rites in honor of G'ui-sha (in Muser spoken language), the supreme natural.

Religion:

As mentioned, most of the Lahu migrating to Thailand were Christianized. Exceptionally, the Lahu on Muser hill still believe in animism.

They believe in a “Father God” who is the creator of all things good and a vast of good and evil spirits which must be propitiated in order to survive sickness and accidents. The spirits are supposed to inhabit all inanimate objects and sometimes thought to take possession of living creatures, becoming sort of werewolf. Providing that a man is free from the four unpardonable sins of adultery, theft, debt and murder, he will be recalled to heaven, otherwise, a hell comprised of seven great dipping pots awaits the condemned.

Most Lahu villages have a “mo pa” or shaman considered as the witch doctors who deal magic rites chasing away and driving evil spirits. It is the “mo pa” and his

practice that suggests to uninformed outsiders that all Lahu are devil worshipers. (Gordon Young, 1974:10-11) These “mo pa” or “mo phi” as the Muser on Muser hill often call are regarded as messengers. Like many other religions, animism even though itself does not have an organized system of monks or religious order it does have messengers whose duty is to convey the sacred words of instruction and prediction or teachings to the rest of followers. The followers here of animism of ethnic minorities in general and Black Muser in particular. In Black Muser community, such messengers are the seniors who have had much experience in contact with the ghosts and sacred supernatural powers. They can read sacred verses or prayers that the majority can not. In all animistic ceremonies, they are the most important personnel. Without them, the ceremonies could not take place. They represent the whole community to extend their sincere respect and tribute to the sacred and ask for their blessing onto the community. Also, they help chase away the bad ghosts away from the village. In the village they are the respected persons that villagers turn to for advice and for their help in terms of supernatural affairs or when they need to have a family ceremony or many other cultivating ceremonies.

Most Lahu accept the existence of a great number of good, neutral and malicious spirits. Many spirits are associated with natural phenomena: hills, water, lightning etc. Such spirits are not necessarily malicious but when they attack the villagers they must be propitiated, usually by a knowledgeable expert. There are spirits whose primary function is to guard the villagers, their livestock and their possessions. Most important of these are the House spirit. There are some spirits invariably intent on doing harm to the villagers. Some spirits of people who died an unnatural death, others are spirits of demoniacal possession. While belief in innumerable spirits is a common religious phenomenon in Southeast Asia among both hill men and lowland dwellers, the distinguishing characteristic of the Lahu is that they emphasize on one supreme supernatural named G’ui-Sha. G’ui-sha is recognized as the highest of all supernatural and as a creator divinity.

Lahu believe that man’s physical body has a spiritual counterpart or “soul”, which is regarded sometimes as a single entity and sometimes as a plurality. Sickness, if no natural cause appear, is often interpreted as the result of injury to or loss of a soul; a soul may play around and forget to come back to the body; the treatment will be the recalling the soul or propitiation of the spirit which is deemed to have attack it. When a person dies normally, the soul goes to the land of the dead, after which it may be reborn

as another human but after unnatural or sudden death, it is supposedly transformed into malicious spirits (Anthony, 1986:118-120).

In the case of Muser dam on Muser hill, they share the same belief as the other Muser groups in terms of animism. The muser dam believe that in every natural property, there is the ghost managing. Whenever they want to cultivate on that lot of land, they have to make a ceremony to pay tribute and make announcement to the ghost so that they can have a good productive crop on that land. If the ghosts get angry, the crop will be destroyed; maybe insect will come and crunch all the rice plant or many other diseases will appear out of the people' control. In some places, a tree or a hill of land that are the shelter for ghosts and people who do not know have some unexpected actions there can be punished to be sick. For example, a child urinates onto a remaining of ash of a dead person, he is punished to be badly sick and after the elder pay worshipping before that place the child will get better.

There are three kinds of phi that the Muser fear most, they are ghost “susu” in the body, suu in in the chicken and “susu” in the forest. Among them, the “susu” in the human body is the most dangerous one. Anybody who has this kind of “susu” in their body has the cruel personality and it is considered because of the “susu” not of his or her own instinct. The other two kinds of “susu” are not so disgusting as the “susu” in human body.

Other kinds of “phi” is “phi Banphaburut” (ancestral ghosts) that does not live in the human world but live in another world. On the occasion of new year, the local people have a ceremony to invite Phi Banphaburut to come and celebrate the new year with them and pay tribute to Phi Banphaburut and after the new year time, they are sent to their own world.

Unlike other majorities like Thai Yay, there is no war in this minority; so there is no kind of hero of the community worshipping. For example, in Mea sod Amphur , people worship “chau pho Phawo” – Phawo God father. However, the Black Muser villager pay respect to the seniors who have helped the community much and when they die, all the community member come to his/her house to join the funeral ceremony and send him to the cemetery.

Worshipping activities:

The ceremony activities related to “phi” worshipping or animism are one of the first and foremost in Muser life. These activities are necessary in their daily life most of the ceremonies serve as opportunities to pay tribute to the sacred and pray for the good

things blessed onto their life. Among the important ceremonies are the New year ceremony and new crop ceremony. In these two ceremonies, all members of the community gather together and join all the activities. They bring people the sense of unity and community. Other ceremonies are related to every household. There are also ceremonies to pray for fertility of the crop of each household. Some ceremonies are to make announcement to the Mountain ghost to cultivate. Another ceremony is to “riek khwan” – to call the spirit of a family member who is sick. They believe that every body has totally 32 kwan and if one of it floats away or hang around for fun and forget to come back to the body, the person will be sick. When a family faces bad things, they have a ceremony to chase away the bad ghost. Besides, there are many other individual or family ceremonies like these.

New year ceremony:

Once a year, the Muser celebrate new year as the biggest ceremony of the year. Like other Muser communities, Black Muser celebrate their New year at the same time. Usually, the new year time falls into the period of time from middle April to May of lunar moth. The head of the community and other seniors are the organizing board of the ceremony. They are the one who set up the important days of the ceremony according to their consideration for the convenience of the date to carry out the activities.

The New year activities are divided into 2 categories: New Year for female and New Year for male. The reason why there is such division is the fact that, the new year date clashes with the date that all the men in the community are hanging out for trade or cultivation; therefore, they can not get home timely and the women should celebrate first and after that 1 week the men come back home and celebrate their New year. All the male and females dress up beautifully to welcome the new year. They exchange gifts and other things like sticky rice and cake. Every household has to carry out the similar worshipping so that all the members of the community get the same bless from the sacred powers. Every household make good preparation for the new year celebration by collecting enough logs or wood from the forest to store in house. It is a must that nobody collect any more wood during the new year time. Also certain kind of work is prohibited.

On this occasion, “banphatburut” ghost come to celebrate with them and bless them much energy so that they can dance and sing the night over. They dance wholeheartedly especially the youngsters. They dance head forwards not backwards. It

is also a belief that just dance straight towards like the development. To step backwards means you lag behind. All the families stop their work on the farm or in the forest contemporarily to celebrate new year. On the first day of the new year, people will build the new temple. On the second, they exchange offerings to each other. On the third, the ghost Banphaburut will leave houses and the new year of male comes. The same ceremonies are carried out like those of female new year. However, the new year for male lasts only one day after that. The banphatburut ghosts come back again to houses and definitely leave on that day. Initially, the period of both new year celebration lasted 11 days but recently, they keep it for only 4 days. The tradition of spilling the water onto the head is also carried out in new year festival. This is the chance for children to extend their gratitude and respect to parents. A sense of hospitality rises in this time when people welcome guests to their house and invite them some rice and some food prepared by themselves on the days before the new year.

Also in the new year, the Muser dam has “ngan khun san chaw” (ceremony to set up the supreme God temple). This temple is newly built once a year in the time of new year. This god spirit is invisible to the people. No one can see his or her face but they pay absolute tribute and respect to this God especially in the ceremony to build the house for “san chaw”. The sanchaw is built after a new year period of 12 days. Also on the day they build “san chaw”, all the members of the community gather together in the sacred point central of the village to send the ghosts to their world. They have the ceremony to watch the chicken bone to ask for instruction from the sacred that what genre of rice and producing they should cultivate, what is good for trade in the new year. The bad omens or any unexpected events could be shown in the chicken bone. Also from chicken bone, the local people can predict that this year will occur accident to community members when they are at work in the forest or on the field, there could be drought or flood, the female could be the driving force for the community in the new year or not. From that, they seek for the solutions or at least try their best to diminish the extent of suffering to the minimum. The reality or actual life have been taking place according to the sacred words conveyed from the sacred power through the messengers who are called “mo phi”. And actually, according to the local people, these sacred words have prove them exact and correct. That’s the reason why they still uphold this animistic tradition seriously and their belief stays strong.

New rice ceremony

As mentioned above, animism is related to the belief that every thing has spirit. As for the rice plant, this is the foremost kind of plant for its role in the Muser' daily life. It is the source of food, the vitality and the economy. The muser dam believe that the rice plant has a spirit. Other minorities such as the Khmu, the Bahnar believe in rice plant spirit and in their imagination it is a female angel named Yangsori. Similarly, the Muser Dam believe in the spirit of the rice plant as a female spirit and she is the symbol of "udomsombun" or fertility. Before they start a new crop, they worship the spirit with offerings and prays for a productive yield. After the harvest, they have the ceremony to express their sincere gratitude to the spirit for blessing them a good crop. This ceremony is held in October and November according to the growth period of the rice plant. Also during these months, the moon is in full shape and is of the best beauty that is the symbol of happiness and prosperity that is a good signal for a good harvest. People kill the pigs for food on this day and tight the hand of each other with a small cotton piece to wish each other happiness as they do in new year time.

The ceremony to chase the bad ghosts:

When the community has bad omen or some members are sick because of the bad ghost disturbing them, they have a ceremony to chase the bad ghosts away. People believe that the bad ghost stick to the human body and make them sick. Also the bad ghosts bring bad luck to the community. Sometimes, they cause bad trade or conflict among community members and harm their property and belongings as well as their poultry. They want to chase the ghost away by crawling through a cage made from bamboo tree and leaves.



Possessed person crawls through this circle of bamboo tree to chase away the bad ghost in his/her body

The ghost in body will feel curious about the strange object and stop at the door and the human body will crawl through with the ghost spirit stripped off at the other side. The place to chase away the bad ghosts is near a water stream so that the bad ghosts as well as the bad things will flow along with water to far away.

Another way is to make a small house by bamboo tree and stuff inside it food and clothes and throw the whole stuff onto the main road to the community. They believe that all the bad things come from the external world through the main road and now they throw them to the main road so that the bad things will be swept away.

They believe that, the ghosts also have a life like human kind and they need such material as clothes, rice and many other things. That's why we can see many stuff being thrown around the ceremony place. To chase away bad luck, people hang amulet on the main gate of their house. This kind of amulet is also made from bamboo tree.



The sacred date and time

As mentioned above, the date and time of ceremonies is often set by the experienced seniors. They reckon according to the convenience of the climate and weather to set the sacred date and time so that they can have the best performance in contact with the sacred powers and get the best results in their praying as well as their daily activities.

The sacred offerings

The sacred offerings of the Black Muser are the very familiar materials that can be found easily nearby their home or within the village. For most ceremonies, the offerings are the same. What makes it different is that in each ceremony, the amount of offerings and the way of decoration are characteristic of the meanings of ceremonies.

For example, in new year festival five necessary things are offered to the sacred powers are tobacco leave, corn, candles, silver and tea. Every stuff must be in pair that is the symbol of couple or the interaction of male and female, the two factors that create the life circle, vitality and fertility. This can be brought into the comparison with yin and yang ideology of Chinese culture. Tobacco leaves, Corn and Tea are the product that are close to their daily life. Local people take these stuff to offer their revered ghosts to express their all time intimate looking up to and sincerity. The offering stuff is familiar and popular just like their respect very loyal and available on daily basic. Candles and silver are the two more luxurious materials in terms of spirit. There have many other minorities believing that when a person accidentally see silver on the street, it is good luck rather than gold. It is possibly the reason why the Black Muser take silver as one of the five. In my modest speculation, due to their origin from China, more or less they receive influence from the giant Chinese civilization in terms of spiritual belief. The five element characteristic in the offering stuff consists of tea as water (shui), tobaccolleave as wood (mu), silver as metal (jin), corn – a product from the soil as soil (tu) and candles as fire (huo). These five elements 五行 - wǔ xíng or 金-JIN 木-MU 水-SHUI 火-HUO 土-TU create the material basic of the universe and represent the vicious circle of life.

The sacred sound

Unlike some other ethnic minorities, the drum play an important role in ceremonies, the Black Muser play their typical musical instrument made from unique local trees including bamboo trees, gourd and others.

The sound of the musical instrument is the call of local people sent to the sacred powers to come and enjoy their offerings as well as to bless them as they pray. The kind of melody and the order of musical instrument to be played are absolutely different from the daily performance. The artists representing the whole community extend their loyal respect and worship to the supernatural in the sacred ceremonies. The sound is the invisible linkage between the two world – the world of ghosts and the world of secular human being. The melody is usually slow and with harmonious rhythm with a mother one to be played dominantly and other smaller accompanying. The leading instrument is the comprising of five sounds representing the father, the mother and children. It is the symbol of unity. Particularly only the leading one named “the nokkuma” is used for the

contact with ghosts in the important ceremonies when they are praying or worshipping. After that, when all the people join the festival to dance or to sing, other musical instruments are played out loud.



A puchan (Huaiplalod village) is playing Muser musical instrument



Other smaller musical instruments accompanying the mother one

Economy

Unlike the other Lahu groups, the Lahu on Muser hill have never grown opium. They grow rice, peppers, corn and harvest them as the rice staple. Side crops include melons, pumpkins, “the year round bean” (*Cajanus cajan*), millet, yams, potatoes, cucumbers, bananas, and mustard. Chicken and pigs are the main livestock. Pigs are released to roam around the village to seek for their main diet. There is no more “slash and burn” habit in the two villages. The products are on sale in the two markets nearby along the main route from Tak provincial center to Mae sod. Initially, the old market was set up far 9 km and 2 km from the two villages respectively. The new market was set up afterwards. Advertisement boards are found along the way from Tak town center to the market. Passenger buses often drop in there for tourists and by-passers to buy the local products. The main crop is planted in May and harvested in late October. Corn and other supplementary food crops follow along through the year. Hunting is also an important part of their economy for meat for the family and for sale. Some Lahu people earn a living mostly by hunting for smoke-cured meat of deer and wild cattle and the velvets horns of sambar buck as medicine and also seek for herbal.

Social Structure

The cells of Muser society are based on family foundation. In general, each family has from 2 to 3 generations including grandparents, parents and children. The married couple will stay with the female side, the Muser marriage is of female side; which means after the marriage the husband has to stay with the wife’s family and he will dedicate his labor for his wife’s family for 3 to 4 years and he can separate his own family afterwards. In case the husband does not want to stay and work for the wife’s family, he can make up for it by paying money. The amount of money is up to the deal that the two sides make.

In the family basic, the man of the family will be the main labor force in charge of economy, protection of the household, the rice field and ceremonies. In case the husband passes a way, the wife will take the duty to be the leader of the family. The husband of the family is the son in law due to the fact that Muser Dam people’ marriage is maternally based. Unlike the other hill tribe, the Muser Dam has the lineage system to track relatives of the same blood flesh. They count down within three generations of the maternal and father sides from grandparents till grandchildren. This is the basic rule when any couple wants to get married, their parents have to track back their blood lineage whether they are related or not. In comparison with the H’mong, it is quite a

difference. If a female gets married, she is considered to be member of the husband family and her children and other children of the same family lineage of the husband are considered relatives, which means the lineage of the father side is important to recognize relatives.

As for the headman of the community, previously, the leader of a household is elected to be. A headman of a certain household is voted by the majority of other headmen of other households. In case the current headman leaves his position, the successor will be his close relative of the same blood lineage or possibly a certain willing and qualified individual. The headman has the duty to take care of the rules or regulations of the community. There is an official elder committee to provide consultancy as well as acceptance to the paramount decisions that might give impact or of great importance to the community. Exceptionally, the Muser dam on Muser hill of this study, the current headman is a young man with a bachelor degree. The reason why the such elder committee voted for him is that the previous headmen could not adopt all the information from the meetings with the central provincial authority about development programs as well as policies related to the community, therefore they could not transfer the message fully to the other community members. The current headman is considered the most well-educated member who can represent the community to contact persons in charge from central authority as well as higher level at the other relevant governmental agencies and other outside contact. Therefore, he receives the acceptance and support from the whole community to become the headman. He can communicate Thai well and joins the committee board for related policies towards his community. His suggestions proposed to the central provincial authority are mostly considered and soon many main projects have been carried out afterwards. He takes the duty to be the leader of the two villages on Muser Hill; thereby, creating a close link between the two villages. He has been granted sponsorship to central Bangkok to further his management capability; more over, he has been to Japan for 1 month during October 2008 to attend a seminar and observe hill tribe projects.

Today, Lahu communities in North Thailand in general and the Lahu on Muser hill in particular, are part and parcel of the whole Thai society. They have official close link to governmental agencies or provincial management boards. Increasing contact regarding trade and culture have made the mutual understanding between the Lahu and the lowland neighbors develop. As for the Lahu villages on Muser hill, Lahu children

study in the same primary and secondary school with lowland students on Friday. They are carried by a van from 7 km village out to the main route to central Tak province. New ideas, values, information and culture are transferred through such contacts.



ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CHAPTER III

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY TOWARDS THE HILL TRIBES AND LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION: THE CASE OF HUA IPLALOD SCHOOL

3.1 Education policy towards the hill tribes

During the past decades, Thailand has experienced growth in education system including basic education and higher education. Thai Education has served as a crucial means to build up people's capability to integrate into the process of development in the modern time. Thai government has enhanced every individual's access to education. In other words, access to education has been extended to all, regardless of sex, race, financial status or physical and mental conditions. Hill tribe people are no exception. Education has been introduced to remote hill tribe communities along with other hill tribe development programs. There has been no specific education policy towards hill tribes but hill tribe educational projects and programs have been included in hill tribe development policy. Education for hill tribes is classified as formal, non-formal and informal. Hill tribes are legitimated belonging to Thai society and "in the provision of education, all individuals shall have equal rights and opportunities to receive basic education provided by the State for the duration of at least 12 years; such education, provided on a nationwide basis, shall be of quality and free of charge" (Office of the Prime Minister. Office of the National Education Commission, 2002: 6). Therefore, hill tribe people are part of target population of education policy.

All forms of hill tribe education serve the same purpose – to integrating the hill tribe communities into the mainstream society regarding economic and social aspects, constructing Thainess, implanting sense of belonging to Thai nation for nationalistic purpose and culturally assimilating. Such ideologies are attached into related policies and programs at general and instructive level and then transferred to implementation in reality at specific localities. To study about education towards the hill tribes, it is necessary to look into nationwide general education policy first. Then, we look at each hill tribe locality of our case study. Each locality has its own context and features; therefore, education is also designed specifically to fit in. By doing this, we can have a broad overview and detailed insights into hill tribe education. The case study of

Huaiplalod school of this study is a striking example. This chapter will provide clear insights into Thai education policy towards the hill tribes nationwide by looking into curriculum design, teaching and learning method, its ideology and purposes. Then, the case of Huaiplalod school is mentioned as a place of local implementation according to national education policy.

Nationwide, basic education in Thailand is divided into 6 years of primary schooling (Prathom 1 to 6) followed by 3 years of lower secondary (Mattayom 1 to 3) and 3 years of upper secondary schooling (Mattayom 4 to 6). In 2003, compulsory education was extended to 9 years, with all students expected to complete Mattayom 6. Eight core subjects of the National Curriculum are Thai language, mathematics, science, social studies, religion and culture, health and physical education, arts, careers and technology, and foreign languages. Curriculum is designed flexibly in order to conform to local culture and wisdom. The promotion of thinking skills, self-learning strategies and moral development is at the heart of teaching and learning in the Thai National Curriculum. The upper secondary level of schooling consists of Matthayom 4 - 6, for age groups 15 to 17 and is divided into academic and vocational streams. There are also academic upper secondary schools, vocational upper secondary schools and comprehensive schools offering both academic and vocational tracks. Students who choose the academic stream usually intend to enter a university. Vocational schools offer programs that prepare students for employment or further studies.

As far as education policy towards the hill tribes in Thailand is concerned, we have to look into different hill tribe development programs and policies to sort out what is educational. According to Somchai Nanthasen (Somchai, 1999:15), initially state's policy towards hill tribes includes politics, economy, society and opium eradication. There was no specific education policy towards hill tribes. Education programs have been attached with different policies. No hill tribe policy had been launched until 1956. The first hill tribe policy was made by the Ministry of Interior in the same year. In 1963, education policy was made by Hill tribe committee in charge of education. In 1969, the policy was amended by Hill tribe Committee in charge of education and public health. After that, education policy had not been extended. Until 1979, hill tribe committee in charge of education emphasized the consideration on "Educational Center for Community" program in highland area. In the first stage, it was merely a pilot program. The purpose was to find a suitable education model towards hill tribes. From that, an educational development strategy would be discussed and then implemented by

the Ministry of Education. The vision of the Ministry that time was that primary education for the hill tribes should be specific in context. It should be different from “lowland” primary education. Apart from literacy including reading and writing comprehension, the policy was to aim at a sense of belonging to a government for safety reason. Because of the task to creating sense of Thai people, the curriculum and teaching staff should be specially organized. From 1979 till 1999, there had no more amendment or extension of education policy. However, there had been programs to set up schools in remote places and communities with language and politic problems (Education Ministry. 1988 as cited in Somchai, 1999:15)

On February the 7th of 1989, Ministerial committee set up policy regarding national stability related to hill tribes and opium. There were 4 ministries together conducting this task. The strategy was pointed out according to the main hill tribe policy. The National Policy on hill tribe effective 1990 covers three aspects¹ :

1. Political and administrative aspect
2. Economic and social development
3. Natural resource: usage, conservation and development

Among those three aspects, education is included in the second. According to the policy, primary education is provided, both formal and non-formal so as to lay the foundation for future communication, socio-economic development, political administration and natural resource conservation. Along with education, Buddhism is also promoted among tribal societies so as to build up national unity.

Regarding education, according to Somyot Menyem (as cited in Somchai, 1999:15), the strategy is as follows:

1/ Provide primary education service both in and out of school system broadly and thoroughly

2/ Adjust the curriculum to be most suitable. Build the readiness and consciousness of the target population by providing knowledge and training skills for locally specific work performance. Build the solidarity for community and individual development, awareness of obeying law and governmental regulations. Help people practise their right and perform their duty, follow the teachings of the Lord Buddha and preserve natural resources.

¹ *Hill tribes: ways of life and development: Department of Public Welfare. 1991: 29-33*

3/ Allow academic activities related to religion and culture on the highland areas clearly. Private sectors can join suitably.

The policy in the education development program for the highlands (1992 - 1996) was to provide education for those who lack in or have no access to education. There are no other policies specific for hill tribe education. Mostly, related policies are included in education program for those who lack education in general. (Somchai, 1999:16)

In 1996, the national committee of primary education (as cited in Somchai, 1999:18) set up the primary education policy as follows:

1. Set up primary education for all children and support them to finish the course
2. Emphasize the development of primary education to reach standard qualification by upgrading and reconstructing schools, reinforcing teaching staff and relevant officers, revising curriculum and redesigning the teaching and learning system, reforming management system
3. Promoting the effectiveness of education management and supervision by : emphasizing on management system, decentralizing to relevant agencies or offices that implement the policy; Using of plan as the manual of management; developing information and documentary system, setting up and upgrading budget management; developing agencies and offices according to standard requirement; applying modern technology into supervision and information, following, controlling and assessing result; promoting cooperation with local organizations to manage, support and assess the performance
4. Develop personnel management system to provide personnel sufficiently, recruit teaching staff for subjects that lack teachers, reinforce staff of all aspects and levels so that they all have sufficient knowledge, skills, awareness, ideology and far vision in their performance
5. Support benefit provision and priority right of personnel of all aspects to encourage performance, build pride and happiness in different ways to the expectation of personnel.

Moving onto curriculum, this is crucial part of Thai education. To serve nationalism, the nationalization of educational knowledge is transferred through curriculum. Curriculum contains a body of knowledge to be transmitted to students by

teachers. It is considerably cultural policy-driven specifically for hill tribes. In terms of culture, curriculum is the conceptualization and understandings of knowledge as well as cultural inclusion and cultural reproduction (Alex Moore, 2006: 93). These two cultural functions can be found in Thai education curriculum towards hill tribes. Like lowlanders, hill tribe students learn the same cultural and social concepts of Thai mainstream society. In this case, there occurs cultural reproduction from primitive ethnic culture into Thai culture. It is a process to learn with a curriculum from a basic level to a higher one. Curriculum leads the students to aspects of knowledge including culture. More over, the design and purpose of curriculum contribute to establishing new behavior, new morality and ethic in young individuals. The way curriculum requires students to behave accordingly is reflected through teaching and learning system. According to Somchai (Somchai, 1999:19), curriculum lead teachers to develop themselves to get good qualification. Curriculum also tells us about purposes of subjects assigned for students.

Primary education curriculum 1978 (revised version in 2533, Ministry of Education, as cited in Somchai, 1999:20) expects students to be able to think, do, resolve problems and work systematically. Students are able to develop their life quality. Then they dedicate to the society to their own ability, duty and role. In this process, it is a must to grow in their mind characteristics as follows:

1. Self – development: basic knowledge, good mental and physical health, solving problems that arise, sacrifice and self-development ambition
2. Occupation development: cooperation with others at work, affection for work and ability to work
3. Social development: duty performance towards family, community, nation and the world

Emphasis of curriculum:

1. Teaching and learning activity focusing on process:

Students are able to learn and have knowledge in different aspects and processes. Students can take advantage of knowledge and experience that they get from schools. Students have to be taught how to practise in reality. Other different processes have to be promoted. Those are thinking process, problem solving process, scientific process, knowledge searching process, management process etc.

In order to help students have understanding, knowledge, ethics, and many other processes, teachers have to turn traditional teaching habit to teaching method emphasizing on practice.

2. Supporting the building of curriculum in localities

Curriculum designing has to be based on the diversity of localities in terms of environment, culture and social economy. Therefore, curriculum opens opportunity for localities to design in related details under the regulation of Ministry of Education. Students can get benefit from local education and have love as well as attachment with their own locality.

3. Organizing teaching and learning activity according to policy

Applied curriculum is in line with two points:

- Teaching and learning activity focuses on meaningful knowledge to the best extent
- Teaching and learning activity is carried out suitably with local conditions

Structure of curriculum:

The structure is divided into 5 aspects as follows:

- 1) Manual for learning skill: Mathematics and Thai language
- 2) Promoting life experience: Process of solving problems of life and society by emphasizing scientific process
- 3) Promoting personality characteristics: Activities that help promote social values, personality, behavior
- 4) Promoting Work and basic vocation: General experience and knowledge about work and basic knowledge to pursue vocations

- 5) Special experience: Many activities to the interest of students; for example, English for daily life.

Such curriculum content is conveyed by different methods. National committee of education (1982) divides the method of teaching and learning into two categories. Those are the method according to which teachers are the center of attention and the method according to which students are the center. Thepthai (1992: 80-82) briefly summaries the two methods set up by National committee of education as follows:

1. Teacher centered method:

Teachers' presentation or instillation of knowledge directly at primary level. Other extra activities are necessary also.

The use of questions helps students think and find answers for themselves. To use good and correct questions is not easy at all. Therefore, teachers have to know how to ask question technically always. Such questions will push students find experience or reasons to their best ability. This method will brings effectiveness to students in their study. They can be more self-reliant, thinkable and self-confident.

Demonstration involves showing students. Demonstration activities are diverse up to the characteristics of the experienced groups / performers. Demonstration activities help students understand many affairs better.

2. Student centered method:

The use of books: The use of books provides students with knowledge. Teachers have to know to use and guide students to use books effectively. Teachers can not use books as alternative to themselves.

Assignment and self study can promote students' self reliance. When giving assignments, teachers have to prepare in advance that whether there are many accessible sources of knowledge.

Giving practice material or homework is another activity that can help self study. Basing on The result of homework or practice material, teachers can evaluate students whether they learn the unit of the book at home and understand it or not. In case they don not understand, teachers have to teach the unit again or help them brush up on it again.

Group discussion provides opportunities to show their mind, raise their voice and decide in a certain affair. Also, they know how to make plan and suggestions in their own activities. More than that, teachers train them to think rationally and critically. They will know to listen to the others' ideas and even accept ideas different from his/her

own. Self study responds to the diversity of students' ability. Students can study according to their capability.

Education strategy, curriculum as well as teaching and learning method all are to serve the purpose of integrating hill tribes into the mainstream society. The above – mentioned characteristics and general contents of curriculum, teaching and learning activity and method are in line with objectives and principles of Thai education policy. That is to aim at the full development of the Thai people in all aspects including mental health, intellect, knowledge, morality, integrity and desirable way of life to be able to live in harmony with other. What is more, “the learning process shall aim at inculcating sound awareness of politics and democratic system of government under a constitutional monarchy; ability to protect and promote their rights, responsibilities, freedom, respect of the rule of law, equality, and human dignity; pride in Thai identity; ability to protect public and national interests; promotion of religion, art, national culture, sports, local wisdom, Thai wisdom and universal knowledge; inculcating ability to preserve natural resources and the environment to earn a living; self-reliance; creativity; acquiring thirst for knowledge and capability of self-learning on a continuous basis” (Office of Prime Minister. Office of the National Education Commission, 2002: 5).

Such aims are implemented nationwide. Obviously, some aims as listed above are much involved in cultural education. The purpose of nationalism and cultural assimilation is to construct pride in Thai identity, promote religion, art and national culture. Regarding nationalist purpose, education policy of Thai state towards the hill tribes focuses on three main factors. Those are Thai language, economy system and management structure. These factors are both beneficial to both sides, the government and the hill tribes. National education committee (as cited in Thepthai, 1992:45) suggests three items to be applied in order to implant Thai identity as follows:

1. Thai language:

Language plays a very important role in tradition and culture. Language helps transfer culture from generation to generation. Mary Bucholt and Kira Hall (as cited in Alessandro Duranti, 2004: 382) identify the role of language as a fundamental resource for cultural production and identity production. Language of Thai nation is Thai. Therefore, every Thai person has the duty to show Thai linguistic culture continuously to express the attachment of his/her own with Thai-ness. (Phaob Posakosana, 1984 as cited in Thepthai.1999:45)

Phaob refers to His Majesty the King's comment about Thai language as the following:

Language is the attaching tool between among human being....The awareness of belonging to a same tribe with the others is the most important. It is more important than speaking a same language. Governments recognize this fact. Therefore, when they want to control different tribes with different languages, they have to build schools and legislate to teach the language of the dominant group. However, such ideology does not always succeed to the expectation of governments. In case the teaching of dominant language is not successful, it means that language speakers and the governors do not believe in each other. .. Language is the inspiring factor which can implant values in people more than other factors. (Phaob. 1984 as cited in Thepthai, 1999:45)

From the comment of His Majesty the King as above, it can be said that Thai language is important toward Thai-ness. Therefore, It is necessary for Thai people to preserve Thai language to transfer to the following generations and to show Thai-ness to the world. Primary schools all over the country are the basic units to be in charge of teaching Thai language. It is considered as a political duty towards the nation. It is obligatory for Thai citizen to attend primary schools. Apart from showing Thai-ness, "Thai language is a leading tool to seek for knowledge. If Thai youngsters can not use Thai language as manual for their life, they will lose opportunities". (Sutmon Omwirat. 1984 as cited in Thepthai, 1999:46). Banluu Pharuksawan (1980. as cited in Thepthai, 1999:46) pointed out that Thai language is the key to knowledge and activities of Thai people.

With the reasons mentioned earlier, National Committee of Education (1984 as cited in Thepthai, 1999:46) certified Thai language to be taught for hill tribe students. Hill tribe students learn to speak Thaiklang (central Thai) when they start school. The Thaiklang assumes the life, culture and language of central Thailand. The learning of language leads to the learning of culture. During this process, awareness and consciousness of being Thai people are implanted.

2.Economic system:

Economic activities of the hill tribes in general and the Muser in Tak province in particular are related to cultivation, harvest, consumption and trade. However, traditional and cultural ceremonies are integrated into economic activities of hill tribe

people in the mean time. Agricultural life is attached with the rotation of time and weather. When favorable conditions come, they get started for a new crop. It is the very time they pay worship to the spirits of rice plant and the rice farm. When harvest time comes, new rice ceremony takes place. Agricultural economic system goes together with the diversity of ethnic traditional culture and social events. In the curriculum, the subject Agriculture provides a considerably basic knowledge about how to cultivate scientifically.

According to Thepthai, hill tribes in northern Thailand have two cultivation systems:

1. Short-term cultivation system: The Lua and Karen use this system. They slash the forest to make the field within 1 year. After the harvest, they leave the land lot in natural state. During a period of 1 or 2 years with favorable weather condition, grass grows again. If they do not cultivate on that area for 6 or 7 years (in the case the forest still remains and population pressure is still minimal). This cultivation system does not harm the ecosystem. This is circulating crop. In the area where there are water streams, the Karen and the Lua grow rice by diverting streams to irrigate step rice fields. Kinds of rice which are grown on step rice fields do not always need water. Rainfall and stream water supply enough. Apart from rice as the main crop, corn is grown to substitute rice when the rice crop is not productive and to feed animal at home. Many other vegetables are also grown along with rice and corn.
2. Long-term cultivation system: Even though, the Meo (H'mong), the Lahu (Muser), Mien (Yao), the Lisu (Liso) and Akha (Yko) use this system, it is considered the Meo's system. This systems uses land resource continuously in a considerable long period of time of at least 5 years or longer than that. Until the productivity decreases or there is serious wild weed problem or there appear two such problems, the hill tribe people leave the field for another. When forest area is still vast and population pressure is minimal, those hill tribes will not return to the previous field. The reason is that they used it for such a long time and they believe that low fertility remains. After such a long cultivation time, the field area can not turn back into forest again.

The main cultivars of this system are similar to those of short-term system. Regarding cultivar for trade only, opium is very popular among the hill tribes of

Thailand. Most people think that hill tribes pay much attention to growing opium. Actually, they focus much more on growing rice. First and foremost, rice is crucial in their daily life. Second to rice is corn. When asked about the importance of rice, they all answer that rice is the most important crop. As for corn, they keep to feed pigs. However, corn is used as the main part in their meals. Especially, within three months before the rice harvest time, the rice reservation is scarce. Corn is used as an alternative. This is the reason why every household stores much corn. In the case of the H'mong, corn is much more stored and can be a substitute for rice all the time. Regarding the Muser in Tak province, they stopped growing opium in 1984. Like many other tribes, rice is the main cultivar and corn can be found hang on the roof of every house.

As mentioned, corn is used to feed pig, an important livestock for religious ceremonies. What is more, pork is the main source of protein for all hill tribes. Apart from being a substitute for rice in crucial time, corn is used to be offering to the sacred ghosts in religious ceremonies. The growing of corn helps the growing of opium. After harvesting corn, they put opium seed onto the same field. Corn plants help hinder wild weed and protect young opium plants from rainfall stream. (Robert Cooper.1984 as cited in Thepthai, 1999:50)

Therefore, it is necessary to provide hill tribe people with knowledge about permanent agriculture. Education instructs them how to manage resource, use technology in agricultural field, and distribute product. The purpose of education in terms of economy is to make hill tribe people ready in agricultural work. Education provides knowledge to reinforce the agrarian force and help them make productive crops. What is more, they will stop growing opium and destroying forests when they have a permanent agriculture. Mostly, hill tribe students after secondary school start working as farmers. According to the reckoning of the management board of Huaiplalod school, most of the students after finishing secondary school, they do farming work to earn their living. Every year, about 1 or 2 students go downtown to work as hired laborer.

3. Management system:

Political units of the Thai state and hill tribes at all levels have duty in at least two aspects:

- Keep the order and regulation among people under the authority
- Manage the relations with external groups

Political unit system of all northern hill tribes falls into 2 categories as follows:

Village:

In the case of hill tribes in Thailand, each village means an authority of self regulation. There is no organization or any political system like other majority villages or groups.

Hill tribe villages had their own village border. Citizens of villages have the duty to keep internal security and security relations with governmental staff and other villages of the same tribe or other tribes. Hill tribes do not have written law. However, they have their own rules and regulation transferred from generations to generations. Whoever violates those rules or regulation will be fined or punished. In case of serious violation, the violator will be expelled out of the village. However, if any household do not feel satisfied with the rule and regulation of the community, they can move to another community.

Headman of activities and ceremonies:

The voted head of ceremonies is the expert in mythology. The seniors of the village will consider and choose among them the best experienced and knowledgeable one to become the head of ceremonies. This one is familiar with all regulation and rules of the village. He will make the final decision after thorough discussion with an assembly of seniors. This kind of headman is called “Pu Chan”. Each village has a “Pu Chan”. This headman will take care of affairs related to sacred places. In case there is any problem of a certain household or of the village, he will be the first to be notified. Then he will help solve the problem according traditional belief of his own tribe.

The two black Muser villages on Muser Hill have one “pu chan” for each. In case of consulting historical or cultural things, these “pu chan” are the right persons for local people to come to. In Huaiplalod village, the headman of activities and ceremonies is Pu chan Chatyo Kamnoedwanaree and Sompoi village, Pu Chan Sompoi Luang. They are honored by villagers. They are the most knowledgeable about ethnic tradition.

“Mophi” (shaman) or persons in charge of animistic ceremonies:

Apart from the headman of activities and ceremonies, the elders in charge of ghost ceremonies also play an important role in religious and cultural life of hill tribes. They have the duty to contact ghosts for different purposes. Sometimes, they help villagers chase away the bad ghosts or carry out necessary ceremonies at household level. Mostly every family invites them to cure sick people by calling for the wandering souls. People believe that these souls leave the body and forget to return to the body. Then the body gets sick. “Mophi” will help call back those souls. They are the main messengers to worship the God or sacred spirits in such important ceremonies as New Year, New Rice ceremony and God chapel ceremony. They convey the messages from the sacred force through chicken bone.

Head of community (in charge of political and organizational affairs):

Every village has a headman to be in charge of leading villagers to live under the jurisdiction of law, tradition and policy of the state. He has the duty to keep contact between the village and governmental officials in many related affairs. Usually, this headman is called “Phu Yay Ban”. In some villages, the person who takes the position as head of community is the headman of activities and ceremonies at the same time. The head of community is certified officially by law. In some villages, the whole community will trust in a certain person who can speak Thai well and vote for him to be the head of their community. This person is active, interpersonal and diplomatic enough to attend meetings with the higher authority. Actually, Thai government officials nominate young men of all the tribes to be the headman. The qualifications that governmental side sets up are Thai language proficiency and being considerably knowledgeable. The headman will transfer state policy to villagers and facilitate governmental officials perform their duty.

Regarding management system, it is necessary to provide hill tribe people knowledge about their rights, political position and duty towards the government. Hill tribe right system means the rights granted by Thai government in democracy framework under the HM the King. Through education, hill tribe people will know that they are a part of Thai society. Therefore, they have rights and duty towards the government. This is what education has to do besides implanting consciousness of Thai citizen, Thai identity, nationality, Thai Buddhism and the monarchy. They can know well that according to the contact between them and the government, which rights and benefits they can have and which duty they have in return to the government. Basically,

they have equal rights to those of the lowlanders. In the mean time, there is no exception for some basic duties. Lowlanders and highlanders are recruited for service in the arm force. Highlanders also pay taxes to the government. In the aspect of management system, hill tribe students are taught about democratic values, rights and duty of a citizen towards the community and nation. That they share the same duty and rights with lowlanders creates in them the sense of being Thai or a sense of belonging to the nation. The provision of rights and duty brings a sense of being included and having meaningful participation into the main society. This erases the sense of discrimination on the basis of ethnic and national origin. When ethnic minorities and the mainstream majority benefit from equality, groups can share in a common sense of belonging called patriotism, or national pride. Nationalism in the form of social and structural pluralism gives people a sense of belonging to and pride in national identity, a sense of being safe and understood and a willingness to make sacrifices for their country. They also take a greater interest in their nation's achievements in such fields as art, sports and entertainment etc. This is important for nationalist purpose of education. From this sense of belonging, interest and participation, it is easier for schools to implant in them cultural values of mainstream society. Democracy practice in class is the election to choose the monitor of the class. This democracy practice make students feel they have right to determine who will be the leader.

Furthermore, when they grow up to be adults and participate into political affair of the community, they can have good decisions to choose a leader for their own. Being well-educated will bring the chance for youngsters to be considered for the head of community in charge of political and organizational system of the village. An elected head of community will make crucial decisions for the community in terms of economy, culture and society. A headman who is concerned much about the tribe culture might take important actions to help preserve their tradition and identity in the process of integration into the mainstream society. For example, the headman of Muser tribe in Tak refused the introduction of Christianity into his village for the excuse that Muser people want to preserve their primitive animism which is the heart of their ethnic culture. In this case, we can see that hill tribe people make the decision for their own cultural destiny.

When the three items mentioned above are implemented, it brings long-term benefit to the hill tribe people. According to Thepthai (1999), such education policy with those three inner core items is the heart of hill tribe policy. Then, new ethnic

characteristics follow. In the mean time, they are aware of being highlanders and Thai citizens. The purpose of state policy is to implant “hill tribe” characteristics in villages of all tribes. More than the feeling of themselves being H’mong or Yao or any other tribe, they should have a sense of belonging to the “hill tribe” group along side with the Isan or the Northern. First and foremost is the Thai identity (National Education Committee. 1984 as cited in Thepthai, 1992:59)

The policies and programs above are involved in formal education. The latest education act of Thailand effective 1999 (amended 2002, Chapter 3. Section 15) mentions formal education as follows:

“Formal education shall specify the aims, methods, curricula, duration, assessment, and evaluation conditional to its completion”

Methods and curricula as mentioned above are to serve the aims of formal education. On nationwide basis, formal education provide access to universal knowledge, knowledge about oneself and relationship in society, religion, art, culture, Thai wisdom, Thai language and morality etc. Basically, in the system of formal education, hill tribe students share the same curriculum and teaching and learning methods with lowlander students. As for the hill tribes, education is designed specifically to fit in the context of local wisdom and locality characteristics. The difference can be found through forms of non-formal education. Besides formal education, in Chapter 3, Section 15 of National education Act (1999), non-formal and informal education are also included:

- Non-formal education shall have flexibility in determining the aims, modalities, management procedures, duration, assessment and evaluation conditional to its completion. The contents and curricula for non-formal education shall be appropriate, respond to the requirements, and meet the needs of individual groups of learners.

- Informal education shall enable learners to learn by themselves according to their interests, potentialities, readiness and opportunities available from persons, society, environment, media, or other sources of knowledge.

Regarding non-formal education, Office of Non-Formal Education Commission through the Non-Formal Education Development Division, Northern Regional NFE Center has launched a project named “Bilingual Project” for bilingual education. In a project report by Wisanee Siltragool, Non-Formal Education Department, Ministry of Education Thailand in 2008, bilingual education situation is evaluated as follows:

“ The “**bilingual approach**” is a very challenging approach for literacy promotion. In Thailand, this approach enables ethnic minority groups to use their own language for initial learning and also helps them learn Thai in order to communicate with the majority of the people in the country. The approach, therefore, can provide a social and cultural linkage between tribal groups and the majority Thai people in order that they can live together peacefully. The problem is that the bilingual approach is new to Non-formal Education specialists in this country. Most of the literacy programs currently use the curriculum and guidelines designed for majority language (Thai) learners. Even though there have been efforts to initiate literacy at local level, the bilingual approach is rarely used.”

In the case study of Muser tribe in Tak, such lingual approach is just done through a linguistic program named “One day one word” which will be mentioned in the case of Huaiplalod school strategy later.

In recognition of the importance of non-formal education, the government had officially promulgated on 4th March 2008 the Promotion of Non-Formal and Informal Education Act, B.E. 2551 (A.D.2008). Thereafter, the Office of the Non-Formal Education Commission is changed into Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education (ONIE). In the framework of ONIE, a Coordinating Committee for promotion and support of Non-formal and Informal Education has the function to undertake the administration and management of the non-formal education policies, planning and strategies for the operations of non-formal education programs and activities. According to this act, Non-formal education is designed for the aims of promoting critical thinking among the learners. Students will have the abilities to think critically, to do proficiently, and to solve the problems of their own and their

community effectively. Thus, the government shall realize to the need of putting up the legislation needed for promoting good strategies and most effective mechanism for development and promotion of non-formal and informal education. Through this new Act, the quality of Thai people will be developed in terms of their knowledge and skills, moral principle, ethical behavior, core value and public common sense. The people will have capabilities in leading their pleasurable lives, perceiving the rapid changes around them, being capable of seeking knowledge continuously throughout their lifetime, having potentiality and wisdom which are useful for the country's development and readiness for international competition. Under the new act regarding non-formal and informal education, local institutions in general and Huaiplalod school in particular will have their strategy amended suitably. The above mentioned aims of the new act are for Thai students nationwide. Hill tribe students also share the same standards. Whatever strategy may come, the framework of moral principle, ethical behavior, core value and public common sense will remain the same. That means values of the mainstream society will continue to be conveyed to them. Teachings of Buddhism play the role as the inner core of ethic. Thai culture is the dominant. Thai language is the official.

3.2 The case of Huaiplalod school

From general instructive education policy, schools in localities will have detailed programs and strategy accordingly suitable for themselves. Huailaplod school has its own academic context as well as local wisdom; therefore, the school strategy is designed specifically but still based on the general policy of the state.

Before further going into education policy of Huaiplalod school, let's talk about traditional education of the Muser Dam. As far as legendary goes, the Lord Gu'sa called ancestors of many tribes to come to him so that he could deliver literacy and transcript. All the tribes except the Muser went up to the high mountain first. The Lord Gu'sa transfered literacy and transcripts to them by writing down on a special kind of paper named "kradad sa" in Muser language . The ancestors of Muser were the last to meet the Lord Gu'sa. The Lord Gu'sa was willing to grant them such things but unluckily he was out of paper. Therefore, a mixture of sticky rice and sesame was used as an alternative. Literacy and transcript were written down on that mixture and the Muser ancestors took it home. Along the way home, they were hungry and ate the sticky rice till there remained nothing. That was the reason why the Muser tribe have no literacy and transcript. The ancestors taught that those literacy and transcript were not

necessary to learn. They were naturally staying in the stomach. People can still live their lives together without learning because they have different knowledge in the stomach already. Therefore, when the elders in the community are interviewed about traditional education of the Muser, they all tell the story like that. Before the incoming of formal education, there was no form of traditional education. More or less, teachings and knowledge were transferred by folktales, spoken words and contact with each other.

Official education was introduced into the village when the school of Huaiplalod was built. The school has been monitored and coordinated by the Office of National Primary Education Commission, Tak province since the day it was transferred to be under the jurisdiction of this organization. There have been curriculum seminars and public relation meetings held by the Office. Teachers in such seminars have contributed to curriculum construction and made curriculum locally suitable. The Office assigns teachers to teach according to their competent interests. Instructions are provided in line with curriculum content and objectiveness. Officers from the Office are in charge of maintaining and servicing instructional and managerial system with instructional medium. At school level, teachers evaluate academic performance of students. Students' achievement is measured through the process of teachers' observation, interviews, tests, assignment and extra – activities. The school sends reports to the Office and then more suitable improved instructions are made. The school library are facilitated by the head office. Books are provided and updated every semester. Academic performance of students and teaching performance of teachers are supervised by school administrators. Apart from official instructional document, instructional activities are in-service training, luncheon and remedial activities.

HuaiHuaplalod school is located in Mu 8, Tambol Maelamaw, Amphur Maesod, Tak province. The geographic location is deep in the national resource jungle, part A of Taksin Maharat national resource area. The school has its history as follows:

- On 26 January 1974, His Majesty the King and the Princess Sirindhorn made a royal carriage to the village and then decreed to establish educational base there. The contemporary school of Huaplalod was built afterwards under the umbrella of Public Welfare Department, Interior Ministry.
- Till the first of May 1987, the school was under the administration of Tak provincial Office of Primary school education under the National Committee of primary school belonging to Ministry of education. The school was very contemporary that time.

- In October, 1988, Phra Ajarn Den and Phra Phisutsong and the local people set up the canteen for students to have lunch.
- From 17 November, 1989 till 11 January 2533, the school is under construction from the contemporary base
- The contemporary school and the highland water supply building were at the cost of 358,258 Baht

In 1992, another branch was opened in Mu 6 which is 8 km far from Mu 5. Mu 6 is the resident place of the Karen. Students here could attend school at the level from kindergarten till grade 6 of primary school.

- Between 2539 and 2541, Phra Ajarn Den was the founding master of a two floor school with the expense of 5,000,000 Baht without sponsorship from the government
- In 2544, another branch was opened in Ban sompoi mu 5 which is 9 km far from Huaiplalod village. The school here educate students from kindergarten to Prathom primary level grade 6.
- On 1 July 2546, Huaiplalod school along with the other two branches were moved to be under the umbrella of Tak local education Office, area 2 of Primary education committee office.
- On the 1st September 2005, the school was granted budget from the government particularly (CEO) regarding the building of a dormitory for students who live far away from the school. The room is 6x4 m² in size at the cost of 150.000 baht.
- On first August 2006, Firefiy Mission from Singapore sponsored in the form of material to build another dormitory of the same size as the built one at the cost of 200.000 Baht
- Currently, Huaiplalod school offers education from kindergarten till secondary school at grade 3 level, 24 classes. There are 14 members in the teaching staff, 3 officers, 1 standing worker and 8 voluntary teachers.

Vision of Huaiplalod school:

Students have the opportunity to receive education within 9 years. They can be trained according to potential and gifted ability. The target is to educate them to be moral persons with ethic and moral values, good physical health, happiness in learning, the pride to be Thai citizen with Thai and local tradition and culture. They are taught to preserve natural resource and environment and live under the ideology of

Sedthakidphophieng (sufficient economy). The education process is also supported by the whole community members in different ways.

Duty of the school:

- 100% of the kids in the village is obliged to attend compulsory learning
- Perform the teaching and learning duty to the best of ability
- Perform the teaching and learning duty to educate students to be good moral citizens.
- Perform the teaching and learning duty to build healthy and good psychological students.
- Supporting the teaching staff to have more expertise and encouraging the community's participation into education activities.

Target:

- Kids before the school age would have readiness to attend class.
- Students during the school age would have good educational opportunities according to basic regulation
- Students are the ethical persons and have appropriate ideology.

Tactics of the school:

- Building the equality and create more chances for learners to have absolute basic knowledge.
- Supporting the teaching staff in their teaching performance: take emphasis on students as the main object in line with Sedthakidphophieng (sufficient economy) ideology by the King.
- Improve the educational environment and leading students to other educational places.
- Build the awareness and support the teaching staff to research and develop their work as well as innovative teaching.

All the school's strategies and visions are made in line with instructions from higher instructive agencies, education policy in general and education programs towards the hill tribes in particular. What ideology and content to be taught in schools to serve the purpose of education towards the hill tribes and how important, to what extent they are will be mentioned in the following part of the study.

Huaiplalod school's strategy regarding extra-activities is in line with state education policy. Extra-activities are to promote morality, ethics and the conservation of Thai and local culture. That is the purpose to make students become moral persons,

good members of the society. Through education, students have knowledge, ethic and skills. The school considers it important to inspire morality, ethic and the conservation of Thai arts and Thai culture. With the support of teaching staff, the senior management board and external organizations, the school set up extra-activities to promote morality, ethics and the conservation of Thai and local culture.

According to Chalong Maphrida (Chalong Maphrida, 1997:49 as cited in Strategic Plan of Huaiplalod School, 2005:2), the necessity of promoting morality and ethic comprises of main factors as follows:

1. It is obvious that there are more and more immoral people do harm to the others. Theft and terror are omnipresent. These facts can be seen through mass media.

2. Traditional values are being off the right track as the consequence of media development and the adaptation of foreign culture. Such impacts are the carelessness in sexual behavior, lack of respect for the elder, lack of gratitude, way of dressing, no priority for Thai products and culture etc.

3. There have been calls for youngsters promote ethic, morality and the conservation of Thai culture through mass media, seminars and document. The first and foremost starting place should be education field.

National primary school curriculum policy (1991:12 as cited in Strategic Plan of Huaiplalod School, 2005:2) regarding ethic of students is as follows:

1. Sacrifice, recognition of common interest and no selfishness.
2. Self discipline, effort to get achievement at work
3. Hardworking, sincerity and suffering
4. Know how to think and decide with reasons
5. Have toleration towards critics and differences among people and groups
6. Sport spirit, appreciation and admiration for the others
7. Know how to integrate in teamwork in the role leader and follower, the one who gives and one who gets

Based on those concepts, Huaiplalod school emphasizes the importance of building ethic and morality of students. Therefore, the school management board decided to launch extra-activities to promote ethic, morality and tradition conservation all together beside teaching curriculum. The slogan is that Huaiplalod school builds ethic, morality and promote tradition conservation in line with national Education Act 1999 and National Primary School Curriculum 2001.

The school sets its purposes in this extra-activity project (Ethic, Morality and Local and Thai cultural conservation Plan of Huaiplalod School, 2005:3) as follows:

1. To build ethic and morality in students and personnel in the school continuously and as a concrete object
2. To conserve and uphold Thai tradition and local culture stably in society
3. To implement governmental policy and follow national education Act 1999 and national primary school curriculum 2001

Main activities of this project are scheduled in details and carried out seriously. Fixed schedule for first semester of academic year 2007-2008 mainly focuses on chanting practice, meditation, ethic training on every Friday. The second semester, the main activities are to worship chanting monks.



Students of Huaiplalod school paying homage to the Buddha in accompaniment of the chanting



Students of Huaiplalod school mediating (Thamma) under the instruction of teachers

Expected result of the project (Ethic, Morality and Local and Thai cultural conservation Plan of Huaiplalod School, 2005:9):

- Students know and understand the principle of meditation and teachings of Buddhism; students can apply those teachings to behave in their daily life.
- Teaching staff, management board and other personnel of the school have understanding towards the importance of the project in order to implant ethic, morality and the conservation of local and Thai culture in and on students.
- Students take what they learn from the activities to solve different problems of the society such as opium. Those who lack quality will be treated by dharma principle or moral principle as inspiration.

Every academic year, Huaiplalod school has a performance plan. Annual plan has many activities regarding many affairs. The activities to improve ethic, culture and tradition conservation are carried out repeatedly. Besides, there are projects to upgrade

library, revise curriculum and reinforce teaching staff. Outdoor extra educational activities bring chances to observe things out of their classrooms. Then students can gain experience directly. The musical performance of supposed roles brings joy to students. More than that, they know the feeling of the others in other positions and roles. Trial or pilot practice helps students deal with real things and then self study. Annually, important traditional ceremonies of Thai society are organized in the village to implant in students Thai ethical and cultural values. The conduct of those ceremonies is included in formal education plan of the school. Students have the chance to express their compliment towards their mothers and teachers. Moral behaviors are instructed and; therefore, new moral identity grows. In other words, such ceremonies play a very important role in transfer Thai culture to hill tribe students. When such cultural values are practiced more often, students have greater sense of being Thai or Thainess is reinforced.



“Way khru” ceremony (ceremony to pay respect to teachers) in Huaiplalod school



A merit making tree (thambun) ceremony in Huaiplalod school



Huaiplalod Students drawing picture of the Queen on Mother day of Thailand



Exhibition of pictures drawn by students on Mother day

Regarding non-formal education, in the case of Muser villages in Tak, non-formal education involves most clearly in the aspects of language and culture aspects. Young learners have the chance to study English, Muser spoken language, Thai and even Karen language. Every morning, students gather in the main school yard. Two representative excellent students hold a board with vocabularies of the day on and read out loud for others students to repeat. Each vocabulary will be written and pronounced in Thai, English, Muser and Karen spoken languages. Apart from this linguistic training, Thai language is the official language of curricula and is used in classes. Thai language is part of formal education. Individual groups as mentioned in the education act in terms of non-formal education are the black Muser and the Karen studying together in one school. Besides, extra activities help improve students' awareness and

upholding of their traditional costumes, ceremonies and culture. Another form of non-formal education is the system of Songkhrosuksa school. Tak Songkhrosuksa School or so-called welfare school was previously in the education system of Tak province.

Tak Welfare School was established by the cooperation between Ministry of Education and Northern Developing Group. The Government has arranged the money for food, cloths, and books. This school is the welfare school number 7 in Thailand. Tak Welfare school has been in operation since May 18, 2507. Nowadays, they open classes for Pathomsuksa to Mathyomsuksa (primary school to high school). Tak Welfare will accept students from Tak, Khompanget, Nakhonsawan, Pitsanilok, Pichit, Sukhothai, Petchaboon and Utaradit province. This is another form of non-formal education. Needy students who have good academic performance and parentless students would be selected to further their study in a special school in downtown of Tak. The headman of Huaiplalod was one of those who furthered high school study by this program.

According to the principal of Huaiplalod school, Mr Direk Munmeung, the number of students to be selected for Rongrien songkhrosuksa has been very few. Each academic year, only about two are enlisted. For more than ten years, this program has been mostly put on hold in Tak. In stead, needy students are sponsored by other foundations and programs. Most recently, CCF, a foundation established by Princess Sirindorn, has granted scholarships to poor children of the two villages. On the occasions of important days such as the King's birthday, the Queen's birthday or National Children day, they are granted an amount of money of about 1000 or 2000 Baht. Totally 32 students received this sponsorship in the year 2009.

Another form of Non-formal education is vocational training program. This program is included in Huaiplalod school's policy annually. Weekly on Friday students are taken to downtown Tak Salaphachan vocational college. In here, they can learn skills related to careers they are interested in. Subjects on curriculum are internet access, beauty salon, welding, making cake, sewing and computer typing. As mentioned earlier in non-formal education policy, lingual program of Huaiplalod school is designed specially for its academic context. Thai language is the official language in school. However, the school has its own linguistic policy. Students can learn Thai, English, Muser and Karen spoken languages every morning before class time. It is "One day one word" program.



Morning “one day one word” activity after National anthem and Meditation (Thamma)

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Lesson plan specifically composed for "One day one word" program, Huaiplalod school

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Table 3.1 THAI EDUCATION POLICY TOWARDS THE HILL TRIBES

	Items	Thai education policy
1	Policy statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - education for all - decentralized management - promote the effectiveness of management - develop personnel management - support benefit provision
2	Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - national/Thai mainstream content - local school content
3	Teaching/Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - child/student center - teacher transition of knowledge - work-based - project-based - special experience - group discussion - self study
4	Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thai teachers / ethnic teacher - local resource / local wisdom
5	Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thai language (formal teaching, informal teaching, teaching-learning materials ect.) - local / ethnic language (informal learning, family, school etc.)
6	School activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thai / mainstream culture - local / ethnic culture
7	Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - national text (NT) in Thai language - project / worksheet / self study

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ภาษาไทย	ภาษาอังกฤษ	ภาษามูเซอ	ภาษากระเหรี่ยง
27	Twenty-seven	อิมจือ - จือ	คีจือทือ
28	Twenty- Eight	อิมจือ - ซี	คีจือนูอ
29	Twenty-Nine	อิมจือ - กอ	คีจือเบา
30	thirty	แมจือจือ	เจอจือ
40	Forty	ฮอจือ	ลู่จือ
50	Fifty	หง่าจือ	แม่งจือ
60	Sixty	เกาจือ	ทือจือ
70	seventy	จือจือ	นูจือ
80	Eighty	สี่จือ	เบาจือ
90	Ninety	กอจือ	กูจือ
100	hundred	คีร้อย	เตดะเกดออย่า
สี			
สีขาว	White	เหือฮ-เว	ฮะวา
สีเหลือง	Yellow	จือ-กาฮ-เว	ฮะปอ
สีแดง	Red	เจือฮ-เว	ฮะหง่า
สีเขียว	Green	น้อฮ-เว	ฮะลา
สีชมพู	Pink	นึ-เว	ฮะหลือ
สีฟ้าสีน้ำเงิน	Blue	เจือฮทือทือ	ฮะจูตา
สีดำ	Black	น้าฮ-เว	ฮะฮู
สีม่วง	Purple	-	ฮะหมุ
สีน้ำตาล	brown	นะทือทือ	ฮะละ
		เหือฮ-เว	ฮะบอหง่อ

A page of “one day one word” curriculum, Huaiplalod school

The special language program is designed for Huaiplalod school for its inclusion of both the Karen and Muser students. The purpose of such program is to help Muser students learn Thai and English more easily and in the mean time, Muser spoken language is repeated as an effort for language preservation. However, the ultimate aim is to teach Thai for students of the small grades from 1 to 3. According to Blachford (as cited in UNESCO. Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education. 2005: 87), “bilingual education is seen as the most feasible policy and effective practice to solve minority language and education problems, and to maintain a balance between the national unity and minority aspirations”. Thereafter, Thai language teaching in every morning along with Muser language helps lay a good foundation for students to know more about Thai language for their convenience in adopting knowledge in class. It can be said that, the program is the first and foremost step in the strategy to teach Thai language for Muser students. Along with their proficiency in Thai language, cultural

values of Thai society are gradually conveyed and adopted through other academic activities, curriculum and teaching and learning method as mentioned earlier. In other words, the “one day one word” program helps solve the problem of language barrier between teachers and students who are attending lower grades of primary education.

Moving onto informal education, in the case of Muser hill, media availability is an obvious example. The presence of TV and radio in mostly every household facilitates the socialization and assimilation of ethnic culture into Thai and western culture. It is the process of learning one’s culture and how to live within it. “For the individual it provides the skills and habits necessary for acting and participating within their society. For the society, inducting all individual members into its moral norms, attitudes, values, motives, social roles, language and symbols is the ‘means by which social and cultural continuity are attained” (Clausen, 1968: 5).

According to Daniel Schugurensky (2000), socialization of informal education (also referred to as tacit learning) refers to the internalization of values, attitudes, behaviors, skills, etc. that occur during everyday life. Not only we have no intention of acquiring them, but we are not aware that we learned something. Thereby, the influence of TV as part of mass media in informal education brings about a considerable socialization among the Muser hilltribe into the mainstream Thai society. The mass media especially TV in these two Muser villages is source of information and entertainment. Culturally speaking, the importance of mass media is to transmit the culture of the mainstream society to ethnic children. Different kinds of behaviors, values and norms are represented in the media. It is a learning process when children watch TV. They learn how to behave in certain situations. Life of the outside world is exposed to them and models of behaviors are conveyed and possible be adopted in actual experience. In details, they can learn laws, customs, belief structures, attitudes and world view of a broader society, the family, institutions, the community, social system and democracy and so forth.

Library is another form of informal education. In the libraries of Huaiplalod and Sompoi schools, there are reading options which students can choose among. The availability of many kinds of books and learning material offer students the chance to access what they like. Most of them according to my observation, are fond of reading Japanese cartoon. It can be said that Japanese cartoon calls for children’ attention more than legendary stories of black Muser tribe. This contributes to explaining why Muser children do not know well about their history and legend. Besides cartoons, various

entertainment magazines and newspapers are also available for students to read. Such mass media, to a certain extent, teach children a basic set of values and morals. For example, peer groups or idols being talked about on the papers have a huge influence on them, whether it be good or bad. They encourage specific attitudes and behaviors. These kinds of entertainment attract students and steal the chances for other traditional recreation as well as cultural heritage of the Muser to be touched upon. The detailed influence will be more elaborated in the next chapter.

When those forms of education are implemented in local context, local people have their participation partially. As far as villagers' participation into school activities is concerned, it can be considered as logistic affair. Villagers are willing at the request for help from schools in organizing activities for students. For example, they set up the stage frame and decorate the background for student musical performance. They are inactive in school policy or academic teaching performance. Their support in "one day one word" language curriculum is can be seen as important participation. Muser teachers and senior villagers provide support in Muser language column with equivalent meaning to English, Thai and Karen languages.

As analyzed earlier, it is obvious that there is no specific education policy towards hill tribes. Hill tribe culture preservation through education is mentioned as the outer part while the inner core is Thai identity to be inculcated. In the case of Huaiplalod school, there are some locally specific programs to help promote Thai culture and help preserve ethnic culture at the same time. However, ethnic culture preservation is of little avail. There is no specific event to promote local culture. Thai culture is the heart and local culture is an additive part. The role of teachers in schools is to act in line with policies from higher level agencies – to instill Thainess. Teachers are the driving force in promoting local culture by their compromises with villagers. In this cas, the teachers should call for more active participation from experienced and well-educated villagers who can take part in designing more suitable curriculum to local conditions. Local people can also have their say and suggestions regarding cultural teaching in schools. However, policies and instructions for such actions should be made from provincial education administrators under the guidances of Ministry of Education.

Within the 15 year period from 2002 to 2016, the National Education Plan will continue to serve as a framework to provide basic education, vocational education, religious and cultural education to the hill tribes. It also provides guidelines down to local education institutions to implement policy and fulfill the aims of cultural

assimilation, nationalism and hill tribe economic and social development. The curricula, teaching and learning methods and extra-activities in forms of formal, non-formal and informal education continues to serve as crucial elements in instilling Thainess, inculcating Thai-identity, integrating the Muser into the mainstream society and nationalizing.



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CHAPTER IV

IDENTITY IN CRISIS: THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON ETHNIC CULTURE

To study about a culture, it is necessary to have insights into constituent elements of it. This chapter focuses on the cultural change in young individuals of Muser culture as the impact of education and the response of Muser villagers to such change. The author has categorized the exposed things in the village into factors of Muser ethnic culture including food, costume, language, religion, traditional games, folktales, music, social structure and family interaction. Definitely, ethnic culture has many other constituents that have not yet been mentioned in this research due to limited time. To clearly understand how education has impact on ethnic culture; during the fieldtrip, the author has direct access to and comprehensive analysis of how these most visible factors of Muser culture are presented by youngsters. By looking at formal, non-formal and in-formal education in the interaction with individual identity, the author has an inclusive valuation about the impact of education towards local traditional culture. After that, the author refers to opinions and comments of senior villagers about cultural preservation of youngsters. A comparison is made to see the cultural identity gap between generations.

Through participatory observation, focus group discussion and in-depth interview within 2 months, the author collected considerable data for analysis. Participatory observation is conducted by attending the classes of all grades in Huaiplalod and Sompoi schools from early morning till afternoon when schools are over. As a welcomed guest in National children day ceremony in these two schools, the author had the chance to observe musical performance by Muser students, traditional dancing, traditional costumes show, games, Buddhist practices and ethical behaviors. Living with the Huaiplalod headman's family during fieldtrip and spending time for dinners with other families in both villages, the author got access to daily way of life of Muser people. In such context, daily culture is exposed to the author in a lively way.

As for focus group, the author divides students into groups of schoolboy and schoolgirl. The selected students are attending grade 5 - 6 of Pratom (primary school) and grade 1 - 3 of Matayom (lower secondary school). The reason for this division is just for the convenience in asking students to gather together in groups. When

schoolboys gather to play football or volleyball after school, the author has the chance to form a group of about 10. When schoolgirls are reading entertainment magazines in library after school, a group discussion of 5 is held. Each group discussion with schoolboys and girls takes 20 or 30 minutes in every weekday.

Group discussion with senior villagers is conducted in both villages at night time around a big teapot. In each group, there are 8 selected seniors aged 50 upwards and 2 experienced Puchan. Warm talks with seniors provide the author with valuable data. In-depth interviews are conducted with the 2 headmen of Huaiplalod and Sompoi villages. The author also has in-depth interview with the principal and vice principal of Huaiplalod school, a Muser teacher at Sompoi school and other 5 Thai teachers of the two schools. After the fieldtrip, the Muser teacher provides her continued support to the author through interviews by phone. All the key informants of group discussion and in-depth interview allows the author to publicize their names in this study.

In analyzing data, theories and definitions of culture are applied and referred to. When defining culture, Parson (1949) identifies culture as a constitute of patterns relative to behavior and the products of human action which may be inherited, that is, passed on from generation to generation independently of the biological genes. Banks and McGee (1989) further the definition about culture as the primary constitute of the symbolic, ideational, and intangible aspects of human societies. According to them, the essence of a culture is not its artifacts, tools, or other tangible cultural elements but how the members of the group interpret, use, and perceive them. It is the values, symbols, interpretations, and perspectives that distinguish one people from another in modernized societies; it is not material objects and other tangible aspects of human societies. People within a culture usually interpret the meaning of symbols, artifacts, and behaviors in the same or in similar ways.

Damen (1987: 367) has his definition about culture as follows:

“Culture is learned and shared human patterns or models for living; day-to-day living patterns. These patterns and models pervade all aspects of human social interaction. Culture is mankind's primary adaptive mechanism.”

Thereby, regarding Muser ethnic culture, villagers or owners of this culture are not the exception to the rule. They have been sharing patterns or models of living. These

shared values and behaviors have formed a common identity of the Muser dam unique from other tribes. In the modern time of globalization and socialization, education has been introduced to them and cultural assimilation has come along. There has occurred a gap in generation in terms of cultural identity. Youngsters and seniors do not absolutely share all the same values any more. Individual identity of the youngsters and seniors differs in some ways. To discover the transformation of this individual identity as a result of education, an in-depth survey into such factors of culture in relation with individuals is necessary.

"Culture has been defined in a number of ways, but most simply, as the learned and shared behavior of a community of interacting human beings" (Useem, J., and Useem, R, 1963:169). The number of ways as mentioned by Useem are involved in the way people dress, interact in family, follow a same religion and so forth. However, as for ethnic groups, with time in those ways the generations behave differently. Especially people who are educated in line with the mainstream society interact with new values and those values are gradually adopted to form a new identity in themselves.

4.1 Cuisine

"Tell me what you eat, and I'll tell you who you are," wrote renowned gastronome Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin in 1825

For as long as we humans have existed, so has our food. Food is so often the focus of historical or anthropological studies. The ingredients, the preparation, the cooking, the combination of flavors, the time and place of eating, the food for worshipping and the way people eat determine the making of a cuisine. At a broader extent, those determine a part of a culture. Cuisine is often what sets a culture apart and provides a common understanding of what it means to "belong" to that community. How they prepare it; and the role of edible fare in celebrations, social lives, and belief systems form the flavor of the community.

As mentioned in the introduction chapter the main menu of Muser people consists of rice, vegetables and live stocks like pork and chicken. Previously, Muser people eat what they have in hand. The resource of food is available around their houses or in the forest and along the water stream. However, nowadays, some families convert to grow other vegetables and coffee for economic gain. Therefore, they have to buy rice from the market. As for students, parents often buy them bread or instant noodle for

breakfast. The source of food in very meal mostly comes from markets. Parents buy convenient food for students to save time when they have to go to the field early in the morning.

Besides the main stuff of a meal, which varies in types like chicken or pork or egg and vegetables, additive is another part of a meal. Muser cooks, mostly adult women of families, use additives such as salt, sugar, ginger, monosodium glutamate, garlic and chilly. Among these, monosodium glutamate, salt and sugar are bought from downtown markets. The other materials are available in the village. In the past, salt was very valuable and difficult to buy. Muser people like flat taste. There is chilly sauce of the Muser, which is most popular in daily meals. The more vegetable there are in the meal, the more excited Muser people feel. Most old aged seniors over 40 sometimes eat Thai food but they are not very interested in. Some say they want to vomit with the flavor of “plara” or pickled fish (a kind of small fresh water fish which is used in papaya salad of Thai people). At home, students have traditional meals cooked by their mothers.

Muser menu is different from Thai menu regarding kinds of food and additives. However both menus share the same spicy taste sometimes because Muser menu has chilly sauce. Students see teachers put strange additives to the food at school canteen. When they go home, they ask their mothers to do the same. The additives they like are white and black soybean sauce, fish sauce, oyster oil, “kapi”(shrimp paste used as additive) and “plara”. They say those additives make food more delicious. However, “kapi” and “plara” are smelling to the adults and they do not like. As for Karen students who study in the same classes with Muser students, they absolutely like “plara”. Some Muser students do not like “plara” and “kapi”. Some children bring those two stuff home from school and their parents throw them away for they are smelling like stale stuff to them.

However, some adults get acquainted with those stuffs and can cook meals with them. In the interaction with Thai people, adults have adopted new forms of cooking or new menu. When asked whether they prefer to cook in Thai style or not, all students answer they love. As for adults, they like a combination of both and aged seniors mostly prefer Muser food to Thai food. In other words, adults who are not very old aged approximately under 40 prefer a combination of both cuisine styles in their menu. Female students also learn how to cook Thai food from their Thai teachers every lunch at school. Students have the chance to learn everyday because they stay the whole day at school. On the occasions of events or festivals, they also can learn cooking from their

Thai teachers. Most frequently, in the canteen of Huaiplalod school, both school boys and school girls all know how to cook at least 5 dishes of Thai food. At home, their mothers or sisters teach them how to cook Muser food also. At home, there is a mixture of Thai food and Muser food already. Parents and old adults feel worried that students can not cook Muser food well or even forget how to cook. They try to teach their children but the children are not interested.

At home, adults use “tau fay”(two stone pieces being scratched with each other) to set fire. They rarely use lighter like lowlanders. Students just want to use convenient stuffs and they do not know how to set the fire as their parents do. Even the traditional cooker is not usually used any more. Electricity cooker is the alternative for its comfortable features. Boys and girls are all fond of Thai menu when they have meals in the canteen. At home, they still love their Muser food prepared by their mothers or sisters with the additives like Thai people use. It means that they prefer a combination of both menus. It is likely that in the future time, youngsters will combine the ways to cook of Thai people with Muser style. There will occur a more obvious mixture of cooking style. We can make such forecast tendency based on Muser students' attitude towards Thai food and Muser food as mentioned earlier. The behaviors and attitude of students in meals with other family members expose that Muser cultural characteristics and traditional moral values in meals are still uphold.

Some dos and donts in every Muser meal are still followed by adults and students. Singing and dancing while cooking are not allowed. Students prepare bowls and spoons for the whole family to get prepared for the meal. Sometimes, their mothers or sisters do this. Children have to take the rice and food for the seniors first and then they can eat. There is no need to wait for the adults to eat first as long as children have already taken the food for them. People in the meal are not allowed to sit in some ways that Muser consider impolite. In the interaction with Thai people, new kitchen utensils; especially, fork and spoon are brought to use. Students ask the others in their families to wash their hands clean before having meal. Students remind their parents and senior relatives to use spoon to take sauce or soup to their own bowls and not to chew rice noisily. These are the new things that make a new characteristic. Previously, Muser people just use their hands to pick the food and put them into their mouth. Nowadays, they all use spoons and folks and sometimes chopsticks. These new behaviors are adopted from school and then introduced into families.

To look at the food aspect first, basically values and the way of cooking are still uphold as before. However, a common sense among students is that they prefer Thai food and in case they eat Muser food, they love Muser food be cooked with additives/ingredients like Thai people do. The well-liked flat flavor is not any more popular among students except the old aged seniors. Parents of students also like their food cooked in Thai style. When the taste changes, a new feature of new identity grows. This new identity is the attitude of liking or preferring a new kind of food or way of cooking from the mainstream Thai society. If cuisine means a common sense of belonging to a community, in this case study, The Muser students in the educational environment have a stronger sense of belonging to Thai society besides being Muser citizens. They become more Thai with new values and modeled behaviors when they have meals as well as they can cook Thai food and most importantly they like Thai food or Muser food being cooked with additives like Thai people do. They do not like flat flavor any more meanwhile flat flavor is the characteristic taste of Muser people. It is likely that youngsters will not cook flat any more and instead spicy food or “kapi” and “plara” flavored food become more and more popular. It can be said that flavor disappears, food identity is lost. Primitive food culture is still persisting in old aged seniors of the two villages. However, culture is what transferred from generations to generations and the risk that food culture of Muser is transformed into a mixture with Thai food or even to Thai food is very high.

We can see an obvious difference between the youngsters and the seniors in cuisine culture. Adults have a stronger passion for Muser food and are upholding the ways to cook, the way to set fire and still use traditional cooker. What education contributes in bringing about this change in youngster is the introduction and practice of cooking Thai food in school environment. Even though there is no official curriculum of formal education to teach cuisine, the forms of such non-formal and informal education in school activities have implanted values of Thai cuisine culture among students.



Two Muser school girls roasting fishes, behind them the canteen

4.2 Costumes

It can be said that clothing or way of dressing represents one of the most visible aspects of culture. From the concepts of Parson, traditional costume of the Muser is a product of Muser hill tribe historically. It is inherited through generations with a process of preservation. From the concept of Banks and McGee, It is the values, symbols, interpretations, and perspectives that distinguish Muser people from other hill tribes. In addition to that, ethnicity connects to the preservation of an identity of individuals that link to meaningful heritage (Mary Ellen Roach and Joanne B. Eicher, 1973).

The meaningful heritage here can be interpreted partly as traditional costumes and definitely traditional costume is not the exception. The features of traditional Muser clothing is mentioned in the introduction part already. In this part, the author would like to focus on the transformation of the way Muser people wear clothes and attitude of both adults and students about their traditional Muser clothes. Students at schools are obliged to wear uniform as lowlanders in weekdays. However, every Thursday they wear Muser clothes to school as required by school regulation. After schools, they also wear clothes as lowlanders with T-shirts or shorts or skirts. Parents buy them school uniform and ask a Muser tailor to sew them one or two sets of Muser clothes. Apart from wearing Muser clothes on one school weekday, Students can show their Muser clothes on the occasions of big traditional Muser ceremonies or festivals like New year days. In other festivals or events organized by the school; for example, National

children day or sport events, mother day or father day of Thai people, students are also wear Muser clothes for parade and musical performance. Apart from 1 or 2 most gorgeously beautiful sets of Muser clothes (chud Temyok) to wear in important ceremonies, students have one or two more normal sets (chud lamlong) to wear daily and on every Thursday at school.

After schools, students also like to dress like lowlanders. School boys do not wear Muser shirt often. It can be said that they have changed their half body dressing. Male Muser trouser is inconvenient for the, to play and work on the field. They prefer jeans, shorts and T-shirts. Previously, the material for those Muser clothes was natural; the colors were dyed by themselves; therefore, colors would fade easily if washed. People keep clothes by drying and then put them into a wooden or metal box. Nowadays, Muser people order clothes from factories in Chiangmai. They design and send the factory to sew with different material that can keep color. In both villages Sompoi and Huaiplalod, no one can weave cloth. Fifty years ago as being told by old age seniors, Muser people still make cloth by themselves but not any more nowadays.

When asked about how they feel about normal clothes as lowlanders and Muser clothes, students like to wear T-shirts, shorts or skirts and school uniform in classes. The normal clothes are convenient and easy to keep; we do not need to worry that color of clothes would fade away. In addition, price for normal clothes is not that high in comparison with a set of gorgeous set of Muser clothes (said school girls Nalataprayud, Nakhuu and Palita Khaniduanli, 16 years old). A “chud Temyok” or official set of clothe in ceremonies for girls cost around 300 to 500 baht not including silver added onto it. School boys like T-shirts and shorts for the convenience to play sports like football and volleyball. Regarding school uniform, school girls and boys when asked all answer that they like school uniform and have a feeling of being a Thai person, being important in Thai society and sharing the similarity with other lowland students. What is more, they will be punished by teachers if they do not wear inform. When they wear uniform, other people will know that they are students and they are proud of it. When students go downtown, they never wear Muser clothes because they do not want the other lowlanders know that they are Muser or “dek doi” – hill tribe kids.

As for female students, they dislike Muser costume because it's hot, heavy and inconvenient for them when they study or do other things. However, when they are selected to be representatives of their schools to join other schools of other hill tribes in events or ceremonies, they feel proud of their Muser characteristic costumes. In such

context, students from other tribes join them. Therefore, a sense of perceived personality grows in them. The awareness of ethnic cultural diversity and uniqueness of each tribe in terms of costumes make students feel proud of themselves being Muser. When students are asked about their feeling in such events where they wear Muser traditional clothes, they all feel proud. More or less, in this case, education activities of schools bring the chances to inspire the pride in identity among Muser students.

Most of them when being asked about the feeling in downtown when they dress Muser say that they have a feeling of stagnancy and being despised by other lowlanders. It is an inferiority complex. Mary Ellen Roach and Joanne B.eicher (1973: 123 – 124) argued that in a traditional society ruled by custom, an individual is limited in dress by age, sex and perhaps occupation. They further argued that in modern society, the individual may accept the cultural standards of dress (the dominant fashion of the time) or may reject them and replace them with those of a sub-cultural group with who people affiliates or with their own idiosyncratic preferences. Refer to Muser people, when education along with compulsory uniform and other forms of dress is introduced to them, students are not limited in dress by occupation anymore. They are now students belonging to Thai educational system. Consequently, in the contact with the more modern mainstream Thai society through formal, non-formal and informal education, they accept the new cultural standards of dress both consciously and non-consciously. They sometimes, under circumstances, enthusiastically accept Muser traditional clothes with other hill tribes that they affiliate in a common sub-cultural group – hill tribe group. When students feel proud of their Muser clothes in those events, they are having achieved individuality and achieving personal distinction and from others in the hill tribe group. Individual identity remains and it is inspired in such contexts. When students return back to schools and daily life after events, festivals or ceremonies, normal clothes as lowlanders become their favorite. There seems to be orthodox when students love their traditional Muser clothes and normal clothes as well as school uniform at the same time. With a thorough look, there is no orthodox if it is put into contexts. In different contexts, they have different feelings.

It is cultural adaptation as stated in Ellen Roach and Eicher (1973: 55-56) that the human being can make limited adjustment (both short term and long term) to environment through body adaptation, he is much more remarkable for his resourcefulness and versatility in cultural adaptation. The environment here can be interpreted as schools and ceremonies or festivals. The versatility in individual dressing

is an expression of individual cultural flexibility. Individual flexibility is a result of education activities in formal, non-formal and informal ways. In one way, schools oblige students do wear uniform and in another way schools create stage for them to show off their traditional clothes. Even though it is compulsory to wear uniform, students like to wear. This is an evidence of cultural adaption in which they join the mainstream dressing culture.

Getting back to inferiority complex as mentioned above, it is education that exposes them to a broader world. They can learn and have a broader world view about mainstream society in particular and the world in general. Schools never teach them that they are more stagnant and inferior to the majority but they themselves when they gain a worldview, they recognize that they fall behind. When a person does not know much about the outside world, he or she does not feel much about self in comparison with the others from the outside world. When they are educated with values of a mainstream society and have a sense of being a small group in a broader society, there grows a feeling of inferiority. To cover that inferiority, they themselves want a change in clothes as necessary for them apparently.

The fact that schools oblige students to wear uniform as other Thai student in lowland and in the mean time, encourage them to wear their Muser clothes on one or two school weekdays is part of cultural pluralism. Pluralism of education regarding dressing culture is to bring students onto a stage of both Thai uniform and Muser traditional clothes. On this stage, Thai uniform is shown most often or mostly daily. And this frequency is hegemonic and nationalistic. Ethnic culture is now poorer and the poor culture begins to direct its outputs towards the tastes of the richer culture as McCaskill (2008) identified. In another aspect, the way students dress differently with different awareness involves double ethnicity. Muser students' sense of identity when they show off their traditional clothes to the other tribes or in the downtown on occasions of festivals or events is identified by Lola (2008) as a conscious part of the self rather than the operation of unperceived automatic mechanisms. It is the conscious awareness of what one is in relation to a social group. An ethnic identity is developed through time and takes on various meanings in the course of one's life experience, as a person contrast his or her social group in some measure against the dominant culture and against other groups within it.

Therefore, Double ethnicity in Muser students can be seen through their clothes, their proud feeling about Muser clothes on some occasions and their preference for

school uniform on school days and the way they dress T-shirts, shorts and jeans rather than daily Muser clothes. When they dress uniform, they feel they are Thai students as their lowland friends; more or less this is a nationalistic awareness implanted over time by uniform dressing obligation for hegemonic purpose. When they wear Muser clothes, they are proud to be Muser with characteristically and gorgeously decorated clothes, this is the result of cultural recipe of education for multiculturalism purpose. An individual's identity is rooted partly in such traditional dressing and his or her pride in traditional clothes. Flexibility in identity of dressing among students tends to be much more prone to being Thai students. In other words, double ethnic identity has more chances to show the part of being Thai than being Muser. Chances here are the frequency of dressing uniform and students' preference towards other clothes not Muser clothes for their daily dressing.

As for parents or other senior villagers, they prefer Muser clothes. Men wear T-shirts but their trouser are usually Muser. The seniors always encourage students to wear Muser clothes but students do not like. There is a compromise between students and their parents. The parents know that it's the interest of children and they comply with them. Students are not strongly forced by their parents. There is no punishment for them if they do not wear Muser clothes but punishment at school by teachers if they do not wear uniform. We can tell from this fact that hegemonic ideology of education policy only recognizes one identity of dressing of students at school. And the same dressing way as lowland students is considered legitimate.

A gap between old generations and young generation regarding consciousness about dressing can be observed. The seniors preserve their Muser identity both unconsciously and consciously. They do not have the chance to access education as their children. Therefore, their awareness and feeling about dressing ways are unlike students and they just dress Muser without any inferiority complex. In them, there is a higher pride in their Muser clothes than their children. The seniors also see the risk that youngsters do not wear Muser clothes often and one day, the culture of dressing will fade away or it will be seen more rarely. Ten most seniors of Sompoi village and 5 seniors of Huaiplalod over 50 years old in this research group discussions express their worry about this risk. Therefore, they try to convince their children and grandchildren into wearing Muser clothes more often. They say that for more than 20 years, Muser have lost their culture of weaving clothes and now it is risky that their next generations will not wear Muser clothes any more but clothes as lowlanders wear.



Students in uniform (Huaiplalod school)



Sompoi School boys and girls in Muser traditional clothes



Muser mothers in Muser daily clothes (Chud Chamlong)

4.3 Language

Language is one of the most important components of culture. Much of culture is transmitted in oral and written forms. It is impossible to understand deep meanings of another culture without knowing its language well.

Through the author's observation, the use of languages among Muser students and Muser seniors are different from each other. As for seniors at the age of 50 upwards, they can not talk Thai or just can speak some popular words. The rest of seniors can speak Thai well because they have frequent contact with Thai people in the markets. They only use Thai language when they talk to Thai people in the markets or Thai teachers at schools. Some speak very clearly. Some speak understandable but not very well-pronounced Thai. Their children go to school at the age of six. Children have the chance to learn Thai from such very early age. It is a good start to learn a language. At schools, students learn to read and write Thai according to the national curriculum as lowland students do. In addition, "one day one word" program provides them with more languages that are English and Karen.

Among those languages, Thai is the first and foremost compulsory language. Standard Thai is "Thai klang" or Thai language of the central part. It is used as the medium of instruction in all Thai school. It is also the language of mass media, such as newspapers, radio and TV broadcasting, and so forth. Karen students study in the same classes with Muser students, they are not obliged to learn by heart

language of each other. In other words, Muser students do not need to talk to their Muser friends in Karen because they have Thai language as a middle tool. The contexts in which Muser students speak languages can be divided as follows:

- Places:

+ At schools: students from Kindergarten level to elementary grade 2 level speak Muser language and “Muser – Thai” language (Muser language mixed with many Thai vocabularies, sometimes mixed with the whole sentences). Elementary school students from grade 3 to grade 6 use “Muser – Thai” and Thai language.

+ At home: Most students use Muser or “Muser – Thai” language, they do not use Thai language absolutely at home or when they talk to other senior villagers.

+ Outside village: when they talk to Thai people, or talk to each other in downtown or in markets, they only use Thai language

- Relations with talking partners:

+ Family members: when students talk to their grandparents, parents and other relatives, they use Muser or “Muser – Thai”(in this case, the Muser spoken language is mixed with Thai vocabularies not the whole sentences)

+ Friends: inferior students often talk to their senior students in Muser or “Muser-Thai” because they are not as proficient in Thai as their brothers and sisters. Friends of the same age like to talk in Thai or “Muser- Thai” rather than Muser.

+ Teachers and other Thai staff worker at schools: Students talk to them in Thai only.

From the above division through the author’s observation and interviews with students, it can be said that students themselves have the flexibility in their

conversations. They know that teachers and other staff workers can not understand Muser; so, they have to use Thai language. At home, the adults prefer speaking Muser language, which makes students change to speak more Muser at home and sometimes they mix the sentence with some Thai vocabularies. Whenever a term or vocabulary to name a stuff or mention any thing can not be found in Muser language, they use Thai. "Some Thai words are easy to understand than Muser words". (said Schoolgirl Panita Khaniduanli). They have their own decisions to choose which language to speak when they talk to different partners daily. In comparison with adults, students can talk better Thai language. Students learn Thai language from schools while adults' Thai language is accumulated through contact with Thai people over time. In contrast, adults speak Muser more fluently than students.

Moving onto the use of Thai language and the mixture of Thai and Muser languages, to a certain extent, the negative impact on ethnic language is unavoidable. The situation gets more serious when Muser tribe does not have a written script. With time, the frequent use of Thai language makes students forget Muser vocabularies. After generations, a proportion of Muser vocabularies will no longer exist. Along with this process of language loss, Thai vocabularies come in and play the role as alternatives. "I feel it's a normal problem, there is no worry for Muser language being replaced by Thai language, we are still able to speak Muser" (said schoolboy Sorawit Khusawihok, grade 3, aged 15). "We must adapt ourselves in the Thai society. We are Muser but we are also Thai; therefore we should speak Thai with Thai people. Sometimes, we speak Muser language, downtown people look at us and they are unable to understand, we feel ashamed" (said school girl Nala Japrayud). "When we can speak Thai well, we can trade with Thai people well, we can earn more money. We can understand Thai movies and sing songs we like" (said schoolboy Kathon Tapayun, grade 3, aged 15). We can see that students do not pay any attention to the risk that Muser language may be lost. Whereas, they are always ready to use Thai in any context or under any circumstance. Besides wearing uniform or clothes like lowlanders, Speaking Thai language is another means that helps them escape from inferiority complex. It is the inferiority complex of being stagnant and small in a broader society as mentioned in the costume culture section above.

In formal education towards hill tribes, Thai language is compulsory and official. Students learn Thai language through curriculum that is designed scientifically. Such curriculum along with daily contact with Thai teachers, Muser students can gain their

good command of Thai language very soon. Students at higher grades of primary school can communicate Thai fluently. Especially those who finish primary school mostly do not have any difficulty in communicating Thai. Outside schools, informal education in the form of mass media contributes to promoting the use of Thai language. Students learn more vocabularies from Thai movies or news. The way people talk or even speak ill about the others are adopted by students without any filter. Newspapers, teenager or entertainment magazines and cartoons are exposed to students with slangs or words that are interesting to students.

Adults of the two villages when being asked about the use of Thai language in stead of Muser language sometimes among the students, they can not hide their anxiety. “Looking back into the past around 30 years ago, villagers all speak Muser. Muser identity was very primitive with no mixture of Thai language like nowadays” (said Mrs. Naphuu Khongkhacharuu, aged 50). “There are no insulting words in Muser language like today. Students speak so many bad words that adults can not accept.” (said Mr. Chaha Sompoiluang, aged 60, “Puchan” of Sompoi village). Old aged adults are the witness of the process of Muser language loss. They give out a list of examples of words that are no more used among students as follows:

	<i>Muser language</i>	<i>Thai language</i>
Tomato	mahesuua	Makhua
Lemon	isuuchee	Manao
Fish sauce	nayguu	Nampla
Sugar cane	khuuchohuu	Namoy
Nail	sunchuu	Tapu

When students can not communicate well in Muser language with their grandparents or other old-aged adults, they are criticized. “I am criticized by Puchan and my grandmother for not being able to speak the whole sentences in Muser language. I mix Thai words usually. When talking to the adults, I feel I do not know around 30% of vocabularies. I do not know some real words to call stuffs and things in Muser language” (said teacher Nauu, Sompoi school, Sompoi village). Adults are worried that more 20 years or 30 years to come, Muser language will be forgotten by next generations. They are more and more concerned about this problem. They are willing to teach children Muser language all the time. They try to talk in Muser language before students so that students have a Muser language environment. They implant in them the

love for Muser language by convincing them into speaking Muser more often. As for Thai language, adults think it is necessary for students to learn. They recognize that the world is changing and Muser people need to integrate into the broader society. Adults sympathize for children speaking Thai better than Muser language for their need to update themselves and integrate into Thai society.

However, besides such sympathy, consciousness about the risk of Muser spoken language being lost makes them put forth to implant in students the love for Muser language. Future of Muser language is obvious. This hill tribe has been on the track of losing their language and its traditionally associated and intertwined ethnoculture. This process is “*a tragedy of language loss*” as called by Joshua A. Fishman (as cited in Conversi, D, 2004: 86-87).

Moving back to nationalist purpose of the state through education toward hill tribes, standard Thai language has played an important role. As mentioned above, students can speak Thai well and forget their local language, which is a consequence that nationalist purpose brings about. The target of national unification, national identity and cultural assimilation in line with hegemonic tasks is successful to a certain extent in the aspect of language teaching. With the students’ ignorance of Muser language, the history, folktales and songs about the great deeds of their forefathers, the mountains and forests and supreme God, language will not be collective treasure any more. Barbour and Carmichael (1998 : 196) identified the importance of language as follows:

“The cultural coherence of an ethnic group or a nation is often partly expressed by language. This works in two ways; a distinctive language may help to demarcate the ethnic group or nation from other groups, and a common language may facilitate communication and hence coherence within a group. Language can hence be extremely important for ethnic identity, national identity and nationalism.”

The close link between identity of language and nationhood that a nation cannot exist without its language and ancestral language is national continuity. Relevantly, at the level of an ethnic group, an ethnic language of a hill tribe is closely and significantly linked to identity of that tribe. What is more, ancestral language maintains cultural continuity of the tribe. In the case of Muser hill tribe, the tragedy of language loss becomes more serious when the tribe people do not have any written script of their own. Record of history, folktales, ceremonies and other cultural and historical things are

transmitted by spoken language being replaced by Thai language at a gradually greater extent after generations.

Along with nationalist ideology of education through language teaching, pluralism or multicultural ideology is also included. The program “one day one word” in Huaiplalod school creates a multilingual environment among the Muser and the Karen. This annual program is considered locally specific curriculum. Teaching Muser and Karen spoken languages along with standard Thai and English, apparently the schools show the villagers their attempt to help preserve local culture. When asked about this program, adults in the villages express their approval. In their opinion, to a certain extent, this program makes Muser words alive and from that Muser language will not be lost much or much replaced by Thai language.

Such program serve the the nationalist purpose when students learn Thai every morning besides official time in classes. In addition, it serves the building of a multicultural learning community or the building of pluralism. Both adults and students of the two tribes have a consensus in speaking Thai as middle language. The two tribes Muser and Karen make a compromise with each other in language speaking like that. However, they can still talk to each other in Muser and Karen sometimes. The diversity of students’ tribe in classes is the prerequisite for the diversity in language learning which is every morning “one day one word” program of Huaiplalod school.

Apart from daily contact between Thai and Muser languages, the diverse language contact of this program also results in changes in linguistic systems. English, Karen, Muser and Thai meet up together and consequently, local languages borrow words from other sources to name things, activities or ideas. New sounds may be introduced and morphological and syntactic constructions may be altered. A thorough research about the alteration of local languages within those localities may help illustrate more. Within the multilingual “school community”, “student speakers” adjust to their languages and to each other in several ways. Actually, Thai language is most adjusted and employed to Karen and Muser because of its official use in such community. Especially, students employ Thai language in most situations, topics and flexibly to participants. That’s the flexibility in individuals of a culture in using languages. In this flexibility, Thai language accounts for a greater usage proportion and Muser language stands the risk of being forgotten. This diversity in language use often leads to miscommunication mostly between the youngsters and the senior villagers. In other words, Muser people with a gap in generation meet another gap in language use. The way people interpret their own

messages will no longer go smoothly as before when they still used only one spoken language.



A Muser student and a Karen student being MC for a musical performance at Huaiplalod school

4.4 Religion

Religion in this study is related to the changing process of ceremonies and beliefs among students as well as the difference in religion of adults and students. Religion is part of a culture and in this case study animism plays a paramount role in shaping hill tribe characteristic identity of Muser tribe. Buddhism is among the important factors for acculturation that closely interacts with other aspects of an ethnic culture after generations. The beliefs and practices of animism preserved from ancestral time till now build a community for their followers – Muser villagers. Animism is a social element that unifies the whole village and then establishes the cultural identity. It can be said that the deep root foundation of Muser community identity is their primitive religion – animism.

The history of Buddhism in the two villages can be traced back to the year 1986 in the movement of Dhammacakri Dhikku. When many children of the Huaiplalod village died of a strange diseases, the local people had asked for help from the ghost power by many animistic ceremonies but it was to no avail. The number of young dead kept increasing to the extent that the seniors had to turn to the people outside for help. Medical staff was there in time and help eliminate the epidemic. At that very time, Phra Ajarn Den told them to bring a statue of the Buddha to the center of the village to

chase bad ghosts of diseases. Since 1986, the Buddha has been located and enshrined in the village at the very revered place.



The statue of Buddha in the center of Huaiplalod village

The spirit of Buddhism started to spread within the village in that year. However, Buddha has become a symbol of salvage or one power of help beside good and helpful ghosts. Animism of the villagers has not been replaced but it still exists and adopts Buddhism. Phra Ajarn Den was among Buddhist priests of the Dhammacakri project by the government to spread Buddha's teachings among hill tribes. Phra Ajarn Den was assigned to teach in Huaiplalod village. Since the arrival of Phra Ajarn Den, the villagers have been taught with basic Dhamma education. The villagers have adopted those new teachings and practices to their primitive animism. Animism in Muser people in those days was still strong and play as an antigen to Buddhism. They believe in the teachings of Buddha because Buddhist teachings are mostly close to their animistic ideology basically. Seniors of the village say that Buddhism has been welcomed since the past days when they were young. They say it is acceptable to adopt Buddhism because this religion is similar to their animistic beliefs. Basically, there is no big difference found. There was no hostile feeling towards Buddhism but Christianity. There have been many Christian missionaries coming to introduce Christianity in the two villages. The differences of cultural values and especially animism did not allow

people to accept Christianity. Muser adults consider the 5 taboos of Buddhism (*sin ha*) are similar to Muser morally good or righteous doings being conveyed through generations. Muser people can not understand Buddhism deeply as Thai people do but the basic teachings of the Lord Buddha are understandable and worth following. Therefore, they still uphold their animistic ceremonies along with Buddhism and their beliefs in ghosts remain unchanged. Since schools were established in the two villages, values and practices of Buddhism have been taught to Muser students officially.

Consequently, education has brought Buddhism to Muser people in a more official and scientific way. Muser students are implanted with Buddhist values through curriculum and extra activities such as every morning 5 minute meditation (*Sa-ma-thit*) and praying (*suad-mon*). In festivals or various events of the schools, Buddhist ceremonies are performed ahead to the main activities. Through such contacts, Muser students get more and more familiar with Buddhism and this religion is gradually adopted.

Education provides students with new knowledge and; especially, implants in them the spirit of Buddhism. Gradually, their belief in animism fades away. They start to wonder that their ancestral ghosts can control their lives and take care of them or not. They convert to the thinking that individuals succeed, fail, be happy or be miserable due to the merit or “*bun*” they make. They do not think as adults that the Lord Gusha would bless them with happiness and prosperity during their life. Instead, happiness in their opinion is the result of merit making in the previous carnation or in the contemporary carnation. In addition, they believe that when people make merits, they should do it from the bottom of their hearts so that they can get good return. Whenever kind of bad ghosts are mentioned, students have a scaring feeling. As for ancestral ghosts, they feel safe and attached because at home parents perform ceremonies to feed and worship ancestral ghosts often. Students consider ancestral ghost worshipping ceremonies necessary because it is the expression of filial duty. They think of their ancestors and feel attached to their families thanks to this kind of ceremony. However, the number of such ceremonies is too many for them. Most male students are asked to join the ceremonies and learn the way how to perform. According to them, around more than 20 times of such ceremonies annually should be reduced to 10 times. They find it difficult to perform many times. The worshipping stuff like pork, chicken and rice is considered too much and wasteful. Some school boys say it is not necessary to kill pigs many times for so many ceremonies. The amount of pork can be reduced to avoid waste of money.

Apart from ancestral ghost worshipping ceremonies, boys are also asked to join other animistic ceremonies to chase the bad ghosts. In other bigger ceremonies like New Year or ceremony to set up God temple (khuunsanchaw), they are asked to observe so that they can perform themselves when they become adults. However, the language that “Mophi” use in ceremonies is so complicated and difficult to understand or learn by heart, which causes boredom to them. This diminishes their interest in animism.

Meanwhile, at schools, students become much knowledgeable about Buddhism through teachers’ explanation, curriculum and school activities. Buddhism is introduced to them as a religion with the symbolic Lord Buddha, meditation, homage paying to the Buddha, chanting, merit making, pagodas or temples for various religious ceremonies and many religious important days. Students are taught that meditation helps their mind find peace and they will study better. Actually, most students do not understand the meaning of Pali chanting. Neither do they explain clearly the meaning of such Buddhist practices. They say that they join those ceremonies and follow the practices according to the regulation of schools. It can be said that initially, they follow teachers’ instruction but gradually Buddhist values are implanted unconsciously in them. This is a building process for establishing new values.

A significant change in their belief is how they believe in life after death. According to Muser belief system, dead people will go to the heaven and stay with the Lord Gusha and their ancestors if they make good merit and behave themselves well and morally. In contrast, they will be thrown down to hell if they commit crimes or behave immorally. However, some students convert their belief into Buddhism and believe in rebirth. A good rebirth to be beautiful or handsome, rich and talented is due to the good merits people have done in the previous carnation. A bad rebirth is due to bad merits or crimes.

At home, they are taught by their grandparents or parents about animistic ceremonies or even join the ceremonies and learn how to perform. At school, they are taught about Buddhism and instructed to follow Buddhist practices. Some of them wear Buddha’s amulets on their necklace to protect them from bad ghosts. In the same time, they believe in Buddha and believe there are ghosts and bad ghosts may harm them. In the same time, two kinds of belief are mixed together and young individuals have their own response to this mixture. Definitely, they feel safe with this treatment towards their scare of bad ghosts. These two sides of religious education bring about a mixture of religious belief. Definitely, religious identity of adults remains mostly primitive with

their relatively pure animism that are not mixed not that many Buddhist values. Whereas, religious identity of students have been markedly changed as a consequence of education that they get. Adults become more and more concerned about the changing religious belief of students.

On important days of Thai Buddhism, adults do not go to temples in downtown or in Thai villages nearby but youngsters. Every time they ask for permission from their parents before going. Parents just answer that you can go if you want. Some of the students want to hang Buddha image at home, their parents have do not say anything. Parents are open-minded in religious belief and respect their children' interest. "I comply with my children to hang Buddha's image at home. It is good also to worship the Buddha. As for me, I worship ancestor ghosts, primitive religion of Muser. The lord Buddha is also a good God who teaches us good things to do." (said Mrs. Setara Khiviwutlay, aged 45). Tolerance of parents towards students is obvious like that.

There is, however, a discontent in parents when their children are very eager in Buddhist ceremonies but ignore animistic tradition of their own tribe. They do not resist children because they themselves also accept Buddhism but at a lighter level or to a basically modest extent. They worry about Muser community characteristic being lost because not many youngster join the "merit making" (thambun) ceremonies at others' houses. Whenever a family performs important household ceremonies like wedding or new house party, villagers will join a collective dancing performance (*ten chaukhuu*). Adults also worry about the belief of youngsters in God Gusha. Puchan Sompoi said:

"....Muser youngster must not forget our animistic culture. If we lose this religion, we lose Muser identity. If we do not believe in God Gusha, we will meet bad luck, miserable things and can not develop ourselves, can not earn a living. Boys must learn how to perform animistic ceremonies to uphold the tradition. As for girls, if they get married with men outside the village, they must come back home in important festivals to join the village. It is not moral and not good for herself if she forgets her own religion, her supreme God and ancestors.... "

Adults, on any possible occasion, try to implant in youngsters the spirit of worshipping the Lord God Gusha. This is an attempt in revitalizing traditional religion to form a counter balance with Buddhism. There occur both tolerance of adults towards youngsters regarding their following Buddhism and an attempt to take them back on

track of animism. This seems to be an orthodox but this can be explained as flexibility in individual awareness. Adults' response is sensitive to contexts and situations. As mentioned earlier, adults accept changes in students as a result of education because they realize the need for them to integrate into the mainstream society. That acceptance involves in many aspects. They can accept students' speaking Thai often; they also accept students' following Buddhism.

In the process of religious change, Muser seniors who are experienced animistic believers are able to observe the intervention of Buddhism into their local beliefs. They can see most clearly how risky it is for their animism to be ignored by youngsters who are more familiar with Buddhism through education; however, they respond in a compromising way. They do not ask their children to give up Buddhism but remind them to look back and uphold their tradition. Consequently, youngsters have a double ethnic religious identity. Young individuals of this ethnic culture tend to simplify animistic ceremonies but still uphold them along with their belief in Buddhist teachings and practice what they learn from schools. It is religion mixture among students that we can see religion as the most indicative level of acculturation, assimilation and integration in this case study.

In fact, animism of the Muser is basically both family and community affair. Family affair is related to ancestor worshipping. Community affair is related to bigger village level - ceremonies or festivals. There exists a strong interrelationship between family organization and religious structure. The nature of Muser animism is ancestor worship. Ancestral deities are lineage of Gods. When a senior dies, the spirit still has contact with the lineage. Their spirits are important links between the sacred world and the secular world. Continuous attention and respect for the ancestors are necessary. Any behavior of ignorance or negligence would bring about misfortune. Normally, each family holds rituals for its own ancestors. Such frequent family interaction contributes to unifying and integrating family members as well as maintaining family features and functions. However, young individuals of the communities have been relating themselves more and more to Buddhism while neglecting animistic rituals. Especially, young schoolboys who perpetuate the lineage do not understand rituals and even do not have any interest in performing those rituals. Nevertheless, they along with virgin females are allowed to lead the rituals.

The religious change in students marks a start for a change in family and community foundation. The fewer rituals they perform and less level of animistic belief they have, the fewer chances for family integration and community unification to be warmed up often. Consequently, cultural identity has fewer chances to be shown and to be repeated so as to be preserved completely in continuity. As Robert Jackson (2004: 21) argues that religious education contributes to the child's awareness of and participation in identity issues. Such participation of Muser students is that they join more Buddhist ceremonies and neglect to learn to perform animistic rituals. Animism is perceived differently from adults because of the difference in knowledge and experience related to Buddhism. Jackson (1997: 62-63 as cited in Jackson, 2004:70) proposes that one's view of tradition is likely to be modified as one encounters new material. In the case of Muser tribe, students encounter Buddhist religious material and their view of Muser traditional religion differs. Double-ethnic identity is partly rooted from such new view.

Moving back to ideology of education in teaching Buddhism towards the hill tribes, we can see that the nation uses hegemonic method to implant religion in students. According to theory of hegemony as touched upon in the theoretical framework of this study, hegemony recognizes only one identity as legitimate and national culture. That is the culture of dominant group. Buddhism is a vital part of Thai culture and therefore, Buddhism is introduced to hill tribes to acculturate them. Moreover, pluralism in education ideology allows hill tribes to maintain their animistic belief system. In the case of Muser tribe, the set of ethnic traditional animistic values are not discarded. Pluralism and hegemonic purpose go together to enhance nationalism. The sense of belonging to a Thai nation becomes stronger when hill tribe youngsters follow the national religion – Buddhism.

In this domain, ethnic culture is assimilated through religion teaching by formal and non-formal education to serve the nationalist task. Buddhism is the sacred foundation of Thai national identity. Thai nationalists have applied that deep cultural resource into education to assimilate hill tribes. It can be said that education in line with Buddhism has bound hill tribe members through ritual and symbolic practices of Buddhism to form a unified nation of communion or religious intimacy. Jonathan Hearn (2006:227) identifies the role of religion in nationalism as it supplies symbolic resources for articulating claims, defining national communities and anchoring identity. He further illustrates the role of religion as it takes part in vital orientation to ultimate

power. In the case of Muser hill tribe, through education, Thai state has been successful in attaching Thai identity to them with Buddhist values and inculcating a sense of belonging to Thai state or Thai government as an ultimate power.



Buddha's image in classrooms (Huaipalod school)



Buddha's image in classrooms (Sompoi school)

4.5 Folklore

“Folklore (or traditional and popular culture) is the totality of tradition-based creations of a cultural community, expressed by a group or individuals and recognized as reflecting the expectations of a community in so far as they reflect its cultural and social identity; its standards and values are transmitted orally, by imitation or by other means. Its forms are, among others, language, literature, music, dance, games,

mythology, rituals, customs, handicrafts, architecture and other arts (UNESCO.1989)¹. Based on the definition of UNESCO, it can be said in other words that folklore is a part of culture that is expressed through music, dance, legends, games, oral history, proverbs and jokes and other related heritages. Muser folklore is the heritage preserved and transmitted through generations. Muser folklore is a set of practices that binds people of Muser community together to form a characteristic identity unique from other tribes. This section will focus on certain aspects of Muser folklore, which are folktale, music, dance and traditional games. The impact of education towards these four elements is considerable among students. The extent at which students have interest in or practice of folklore indicates the level of cultural change.

Folktale of the Muser includes forms of traditional narratives or legendary stories. Those stories are all about the supreme God Ghusa, the origin of Muser, the victories of ancestors over enemies or fierce forest animals and the conquest over mountains and rivers. The telling of those stories is an art. The artists in story telling are experienced old aged seniors in the village. Among those, “pu chan” are the experts who know mostly everything related. Previously in the past time of about 30 years ago, the activities of story telling took place regularly. Villagers; especially, children gathered in a big house to listen to stories from Puchan. At home, there are fewer chances for parents to tell stories to their children because parents have to go to the field and children have to attend classes the whole day. The most popular time for every household is dinner time. However, some students of forth grade and upwards from Sompoi have to stay the night in the dormitory of Huaiplalod school. When dinner is finished, tea is drawn and seniors of the family start to tell story to the other family members. Whenever, there is merit affair (*ngan bun*), tea is also drawn for seniors to have a sip for story telling inspiration. Such story telling in merit affairs is not frequent any more. Previously, there were about more than 5 times per month but nowadays once or twice. The reason is that children do not gather enough as before. The interest in those stories varies from generations. Muser people of senior age above 30 have greater interest than the younger. In actuality, students have interest in those stories also. When students are asked whether they like their Muser folk stories or not, they all answer yes.

¹ UNESCO Meeting report in Paris from 17 October to 16 November 1989 at its twenty-fifth session;
http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13141&URL_DO=DO_PRINTPAGE&URL_SECTION=201.html

However, they have many other sources of entertainment such as Japanese cartoon in Thai language available in the school libraries. Sometimes, the time of story telling clashes with some expected movies or musical performance to be shown on TV, students choose to stay home sitting in front of the TV. To students, the attraction of those new kinds of entertainment is much stronger than the amazement of folk stories.

In the variety of Muser story series, “ekkhay” (story about a hero) tale is the most well-liked among students. On the occasions of merit affairs, if the story is “ekhay”, students can make a consideration to choose between TV or cartoon and “ekkhay”. Those hero story has many episodes to follow; therefore, students feel excited to know what happens in the next. The story tells that initially, as long as the legendary goes, Muser people were very stupid. Ekhay is the most intelligent youngster of the tribe. In that time, young males are called to join the army with Thai people in lowland area. All young male Muser people leave their wives and children home. During the war time between Thai army and enemies, Ekhay is very innovative. He contributes many helpful tactics to defeat enemies. When the war is abated, Ekhay is very homesick and ask for priority allowance for his contribution to go home Muser village. When there is no other young man in the village, the wicked sexual instinct of Ekhay arises. He lies other young women that their husband passed away in the war. He warns them of the bad ghosts around at night time if they sleep without men. The suggestion is that they should stay in his house. If they bring children with them, they have to keep them silent not to disturb his sleep. All of the young women in the village become his wives gradually.

One or more years later, all the men return home after war. A young generation is born. The doubt and lineage is confirmed. Ekhay is found the mastermind of this consequence. However, with his outstanding intelligence, he is able to escape from the arrest of villagers. His gene is left in young born children. Afterwards, Muser generations become more intelligent thanks to the gene of Ekhay. The stories about Ekhay roaming here and there are interesting to students in a manner like that. However interesting Ekhay is, the frequency of Ekhay telling does not remain as before. Adults feel worried about this. Puchan of Somoi village and Huaiplalod village feel most worried. They are in charge of transmitting stories. They are aware that they have the duty to help preserve this traditional culture of folktale. Therefore, senior themselves use any chance available to tell Muser stories to their children. They do not force

children to listen but try to inspire them that those stories are part of Muser characteristics and can not be forgotten. Puchan of Sompoi village said:

“...if adults do not tell those stories often, it is very risky. Next Muser generations will not know about their traditional folktales anymore....when we tell stories, we try to tell in an amazing way so that children do not feel bored. There are many stories and it takes time to tell all. Time may be years if we do not tell stories often.”

Another important part of Muser folklore is traditional music. Muser music includes Muser folk songs and musical instruments to be played on specific occasions. There are many kinds of musical instruments. They are *khaen* (small and big mouth organs whose pipes are connected with a small, hollowed-out hardwood reservoir into which air is blown), *namtaw* (a free reed mouth organ with a windchest made from a dried bottle gourd; its pipes often five in number, made of bamboo and it has free reeds that are made of bamboo), *sueng* (made from wood similar to guitar, is a plucked string instrument, made of teak or hardwood. A round sound hole is cut on the top sound board), flute (bamboo), *tonkhaw* (rice plant), *khlui* (vertical duct flute made from papaya branch used as flute). Muser folksongs are mostly gentle and slow in melody. The adults do like this music because its part of their soul since they were born. The folksongs hail the victories of ancestors, the beauty of mountains, forests and water streams, the attachment of parents and children and so on. There are songs for boys to flirt with girls, for rice cultivating, for expressing sadness or joy. These songs are sung in the accompaniment of traditional instruments. It takes about 2 or 3 years to master playing all those musical instruments. It is quite difficult to learn to play, according to the “puchans”. They are played up to the contexts. Nam taw is mostly played for Chakhuu dancing and Khaen for daily affairs or daily entertainment; for example, when students play football or volley ball.



A schoolboy playing Khaen to support his friends playing valley ball

Only a few male students nowadays can play some of those musical instruments well. Very few students can sing Muser folk songs. They feel it difficult to understand the lyrics and to learn them by heart is even more impossible. The language in folksong lyrics is not similar to daily Muser spoken language. They do not have much interest in Muser folksongs because of language barrier. In addition, students do not like the slow and monotonous melody of Muser folk songs. In contrast, they very much love Thai and international pop or hip-hop songs. They have the chance to learn songs from Thai teachers in class. They can also watch TV or listen to radio and learn those songs by heart.



Muser students watching TV after class

Non-formal education of schools exposes students to modern Thai music and dancing styles of Thai singers through extra activities. For example, on the occasion of national children day, teachers teach them some dancing performances accompanied by Thai pop background music. Apart from Muser music being ignored by students, traditional dancing of the Muser or Chakkhhu also stands the risk of being forgotten. Muser people dance Chakkhhu together whenever a family has “ngan bun” or merit making ceremony. Chakhuu dancing is performed most gorgeously on the occasion of big events like New Year ceremony or ceremony to welcoming honorable delegation from downtown or government officials. Chakhuu steps are always ahead forward, which means development and prosperity for the Muser.

Some Students even can not dance Chakhuu well because they do not have interest in it. When they are not interested in dancing, they can not remember the steps. In most events of the schools, dancing like Thai pop boy or girl bands is the most popular. Adults feel very worried about students ignoring Chakhuu dance. According the “phuchans” of the two villages, Chakhuu dancing is very meaningful. If Muser people do not dance Chakkhhu, the God Ghu’sha will not protect them from disasters anymore. Chakhu also inspires fertility, prosperity and helps prevent from earthquake. Therefore, adults always remind children to join Chakhuu dance more often by telling them the meaning of Chakhuu. However, the attraction of Chakhuu is not strong enough to take their interest out from other games and modern music. The attention students pay for Chakhuu is minimal in comparison with other modern dancing styles and music. Adults consider Chakhuu dance is the symbol of solidarity and community unification. If Muser people do not have any more interest in Chakhuu, the solidarity will decrease.

In another viewpoint, the identity of Muser young generation in terms of musical culture decreases due to the new identity established by their adaptation of Thai pop music. Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel (as cited in Storey, J., 2003:117) argue that pop-music helps establish a sense of identity among youth. According to them, the pop culture provided by the commercial entertainment market plays a crucial role in the fact that it provides an expressive field and a set of symbols. Teenage culture is a mixture between the authentic and manufactured. It is an area of self-expression for the young. A tangle of emotional and sexual expression through pop music invokes the need to experience life directly and intensely. Regarding such new identity, the case of Muser young generation’s identity is synonymous with their stronger interest and new life experience in Thai pop music than Muser music.

The interest of Muser students in Muser folksongs and Chakhuu dancing is also interrupted by TV. Watching TV is always more than a series of acts of interpretation, it is, above all, a social practice as theorized by Morley (as cited in John Storey, 2003:19). According to Morley, TV watching can be a means to isolate oneself (Do not talk to me, I'm watching this). This can be interpreted in the case of Muser students that they are isolated unconsciously from Chakhuu dancing ceremonies by TV (I do not want to go dancing, I'm watching TV). The television programs soon distance young individuals from community. The chances for traditional culture transfer begin to be forgotten. Meanwhile, the risk of culture loss increases.



Muser students of Huaiplalod school dancing Chakhuu to welcome charity groups of corporations from Bangkok

ศูนย์วิทยพักร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย



Students of Huaiphalod school dancing to a Thai pop song on the occasion of National children day

Such Thai music is well-liked by Muser students but is a nuisance to the seniors. Some seniors say it causes headache and its sounds are not understandable. They conclude it is not good for Muser students to sing and dance like Thai people. However, as in other aspects of cultural change mentioned earlier, adults accept as it is an unavoidable process of integration into the mainstream society. What they can do is to make the change less fast and protect traditional values from being forgotten. Regarding Muser folksongs, they teach their children to sing in convenient time. They do not force children to keep away from other music and get back to enjoy Muser music. They only implant in students the passion for traditional folksongs and teach them how to sing songs and play musical instruments. They repeatedly remind their children that to throw folksongs away is to lose the identity of Muser tribe.

National anthem is the music to get started for a new school day. The activities of saluting national flag and singing national anthem gradually establish in students' mind a stronger sense of belonging to Thai nation. This is a symbolic sign of nationalism. It is obvious that, national anthem singing implants in students the awareness of self and identity. They have greater feeling of being a Thai apart from being a Muser. This forms a double ethnic sense of belonging, in which the sense of belonging to Thai nation is implanted everyday at schools. According to James G. Kellas (1998:41), the idea of the nation and ideology of nationalism at simplest means the recognition of a people. To implement such ideology, nationalists use specific symbols such as anthems, flags,

coinage etc. Anthony D. Smith (as cited in Conversi, D., 2004: 64) identifies that they are ethno – symbolic elements that form vital components in the definition of ethnies or nations. In this case study, the simplest meaning of national anthem singing at schools is the recognition of being Thai. In terms of culture, such sense of belonging is the impetus for the adaptation of Thai culture. When one feels oneself belongs to a certain nation, one can quickly integrate themselves into the mainstream society socially and culturally.



Students at Huaiplalod school singing national anthem before class time

Traditional games of the Muser are *lukkhan* (bambooball similar to football), *luksaba* (games played on the ground using seeds of a kind of big tree), *yolukchuang* (cloth ball to throw back and forth between male and female teams), *bolokadong* (bamboo wheel for cycling), *khamtho* (javelin), *kradotechuua* (bungee jumping), *takhokhonkay* (shuttlecock), *yingnamay* (wooden arbelest), tug of war and archery. Toys for those games are mainly made from natural material such as bamboo tree and some are made from cloth. Bonlakradong is a game in which a wooden wheel is made rolling like a bicycle and children chase after. This game helps improve physical health. Yolukchuang is the game in which a small cloth ball is thrown up for boys and girls to catch. These two games are played only in New Year time. They are considered sacred games to inspire fertility, stimulate rice to grow beautiful and make village prosper. The

games that are not played any more are wonlokradong and yolukchuang. Lukhan is still played in New Year time. Among those games, “luksaba” is played most often. Children; especially, girls use seeds of a kind of big plants or stone to play “luksaba”.



Muser girls playing Luksaba game

Nowadays students have different games to play. At schools, they are taught to play sports such as volley ball, football and so on. Plastic toys and dolls are available at small shops in the villages. On occasions of school events, new games are introduced

and students have much enthusiasm to play. The reason is that those new toys and games are new and exciting to them. To play traditional games, they have to make the toys themselves, which takes them time. It is so called laziness in game playing. What is more, in school libraries, there are entertainment magazines such as Reader Digest (Thai language), Dara Daily (News and gossips about Thai stars), Spicy (Star gossip), TV2 and Star News which are more attractive to them than those traditional games. Some students spend their free time reading those magazines with curiosity about their idols' stories. What lays under that laziness is the loss of characteristic game culture. When Muser youngsters can not make toys themselves and play their traditional game, a part of folklore is lost. Meaningful indications through games about nature, fertility, solidarity and animistic belief will not remain anymore. Individuals' ethnic identity will lack game culture along with the loss of many other social and spiritual values.



Students of Sompoi shool playing a game held by teachers on National children day

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Traditional insect toy made from coconut and bamboo like this is no longer popular but can be seen only in contest organized by schools

Folklore has many cultural aspects in the relation with its elements such as narratives, music, dance and traditional games. Muser folklore helps validate Muser culture. Through folklore, Muser cultural morals and values are transmitted through generations. Muser folksongs convey Muser's way of life, beliefs and emotions. Most importantly, they bring a sense of community when they are sung in the accompaniment with Muser musical instruments. The myth in folktales being told to children contains an ancestral lineage which implants in students the pride of their history and ancestors' victories.

Tylor (as cited in Dundes, A. Vol. IV. 2005:87) found myth important because of the light it shed on religion. Folktales are the tales people tell to themselves about themselves, their fantasies and their past also. Dundes, A. (Vol. III. 2005:264) identifies the value of folktale as primary testimony about a society's view of itself. As argued by Tylor and Alan Dundes, folktales form the identity of a community in such ways. Further to arguments about folktale, Davidson (1978:2) found that oral tradition or folktale survives in men's memories because it serves the interest of the society in which it is preserved. However, there is no more a great interest of Muser students in folktales. No more interest they have, no more chance for folktales to survive. Formal education, non-formal education and in-formal education have exposed them to such many new things more attractive to them than folktales. The consequence of such interest conversion has been discussed earlier.

Besides tales and music, folkdance as discussed by Alan Dundes (volume III. 2005:69) is an integral part of the community, such that the loss thereof would be to

essentially damage the life of the community. According to Dundes, folkdance is also connected with religious belief and transmitted by the whole community.

In the case of Muser community, traditional dance is no longer popular among students. Schools teach them sing Thai songs specific for students and TV shows them singers of teenagers with dancing styles that they imitate in their musical performances or contests. Therefore, music element of Muser folklore is being ignored and facing the risk of being forgotten. In the process of individual cultural change among students, traditional game, a relatively important element of folklore is also being lost. Games in this concern is not only entertaining to students only but is partly vital to the survival of Muser folklore composition. Toys can be bought from shops and new games are taught at schools, which bring them new excitement rather than traditional games that they have to make toys themselves.

In a nutshell, Muser folklore is being unconsciously ignored by youngsters who have access to education with new values introduced at schools and through mass media. Meanwhile, the adults consciously put forth to help preserve to the best of their ability. Theodore Gaster (as cited in Davidson, 1978:43) argued:

“folklore is that part of a people culture which is preserved consciously or unconsciously, in belief and practices, customs or observations of general currency, in myths, legends and tales of common acceptance, and in arts and crafts which express the temper and genius of a group rather than of an individual”

In the case of Muser tribe of this study, it is young educated individuals that can help keep such expressed temper and genius by learning how to play traditional music, sing folksongs, listening to folktales often and play traditional games. However, such expected behaviors take time and efforts to establish.

4.6 Social values

The term “social value” has its many forms of interpretations. For example, they are values about the good people, the relationships between self and others, friendship, respect for seniors and male and female roles. Thomas Fitzimmon (1958:480) when mentioning social values and attitudes of Thai society divides social values into three large categories as:

- spiritual development and the attainment of merit
- individual responsibility
- leadership and authority

In the case of Muser villages, Muser social values in the above three category framework have their own characteristics. Through time, Muser primitive social values have been transmitted through family base and community contact. Formal education has brought new values of Thai society to Muser villages. The new values, especially ethical and moral teachings of Buddhism have made them become new Muser members. These educated members behave according to both traditional norms and new values adopted.

As far as social values are concerned, family as basic cell of society is a starting point to study further into broader context. Family interaction and what students learn from their own houses lay a paramount foundation for their behavior when they join the community. What students learn from schools have established in them a new behavioral identity that is different from their seniors. Chaudhary (as cited in Valsiner and Rosa, 2007:524) identifies the family as a central social group for developing individuals in all societies across time. Chaudhary refers to Pernaun (2003) to further argue that care for the new generation is one of the critical tasks for the family; it provides the decisive junction of individual expression and society.

The family base of Muser community still upholds behavioral values transmitted from their ancestors. Muser family unit has an organic link to the larger society – Muser community. From family, children are taught to be loyal to family members and be kind, hospitable and charitable towards other people, animals, environment and nature. At home, parents call children sweetly in Thai language – “luk ja”. Whenever children do something wrong, parents teach them right away. They do not teach their children in

an organized way like schools do. They teach children in situations. Previously, Muser children did not have shared expressions of respect to the seniors.

However, nowadays, from schools, students learn the way Thai people salute each other by “wai”. “Wai” is the most basic social act a child learns from schools, which is the gesture of respect. When a “wai” is made, children press the palms together as in prayer. The gesture is used in many ways from simple salutations specifically to persons of different status and to the highest power – the Buddha. The simplest use is for salutation. Similarly, schools teach them the ways of sitting before superiors and handing items to them or receiving items from them. According to adults, such behaviors are very polite and they feel satisfied when their children express the respect for them in such ways. This is definitely a very positive impact of education.

In this case, schools contribute to building ethical citizens even though such ethical conducting practices are from Thai people. In Muser tradition, there are no salutations, no regulations for handing items and receiving items from seniors. Education helps fulfill those gaps in ethical expression for Muser culture and Muser adults are eager to accept those new values. In the past, Muser people didn't say hello to each other when they meet. Nowadays, young Muser always say “sawasdee kha” or “sawasdee khrab” to salute. Adults are still shy when they are greeted by children with “sawasdee”. Some adults turn their face to another direction when students say “sawasdee” before going to school or when coming home from school. There is still a gap between adults and children in adopting those ethical expressions. However, adults do not see those actions weird but polite and agreeable. The self Muser habit in adults is stronger than their children; therefore, it takes time for them to get acquainted to new values.

As for children, even though they express their respect, they still have debate with seniors; especially, elder sisters or brothers. “Puchan” Sompoi, through his experienced time witnessing younger generations grow up, say that youngsters dare to argue with seniors rather than obedience. To a certain extent, students learn about democratic values from schools. Election events to select monitor of the class and democracy teachings in curriculum make student become more aware of self or their own determination. However, according to Phu Chan and other senior adults, it is just a debate to make a compromise in doing something. It is not serious quarrel that need much concern. Values that students learn from class sometimes are universal values to

become a good person. Some others are Buddhist teachings about how to conduct an ethical life to get good merit.

At school, students are taught to be demeanor, respectful to elders and social superiors, self-reliant, generous, honest and self-disciplined. Whenever a student does something wrong, his case is discussed before the whole school in the morning after national anthem before class time as regularly. By doing this, teachers criticize the wrong doing and instruct students how to avoid doing so and how to behave in the situation of the wrong doing. Theravada Buddhism provides a comprehensive system of moral values. Students are implanted that merit accumulation will help create good things for them. Among the values associated with merit making, generosity is the most important. What is more, the inner core of merit making is to be generous and giving without regret. Moderation is needed in social relations. One should be friendly, pleasant and polite to other people. A good person is a person of serenity, mildness and generosity.

Moving onto individual responsibility, the roles of male and female in Muser community is not absolutely different. Husbands respect wives and they together decide on important affairs. Female's role is important in the family for their care about mostly all the internal affairs. Some wives tell their husbands "tong fang chan" (you must listen to me / follow me) when making decision on a certain affair. And in actuality, husbands follow wives in such way.

Individual responsibility of young educated generation may be most outstanding in the case of the head of Huaipalod village. This headman is in charge of political affairs of the community. The headman of community is absolutely admired and respected by all villagers. He is a well-educated bachelor and he can speak Thai very well. What is more, every thing he does targets at bringing benefit to his own village. He has made continued efforts to upgrade infrastructure and living condition. He is voted by both senior assembly of the village and the governmental side. His innovative ideas have been contributing to the growth of the village. The obvious evidence is the two markets along the main route between central Tak province and Measod. It is a striking example of individual responsibility towards one's community. Schools provide him with new updated knowledge, vision and sense of self identity. From that, he comes back to serve his community with innovative ideas. The living conditions of Muser people are much improved in comparison with previous time.

“Pu chan” of the two villages when asked about the heads of their communities express their absolute trust. They trust in the young educated Muser that they can communicate the governmental section well and have updated knowledge to instruct them in economic, political and social affairs. However, the “puchan” see an obvious risk of tradition loss as for headman in charge of traditional affairs – “pu chan” to be. Their lack in knowledge about animistic ceremonies is the biggest concern for current “puchan”.

As analyzed earlier, greater interest of students in Thai food or mixture of Muser and Thai food brings about a noticeable change in ethnic cuisine culture. Flavor disappears; food identity is lost. A decrease in frequency of traditional costume dressing limits the chance for ethnic culture to be represented in one of its most visible aspects. The strong need to cover inferiority complex is fulfilled by the same dressing style as lowlanders; which results in a double ethnic identity in costume with flexibility. However, this flexibility tends to be much prone to Thai identity. Besides the change in food and costume culture, “the tragedy of language loss” has substantial impact on Muser ethnic cultural coherence. The loss of ancestral language is interrupting the continuity of community identity. Language loss synchronizes with a remarkable ignorance of animistic ceremonies and change in primitive belief system. A stronger sense of belonging to Thai nation stems from religious education which contributes greatly to students’ awareness of and participation in Thai identity. A new identity is being gradually established in young individuals with new taste of music, dance, reading and games.

Traditional dance are performed only on specially occasions instead of being performed regularly for weeks or months as before. Now, traditional folksongs stand the risk of being discarded by youngsters for they are not as fast melodious as Thai pop music. Japanese cartoon in Thai language, Dara Daily Gossip or TV series divert students’ attention from folktale and traditional dance. Education contributes to constructing individual personality with moral and ethical values of the mainstream society.

A new social value identity comes into the village with expressions of salutation, respects towards the seniors and individual responsibility of the educated persons. Buddhist teachings serve as an ethical mold for youngsters to conduct their lives. New

social values are welcomed by seniors as they supplements the moral system of Muser tribe. That is to say, the impact of education is not absolutely one way. There is consciousness about the risk of losing tradition. The senior villagers have had attempts to exert. However, there remains a question for what to do most properly and effectively to avoid such loss of cultural tradition.

Getting back to the policy of Huaiplalod school regarding cultural teaching, the “Ethic, Morality and Local and Thai cultural conservation plan - 2005” project as mentioned in chapter three emphasizes that teaching staff, management board and other personnel of the school have understanding towards the importance of the conservation of local and Thai culture. Through education in its many forms, there have occurred the process of cultural integration, assimilation and cultural preservation among which cultural preservation is not yet concerned principally and largely. Cultural integration in the local context of this study is related to the adoption and adaptation of mainstream Thai culture. In this integration process; cuisine, costume, language, music, moral behavior and religious belief are integrated into the national culture without challenge because schools serve as official institution to implant those new values. While this may be seen as a positive step towards unifying the nation on the right track of hegemonic purpose and nationalism, such cultural integration is seen as a threat to ethnic culture. On larger scale, such cultural integration without considerable concern about local culture preservation will do harm to cultural diversity. Therefore, something must be done before it is too late.

The process of cultural integration occurs through both formal and informal education. Cultural assimilation is obvious through formal education with curriculum and school extra activities. The assimilation process includes steps of implanting Thai moral values, Buddhist ideology and many other nationalist cultural elements onto students. As analyzed above in the six domains of culture, it is clearly seen that cultural integration and assimilation are interrelated to each other. These two processes have a considerable impact on Muser ethnic culture. Such impact is of great concern. Meanwhile, the process of local culture preservation is of little avail. More or less, the efforts schools made to preserve local culture raise the awareness of students about their local features. However, the idea of integration and assimilation serve as the inner core of education. Therefore, local culture preservation can not serve as a counter balance to help uphold Muser cultural tradition.

The case study of Huaiplalod School, in terms of cultural integration and assimilation through education, is a striking example of hill tribes and other ethnic minorities nationwide. Education for all significantly popularizes universal knowledge among ethnic people. As a result, it brings material and non-material gain to them. Most importantly, hill tribe people have a stable economy with new knowledge and technology in agriculture. What is more, they have a broader vision about the world around them in many aspects. However, an emphasis on hegemony through education which recognizes only one national identity, based on the mainstream dominant culture as legitimate has a negative impact on local ethnic culture. Multiculturalism or pluralism is mentioned in written policy and the detailed programs of schools in the form of local culture preservation project. However, it is quite different in practice. Consequently, double ethnic identity grows with the tendency of ethnic identity loss. Ethnic youngsters keep adopting and adapting new values consciously or unconsciously through education exposed to them at the expense of their local culture. The process of integration and assimilation could happen easily, especially for the hill tribe that does not have its own written transcript of local language. Moreover, there is a big gap between seniors and youngsters in terms of awareness about cultural preservation. Not only the Muser in Tak province but many other hill tribes and ethnic minorities are also confronting such crisis of identity.



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CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

There have been many studies about ethnic culture and state policies towards the hill tribes in the North of Thailand. However, the Muser in Tak province has not been much touched upon. Education for the hill tribes and its impact on ethnic culture have not been studied thoroughly. This research tried to study the impact of education towards ethnic culture through the case study of the Muser hill tribe in Tak province. It is found that education strategy, curriculum, teaching and learning methods, extra-activities or education forms categorized as formal, non-formal and informal are to serve the purpose of integrating hill tribes into the mainstream society. Objectives and principles of Thai education policy are fulfilled and implemented along with the context of local wisdom. That is to say, education aims at the full development of hill tribe people in all aspects including mental health, intellect, knowledge, morality, integrity and ability to live in harmony with others. The inner core of all programs in hill tribe policy are to achieve the aims of cultural assimilation, nationalism and hill tribe economic and social development. It is more crucial for education to perform the duty of teaching Thai culture and achieving nationalist purpose. The education process brings about socialization and cultural assimilation among hill tribe students. Schools in hill tribe villages serve as institutions of instilling Thainess, which includes Thai-identity and integrating the Muser into the mainstream society and nationalizing.

The case study of the Muser in Tak shows that education since 1974 has paid a great attention to universal knowledge and basic knowledge about agriculture technology. Thus, the Muser have cultivated more effectively on their field and achieved a better economic life. In terms of cultural change, education has implanted new cultural identity to Muser students. It is noticeable that education in Muser village has resulted in a natural integration without force. Students have a greater sense of belonging to Thai nation and a greater Thainess. This is a result of hegemonic and nationalist ideology which are implemented through curriculum, daily practice at school and Buddhist teachings. When new values are conveyed, new individual identity develops. Consequently, double-ethnic identity is established. Double-ethnic identity of individual youngsters can be found through their attitude towards their traditional

culture. The locus of traditional culture arises from such shared individual identity. When individual identity changes, traditional culture also begins to change or traditional identity fades away more or less.

Elements of Muser traditional culture such as cuisine, music, folklore, religion, language and costumes are being represented by Muser youngsters in a different ways in comparison with their seniors. Traditional culture provides the individuals with style of living, a recipe for appropriate behavior and alternative recipes based on different values, beliefs and world views. However, the old way of life changed because education brings new values and a broader worldview to Muser students. As a result, there occurs a mержence of beliefs between animism and dominant Buddhism as well as a change in the presentation of traditional culture's elements. The so-called tragedy of language loss is exposed in daily conversation among youngsters with the worry of seniors. Muser vocabulary is replaced by Thai language. These young Muser have a greater proficiency in Thai language and gradually forget their Muser vocabularies.

New taste of food can tell who these youngsters are. A favor in Thai food brings about the change in Muser cuisine culture, and this considerably represents a new cultural identity. Similarly, new kinds of entertainment from mass media and schools do not allow the chances for traditional folklore to be demonstrated and performed. Muser traditional music is also discarded by youngsters for its slow melody and difficult lyrics to remember. Chakhuu dancing take place less regularly due to youngsters' lack of interest in it, but instead, there is more interest in TV series movies or musical performance. Folktale, a carrier of history and tradition is regrettably ignored. Like Chakhuu dancing, the activities of telling folktale takes place less regularly. Some traditional games become extinct. No effort is made to preserve those traditional games. Traditional costumes, one of the most visible expressions of culture are put on by youngster just occasionally. Young individuals can move from the realm of Muser costume culture to dressing culture of the lowlanders without any inner conflict. A combined identity is illustrated through dressing. Flexibility in dressing represents most visibly the double-ethnic identity in youngsters. It is up to the context for Muser youngsters to perceive themselves as Thai or Muser with their costumes.

Through the study about education policy and its impact on Muser ethnic culture, the author has come up with some recommendations as follows:

- 1) Governmental level: It is necessary to integrate the hill tribes into the mainstream society so that they can catch up with the development pace of the modern world. To achieve this integration aim, education plays a very important role. However, education policy towards the hill tribes; formal, non-formal and in-formal education with specific curriculum, teaching and learning methods as well as extra-activities should be thoroughly considered in terms of local culture before they are implemented. That is to say, more efforts should be made to help hill tribes preserve their ethnic culture. For example, ideologies and aims of hill tribe education in the framework of education policy should lay more emphasis on cultural diversity regarding religion, language, costumes and other heritage that stand the risk of being lost. Education to implant more awareness of students about cultural preservation is necessary. A specific ethnic culture curriculum as non-formal education and bi-lingual project can contribute to the reproduction of Muser culture more or less.
- 2) School level: When organizing education activities, schools should give more priorities to cultural aspect of local communities. More appreciation for elements of ethnic culture is needed. For example, a practical effort can be an increased number of weekdays for students to dress Muser costumes at school to help maintain costume culture. On occasions of festivals or school events, Muser traditional games should be included for entertainment. Chakhuu dancing should be promoted more often. Annual school musical contest for Muser folksong singing can strengthen the motivation for folksong preservation. In literature subject, a small amount of time should be provided for ethnic legendary teaching. To do this, schools can invite experienced “puchan” of the villages as guest lecturer for students and the language to be used is their own local language. This makes ethnic legendary telling continued.
- 3) Community level: Experienced seniors and responsible persons in community affairs continue to pass on youngster the pride and knowledge about traditional culture. The cooperation between community and schools should be more promoted and cemented to effectively carry out education strategy for culture preservation. Villagers themselves should be more active in making compromise with schools or education relevant agencies at higher levels to have a more

proper education that can help uphold their primitive ethnic culture. In other words, local people can have their own innovative ideas to be suggested to responsible education agencies regarding cultural education in their villages.

This study attempts to examine the influence of education towards ethnic culture of the Muser. The author believes that the main objectives of the study are basically realized. It is with hope that this work will provide preliminary findings for further studies on related subjects. There remain issues that need to be studied more thoroughly with more details, for instances, problems of preserving local spoken language or how to effectively carry out bi-lingual projects in hill tribe education. How to maintain ethnic animistic ceremonies in the time of religious mergence between Buddhism and animism is another interesting issue to be explored.



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APPENDIX



ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS

No	Name	Interview date	Remark
Huaiplalod school			
1	Mr. Direk Munmeung	20 December 2008	Principal
2	Ms. Kanlaya Khaimualerdrit	20 December 2008	Vice Principal
3	Mr. Comsan Pimtom	22 December 2008	Teacher
4	Ms. Rungpiwa Kaengin	22 December 2008	Teacher
5	Mr. Jakapong Mongkonree	22 December 2008	Teacher
6	Ms. Manilat Aumstid	22 December 2008	Teacher
7	Ms. Wanlapha Thanomphongdee	23 – 30 December 2008	Teacher
Headman of Community			
1	Jayakkarati yukeeree	19 December 2008	Head of Sompoi village
2	Jakapong Mongkolkeeree	19 December 2008	Head of Huaiplalod village
Puchan of the villages			
1	Chala Khirirongrong	December 2008	Huaiplalod village
2	Chala Charunbanphot	December 2008	Huaiplalod village
3	Chayok Kamnoedranaree	December 2008	Sompoi village
4	Chala Sompoiluang	December 2008	Sompoi village
Other senior villagers			
1	Mr. Chakhin Khamchaikul	December 2008	Huaiplalod village
2	Mr. Chatho Keo Krathakul	December 2008	Huaiplalod village
3	Mr. Danay Chodthamachat	December 2008	Huaiplalod village
4	Mr. Kitiphol Thaicharoenkul	December 2008	Huaiplalod village
5	Mr. Suraphol Tabayun	December 2008	Huaiplalod village
6	Mr. Somchay Tapayin	December 2008	Huaiplalod village
7	Mrs. Serata Khivitwuthlay	December 2008	Sompoi village
8	Mr. Chatthuu Manitaru	December 2008	Sompoi village
9	Mrs. Napuu Khongkhacharuu	December 2008	Sompoi village
10	Mr. Chatmo Kheereethaksin	December 2008	Sompoi village
11	Mr. Chatho Sompoiluang	December 2008	Sompoi village
Schoolboys			
1	Anuda Kharuchirikul	December 2008	
2	Birawat Thamcheereekul	December 2008	
3	Chachaphol Keereethaksin	December 2008	
4	Chalakon Charuukeereemak	December 2008	
5	Chiraphak Chokthamachat	December 2008	
6	Chiraphate Wangnayloert	December 2008	
7	Chiraphol Phuphawithok	December 2008	
8	Chitiwat Chindapanakul	December 2008	
9	Chonchan	December 2008	
10	Kanchan Sakulor	December 2008	
11	Kathon Tapayan	December 2008	
12	Khanongphak Khamkhiwikhun	December 2008	

13	Kitithat Choruphachee	December 2008	
14	Krawee Kamnoedwanaree	December 2008	
15	Sonthol Chasingkol	December 2008	
16	Sorawit Khusawihok	December 2008	
17	Supachay Chomphachee	December 2008	
18	Suraday Chaysamikit	December 2008	
19	Torawit Keereethaksin	December 2008	
20	Widaphat Koamnoedwanaree	December 2008	
21	Yothin	December 2008	
Schoolgirls			
1	Chananda Chayruangrong	December 2008	
2	Chanaphol Keereechariang	December 2008	
3	Chanika Koamneodwanaree	December 2008	
4	Chindaphol Keereethaksin	December 2008	
5	Chitraphol Tapayun	December 2008	
6	Chittika Keereenakphayong	December 2008	
7	Chutima Chaysakul	December 2008	
8	Chutimon Keereecharuu	December 2008	
9	Davin Chongborikan	December 2008	
10	Kamoluan Chodmahasab	December 2008	
11	Kanodthong Manitora	December 2008	
12	Nanuumon Kamnoedwanaree	December 2008	
13	Naphaphol Keereethaksin	December 2008	
14	Nappla Chayamikit	December 2008	
15	Naree Raythikeeree	December 2008	
16	Nipha Chaysakuloerd	December 2008	
17	Phuthita Keereethaksin	December 2008	
18	Salithip Keereethaksin	December 2008	
19	Sudarat Chaysabdakul	December 2008	
20	Wichanan Paprayun	December 2008	
21	Yuthing Sisenkray	December 2008	

STUDENT NUMBER AND EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF
HUAIPALOD SCHOOL 2551

Grade of class	Quantity of student										Level (Classroom)
	Sompoi			Huaichaku			Huaiplalod			Total	
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total		
Kindergarten 1	6	5	11	3	7	10	12	9	21	42	3
Kindergarten 2	12	8	20	2	8	10	14	7	21	51	3
Total kindergarten	18	13	31	5	15	20	26	16	42	93	6
Primary school 1	21	9	30	11	20	31	21	14	35	95	3

Primary school 2	16	11	27	10	11	21	20	7	27	75	3
Primary school 3	3	6	9	5	6	11	20	7	27	47	3
Primary school 4			9	12	21	26	10	36	57	2	
Primary school 5			15	10	25	14	21	35	60	2	
Primary school 6			14	11	25	11	29	40	65	2	
Total primary school	40	26	66	64	70	134	112	88	200	400	15
Secondary school 1							18	17	35	35	1
Secondary school 2							11	23	34	34	1
Secondary school 3							14	18	32	32	1
Total secondary school							43	58	101	101	3
Total	58	39	97	69	85	154	181	162	343	594	24

QUANTITY OF STUDENTS ACCOMMODATED IN THE DORMITORY

Gender	Kindergarten			Primary school							Secondary school				Total
	1	2	Total	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	1	2	3	Total	
Male	-	1	1	13	4	5	5	5	9	41	10	3	8	21	63
Female	-	-	-	17	6	4	8	6	7	48	3	16	8	27	75
Total	-	1	1	30	10	9	13	11	16	89	13	19	16	48	138

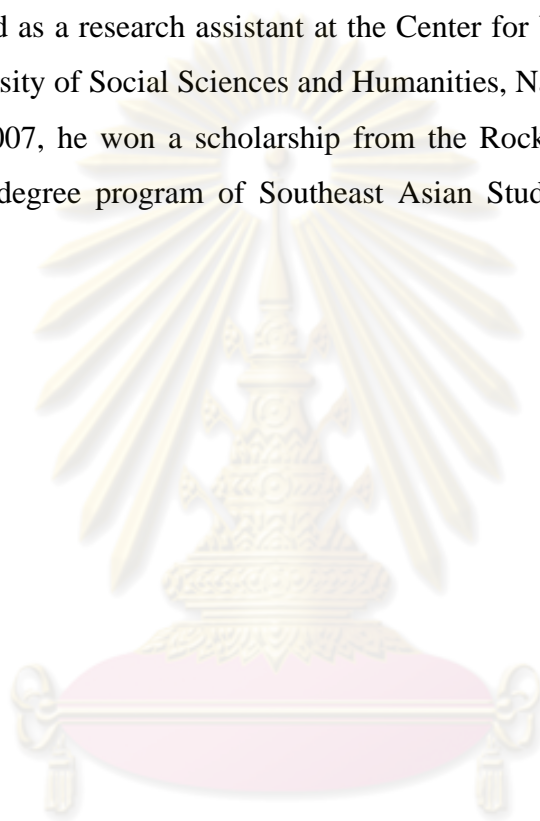
TEACHERS AND STAFF

Domain	School staff			Note
	Male	Female	Total	
1. Governmental teachers	4	10	14	Voluntary teacher Luangpho Ched Hired worker
2. Governmental officer	1	2	3	
3. Worker	1	-	1	
4. Hired teacher	1	-	1	
5. Voluntary teacher	-	8	8	
Total	7	20	27	

Source: Management board of Huaiplalod school

BIOGRAPHY

Nguyen Quang Dung was born in Hoi An City, Vietnam in 1984. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts with distinction in Oriental Studies in 2006 from Social Sciences and Humanities University, Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City. After his graduation, he worked as a research assistant at the Center for Vietnamese-Southeast Asian Studies, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, National University, Ho Chi Minh City. In 2007, he won a scholarship from the Rockefeller Foundation to study in the Master degree program of Southeast Asian Studies at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand.



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