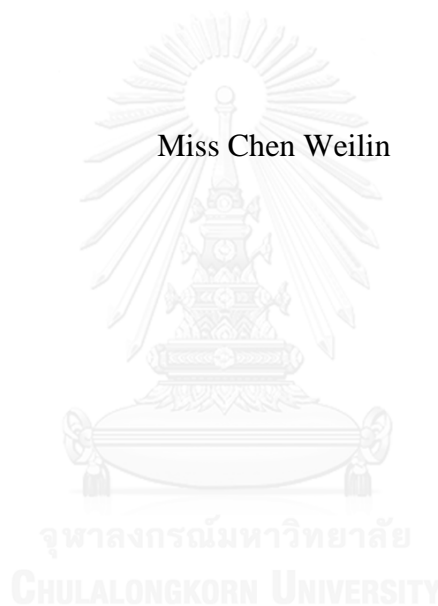


NEGOTIATING A FLUID COLLECTIVE IDENTITY: A CASE STUDY OF THE
YUNNANESE IN BAN HIN TAEK VILLAGE, CHIANG RAI PROVINCE

Miss Chen Weilin



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กรณีศึกษาชาวยุทธนานในหมู่บ้านหินแตก จังหวัดเชียงราย



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วิทยานิพนธ์นี้ศึกษากระบวนการต่อรองทางอัตลักษณ์ของชาวจีนยูนนานในหมู่บ้านหินแตก จังหวัดเชียงราย ท่ามกลางบริบทของประเทศไทยในศตวรรษที่ 21 ซึ่งการต่อรองนี้เกิดขึ้นในสามระดับคือ 1) ระดับท้องถิ่นระหว่างกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ต่างๆในเขตที่สูง 2) ระดับชาติกับเจ้าหน้าที่รัฐและประชาชนสัญชาติไทย และ 3) ระดับข้ามชาติกับกลุ่มชาวจีนนอกประเทศไทย การศึกษาใช้วิธีวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ โดยพิจารณาทั้งข้อมูลจากสื่อชนิดต่างๆและข้อมูลภาคสนามที่ได้จากการลงพื้นที่หลายครั้งในหมู่บ้านหินแตก การลงพื้นที่หลักเริ่มจากเดือนมีนาคมถึงมิถุนายน พ.ศ. 2559 กิจกรรมภาคสนามประกอบด้วย การสังเกตอย่างมีส่วนร่วม การสัมภาษณ์ และการรวบรวมข้อมูลเอกสาร จากการศึกษาพบว่า ชาวจีนยูนนานในหมู่บ้านหินแตกใช้กลยุทธ์ที่หลากหลายเพื่อสร้างอัตลักษณ์กลุ่มที่มีความยืดหยุ่นและสอดคล้องกับบริบททางสังคม การเมือง และวัฒนธรรมของประเทศไทย ซึ่งเป็นบริบทแวดล้อมที่มีความซับซ้อนในหลากหลายมิติ กระบวนการสร้างอัตลักษณ์นี้เกิดขึ้นทั้งในระดับท้องถิ่น ระดับชาติ และระดับข้ามชาติ ชาวจีนยูนนานในหมู่บ้านหินแตกปรับตัวเข้ากับสภาพทางสังคมและวัฒนธรรมของพื้นที่ใหม่โดยใช้วิธีการประนีประนอมทางสังคมที่ยืดหยุ่นตามสภาพแวดล้อม วิธีการดังกล่าวแม้จะใช้ได้ผลแต่ก็ไม่สมบูรณ์แบบในทุกกรณี อีกวิธีการหนึ่งที่ชาวจีนยูนนานใช้คือการอยู่อย่างเรียบง่ายและไม่ดึงดูดความสนใจ พวกเขาสร้างอัตลักษณ์กลุ่มที่ปรับเปลี่ยนได้ตามบริบทและแตกต่างจากทั้งกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์อื่นๆในพื้นที่ กลุ่มคนไทย และกลุ่มชาวจีนนอกประเทศ จากการวิเคราะห์กระบวนการสร้างอัตลักษณ์ของชาวจีนยูนนานพบว่า ปฏิสัมพันธ์ทางสังคมที่เน้นการประนีประนอมทำให้คนกลุ่มนี้มีอัตลักษณ์ที่ลื่นไหล ซึ่งทำให้พวกเขาสามารถปรับตัวเข้ากับบริบททางสังคมวัฒนธรรมในหลากหลายรูปแบบได้อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ การศึกษานี้ช่วยสร้างความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับกระบวนการประนีประนอม ซึ่งช่วยให้ชาวจีนยูนนานดำรงอยู่ได้ในภาวะแวดล้อมทางสังคมวัฒนธรรมที่เคลื่อนไหวอยู่ตลอดเวลาโดยใช้กลยุทธ์การทำตัวให้กลมกลืนไม่เป็นจุดเด่น แรงจูงใจและปัจจัยแวดล้อมต่างๆเกี่ยวกับการสร้างตัวตนทางสังคมของชาวจีนยูนนานในสังคมไทยผลักดันให้พวกเขาสร้างพรมแดนและอัตลักษณ์กลุ่มที่มีความยืดหยุ่น ทั้งในระดับท้องถิ่น ระดับชาติ และระดับข้ามชาติ

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CHEN WEILIN: NEGOTIATING A FLUID COLLECTIVE IDENTITY: A CASE STUDY OF THE YUNNANESE IN BAN HIN TAEK VILLAGE, CHIANG RAI PROVINCE.
ADVISOR: LOWELL SKAR, Ph.D., pp.

This thesis examines how Yunnanese villagers in the borderland village of Ban Hin Taek, Chiang Rai Province, Thailand, negotiate their identity in 21st century Thailand at three different levels: locally among upland ethnic groups, nationally in relation to mainstream national Thais, and transnationally with different Chinese groups. The thesis uses qualitative methods to analyze and interpret various materials and data collected during several field research trips to Ban Hin Taek, with the main one having occurred from March to June of 2016. Fieldwork activities included participant observation, extensive interviewing, and document gathering. The study reveals that village Yunnanese use several strategies to create flexible collective identities for themselves in a complex and multi-tiered socio-political cultural environment in Thailand, working at the local, national, and transnational levels. Yunnanese villagers in Ban Hin Taek adapt themselves to their socio-cultural environments by using a flexible social negotiation strategy, that is often successful but not always perfect, as well as often by maintaining a low profile. They make an adaptable collective identity that is distinct from those of local ethnic groups, Thai society, and transnational Chinese communities. The analysis of their identity construction shows that their complex social interactions and negotiating processes have shaped fluid identities that allow Yunnanese villagers to effectively work in the various socio-cultural settings they encounter. The analysis also helps us understand how their negotiations allow them to survive in the dynamic socio-cultural-political environment, especially by not trying to strongly stand out. The motivations and forms of agency which drive Yunnanese to make their social status in Thai society today prompts them to shape flexible ethnic boundaries and collective identity in local, national and transnational social settings.

Field of Study: Thai Studies

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Student's Signature

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Chapter I: Introduction

1. Background

Ethnic diversity and complex ethnic relations are a common feature across Southeast Asia. Thailand's many ethnic groups likewise have diverse and complicated relations, even as Thailand's nation-building efforts have tended to create patterns of cultural homogeneity that aim to minimize ethnic difference (Hayami, 2006a). Anthropologists, sociologists, and political scientists stress that ethnic identification is a complex process of negotiation and articulation between active efforts of self-formation by ethnic minorities and various state practices and the actions of dominant groups (Laungaramsri, 2003) (page 158-159). In today's world, ethnic groups migrate, regroup in new locations, reconstruct their histories, and rework their ethnic projects as part of complex transnational ethnoscapes (Appadurai, 1996) (page 48). They seek to establish their distinctive collective identity through processes of socio-cultural negotiation with dominant groups and other ethnic minorities in ways that are not limited to standard narratives of state-making and modernity in Southeast Asia.

The borderland areas of Northern Thailand, part of what is often called the Golden Triangle, are one of largest and most diverse areas of multicultural ethnic groups in Southeast Asia. Known as much for its rich natural resources as its multilingual ethnic complexity, this area has been studied by many scholars interested in Southeast Asia. Much Thai government policy towards the ethnic groups in these areas has aimed to minimize ethnic diversity and to create diverse ways of showing relationships to Thai society and culture. Yet many different ethnic minorities who live in upland areas of Northern Thailand both interact with one another and interact with groups in situations where stressing their Thai identity is important.

One interesting group in Northern Thailand that has yet to be fully understood is the Yunnanese Chinese. While Chinese, the Yunnanese-speaking groups who claim strong historical ties to Yunnan and now have strong ties in Northern Thailand have typically been distinguished from better-established Chinese groups that migrated

from Southeast China and are now mainly centered in Bangkok or other areas further south. Yet the Yunnanese in Northern Thailand have created flexible and fluid identities and formed new roles to live well in the contemporary world that Thailand is part of, and while often successful, these negotiations are not always smooth or resulting in perfect social roles. Studying them can help to show more general ways that ethnic groups negotiate their forms of existence and modes of interacting with other groups in such complex ethnic environments as exist in northern Thailand, as well as help to add nuance and depth to understanding the diversity of Chinese groups in Thailand, including the difficulties and tensions in these negotiations, and how they produce fragile identities and how they change society. Researching the complex socio-cultural negotiations pursued by the Yunnanese in Northern Thailand in today's world thus offers an opportunity to study how ethnic complexity works in contemporary Thailand and more broadly in the region.

Yunnanese-speaking people who claim connections with Yunnan province in China have been part of the dynamic upland areas of Southeast Asia for centuries (Ruangsri, 2013). They entered upland Southeast Asia in several historical waves of migration, and have produced complex relations with other ethnic groups in the high hill regions. Throughout the many phases of their migration and settlement in the region, Yunnanese groups are best known for their active roles in the border trade, and have been known for this across northern Thailand since at least the nineteenth century, attracting the attention of early 20th century state-building efforts (Ruangsri, 2013). Since the 1940s, Yunnanese in Southeast Asia have also been known for their strong ties to China's Nationalist (Kuomintang) Army (KMT) that entered Southeast Asia (Hung, 2017). While images of borderland traders and heirs of the KMT remain key parts of Yunnanese identity to this day, they have taken on new roles, too, such as workers in Thailand's tourism industry that caters to Chinese tourists. The Yunnanese have used social-cultural negotiation to create fluid forms of ethnic identity that helps them adapt to living in a dynamic Thai society that is part of a complex ethnoscape situated in an evolving global system. Their negotiations are nuanced and often messy, but not always smooth, and they do not always result in sharply defined and

durable ethnic identities, but in a strategy of maintaining a ‘low profile’ form of identity (Singh, 2017) that requires ongoing negotiations.

This thesis will examine how Yunnanese people in one village in Chiang Rai Province in Northern Thailand have created a flexible set of identities for themselves. These negotiated identities build on and refine the two major ways that the Yunnanese are now commonly understood: as traders of illicit goods on the borderlands of northern mainland Southeast Asia and as heirs of the KMT military families which entered Southeast Asia after World War Two. These images were central to a 2007 article from the *Bangkok Post* that introduced me to the village of my study. I first learned about Yunnanese villagers in Ban Hin Taek from the article “*Khun Sa’s old village may become a tourist attraction*”. The article said:

“At least three investors are trying to convince local authorities to turn a northern border village which was once home to late drug warlord Khun Sa and his troops into a tourist attraction. However, the village committee had yet to agree to any of the investors’ bids. It fears the investors will focus mainly on making profits and ignore the culture and traditions of the locals and distort the history of the village where the former drug warlord made many contributions.” (Kheunkaew, Nov 10, 2007) (Bangkok Post)

This article stresses Ban Hin Taek’s associations with the former KMT soldier and drug warlord Khun Sa and his followers, contemporary tourism, outside investment and fears by local people of investors’ neglect of “the cultural and traditions of the locals” and distorting of “the history of the village.” I will examine how these images of Ban Hin Taek relate to the actual lives, activities, and experiences of villagers, many of whom are from Yunnan and speak Yunnanese, in Mae Fa Luang district of Chiang Rai Province in northern Thailand. Located on the Thai- Myanmar border, the province is surrounded by hills that have been scarred by slash-and-burn agriculture. The above newspaper article highlights the real contemporary dilemmas faced by the Ban Hin Taek villagers, whose complex ties to Khun Sa represent both the illicit borderland trade of the region and their ties to the KMT. These images of the Yunnanese represent one aspect of the village, but they are partial and incomplete and they do not jibe with the ethnically complex situation that

the villagers are part of and live in. After interviewing several dozen villagers (see Appendix II), many of whom are Yunnanese, including the village committee, it was clear that the Yunnanese villagers actively sought to create opportunities for social negotiation which aimed for better livelihoods in Thailand. They lived in a world where Khun Sa, illicit trade, and the KMT did not fully define or encapsulate who they were.

The contrast between the article and my preliminary interviews reminds us that although Ban Hin Taek is tied to these familiar images of Yunnanese people in Thailand today, its Yunnanese residents are also part of a wider and more complex world. Yunnanese villagers in Ban Hin Taek are often depicted as “drug traffickers” and part of “the force of Khun Sa” by outsiders as part of an unruly community. Although many villagers in Ban Hin Taek are heirs of vulnerable groups or KMT heirs in the border areas, they also face challenges and opportunities available in today’s world. This research aims to provide a contemporary perspective on understanding the ethnicity of Yunnanese people now living in 21st century Thailand.

As one of the most complex and little studied Yunnanese villages in upland Northern Thailand, Ban Hin Taek deserves a fuller analysis. Yunnanese migrants entered Ban Hin Taek at several distinct times in the last seventy years. This pattern of migration of Yunnanese-speaking people with ties to Yunnan helped to create distinct historical layers and connections among these Yunnanese people in the village with other Yunnanese, minority groups, Thais, and with Chinese, too. However, as a marginal and dynamic group living in the Thai-Burmese borderlands today, the Yunnanese people in this village, and more broadly those living in the upland region of Northern Thailand, use a wide array of active and passive strategies for living their everyday lives, and to define themselves, so that they can survive by fitting in well in the very different social occasion they may encounter. The diverse and complex ethnic structure, changeable political systems, environmental and geographical restrictions in upland areas of Northern Thailand have driven or forced Yunnanese to learn how to negotiate, to try and balance their relations with different minority groups in upland society, efforts that rarely met with perfect success but

required continued effort. And the rapid development of Thailand's modernization process, expansion of the Thai nation-state and the challenged of being a marginal group also pushed the Yunnanese to take part in efforts to negotiate their identity with mainstream national Thais, even if may mainly stemmed from their need to survive. Moreover, changing historical connections with Taiwan and with China made the Yunnanese in this place face competing forces from both Taiwan and China. The changing patterns of multilateral relations between the Yunnanese, China and Taiwan also made the Yunnanese renegotiate their distinctive ethnic identity in contemporary Thailand. All of these efforts in changing circumstances made the Yunnanese seek to negotiate flexible identities for themselves less to create a harmonious identity than in order to survive.

Chinese communities outside of Northern Thailand there have had some success in establishing themselves in the many parts of the country. New research shows how elite groups in Thailand treat Chinese ethnic groups differentially, based on their class, and this differentiated treatment helped to shape modern Thailand (Wongsurawat, 2016). Although well-established in the North, Yunnanese have also been assimilated into various levels of Thai society as it has become modern. Estimates of the various ethnic Chinese groups living in Thailand refer to about 8 million Chinese-Thais, of which only 2% are considered in the "other" category of Chinese that includes the Yunnanese, most of whom are still living in northern Thailand (Chansiri, 2008).

Until the late 19th century, Yunnanese-speaking groups with ties to Yunnan followed three large immigrant waves within mainland Southeast Asia, resettling in the upland regions of Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Mae Hongson provinces (Chang, 1999; Duan, 2012; Wang, 2006). As a small minority of ethnic Chinese living in upland areas of Northern Thailand, Yunnanese and their descendants have been usually called "Jin-Haw", "Chinese diaspora" and "Chao kao (in Thai: ชาวก้อ)" by mainstream Thai society in the last half century. From my first trip to Ban Hin Taek, I noticed that the Yunnanese people there and elsewhere in Northern Thailand did not

fit well with the typical narratives and ethnic labels used in Thailand. The people in this village typically refer to themselves using various Chinese terms, such as “Yunnanese” (in Chinese: 云南人, *yunnanren*), “Chinese” (in Chinese: 中国人, *zhongguoren*) or “Han” (in Chinese: 汉人, *hanren*) to distinguish themselves from other groups living in different areas of Northern Thailand.

As a small group of people from China who are now living in Thailand, the Yunnanese in upland areas of Northern Thailand are also often thought of by outsiders as descendants of KMT forces who have links to Taiwan and other overseas Chinese groups in Southeast Asia. These links were strengthened with the publication of the 1961 novel by Bo Yang, *The Alien Realm* (in Chinese: 異域, *Yiyu*), in Taiwan. This compelling story cemented the image of ethnic Yunnanese in Southeast Asia as heirs to the KMT, but it was a work of historical fiction with only tangential links to history. The Taiwanese anthropologist Wen-Chin Chang (1999) made pioneering research into the migration and resettlement of the KMT Yunnanese in northern Thailand, and emphasized the close relations between Kuomintang forces and Yunnanese villagers in the 20 Northern Thai villages that she investigated, typified by Mae Salong. The recent Chinese anthropologist, Duan Yin, also researched some Yunnanese in Northern Thailand. He highlighted “New village” (บ้านใหม่หนองบัว, or *xin-cun* in Chinese), which he described as a completely Yunnanese Chinese village which “mostly consists of former KMT soldiers and their families; the caravan traders and their descendants; and new immigrants who came from China or Burma” (Duan, 2008).

My three-month research trip in Northern Thailand in the summer of 2016 found that there are three distinct core areas inhabited by Yunnanese groups there: 1) those along the Thai-Myanmar borderland of Chiang Rai province; 2) those in Chiang Mai province; and 3) those living in Mae Hong Son province. Ban Hin Taek is a core part of area where Yunnanese people live in the upland area of northern Chiang Rai province and follows patterns of other upland groups in Northern Thailand. I found that these Yunnanese families in Ban Hin Taek were part of new patterns of migration

and intermarriage with different ethnic minorities in the border area of Northern Thailand. Most Yunnanese villages in upland Chiang Rai areas have been presented by researchers as either following the concentrated structure of Yunnanese population as in Mae Salong based mostly on KMT families (Chang, 2006; Hung, 2017) or as mostly filled with minority groups like in New Village (Ban Mai) of Chiang Rai. Like Ban Hin Taek village, I found that most Yunnanese living in upland Chiang Mai areas also pursued a complex mixed-habitation structure, using similar strategies to allow them to live in a multiethnic ecology with many different minority groups in a given area. This contrasts with monolithic Yunnanese groups who are mainly concentrated in lower basins of Chiang Mai's borderlands. The unique geographical structure has not only allowed for various ethnic minorities in upland areas of Chiang Rai province but also for many Yunnanese who come from more diverse historical layers who are also concentrated in Ban Hin Taek village today. Because Khun Sa and his drug business have been long related with Ban Hin Taek village, and have shaped its early history, the village was off-limits for researchers or the Thai government for a long time. This isolation meant it was off-limits to outsiders, and therefore ignored by researchers. My research trip in Northern Thailand also made me realize this unique village contains many historical experiences among people who claim descent from or ties to Yunnanese places or people.¹ This further indicated how this village is a good representative for us to understand a neglected form of Yunnanese groups in Northern Thailand today.

The KMT and Khun Sa have played a crucial role in the earlier history in Ban Hin Taek village, but Yunnanese people living there now have reworked and renegotiated their identities through interactions with other groups at local, national and transnational levels in ways that are at odds with this earlier history. These renegotiations at several sites and levels helped them to produce a complex and fluid collective identity. They reworked ethnic boundaries between Yunnanese villagers of Ban Hin Taek and other socio-cultural-political groups in Thailand. Nevertheless, the

¹ Much of the success I had as a research stemmed from the bonds of trust that I established with my informants in Ban Hin Taek. This trust became firmer once I began speaking the Yunnanese dialect with people I met, since they were more comfortable speaking this common language and because of the familiarity they had with someone speaking that dialect who was also from Yunnan.

complex collective identity made by Yunnanese villagers in Ban Hin Taek came less from any one group, but arose as part of their ongoing social-cultural negotiation among diverse groups in a dynamic socio-cultural environment. By studying the processes of ethnic negotiation and construction used by the Yunnanese based in Ban Hin Taek, I will seek to provide a contemporary perspective on who the ethnic Yunnanese are in 21st-century Thailand. Examining the processes of socio-cultural negotiation developed by Yunnanese villagers in Ban Hin Taek village will allow us to see how they make room for themselves along different spatial and cultural scales.

This research will examine the way that Yunnanese-speaking Chinese in Ban Hin Taek create their Yunnanese ethnicity in a dynamic 21st century world using a cultural constructionist perspective that is tied to ethnogenesis. It will examine how Yunnanese villagers in the borderland village of Ban Hin Taek, Chiang Rai Thailand, negotiate their identity on three different levels—locally, among upland ethnic groups; nationally, in relation to mainstream Thai groups; and transnationally, with different Chinese groups. By taking this approach, the thesis will also examine how Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek village turn to different negotiation processes to create a flexible set of identities for themselves in contemporary Thailand.

2. Literature review

The upland areas of Northern Thailand are now normally tied to the borderland area called the “Golden Triangle” in southern part of central Mekong River basin. More recently, this area has been identified as part of the central corridor of “Zomia.” The concept of Zomia was originally put forward by Willem Van Schendel in 2002, which was divided into “four different world areas: Gohaling is in Yunnan (‘East Asia’), Sakongdan in Burma (‘Southeast Asia’), Dong is in India (‘South Asia’), and Zayu is in Tibet (‘Central Asia’) where to be mindful of the unity of people’s ‘shared ideas, related lifeways, and long-standing cultural ties’ comes a cropper here” (Van Schendel, 2002). This new perspective includes the entire upland area of Northern Thailand in the Sakongdan area of Zomia, but also stresses its links with the Gohaling region.

Many recent studies on Southeast Asian borderlands and ethnic minorities in this area have debated how ‘international borders’ and ‘ethnic boundaries’ could be understood in specific social circumstances, sometimes using the Zomia concept. Among the most renowned has been James Scott’s recent use of “Zomia” to locate the upland peoples in Southeast Asia as those “who had reason to flee state power” (Scott, 2009) (page 30) and to dwell in “isolated highland societies into the World System” (Mckinnon, 2000) (page 5). Scott also argued that sharp territorial boundaries were not stressed much in Southeast Asia since “the important rights were rights over people, not over places, except for particular ritual sites” (Scott, 2009) (page 72). Modern states of Southeast Asia have worked hard to gain more control over both boundaries of their states and the movements and actions of peoples across or in those boundaries.

Transnational forces, such as human migration, remain important in the contemporary world of nation-states. As groups of people still migrate, regroup in new locations, reconstruct their histories, and reconfigure their ethnic projects, the “ethno” in ethnography gains a slippery, nonlocalized quality (Appadurai, 1996). State and ethnic boundaries are both subject to negotiation process in borderlands areas, and it has been an important part of anthropological studies, such as by Donnan and Wilson (1999). They mainly focus on negotiating borders and underline how borderlands could ‘draw strategically on multiple repertoires of identity’ (Hastings, 1999) (page 39). But they also argued that ‘almost all that occurs in the everyday lives of people in the modern world can and does occur in its borderlands’ (Hastings, 1999) (page 39). A recent essay by Eric Tagliacozzo provides a new perspective on understanding the borderland areas of Southeast Asia, arguing that in the hills of the northern parts of mainland Southeast Asia, the “mandala” system of political imagination and control has been less relevant in shaping the areas since there were few political centers like those found in lowland states (Tagliacozzo, 2016). Other issues important to collective identity of ethnic groups in borderland areas are found in Karlsson’s study of Northeast Indian ethnic groups, who also argues that Scott ‘misses what one, for the lack of better terms, can call the affective and existential

dimensions of identification and belonging' (Karlsson, 2013). He continues this argument in a more recent article about how 'fluid attachments' created by people in northeast Indian allow ethnic minorities to 'feel in relation to migration from outsider area' (Karlsson, 2013) by those who have taken the dominant authority in the nation-state space. Other new research also shows that ethnic minorities' choosing to live in highland areas is not the same as resisting the power of the nation-state, even though a 'low-profile' identity – tied with relatively minimal ethnic-based conflict or subordination – can sometimes support better livelihood opportunities (Singh, 2017). To study this "low-profile" identity and living strategies adopted by those marginal groups who are away from the mainstream society could let people better understand life in the borderland areas and ethnic identity of marginal groups today. As Singh has mentioned in her research that the "low-profile situations require study for a more comprehensive view of the borderlands that incorporates the diversity of dynamics shaping identity", and her case study with the borderland dwelling peoples also well verify her own opinion that "low-profile ethno-national identity can have practical advantages" for those marginal group (Singh, 2017).

Much research of ethnicity in contemporary Thailand has been tied to modern nation-building. As a modern Southeast Asian constructed and mapped "geo-body" (Winichakul, 1994), Thailand is often described as a homogenous political entity with a minimal ethnic diversity and a dominant singular ethnic Thai identity (Hayami, 2006b; Keyes, 2006; Laungaramsri, 2003; Winichakul, 1994). Accordingly, a range of scholarly debates on the homogenous policy of Thai government discuss whether the emphasis on "Thainess" is something that discriminates against ethnic minorities and results in the unfair treatment of these non-Thai groups (Hayami, 2006b; Keyes, 2006; Laungaramsri, 2003; Leepreecha, 2001). These debates relate to Scott's argument about how many upland peoples prefer to remain in the hills to remain apart from and to resist the expansion of the modern state. Although there have been many efforts to create a homogenizing policy to reshape the identities and the survival of some ethnic minorities in Thailand, the Japanese scholar Hayami (2006) has put forward a new image of hill-dwelling ethnic minorities in upland Northern Thailand who are actively seeking to shape their identities with relation to the state. This

perspective has gained visibility since 1980s, as new social movements tied to new types of tourism, legal disputes, and ethnic-minority rights have shown that ‘the hill-dwellers are becoming an arena of negotiation, where the hill-dwellers themselves are active participants’ (Hayami, 2006a). Based on a case study in a Karen village, she has shown that ‘forest-dwelling Karen have become desirable targets of ecotourism in Thailand’ (Hayami, 2006a). Moreover, in comparative research different non-Thai groups among Tai Lue, Lao Puan and Khamu in Northern Thailand, Chusak Wittayapak has argued how differences of history and geography of identifications allowed the Tai Lue to successfully become “Thai” in many respects, rather than other factors like ‘interrelationship of belief system, power structure, spatial division, and ethnic identification’ (Wittayapak, 2008).

More recently, Pinkaew Laungaramsri argues that the ID card system used by ethnic minorities in Northern Thailand ‘are not only the state instrument of control but survival resources to be assessed, classified, and circulated’ according to values based on how much ‘a given card has a negotiating power in dealing with police authority and how much freedom of mobility it entails’ (Laungaramsri, 2015). Although there is little doubt that state efforts to create a homogenizing policy for Thai citizens has affected the sense of “Thai identity,” the cultural anthropologist Aihwa Ong (1999) reminds us that in contemporary Southeast Asia, it is often “flexible citizenship” that best describes relations of individuals and groups to the nation-state. She uses this term to highlight how migrants negotiate their relations to the state within in fluid socio-economic situations as the state system forms internal “zones” of law as part of a general context of “graduated sovereignty. (Aihwa Ong, 1999)” This allows the state to subject “different sectors of the population to different regimes of valuation and control” and for ethnic groups to flexibly relate themselves to these zones of graduated sovereignty (Aihwa Ong, 1999) (page 217).

Classic research on overseas Chinese in Thailand has stressed how Chinese have successfully assimilated themselves into Thai society during last century. The influential work of G.W. Skinner (1963) has led many later scholars to argue that most descendants of Chinese immigrants in each generation have been assimilated

into Thai society (Skinner, 1963). Recently, more detailed work about the Chinese in Thailand has challenged and refined this view. Various scholars have argued that Skinner overestimated the powers of assimilation and that the assimilation process does not make Thai-Chinese fully one with the Thai people by adopting a full 'Thai' identity. Instead, many Chinese continue to exist as separate communities which are able to maintain and re-assert their Chinese identity through hybridization processes (Authavornpipat, 2011; Tan, 2004; Tong, 2010). For instance, Tong Chee Kiong has used a social linguistic perspective to argue that the bilingual use of the Chinese and Thai languages and the re-emergence of Chinese education in Thailand shows that, rather than being totally assimilated, many Chinese-Thai citizens want to retain their Chinese identity (Tong, 2010). Recently, Wongsurawat has argued that Chinese groups in Thailand have been treated differently depending on their class, with well-established entrepreneurial families seen as a valuable part of Thai society, but other Chinese groups prone to unrest being seen less favorably (Wongsurawat, 2016).

Nevertheless, research on overseas Chinese in Thailand are focus on the Chinese communities mainly consist of people whose ancestors are Teochew (Chaozhou, Guangdong), Hokkien (Southern Fujianese), and Hailum (Hainanese) people. This constitutes the majority of Chinese people in Thailand and they are dominant in big cities, but they differ from the ethnic Yunnanese in Northern Thailand. The dominant Chinese groups in Thailand have successfully established themselves in the central valley of Thailand for a long time. In consideration of the complex Chinese identity of different Chinese group in Thailand, the special Chinese identity of ethnic Yunnanese has been less studied (Chang, 2006; Hung, 2017).

I selected Ban Hin Taek village mainly because it has not been studied before, but I also believe that it is a good area to both show several distinct historical layers of migrant groups of Yunnanese living in a single space, as well to show their relations to other minorities like Lisu, Akha, Lahu and Shan. Based on the information I collected from the local village committee and many informants of Ban Hin Taek, I learned that the former history and tight relationship between Ban Hin Taek and Khun Sa made this village only open to outsiders from about 2000. The Thai government

took control of the village in 1997 and some important relatives of Khun Sa still stay in this village. So although officially open, there are still have some invisible “entry restrictions” for outsiders, especially for journalists, scholars and foreigners. Although this situation has much improved after the local village committee made plans to develop local tourist resources during last ten years (as suggested in the *Bangkok Post* article cited above on (p. 3), it is still hard for outsiders to gain the trust of local villagers due to their distinct preferred language (Yunnanese) and socio-cultural adaptability.² To some extent, this special situation of Ban Hin Taek also proves that this place is worth us to study and it may provide a new knowledge about Yunnanese groups in upland Northern Thailand today.

Earlier research of ethnic Yunnanese in Southeast Asia also shows different historical layers. The earliest research of ethnic Yunnanese in Thailand was done by F. M. Mote on 1967. He provided valuable field knowledge of Yunnanese people and their ties to migration history, and gave a detailed definition of the “Haw”, a curious and insulting Thai term for Yunnanese Chinese (Mote, 1967). Although his short-term field research could not provide enough information, Mote and other later scholars found that Yunnanese Chinese learned the languages of different ethnic groups so that they could more easily fit into the complex ethno-linguistic context of upland Southeast Asia. Using a flexible language strategy with other hill tribal allowed them to keep their authority in upland society of Northern Thailand (Chang, 1999; Duan, 2012; A. M. Hill, 1983; Mote, 1967). Mote also argues that it is inappropriate to apply any political labels to the villages under discussion, because the issue is contingent upon one’s viewpoint (Mote, 1967). In later research by Ann Maxwell Hill, we can see how she discusses the relations between the Yunnanese Chinese, Thai groups and non-Thai groups. Both she and Mote argued that the Yunnanese exercise considerable authority among all of the hill tribes of the region, which they see as due to their more sophisticated social and cultural ways of living, control over trade, commerce, and land, making many of hill tribes are economically dependent upon the Yunnanese (A. M. Hill, 1983; Mote, 1967) (page 59). In addition, both Mote and Hill mentioned that

² As I mentioned in the above note, because I am from Yunnan, I am able to speak with villagers in their native dialect, and also to more easily fit in and gain the trust of people living in Ban Hin Taek. My journalism background may also have played a role in my research.

the attitude of Yunnanese Chinese towards local Thai officials was full of anxiety; they are often subjected to petty harassment because of language difficulties and permit irregularities (A. M. Hill, 1983; Mote, 1967) (page 59).

Mote's view political labels may be inappropriate to villages under discussion, has been altered by recent research on ethnic Yunnanese, which has shown how this group has transformed in more recent times, especially in relation to Northern Thailand and modern Thai society. More recent research by Chiang Wen Chin (1999) notes that Mote 'failed to see the villages ties with the KMT forces'. In her crucial research of ethnic Yunnanese, she outlined how the KMT Yunnanese in northern Thailand are tied to two main developments: the existence of KMT force from the 1960s till the late 1980s, and the establishment of individual Yunnanese villages (Chang, 1999) (page 17). Based on her limited information about the relationship among KMT Yunnanese, Thai group and non-Thai in upland Northern Thailand, she shares a similar opinion with Hill (1974) and argues that 'vis-a-vis Thai people, Yunnanese Han are proud of being Han and regard their culture as superior and justify their position of being the civilizing center'(Chang, 1999) (page 121). And she also mentioned that KMT Yunnanese Chinese were show unacceptable about "Jin-ho" and most of her informants thought mainstream Thai media 'has been overlooked their role in the suppressing the Thai Communist forces' (Chang, 1999) (page 126). In her latest study of Yunnanese, she turns to the terminology of 'flexible citizenship' laid out in Donald Nonini and Aihwa Ong (2006) to present a 'operational flexibility and spatial mobility' (Aihua Ong, 2006) of ethnic Yunnanese in the course of their migration and resettlement. Later, Huang shu-min has researched ethnic Yunnanese in Northern Thailand, analyzing the religion and rituals of a Yunnanese village to put forward a new idea that the encounter of ethnic Yunnanese with the Thai nation-state seems to have added a sense of urgency to their desire of preserving their own cultural heritage and to elevate an idealized version of 'Chineseness' to the status of an authentic ethnic identity (Huang, 2009). And, based upon pervious research, Duan (2012) has first applied 'ethnic boundary' into the analysis of social integration process among ethnic Yunnanese. He emphasizes that when ethnic Yunnanese try to assimilate themselves into Thai society, 'they have to passively maintain their ethnic

boundary due to the influence of the factors such as social class, ethnic interaction, living strategy and etc.’ (Duan, 2012) (page 85). A recent article (2017) by Po-Yi Hung and Ian Baird points out the evolution of KMT soliders and their heirs in Mae Salong, focusing on their relations to the Thai government and to Taiwan, but Mae Salong differs from Ban Hin Taek.

3. Theoretical framework

Because ethnicity, the creation ethnic groups, and ethnic identity are difficult to understand, scholars have created several theoretical frameworks to analyze them. The range of approaches on these topics are tied to borderlands anthropology, including collective identity, ethnic boundaries, social construction, and agency. These categories are not fixed, and many of the theories can be classified under more than one school of thought.

I use two key foundations for this research project and for understanding ethnicity: one from Barth’s (1969) theory of ethnic boundary and another from Wimmer’s (2008) multilevel process theory about making and unmaking ethnic boundaries. Barth argues that “the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses (Barth, 1998) (page 15).” He has inspired me by showing ‘how the boundaries between two ethnic groups are maintained, even though their cultures might be indistinguishable and even though individuals and groups might switch from one side of the boundary to the other’ (Wimmer, 2008). He moreover emphasizes that ‘that actors use ethnic identities to categorize themselves and others for purpose of interaction, they form ethnic groups in this organizational sense.’ (Barth, 1998) (page 13-14) ‘also argues that “the ethnic boundary canalizes social life - it entails a frequently quite complex organization of behavior and social relations” (Barth, 1998) (page 15). Joining his case study of the Coast Lappish population, he also argued that when ethnic identity is a social stigma for these fluid ethnic, they would ‘seek to qualify themselves as full participants in the society’(Barth, 1998) (page 40).

Barth's basic theory has gained been expanded and enriched by other scholars who have forward several ways of understanding 'fluid ethnic-identity'. Alba and Nagel have argued that "ethnic identities are fluid across time and social contexts, sometimes even to the point of "ethnic switching" (Alba, 1990; Nagel, 1994). The public presentation of ethnic identity is also situational, showing the plural or hybrid character of modern ethnicity (Espiritu, 1993; Lessinger, 1995). Mélanie Vandenhelsken & Bengt G. Karlsson also note how 'certain attachments and sense of belonging come to precede at particular points of time' and it 'raised both in relation to individuals who, for example, adopt a new ethnic identity to collectives involved in project of redefining themselves' (M. Vandenhelsken, and Bengt G. Karlsson., 2016).

Building on Barth's important contributions, Wimmer has put forward a multilevel process theory of creating ethnic group identities, which assumes that 'ethnic boundaries are the outcome of the classificatory struggles and negotiations between actors situated in a social field' (Wimmer, 2008). He introduces a multilevel process, such as different degrees of political salience of ethnic boundaries, of social closure and exclusion along ethnic lines, of cultural differentiation between groups, and of stability over time to understand hoe ethnic characteristics are generated and transformed over time. In contrast to the Barth, Wimmer has argued that 'in other constellations, ethnic boundaries do not divide a population along obvious cultural lines but unite individuals who follow quite heterogeneous cultural practices' (Wimmer, 2008). Based on his analyze of political salience of boundaries, he underlines that 'when boundaries are salient, political alliances are more likely to be formed between co-ethnics than between individuals on opposite sides of a boundary' (Wimmer, 2008). In the situation of 'repositioning', 'an actor seeks to change her own position within an existing hierarchical boundary system'. Hence, for most of contemporary immigrant minorities, 'assimilation and passing are the main strategies for individuals to "shift sides" and escape a minority stigma' (Wimmer, 2008).

More recently, ethnic identity has been seen as part of global flows of people. A range of scholars, such as Appadurai, Tsing, and Comoroff & Comoroff all analyze how ethnic identity takes shape in transnational situations. The concept 'ethnoscape'

put forward by Arjun Appadurai emphasizes how it 'is an urgent need to focus on the cultural dynamics of what is now called deterritorialization'. Appadurai saw this term as applying not only to international corporations and markets, 'but also to ethnic group, sectarian movements, and political formations, which increasingly operate in ways that transcend specific territorial boundaries and identities' (Appadurai, 1996) (page 49). Building on Appadurai's ideas about how to understand globalization, Tsing has sought to understand how globalization works as forms of global connection in specific local contexts, and connected to the world through various scales that may be approached through different levels of analysis. Using the concept '*friction*', she aims to examine 'the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference' (Tsing, 2011) (page 4) implied by globalization as a working force in local settings. Tsing's argues that '*friction* is required to keep global power in motion' (Tsing, 2011) (page 6) and reminds us how local interactions are tied to higher scales of activity and multiple forms of agency that culturally inform ethnic identity. When ethnic minorities interact, they are operating locally, but these *frictions* engage and create connections and forms of identity that are ties to global processes. John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff's *Ethnicity, Inc.* sees in the unfolding of globalization that 'there is a palpable consonance between the nature of ethno-commodities, the incorporation of identity, and the existential grounding of ethnicity' (Comaroff, 2009) (page 46). More recently, in 'Thai ethnicity and nationalism' by Jaggapan Cadchumsang argues that 'any investigation of ethnic dynamism should not zoom in exclusively on the context that a particular ethnic group exists' and the 'identity is also formed by the interaction between the self and the society in which the former is the inside and the latter is the outside or the personal and the public, respectively' (Cadchumsang, 2012).

The above theories are the main ones to support the research of this thesis. My thesis will examine how the ethnic Yunnanese in northern Thailand – an ethnic minority and marginalized group – negotiate their identity locally among upland ethnic groups, nationally in relation to mainstream Thai groups, and transnationally with different Chinese groups, to flexibly adapt themselves to the complex ethnic world they are part of. Below are some main technical terms used in my research.

4. Definition of Terms

Ethnic boundary

In my thesis, I will follow Barth's (1969) discussion of how 'the ethnic boundary canalizes social life—it entails a frequently quite complex organization of behavior and social relations'. Jimmy M. Sanders (2002) also points out how "ethnic boundary refers to the patterns of social interaction that give rise to, and subsequently reinforce, in-group members' 'self-identification and outsiders' confirmation of group distinctions". Ethnic boundaries are therefore better understood as the social mediums through which association takes place, rather than as a territorial demarcation (Sanders, 2002).

Collective identity

Throughout this thesis, a central term is 'collective identity'. The concept of collective identity is not unique to social movement studies, but also used in studies of nationalism, religion, management, political culture, electoral behavior, organizational theory and psychology, among others (Flesher Fominaya, 2010). I use this term in line with Alberto Melucci (1995), who wrote that "collective identity is an interactive and shared definition produced by several interacting individuals who are concerned with the orientation of their action as well as the field of opportunities and constraints in which their action takes place"(Melucci, 1995). I also refer to the multidimensional concept (Ashmore, 2004) comprised of an individual's perception that their self-image is based on the various social groups or categories with which he or she views him or herself as belonging.

Agency

Debates about structure and agency have been a central concern in anthropology for decades. The term agency now means many different things for anthropologists. The concept of agency has been linked to Max Weber, who initially suggested that "acts be distinguished from mere (animal) behavior on the basis of acts being seen to entail a number of features of human rationality: consciousness, reflection, intention,

purpose and meaning” (Rapport, 2000) (page 1). In this research, I use this term in line with the meaning given by Chris Barker that “agency is the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices” (Barker, 2005) (page 448).

Low-Profile Ethnic Identity

In this thesis, I will use the term “low-profile” ethnic identity which refers to the scholar Sarinda Singh in her 2016 research to Lao villagers in northeast Cambodia. She suggests that low-profile situations require study for a more comprehensive view of the borderlands that incorporates the diversity of dynamics shaping identity (Singh, 2017). And the notion of low-profiles ethnic identity which used in this research will mainly base on Singh’s opinion that “‘low-profile’ identity – which is associated with relatively minimal ethnic-based conflict or subordination – can sometimes support livelihood opportunities” and a low-profile ethnic identity is also common for some borderland groups who “have been similarly described as ‘invisible’”(Singh, 2017).

Cultural Construction of ethnicity via socio-cultural negotiation

The social negotiation tied to ethnic knowledge is a key part of ethnic formation since it allows individuals to test their ethnic constructions against one another and to gain new understandings of who they are in relation to others. Joane Nagel has noted that ‘as the individual (or group) moves through daily life, ethnicity can change according to variations in the situation and audiences encountered’ (Nagel, 1994). The notion of constructing ethnicity used in this thesis will mainly be based on that of Nagel. So I will consider the socio-cultural negotiation that individuals and groups use to create and recreate their personal and collective histories, the membership boundaries of their group, and the content and meaning of their ethnicity.

5. Research question & Research objectives

Researching the complex socio-cultural-political negotiations pursued by Yunnanese people in Northern Thailand in relation to the Thai state offers an opportunity to study a neglected form of ethnic complexity and national recognition in contemporary Thailand and, more broadly, in the region. As such, the main research question of this thesis is: “How do Yunnanese villagers in the borderland village of Ban Hin Taek, Chiang Rai Province in Thailand, negotiate their identity locally among upland ethnic groups, nationally in relation to mainstream national Thais, and transnationally with different Chinese groups in the 21st century?” By answering this question, the thesis has several research objectives. It will focus on three different levels of identity negotiation by Yunnanese villagers in/from Ban Hin Taek, Chiang Rai province.

1. First, this thesis will examine how Yunnanese villagers in Ban Hin Taek, a borderland village in Chiang Rai Province, negotiate with local ethnic groups in upland areas of the northern borderlands region of Thailand;
2. Second, as regard to national level of identity negotiation, this thesis will also to analyze how Yunnanese villagers in/from Ban Hin Taek negotiate with mainstream national Thai.
3. Lastly, in order to provide new perspective to understanding the “Chinese identity” of Yunnanese villagers of Ban Hin Taek, this thesis will further analyze how Yunnanese villagers there negotiate with transnational Chinese groups from China and Taiwan.

6. Hypothesis

Yunnanese villagers in the borderland village of Ban Hin Taek of Chiang Rai province in Thailand have created a multi-lingual and developed a wide repertoire of cultural practices to negotiate their socio-political identities and roles in the diverse socio-cultural environments they live in. They use this strategy and learn to use the appropriate cultural practices to shape fluid and flexible collective identities for themselves so that they can fit in with the varied socio-cultural-political groups they encounter at local, national and transnational levels. This allows them to live with a

distinct form of identity in relation to local ethnic groups, Thai society, and Chinese communities. The multilingual negotiation process they use allows the Yunnanese villagers from Ban Hin Taek to flexibly adapt themselves to the complex ethnic world they are part of.

Hence, the hypothesis of this thesis is consisting of three parts. First, Yunnanese people negotiate with local ethnic groups in upland areas of the northern borderlands of Thailand using multilingual skills, marriage, and other cultural practices to create alliances and forms of distinctions that allow the Yunnanese to form a flexible ethnic identity. Second, the Yunnanese villagers perceive the ability participate in Thai government functions and ceremonies as an indicator of their commitment to become Thai citizen. Third, by negotiating and cooperating with different transnational Chinese groups, the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek have made a flexible form of “Chinese identity” that they employ as social and cultural capital in the local economy and society of Chiang Rai, as well as in other urban centers of Thailand.

7. Research methodology and theory

Data Collection

This thesis will use qualitative methods to collect, analyze and interpret data. The qualitative approach used here starts by recognizing the importance of locating my research within a specific social-cultural-political context in upland Northern Thailand. During my discontinuous three month-fieldwork in Ban Hin Taek village during the summer of 2016, return trips in the fall and winter of 2016, and return trips in spring of 2017, most of the 50-odd interviewees and other materials used in this thesis were collected from my field research in Ban Hin Taek Village of Chiang Rai province. The qualitative approach of data collection in my field research consists of participant observation, interviews, interpretation of some material artifacts, and reflexive methods. The languages that I used in collected information from my informants are both Yunnan dialect and Thai language, but mainly using the Yunnan dialect. Out of respect for the feelings of a number of villagers I interviewed, I have

not used voice recorder or other electronic device to record the interview but used extensive written notes. Moreover, I will use pseudonyms of my informants in this thesis which to ensure their privacy and personal safety. See Appendix II for more details.

My fieldwork in Ban Hin Taek village fell into three main stages. In the first stage, after I visited several Yunnanese villages in Mae Fah Luang county of Chiang Rai province in early March of 2016, I decided to choose Ban Hin Taek village as the research site of this thesis. But when I tried to enter Ban Hin Taek village and do my fieldwork in mid-March of 2016, I faced some invisible restrictions, such suspicious villagers and defensive reactions by the local village committee. These barriers did not allow me to do my fieldwork smoothly. I then returned to Bangkok and tried to more preparations for the fieldwork in the next stage. In second stage, with the help of my relatives who fled from southwestern Yunnan around 1950 and resettled in Mae Sai county of Chiang Rai province, I got in touch with several local Chinese schools in and around Ban Hin Taek, and I have applied to become a volunteer teacher to teach Chinese in a neighboring village Ban Na village from late April of 2016. Because of my Yunnanese background, language fluency, and living experience in Yunnan, I then received strong support from several school principals and some leaders of local village committee. Their support helped me get the chance to attend different social activities with local villagers in Ban Hin Taek, Mae Sai county, Chiang Rai city, Chiang Mai city and even in Bangkok. In that same stage, I also got significant help from two Yunnanese families in Ban Hin Taek village, which gave me more chances to take part in various Yunnanese villager daily activities. During this stage, I not only collected much useful interview information from local leaders of Ban Hin Taek, but I also learned more from the talk with ordinary villagers in Ban Hin Taek, all of which allowed me to observe how Yunnanese negotiate their identity with different social-cultural-political groups they encountered. In the third stage, in order to made the content of this thesis become more reliable, I returned to Ban Hin Taek, Mae Sai, Chiang Rai city, Chiang Mai city several times from February to March of 2017, and I frequently went to Hui Khwang district and Ratchada district in

Bangkok to meet with different informants who provided lots of valuable information and materials for this research.

The reason for choosing the above qualitative research approaches to collect data is that interviews and participant observation allows me to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural context of Yunnanese villagers as they live in Ban Hin Taek village. The materials collected focus both on sites where the negotiation of identity happens and on how ethnic identity of Yunnanese has been created or recreated. As a native speaker of the Yunnan dialect, both of these approaches help me to build a deeper trust and rapport with the villagers which lets them open up more to me, allowing me to see and understand more than they might have as an outsider. Nevertheless, Yunnanese villagers also alter their behavior in front of me to create a positive image for me. Therefore, reflexive experience and comparison to a number of different villagers will help me effectively to distinguish and understand the potential meaning which behind it.

Data Analysis

The thesis uses qualitative interpretive methods to analysis examples of socio-cultural negotiation that Yunnanese people in Ban Hun Taek Village use to produce their identities in various socio-cultural settings. Examining the socio-cultural processes by which a group of people becomes ethnically distinct and by which an ethnic group forms and develops (Lockwood, 1972) will allow me to understand the processes, transformations, causes, and politics of making social identities (J. D. Hill, 1996; Roosens, 1989; Soonthornpasuch, 1977). Theorists of social identity, ethnicity, and ethnogenesis have demonstrated how simplistic, homogenous notions of collectivity are confounded by such things as migration, state formation, modes of communication, and types of representation, shared cultural expressions, intragroup diversity, exploitation, shifting identities, and subjectivities (Lewellen, 2002). Because of this, qualitative, interpretive research will do best to assess these important, but often neglected processes.

8. Significance

This research aims to show a more complex and nuanced way of understanding Chinese peoples' diverse roles in contemporary Thailand by focusing on the neglected Yunnanese people living in a village in far Northern Thailand. By understanding the collective identity of Yunnanese villagers in Ban Hin Taek as tied to processes of negotiation that take place at several levels or scales at the same time, the thesis seeks to discover how these villagers create flexible forms of ethnic identity bound up with different social-political-culture groups at local, national and transnational levels, while also allowing me to see when and where negotiations do not always work perfectly. Seeing their activities in this way will allow us to better see how ethnicity works in the contemporary Thailand and in Southeast Asia, as well as in relation to China.

Ethnic Chinese in Thai society have long been an important subject of anthropological and historical research. This research has stressed both the variety of Chinese groups in Thailand and the diverse ways they relate to other groups in the country, especially to the dominant Thais. Examining the identity of ethnic Yunnanese in the 21st century further contributes to these studies by expanding Chinese ethnicity and extending ways of analyzing their identities, both of which helps to better understand contemporary Thai society better. This thesis will provide two main ways to think about the ethnic Yunnanese in Thailand today. First, it will focus on them as a Chinese group in Thailand that has been relatively little studied but which is becoming more important, those with growing ties to Southwest China. Secondly, by examining how these Yunnanese villagers in Ban Hin Taek Village of Chiang Rai province negotiate their social-political-culture roles at local, national and transnational levels, we can understand the complex ways that ethnic groups live in the contemporary world. Both approaches allow us to see how Chinese ethnicity and ethnic negotiations work in Thailand today.

The research will thus provide new perspectives on understanding how ethnic groups live on the more clearly defined borderlands of the Thai nation-state today.

Yunnanese villagers in Ban Hin Taek interact with other ethnic minorities to create and maintain a distinctive place for themselves in upland society, as well as forming indispensable parts of social networks engaged in border trade that involves Thailand's lowland society, and being tied to newly rising Chinese tourist groups in Thailand. I hope that my study would improve the understanding of Yunnanese groups in the borderlands of Southeast Asia and China, and thus provide a new approach to understanding how ethnic Chinese live in 21st century Thailand and in Southeast Asia. Finally, I expect that this study of Yunnanese groups in Northern Thailand will create new views beyond the misconceptions and prejudices that Yunnanese people share with other ethnic minorities in upland Northern Thailand, views that will better accord with their current place in Thai society.

9. Chapter Overview

Excluding this introduction (Chapter one) and conclusion (Chapter six), there are four main chapters in this thesis. Chapter two aims to analyze who the “Yunnanese people” are in today's Northern Thailand, as much as possible using their own ways of doing so. Asking “who are the Yunnanese in today's Northern Thailand?” allows for a historical review of Yunnanese migration into Burma and Thailand. It provides more historical materials to prove why Yunnanese group in Northern Thailand today should be considered as a multi-dimensional ethnic group which has different Yunnanese groups with distinct historical layers. This chapter also argues for some features that people in Ban Hin Taek use to mark themselves out as “Yunnanese” as a flexible and changing form of identity with a deep historical past, which help to define the group I will study in later chapters. Key components of Yunnanese include being fluent Yunnanese speakers, ritually claiming common descent groups or connections to Yunnan, specific dwelling types and locations of dwelling in the village.

By focusing on the relations of the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Take to local highland groups, chapter three provides basic ethnographic data of the Yunnanese and their place in Ban Hin Taek village including the geographical setting, historical

background, population profile, religion, language and local custom. This chapter then goes on to deal with the identity negotiation process between Yunnanese villagers of Ban Hin Taek and other local ethnic minorities. Through the three different aspects—intermarriage, economic relation and local organization—to further explore how Yunnanese villagers through identity negotiation to integrated with other ethnic minorities in upland area, and shows that these activities do not always lead to smooth negotiations or end in durable identities. Chapter four addresses a second level of identity negotiation for the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek, the relations to Thai society today. The chapter delineates insiders' perspectives of how Yunnanese people make sense of and relate themselves to three aspects of Thai identity—the “ID card system”, the “influence of royal family”, and the “Thai education” system. Each shapes the Yunnanese identification to different aspects of Thai state, society and culture, and therefore of different aspects of Thai national identity. The chapter then examines some of the dilemmas and social tensions that Yunnanese face while seeking to establish a suitable relationship to Thai society, and the difficulties in establishing a recognized Thai identity that also permits Yunnanese cultural forms.

Chapter five deals with a third level of analyzing Yunnanese identity in Thailand, namely the ways that the Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek form relations with different transnational Chinese groups. It adopts a comparative method to study how people of Thai and China have made influence to the “Chinese identity” of Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek and how Yunnanese people from Ban Hin Taek relate to different Chinese groups in other parts of Thailand, such as in Bangkok and Pattaya, again stressing how establishing relations to various Chinese communities in Thailand and to various global cultural and political communities of Chinese remains an ongoing challenge. When seen together, the chapters of this thesis aim to show that the Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek use a variety of strategies to negotiate their place in the complex socio-cultural environment they live in, and that these dynamic practices allow the Yunnanese allows them to create flexible identities for themselves in contemporary Thailand so that they can survive, but stresses that these strategies are imperfect and lead to fragile identities that require further negotiations as the social and political situation changes.

Chapter II: Who are the Yunnanese in today's Northern Thailand?

The Yunnanese in Northern Thailand remain little studied. They speak a distinctive form of the Chinese language characteristic of Yunnan province in China, but one with subtle variants. They took their language and its dialects travels with them as they crossed over the rugged frontiers between China and upper mainland Southeast Asia. As one of the most complex ethnic minorities in the region, the Yunnanese are normally distinguished from better established Chinese groups that migrated from Southeast China by sea, those who retain the Chinese dialects from those areas, and who now are in central Thailand or other areas further south. These better-known Chinese arrived in Thailand and are known as the Teochow, Hokkien, and Hailum groups further south. By contrast, Yunnanese migrants entered Northern Thailand area at several distinct times in the last two centuries, either directly on overland routes from Yunnan or indirectly from Myanmar. Their language and their overland migration histories helped to create both distinct historical and linguistic strata and cultural connections among Yunnanese people in the highland areas of Southeast Asia. They also formed unique alliances with other overseas Yunnanese, minority groups, Thais and Chinese, too.

Despite these differences, a large group of villagers in relatively new village of Ban Hin Taek in Chiang Rai province in Northern Thailand and elsewhere in mainland Southeast Asian often refer to themselves as “*Yunnan ren*” (Yunnanese). What is the basis of their using Yunnanese for themselves? That is the question that this chapter seeks to answer.

The first thing that I noticed when I went to Ban Hin Taek village was the subtle differences in Yunnanese dialects among Yunnanese villagers there. And as I stayed there longer, it was clear that the Yunnanese Chinese used language difference as a key marker of their identity which shaped what sociopolitical, cultural and economic activities they took part in, all of which shaped the Yunnanese culture and identity of the village. Although most of them used the standard southwestern Yunnan dialect

which I was familiar with from having grown up there, some used slight differences in grammar and vocabulary and accent than normal. These linguistic differences became important indicators that allowed Yunnanese villagers to know “which kind of Yunnanese” they are part of. These Yunnanese dialect differences in Ban Hin Taek helped me to link these subgroups with Yunnanese migration history, but it also led me to explore a new way to gain insiders understanding of the various components of Yunnanese identity for people living in Ban Hin Taek today. Explaining these different migration strata and how they are related to Yunnanese identity in Ban Hin Taek is the goal of this chapter.

Earlier studies of Yunnanese groups often use the term ‘Ho’ or ‘Haw’ for all Yunnanese Chinese migrants, whether Chinese Han people or other ethnic minorities. In the late 20th century, however, the term ‘Haw’ or ‘Jin- Haw’ has been used as an insulting term that often insinuates participation in illicit trade or belonging to the KMT’s force in the Golden Triangle area, both of which has produced negative views in Thai society. The history of ‘Haw’ (or ‘Jin-Haw’) has attracted the attention of the mainstream press in Thai society since 1970s and generated notoriety. After a spate of negative headlines, stereotyped views of some Yunnanese groups has led the general public to simply treat all Yunnanese migrants as the same as ‘unruly Haw (or Jin Haw)’ until the present.³ Yet there have been several distinct waves of migrants from Yunnan into Northern Thailand. These include early migrants of Yunnan Muslims and later waves of migration of Yunnanese and other ethnic minorities from Yunnan. In the early 1980s, many villages with large numbers of Yunnanese were mainly filled with descendants of 93rd KMT Army, such as Mae Salong village and Tang-Nogb village, both of which have received significant aid from the Taiwanese NGOs. Many news reports in Thailand and Taiwan also continue to present to overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia that villages in Northern Thailand with many Yunnanese groups as descendants or dependents of the KMT 93rd Army (Hung, 2017). This impression of Yunnanese of Northern Thailand was central to a series of

³ See the report of (1). Bangkok post, ("Life in a KMT Camp," Nov 25, 1973); (2) Bangkok Post, ("CIF Must Change Their Ways," Dec 1, 1973); (3) Bangkok Post, ("No Passport Needed to Visit "Paradise," Dec 2, 1973); (4)The Nation, ("The Ex-KMT Villages Under the "Thai-inization" Policy," July 23 to 26, 1984); (5)Bangkok Post, ("The Ultimate Merchandise," Feb 18, 1990).

news report from the Bangkok Post during the period from 1970s to 1980s. From a 1984 article which titled “Time runs out for KMT’s ‘state within a state’” of the *Bangkok Post*, it said:

The force, which came into Burma and then right on to the Thai border, was the 93rd division of the 13th army. The troops and the Yunnanese (locally known as “Haw”) civilians who fled Yunnan with them initially stayed in the Shan state. From there they made futile raids into Yunnan to try to wrest this southern Chinese province back from Mao’s Communists.⁴ (“Time runs out for KMT’s ‘state within a state’,” Jun 24, 1984)

From 1970s to 1980s, this kind of description of Yunnanese group was common in the mainstream Thai media, which generally perceived all the Yunnanese in Northern Thailand as the descendants and dependents of the former KMT Army (Hung, 2017). Although the descendants and dependents of the KMT Army have played a crucial role in Yunnanese groups to today, the composition of Yunnanese groups in Northern Thailand is much more diverse, complex and dynamic. There is also a misperception of the composition of the Yunnanese groups in Thai society until nowadays. As a marginal ethnic group, the Yunnanese in upland Northern Thailand are still imposed stereotype such “Haw” by mainstream press in Thailand today. As shown below, the misperception of the composition of the Yunnanese groups made mainstream Thai society are still perceived Yunnanese as the descendants of KMT, but it neglect the diverse and complex composition of Yunnanese today.

Doi Pha Tang is home to around 2,000 ethnic people, including Hmong, Yao and the Chinese Haw descended from Kuomintang soldiers retreating from Yunnan during the communist take-over of China.⁵ (Pholdhampalit, Dec 12, 2015)

Nowadays, Ban Hin Taek and other villages in upland Northern Thailand with Yunnanese groups in them that have been presented as either organized in a

⁴ Bangkok post in June 24 1984, p5, titled “Time runs out for KMT’s ‘state within a state’”.

⁵ An article of THE NATION in December 13, 2015, titled “The Chiang Rai less travelled”.
<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/sunday/aec/30274768>

concentrated structure of Yunnanese people like Mae Salong or as minority in the New Village Nong Bua (บ้านใหม่หนองบัว, 热水塘新村). Yet the Yunnanese villagers in Ban Hin Taek seem to do things differently. They are both deeply aware of the different historical layers of Yunnanese in their village, and they mainly pursue in a complex mixed-habitation structure. During my fieldwork in Northern Thailand, I noticed that the Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek and elsewhere in Northern Thailand did not fit well with the typical narratives ('Chinese diaspora') and the ethnic labels ('Ho' or 'Jin-Haw') often used in Thailand. Rather, most Yunnanese groups in Northern Thailand refer to themselves as 'Yunnanese' (*yunnan ren*), sometimes 'Han people' (*han ren*), and even 'Chinese' (*zhongguo ren*). (A. D. Forbes, 1987; Mote, 1967). Yet the term 'Ho or Jin-Haw' is still widely used in today's Thai society for all Yunnanese groups. This ignores differences and features that matter to the Yunnanese groups themselves, which are especially important since new Yunnanese migrants have continued to enter into border areas of Northern Thailand in the last seventy years. The driver of migration in these decades has been the waves of unrest along the Thai-Myanmar-China border, which complicated the current composition of Yunnanese living in the region, including Northern Thailand. Due to these changes in compositions and waves of migration, this chapter seeks to understand who the Yunnanese people in villages like Ban Hin Taek are, based on their own understanding and thinking.

Precisely defining who the 'Yunnanese' are is a complicated process. No one has given a specific definition of this Yunnanese group of Northern Thailand. Minimally, it consists of native speakers of dialects based in Yunnan province by people who claim connections to people or places in Yunnan province in China. Because Han Chinese now comprise a majority of the Yunnanese population in Thailand, Yunnanese villagers have been generally perceived as ex-KMT soldiers and Han people (Hung, 2017; Wang, 2006). The terms 'Haw' and 'Jin-Haw' are similarly problematic since they carry negative attitudes or prejudice of mainstream Thai society toward Yunnanese groups. Wang Liu Lan (2006) has characterized "Yunnanese" in Thailand as the Chinese who directly came from Yunnan Province or

whose ancestors have come from there. Since Yunnanese nearly always migrated by overland routes, they are often categorized as “overland Chinese,” and so differ “from those Chinese migrants who came to Thailand by sea” (Wang, 2006).

However, the early history of people in Yunnan province is messy, due to their complex ethnic structure, ethnic differences which include different cultural, ritual, language and religious belief among each ethnic group has challenge the appropriateness of the term “Yunnanese”. After I established good relationships and had more chances to take part in different scenes of villager’s everyday life in Ban Hin Taek village, I found that these villagers used various terms identify themselves for different social occasion and social groups. This ties into their changeable demands of ethnic identity and also well reflected how did they understand who they really are. For instance, when these villagers meet with other migrants who came from Yunnan or who have family connections in Yunnan, they generally use different more specific and localizing terms to identify where their ancestor and family come from to identify “which city people”, “which county people” and even “which village people” they are. And when these villagers meet with other ethnic minorities locally, they seek to show a sense of cultural authority of Han culture, using the term “Han (*hanren*)” for themselves to distinguish their identity from other “uncivilized minorities” in upland areas. Moreover, when they meet Chinese tourists who come from different part of China today, they usually turn to use “Chinese (*Zhongguo ren*)” to identify themselves. What is more interesting is that during last five years, whether in Hui Khwang district and Ratchada district of Bangkok, or in many Yunnanese villages of Northern Thailand that receive a significant number of tourists, the term “Yunnanese” has become more common, appearing on signs for restaurants, hotels, bars and travel agencies. Even though this group has been flexible changing their ethnic term to cater with the identity demands in different social occasion they encountered, the frequently used term “Yunnanese” in recent years has helped to identify and create an imagined collective identity for themselves that shows themselves as distinct in today’s world.

As more and more new Chinese groups have entered Thailand in the last decade, the rising role of China has pushed a new trend which let overland and overseas Chinese in Thailand today learn about a new ethnic term that emphasizes subtle differences within a general Chinese identity. Most recently, except for familiar ethnic terms of Thai-Chinese like Teochew people (*Chaozhou ren*) and Hakka people (*Kejia ren*), various new ethnic terms of oversea Chinese in Thailand have appeared for new “provincial cultures,” such as Yunnanese (*Yunnan ren*), Guangxi people (*Guangxi ren*), Sichuan people (*Sichuan ren*) and Shandong people (*Shandong ren*). This interesting phenomenon may not only show the variety of Chinese groups in Thailand and the diverse ways they relate to other groups in the country, but it also proves that the term “Yunnanese” can reflect a more wider, more diverse and more complex imagined collective identity within a bigger Chinese world.

Nevertheless, most villagers in Ban Hin Taek village use “Yunnanese” to name an imagined collective identity tied to an invented community that centers on fluency in the Yunnanese dialect and a wider repertoire of cultural claims that villagers in Ban Hin Taek use to assert a collective identity in contrast to other groups, mostly based on claims of connection to places or people from Yunnan. To this basic understanding I hope to add the discovery that Yunnanese groups in Northern Thailand nowadays are multi-dimensional ethnic groups in which different Yunnanese groups relate to one another based on waves of migration and distinct historical layers.

Given this background, in this chapter, I will relate compiled records and accounts of informants from Ban Hin Taek to the period they resettled from Yunnan, Myanmar and then into Thailand and in Ban Hin Taek village. I will divide the migrations pattern into four sections, corresponding to the four major Yunnanese migration waves which now comprise the groups of Yunnanese people now living in Northern Thailand. I will also discuss the situation in Ban Hin Taek today to further explore how various migration backgrounds of Yunnanese villagers have constructed their distinctive but complex ethnic identity in today’s Northern Thailand.

1. The Yunnan Muslims in northern Thailand

One main subgroup – and arguably the best known – of the Yunnanese now in Northern Thailand today is the Yunnanese Muslims. Since Yunnanese Han people comprise the majority of the Yunnanese population in Northern Thailand, Yunnanese Muslim are generally considered as an ethnic minority. In this section, I will first review the historical connection between Yunnanese Muslim and Northern Thailand. Over the centuries, Yunnan Muslim communities have mainly consisted of caravan, miners and merchants are active in the upland area among Southwest China, Myanmar and Northern Thailand. According to the research of Yao Ji-de (2003), the Yunnanese Muslims groups have been a part of overland trade in Southeast Asia since the late Yuan Dynasty (fourteenth century) (Yao, 2003). In the middle of the Qing dynasty (late eighteenth century), Muslim groups in Yunnan took part in the overland trade with Myanmar, Thailand, Lao and Vietnam. These early traders normally came to Thailand from Yunnan by passing through Burma once or twice a year during the dry season (Wang, 2006). By the early nineteenth century, the development of Yunnanese Muslim's caravan exerted a significant impact on the overland trade and commerce in the border area among Myanmar, Southwest China and Thailand. With a number of the courier stations of Muslim caravan has built among Yunnan and Southeast Asia, there is some Yunnan Muslim groups have separately settled in the northern Thailand.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Du Wen Xiu set up a provisional authority of Yunnan Muslim (also known as 'Panthay Rebellion') in Dali City, Yunnan province from 1857 to 1873, but when Du Wen Xiu's regime collapsed in 1873, a large number of Yunnan Muslims (Hui-hui) were forced to flee from Yunnan. This event led to many Yunnanese Muslims resettling in the Panglong, Mandalay, Lashio and Tanyan and other parts of Northern Myanmar (Cao, 1916), and many other Yunnanese Muslims resettling in Chiang Rai province of Northern Thailand via Myanmar. During the Panthay Rebellion, Muslim caravan trade increased in Southwest Yunnan

as overland trade among Southwest China, Myanmar and Northern Thailand flourished.⁶ And based on the *Record of the Facts of Tu's Rebellion in Tengyue* (in Chinese: 腾越杜乱纪实, *teng yue du luan ji shi*) (Cao, 1916), we read that ‘more than half of Muslim people from Tengyue mansion were engaged in the overland trade of jade, gems and cotton’. When Tu’s regime ended, the caravan trade of Yunnanese Muslim groups in northern Myanmar became more dynamic in trading jade, gem and other precious items between Myanmar and Northern Thailand.

Based on the research of Andrew D.W Forbes (1985), some Yunnan Muslims and other Yunnanese (or a distinct Ho community) had established in the Wiang Phing district of Chiangmai City by the late 19th century. Those Ho who settled in the towns were predominantly Muslim, and by and large retained their links with the long-distance caravan trade, while expanding into other areas of commercial enterprise (Forbes, 1985). Later on, more Han people from Southwest Yunnan have gotten into the caravan trade at late nineteenth century. Today, the Wiang Phing district of Chiangmai is commonly associated with Yunnanese resettlement which mainly includes Muslim, Han people and other ethnic minorities from Yunnan. The Yunnanese Muslims in Chiang Mai distinguish themselves clearly from other Chinese, and although a great number of them married local women, they retain their Yunnanese ethnic and cultural identities (Setthamalinee, 2010) (page 38). The greater ethnic diversity of northern Kingdom of Siam (as Thailand was called at the time) in the late 19th and early 20th century colonial moment prompted the Siamese government to try to establish more control over the land and the peoples of the region through railroad building and new rules for traders (Ruang Sri, 2013). Hence, this part of Yunnanese Muslims in Chiangmai urban area has become an important composition of Yunnanese group in Northern Thailand at the early stage. Since this stage, the mature mode of cross-border trade of Yunnanese Muslims in upland Southeast Asia and various trade opportunities made many Yunnanese people regarded as “*zouyi fang*”⁷ or a taking a promising way to flee the unrest of their

⁶ (Andrew D.W Forbes (1985) also mentioned that during the period of rebellion, Tu relied heavily on the caravan trade with South-East Asia for the supply of finance and weaponry.)

⁷ (*zou-yi-fang*, Chinese: 走夷方, is a phrase in the Yunnanese dialect literally meaning is “go to a foreigner’s

homeland. This kind of opinion has deeply rooted in sensibility of Muslim people in Yunnan during that time. Besides, the failure of Panthay Rebellion also led to many Yunnanese Muslims fleeing to Southeast Asia.



Figure 1: The Yunnanese Mosque in the Mea Sai city of Chiang Rai Province
Source: This photo was taken by author on May 2016 at Mae Sai city.

During the Second World War, the activities against Japanese aggression by the Yunnanese Muslims were an important part of the Chinese Expeditionary force. As one part of skilled workers and crucial material transportation group, the Yunnanese Muslims made a significant contribution to build the Myanmar Road. In addition, hundreds of thousands of Yunnanese refugees which include large number of Yunnanese Muslims have fled the fighting in Southwestern Yunnan and Northern Myanmar since Battle of Northern Myanmar and Western Yunnan broken out in 1943. As Forbes mentioned, this process was to continue over the following decade-and-a-half, as Yunnanese Chinese from all walks of life fled to Myanmar, Laos and Thailand to escape the depredations of (in rough chronological sequence), the Japanese, local warlord factions, the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Chinese Communists (CCP) (A. D. Forbes, 1987). However, Andrew D.W. Forbes (1997) and

place". More generally, it refers to the popular phenomenon of the Yunnanese community from late 19th century to mid-20th century when many Yunnanese (mainly Muslim people and Han people) were widely engaged in cross-border trade in the upland area among Myanmar, Thailand and Laos).

Ann Maxwell Hill (1983) also mentioned that Yunnanese migration waves in the last century were simply seen as migrations of Han Chinese people, but overlooked the migration history of Yunnanese Muslims (A. D. Forbes, 1987; A. M. Hill, 1983).

After the KMT were defeated in the Chinese Civil War in 1949 and as they were fleeing to Myanmar in 1951, the KMT actively recruited large number Yunnanese civilian refugees, which included Han people, Muslims and other ethnic minorities. They hoped to be able to continue fighting with the new Chinese government in the border area between Northern Myanmar and Southwestern Yunnan. Their hopes to ‘take back mainland China’ had clearly failed by 1961, and many Yunnanese Muslim soldiers tied to the main KMT force scattered to resettled in the upland area of Northern Thailand via Myanmar (Hung, 2017). According to the Yunnanese research which done by Wang Liulan (2006), among the 36 Yunnanese villages she studied in upland Northern Thailand, 20 villages were mainly established by Han Yunnanese while another 14 were Yunnanese Muslim (Hui) villages. And among these 14 villages, 11 were established after 1950s and 7 were a mix of Hui and Han Yunnanese (Wang, 2006). After resettling in upland Northern Thailand, many of the Yunnanese were engaged in trade with hill tribe groups. And, some of these Yunnanese Muslim caravan traders still actively move across the Thai-Burmese frontier carrying precious items like gems and jade, consumer goods and opium.

Although it hard to find relevant official records on this topic, many in the mainstream press of Thailand reported that Yunnanese merchants of upland Northern Thailand have closely cooperated or aligned their caravan with the KMT isolated force and other local armed forces of Northern Myanmar during the period of 1970s to 1980s, and the Yunnanese Muslims in Ban Hin Taek may is a good representation of that. As regard to Ban Hin Taek village, even though only 13 Muslims families are still live in this village today, the old generation of this small group of Yunnanese Muslims was played a very crucial and controversial role in Khun Sa’s force from 1970s to 1980s. When I tried to collect some information about this small group of Yunnanese Muslims in Ban Hin Taek, almost every informant there mentioned that “these *hui zu* (ethnic Hui -Muslims) were descendants of Khun Sa’s *hui zi jun* (in

Chinese: 回子军, means the military forces of ethnic Hui).” And some of them also mentioned that the core ethnic Hui leader of former Khun Sa’s *hui zi jun* was mainly come from Ban Hin Taek, and the *hui zi jun* was the main strength of Khun Sa’s Army which was in charge of material transportation and opium traffic in Golden Triangle area. As an elder Yunnanese villagers who have serviced in *hui zi jun* has recalled that the scale of *huizu* in Ban Hin Taek is much larger than today due to the actively opium trade from 1970s to 1980s, and “many Yunnanese Muslims have same accent and clothing with Han people, which made it hard for outsiders to distinguish *huizu* from other Yunnanese.” He also stressed that even though the *huizu* is a minority in Ban Hin Taek today, “the *huizu* people are still highly respected by other Yunnanese due to their close relationship with other Yunnanese villagers.”

Because of the high number of people moving back and forth along the Thai-Myanmar border and their pattern of living in scattered settlements, it is hard to get exact number of population of Yunnanese Muslims in Northern Thailand nowadays. However, the Yunnanese Muslims in Ban Hin Taek have well maintained their Yunnan dialect and traditional custom which helps to reinforce their ethnic identity. And they generally consider themselves as Yunnan *hui-min* (or *hui-zu*), which is different from the Han Chinese (or Haw), non-Muslim Thais, Malay Muslim from south, and other tribal groups settled in Northern Thailand (A. D. H. Forbes, David EF; and Henley, David., 1997; Setthamalinee, 2010; Soonthornpasuch, 1977; Wang, 2006). During the past half a century, Yunnanese Muslims in urban areas of Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai have made a positive impact on local society in terms of promoting commerce and religious education. Due to the differences in when they resettled, where they came from, family relationships and business connections, they made an impact on the relationships between urban Yunnanese Muslim community and upland Yunnanese Muslim community in the Northern Thailand region. Nonetheless, under pressures of mainstream Thai culture, most Yunnanese Muslim could strengthen the social connection with each Muslim group, mainly to reinforce their ethnic influence in contemporary society of Northern Thailand. And whether in migration history or population distribution, Yunnanese Muslim has become a crucial

composition of Yunnanese group in Northern Thailand nowadays. And even in Ban Hin Taek, the history of village also indicated the important position of Yunnanese Muslims in Yunnanese community. To some extent, however, because the Yunnanese in Northern Thailand is mainly comprised of Han people, Yunnanese Muslim are generally overlooked and often simply seen as non-Yunnanese groups or another ethnic minorities by Thai society until today.

2. The descendants of KMT army in northern Thailand

As the major composition of Yunnanese migrant's wave of the mid-twentieth century, the KMT descendants were generally perceived as the main resident population of Yunnanese in Northern Thailand today. This section will focus the Yunnanese with connections to the KMT, who were generally consider as major component of Yunnanese people in today's Northern Thailand. Scholars Chiang Wen-chin (1999) and Duan Yin (2012) have studied the migration history of KMT force into Northern Thailand during the 1950s. The migration history of KMT Yunnanese group may be traced back to the early 1950s when the KMT force lost in the Chinese Civil War in Yunnan. After the defeat of the KMT in Yuan Jiang city of Yunnan, they withdrew to Northern Myanmar and quickly established a provisional Military University in Monghast which they called Fan Gong Kang Er Da Xue (meaning 'the University of Anti-communist and Soviet Union'). With American military assistance, the KMT actively recruited large numbers Yunnanese civilian refugees and trained them in military affairs at this university, mainly to continue fighting the communists and hoping to take back mainland China. However, the Myanmar government disliked the KMT forces in Monghast, so in 1954 and especially in 1961, respectively, and under the pressure of United Nations and the PRC, the remains of KMT forces left Northern Myanmar, with many settling in Northern Thailand (Hung, 2017). Nonetheless, as Chiang Wen-chin noted in her research, "Chiang Kai-Shek knew he had to concede to the issue of evacuation to placate the Burmese government and to preserve the seat of the Republic of China in the UN, but he did not want to have all the guerrilla forces evacuated (Chang, 1999) (page 33). He hopes to withdraw as few people as possible and leave essential roots in Myanmar for future possibilities" (Chang, 1999) (page

33). As the record of the official materials, around 2000 KMT soldiers escaped to upland areas of Northern Thailand and separately resettled in the Mae Salong and Tang-Ngob in the early 1960s. And soon, the guerrillas (the KMT isolated force) were reorganized as the “Yunnan Anti-Communist Voluntary Army” (*Yunnan fangong ziyuanjun*, 云南反共自愿军) (Chang, 1999) (page 34).

Nowadays, Chinese traditions of ancestral identity have led a majority of descendants of KMT soldiers in Northern Thailand to consider themselves as Yunnanese, and sometimes to call themselves Chinese or Han people. Most Yunnanese villages with high levels of KMT descendants have well preserved the regional customs of Southwestern Yunnan in terms of their dialects, diets, rituals, etc. This unique phenomenon of the so-called ‘KMT village’ could be traced back to the early 1950s. At the same time that the KMT force retreated to Monghast, on February 22, 1950, China’s Liberation Army started to enter and station itself in Yunnan. Before 1950, due to the fear of ‘New regime’ (Chinese Communist), many Yunnanese people have fled to Northern Myanmar and Thailand from Southwest border area of Yunnan. According to the official document where I found in the Yunnan Archives Hall have indicated, on 19 February 1951, the Yunnanese government issued the “Measures for the Implementation of Land Reform in Yunnan Province (云南省土地改革实施办法)”, and put it into effect from August 1951. Moreover, the new government actively started to do “Social-Class Division” in same period.

Although it is hard to find relevant records in official documents, interviews and information from my informants who were mainly from Southwestern Yunnan have given a brief history review for this period. After the Land Reform Policy has put into implementation in Southwest Yunnan, the disordered standards led most border city into chaos. All the literary and leading families, called *tusi* (土司, the hereditary ruling families of ethnic minorities in Southwest China) and business families were redefined as “anti-revolutionary, bandit and landlord” classes respectively. And all of them were strongly suppressed by the new government and local poor peasants. Moreover, “man in the folk armed force (include civil corps, local militia and private

armies) were regarded as threats by the new government. A series of policies put forward by the PRC government deepened civilian's fear of the new regime".⁸ (History Project of the Naging University, 2014)

From the late 1940s to early 1950s, therefore, the political upheaval in China has led a large-scale migration wave in Southwest Yunnan. Those civilian refugees were mainly escape to the Northern Myanmar and Thailand via the port city such like Jiegao, Wanding, Manghai, Zhenkang, Cangyuan, etc⁹(The Government of Luxi County, 1993). Subsequently, many young male of civilian refugees has joined the Military University of KMT Army which increases their scale of Army from 1000 people to more than 20,000 at the stage of mid-1950s.¹⁰ As one of my older informants have recalled to me that fled Yunnan became most safety way for those Yunnanese who were come alleged "reactionary class" at that stage and most of these Yunnanese migrants have "conceal their real name and family background when they resettled in Myanmar and Thailand", because most of Yunnanese migrants believe only to adopted a low-profile strategy "can preserved their life in an unfamiliar environment where they forced to resettlement".

In addition, according to the information of in Civil Museum of Northern Thailand (in Chinese: 泰北义民博物馆), because of both 3rd Army and 5th Army of KMY 93rd Division was reconstituted by the Yunnanese soldier who has joined KMT force when they escape from southwest China during the period from 1949 to 1952, majority of those them unwilling went to Taiwan. Therefore, when the remains of KMT force have completed evacuated from Northern Myanmar in 1961, the 3rd force and 5th force of KMT 93rd Army where is relocated in border area of Northern Thailand is mainly consist of Yunnanese. Also at this stage, as several former KMT soldiers of Ban Hin Taek have mentioned to me that "a part of remains of KMT force have rejoined different local armed forces in the upland area between Northern

⁸ The information are refers to the article: "1949—1952: The Establishment and Consolidation of China's Red Political Power in Yunnan, History Project of the Nanjing University, 2014.

⁹ The Gazetteer of Lu Xi County: Memorabilia, Yunnan Education Publishing House, 1993, p42

¹⁰ The data is refers to the information where displayed in the Chinese Martyr's Memorial Museum (in Chinese: 泰北义民博物馆) in Mea Salong, Chiang Rai province.

Thailand and Myanmar, “such as us have rejoined Khun Sa’s force and became the main strength of his army”. And most of this former KMT soldiers were followed Khun Sa fled to Northern Thailand and resettled in Ban Hin Taek at early 1960s, “even most of them never admit their former KMT background after resettled in Ban Hin Taek village”.

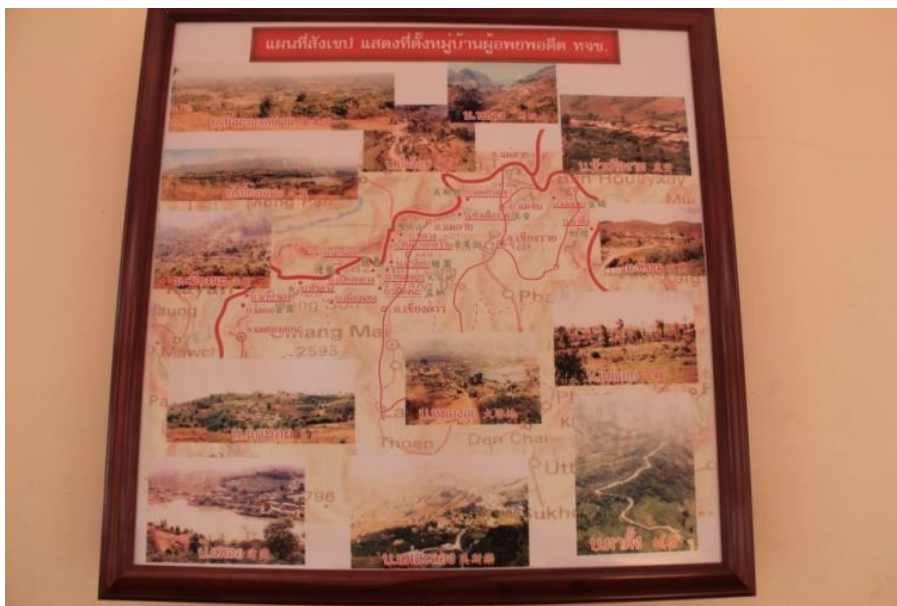


Figure 2: The map of the distribution of KMT Yunnanese villages in Northern Thailand

Source: This photo was taken by author on March 2016 at Chinese Martyr’s Memorial Museum of Mae Salong village.

Since illegal residence in upland Northern Thailand, the ranges of daily activity of KMT Yunnanese were strictly limited by the Thai government from early 1960s to 1980s. And the rough conditions in upland area of Northern Thailand let these Yunnanese has faced dilemma. Because the frontier trade and economic corporation among China, Myanmar and Thailand almost ground to a halt from late 1960s to 1970s, this situation has led the severe shortage of goods trade in the border area of Thailand. Hence, the general trade of Yunnanese caravan in goods smuggled has driven the trade contacts in border area among southwest China, Myanmar, Northern Thailand and even Laos. After 1961, the isolated KMT force in Northern Thailand has established a close relationship with caravan merchants who were generally traveled in upland region between Southwest Yunnan and Northern Thailand. Most Yunnanese caravan group prefer cooperated with KMT isolated due to their relatively strong

ability in fighting which could protect the caravan from the attack of local armed forces in Northern Myanmar (Duan, 2008) (page 59). In addition, the isolated KMT force also established their own caravan after they relocated in the border village of Northern Thailand. In 1970s, the KMT Yunnanese has caused international concern because they have been involved in opium trade in Golden Triangle Area.

“We have to continue to fight the evil of communism; to fight you must have an army, must have guns; and to but guns you must have money. In these mountains, the only money is opium.” (“The Ultimate Merchandise,” Feb 18, 1990) (Bangkok Post)

The conditions of KMT 93rd Division have improved since they helped Thai government defeat the Hmong guerrilla fighters. On 30 May 1978, the Thai parliament announced its decision to give regular Thai citizenship (*bad prachachon*) or alien status (*bad khon tang daw*) to KMT forces and their dependents as a reward for their victories in the battles of the early 1970s (Chang, 1999) (page 68). From the 1960s to the late 1970s, with the resettlement of KMT 93rd Division in upland Northern Thailand, there are numbers of Yunnanese refugees has continuously followed them to settle in these villages. And the migration wave which driven by upland caravan trade between Myanmar and Thailand also attracted large number of Yunnanese civilian refugees to swarm into border area of Northern Thailand (Hung, 2017). Combined with the data from Chiang’s research, these Yunnanese new comers has increases the scale of KMT Yunnanese villages from 3 by early 1960s to more than 27 by 1974 in upland Northern Thailand. The kinship of KMT soldiers also became a main factor that impact on the migration wave of Yunnanese from 1960s to 1970s (Chang, 1999).

Most importantly for this project is the fact that Ban Hin Taek village was established under the leadership of Khun Sa in this period. Even though more than half of the villagers were Shan people at that time, many former KMT soldiers have taken charged in senior position and played core roles in the Khun Sa’s Army. According to my interview with a former Yunnanese soldier of Khun Sa’s force in Ban Hin Taek, he noted that “the number of former KMT soldiers in Ban Hin Taek

were not as many as other civilian Yunnanese, but almost all of them have taken up a position in Khun Sa's Army, and villagers here have received lots of effect from former KMT force, especially in military culture." He also mentioned that "former KMT soldiers here have strengthened links between 'KMT Yunnanese villages' and Ban Hin Taek village to some extent, which may have driven a great deal of cooperation in "improper businesses" in both Ban Hin Taek and in other Yunnanese villages. During my field trip in Ban Hin Taek, however, many descendants of former KMT soldiers in Ban Hin Taek have strongly denied this part of history since they "do not want to be treated as the children of drug traffickers, even it is true". Indeed, the controversial history of KMT Yunnanese has attracted the attention of mainstream press in Thai society since 1970s. And the stereotype of Yunnanese groups has misleading the general Thai public to simply perceive most Yunnanese migrations in Northern Thailand as 'unruly Haw (or Jin Haw)' until nowadays. But there is no doubt that the descendants of KMT Yunnanese Chinese was became one of the most important composition of Yunnanese group in Northern Thailand, and those KMT Yunnanese family are still taken a very important position in the social structure of today's Ban Hin Taek.

3. "Escapees" from the period of Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution (late 1950s to late 1970s)

This section will shift its attention to the Yunnanese civilian refugees who were fled to Northern Thailand via Myanmar from the late 1950s to the 1970s. This was the time of the Great Leap Forward (*da yue jin*, 大跃进) and the Cultural Revolution (*wenhua da geming*, 文化大革命) in mainland China. The former was an economic and social campaign led by the China's Communist Party from 1958 to 1962 and tied to the collectivization phase of PRC history, and the latter was a period of political and social turmoil in the PRC. Since 1957, the China government has launched a series of campaign and political movements with the two most significant being the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Those political movements caused huge negative effects on China's economic development, political structure and ethnic relations. Yunnan suffered from them as well. As a province with

many ethnic minorities and special cultural and geological conditions, Yunnan's ethnic relations play a key role in building border security. In the Great Leap Forward, a series of political conflicts threatened most Yunnanese civilians' (both Han groups and ethnic minorities). Moreover, the breakout of the Great Famine in 1959 led to a large scale flight of Yunnanese civilians from border areas to nearby countries, especially to Myanmar. Data from Jin Ni's (2014) research shows that 307,300 Yunnanese civilian refugees fled Yunnan from 1959 to 1961, an event that threatened the national security of China's southwestern frontiers (Jin, 2014). The large flow of Yunnanese civilian refugees mainly entered into Shan state and Wa state of Northern Myanmar. In this stage, most Yunnanese civilian refugees moved to Burmese cities such as Lashio and Kokang in Shan state. Based on county annals that I have collected from each county of southwest Yunnan, I have found that large numbers of Yunnanese civilian refugees fled from the southwest border area of Yunnan after the founding of the PRC, and especially after 1953, and then again after the Great Leap Forward in the early 1960s.

Shun Ning Prefecture includes the counties of Geng Ma (耿马), Cang Yuan (沧源), Feng Qing (凤庆), Shuang Jiang (双江), Lin Cang (临沧), Yun Xian (云县), Lan Cang (澜沧) and Chang Ning (昌宁). Because Shun Ning prefecture lies on Myanmar's Northern border, many Yunnanese refugees fled from their hometowns in the time of the Great Leap Forward. In 1953, there were more than 60,000 people who were missing in Lan Cang city. And thousands of people has continued to flee from Lan Cang city each year between 1956 and 1959. Only 5,417 people has return back to Lan Cang city in 1959. (The Government of Lan Cang Lahu Ethnic Autonomous County, 1996)
(The Gazetteer of Lan Cang Lahu Ethnic Autonomous County, Yunnan People's Publishing House, 1996 : 17, 102)

Yong Chang Prefecture includes the counties of Yang Bi (漾濞), Bao Shan (保山), Lu Xi (潞西), Long Ling (龙陵), Yong Ping (永平), Zhen Kang (镇康) and Chang Ning (昌宁). Although these counties were in difficult conditions during the period of The Great Famine (1960-2), the death rate has decreased, mainly due to the large number of people who fled from each county in late 1950s. But there is no accurate record about the actual numbers of migrants. Most Yunnanese fled to Northern Myanmar, and a smaller part of them left for Thailand and Laos.(The Government of Bao

Shan City, 1993; The Government of Long Ling County, 2000; The Government of Luxi County, 1993)

(The Gazetteer of Lu Xi County: Memorabilia, Yunnan Education Publishing House, 1993, p42; The Gazetteer of Long Ling County, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2000, p24; The Gazetteer of Bao Shan City, Kunming: Yunnan Nationalities Publishing House, 1993, p84.)

Pu Er Prefecture has a common boundary with Myanmar and Laos, and it consists of Si Mao county (思茅), Mo Jiang county (墨江), Jing Hong county (景洪) and Sipsongpanna (西双版纳). In the year of 1958, many counties had riots. For most civilians in Pu Er Prefecture, fleeing abroad was already a key method to survive. Since 1954, many local residents cautiously fled from the border areas. The characteristics of people's escape: 1. The flight of people was already a common phenomenon; 2. The scale of people's flight is larger than expected; 3. As much as 65% of those fleeing were local civilians; 4. The riots continued in many border areas. (The Government of Meng Hai County, 1997)

(The Gazetteer of Meng Hai county, Yunnan People's Publishing House, 1997, 92-93.)

Teng Yue Prefecture includes the county of Teng Chong (腾冲), Ying Jiang (盈江), Zhan Xi (盏西), Liang He (梁河), Lian Shan (莲山), Long Chuan (陇川) and Ruli (瑞丽). Because of the large number of people who fled from Teng Yue Prefecture, this complex situation made it unable to count the death rate and population growth from 1953 to 1964. (The Government of Teng Chong County, 1995)

(The Gazetteer of Teng Chong county, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1995: 880.)

The above information shows that the migration waves continuously occurred in all border areas of Yunnan province since 1953. Although most documents could not provide accurate data about the migrant's population, they clearly emphasize that things worsened with the Great Famine broke out from 1960. Among the four main prefectures, the mass migration wave was most serious in Lin Cang Prefecture. Although the Chinese government promulgated a strong policy to shrink the number of migrants in border areas since the early 1960s, this migration flows have persisted in those border places until the late 1980s. In addition, although many escapees constantly fled from Yunnan to Myanmar and Thailand in the time of the Chinese

Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), “the situation was not as serious as what occurred during the Great Leap Forward period. This difference can best be attributed to better local government management of the borders” (The Government of Bao Shan City, 1993) (page 76).

The migration pattern in this stage strongly relies on the relationships and networks that formed by families and relatives in Yunnanese communities in southwest Yunnan, Northern Myanmar and Northern Thailand. The key elements of the Yunnanese migration network were built from relationships among family, clan, language and whether they are from the same village. This forms special social networks similar to those that connected Chinese families from other parts of China to descent groups – whether real or imagined – throughout Southeast Asia and beyond. These networks rely on lineage relations, race relations and bonds of friendship. As many of my informants in Ban Hin Taek village reported to me: Yunnanese civilians often would flee Yunnan along with their family members, clansmen and a whole village. First, after Yunnanese civilians got in touch with their relatives or clansmen who had earlier relocated in Myanmar or Thailand, they would determine a specific route and departure time to leave their hometown. Then, following the route they determined before, the clan elder would bring people together to go abroad. Normally, most of the Yunnan relatives or clansmen who had relocated abroad would meet them once they fled from mainland China. Moreover, migration pattern of Yunnanese in this stage also strongly relied on their low-profile survival strategy. As scholar Singh mentioned in her research that “low-profile ethno-national identity can have practical advantages” (Singh, 2017). This kind of strategy made large number of Yunnanese migrants choose to separately re-settled along the remote border area between Northern Myanmar and Northern Thailand, where living condition and natural environment may not suitable for human habitation but it may could provide geographical advantage to protect these Yunnanese migrants to some extent. From 1958 to 1961, the Great Famine (1960-1962) was a key reason for many Yunnanese civilian refugees to leave their home without any pre-preparation. Nonetheless, the relative relationship of Yunnanese groups established in Southwest China, Myanmar and Thailand extended this migration wave.

Although the border areas of southwest Yunnan are far from the political center of mainland China, the Yunnanese had strong ties to their families, clans and relatives, and these connections spread widely with the Yunnanese group across upland Southeast Asia. With the development of Yunnanese group in the upland of Myanmar and Thailand, different kinds of contact among different border migrants group such as intermarriage, mutual trade and mixed inhabitation as well as cultural integration of different nationalities would inevitably lead to complex relatives' network in this group. And this huge relative network has in large degree to maintain or extend the migration process of Yunnanese civilian refugees during the period from 1960s to 1970s. Moreover, although majority of Yunnanese civilian refugees were concentrated settled in Shan state of Northern Myanmar at this stage, there are also numbers of Yunnanese civilian refugees has swarm into the Thailand and seek refuge with their relatives or friends in the Yunnanese village of Northern Thailand. According to the chairman's information of village committee, the majority of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek village today are mainly come to this period. Although some record in local village indicated that Khun Sa has bring thousands of Yunnanese civilians and other ethnic minorities (most of them are Shan people) were settled in Ban Hin Taek around 1964. However, the relatives' network of Yunnanese people attracted many civilian refugees of Yunnan have continuously resettled in Ban Hin Taek at this stage, which is gradually become the major components of Yunnanese population in today's Ban Hin Taek.

The flight of ethnic minorities into the border areas of Southwest Yunnan became common in the Great Leap Forward. Based on the materials that I have collected from each ethnic minority autonomous regions of the Southwest Yunnan, it also could be relevant information that ethnic minorities like the Dai (called Shan in Myanmar), the De'ang (also called Benglong), the Akha (also called Hani in mainland China), the Lahu, the Jinpo, the Bulang and the Yao (Yu-mien) also fled from southwest border areas of Yunnan in various degrees since Great Leap Forward period.

From January to November in 1958, 56,267 civilians fled from Lu Xi Prefecture, which represents as much as 14% of total population in the border area of Southwest Yunnan. The migration population in 1958 consists of 27,626 people of Dai region and 24,886 people of Jinpo region, and most of migrants were ethnic minorities. According to the materials of Rui Li government, the peak season of civilian escape is April and September when government has concentrated in water conservancy construction program and steel production. (the CCP's District Committee of Dehong, 1958)

(The Report of the Ethnic Minorities' Migration Situation, 6 December, 1958, the CCP's District Committee of Dehong)

In Meng Long District of Jing Hong County, more than 7,000 people fled abroad from September 1958 to January 1959. And the ethnic composition in Meng Long District is very complicated, including nearly twenty ethnic minorities like Dai, Hani (Aka), Blang, Lahu and etc. The population of ethnic minorities represents as much as 97% of total population in Meng Long District. Although a small part of ethnic minorities returned back in early 1959, the migration of ethnic minorities in our county became more serious after the autumn of 1959.

(The telegraph from Simao Headquarters of Border Management in 1960. The private resource which provided by informants in Simao city.)

The above information indicates that the migration situation of ethnic minorities in the ethnic minority autonomous region of Southwest Yunnan around 1959. Both Luxi Prefecture (also called Dehong Prefecture nowadays) and Sipsongpanna were the major border areas and had concentrations of more than twenty ethnic minorities of Yunnan province. And nearly sixteen of these ethnic minorities were transnational ethnic group in the border area of Yunnan. After the coercive policies of the Great Leap Forward came into effect, the new economic processes in the new communes advocated by the new policies differed from the earlier, mostly agricultural, economic activities of ethnic minorities. And the broke out of the Great Famine became a good opportunity to driven large scale of these ethnic minorities has fled along with their group to relocated with their clansman abroad and maintain their original production mode.

Compared with the family based migration patterns of the Yunnanese Han group, those of the transnational ethnic minorities is more purposive. A majority of these

ethnic minorities would resettle in several fixed regions where their clansmen have settled. For instance, in the Zhen Kang county of Yunnan province, both the De'ang people and Lisu people there fled from the Bai Yan village of Nan San township during the year of 1958. And these two groups relocated in the fixed region of Kokang, where mainly concentrated Benglong village and Lisu village. In addition, because both Shan people of Myanmar and Dai people of Yunnan generally considered themselves as a same race, a majority of Dai people from Dehong were commonly moving to the Shan people's dwelling district of Shan state in Northern Myanmar. Besides, many Lisu people of Yunnan has fled to the Northern Myanmar and normally relocated in Myitkyina where has gathered a large numbers of Lisu people. However, the migratory route and distribution of some ethnic minorities such as Dai (Shan), Akah (Hani), Lahu and Lisu were wider and completed. Since the Great Leap Forward period, many of these ethnic minorities in southwest Yunnan chose to resettle with their clansman in the border area of Northern Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. Since 1960, the constant political upheaval in Myanmar has also forced a large scale of ethnic minorities who were fled from southwest Yunnan earlier were turn to seek refuge with Yunnanese villages in Northern Thailand. And this is the reason why the phenomenon of mixed dwelling among Yunnanese Han people and ethnic minorities is very common in today's Ban Hin Taek and other Yunnanese village.

Ethnic minorities relate to one another in different ways in the upland areas of Thailand today. Yunnanese Han intermarry with Shan, Lisu and Lahu. This contributes to a cultural integration in terms of their language, customs and rituals. Their similar migration background and low-profile living strategies links many ethnic minorities who fled from Yunnan with the Yunnanese Han group in upland Northern Thailand. Because of the similar low-profile among Yunnanese migrants and other local ethnic minorities could "associated with relatively minimal ethnic-based conflict or subordination"(Singh, 2017). Nowadays, for instance, the intermarriage between Yunnanese Han males and Shan females (or Dai) is relatively common in Ban Hin Taek village. The intermarriage of Yunnanese Han and other ethnic minorities has expanded the family relation of Yunnanese groups in upland

northern Thailand. It has also made the ethnic composition of Yunnanese group more complex and diverse. Unlike other KMT Yunnanese villages, various ethnic minorities from Yunnan have shaped its distinct multiethnic structures. This is a unique characteristic which seems to distinguish Ban Hin Taek from other KMT villages in Northern Thailand. Furthermore, in the past two decades, with the rising social status of Yunnanese groups in Northern upland society, some of the ethnic minorities in upland Northern Thailand have started to learn the Yunnanese dialect and have adopted Yunnanese traditions, both of which are common in Ban Hin Taek village. In addition, most ethnic minorities (who fled Yunnan) in Ban Hin Taek also prefer to consider themselves 'Yunnanese', or 'ethnic minorities from Yunnan' or often use names for themselves from China's ethnic categories, as a way to distinguish themselves from other indigenous hill tribes groups in upland Northern Thailand.

However, since Thai government has officially issued Thai citizenship to ethnic minorities in upland Northern Thailand in 1970s, many Yunnanese Han people have acquired their Highlander ID card which identified them as indigenous people in Northern Thailand. This is one of important reason may could explain why many former Highlander Card holder are still consider themselves as Yunnanese people today. Chapter four of this thesis will discuss the "ID card system of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek" in more depth.

To sum up, the Yunnanese migration patterns (of both Yunnanese Han groups and other ethnic minorities from Yunnan) from the time of the Great Leap Forward (1958 and on) has come to be an important stratum of the Yunnanese living in Northern Thailand nowadays. From 1960 through the late 1970s, although most Yunnanese groups were resettled and concentrated in Shan state of Myanmar, many Yunnanese refugees (includes both Han group and ethnic minorities) continually entered into Yunnanese villages of upland Northern Thailand via Northern Myanmar. Moreover, the rest of the large number of Yunnanese civilian refugees (or Yunnanese stateless refugees) were stuck in Northern Myanmar. They have directly or indirectly triggered refugee crises on the Thai-Myanmar border since the 1980s.

4. Overseas Chinese (or Chinese refugees) in Myanmar-Thailand (1980s to today)

In this section, I will further explore the last migration wave of Yunnanese people, those who entered Thailand from Northern Myanmar in the last thirty years or so. Since Myanmar gained independence in 1948, bilateral relations between Thailand and Myanmar have created a series of refugee crises along the Thai-Burmese border. The ongoing fighting between ethnic armed groups and the Burmese military government in the Northern Myanmar forced many stateless refugees into the Thai-Myanmar border since the 1980s (Hung and Baird, 2017). In 1984, the Burmese military government initiated a large military offensive against the KNU (Karen National Union), which caused more than 10,000 Karen refugees to flee to the border area of Northern Thailand. Again after the ‘8888 Uprising’ (also called 8888 Nationwide Popular Pro-Democracy Protests or People Power Uprising) in August 1988, the new military government of Myanmar made the drastic measure to fight with ethnic armed groups in Northern Myanmar. This led more and more civilian refugees to flee to the Thailand. Although the unrest situation in Northern Myanmar has led many of Yunnanese Chinese refugees returned to the port city (like in Ruili and Zhen Kang) of southwest Yunnan, the Chinese government have not issued legal residence permit refugees but only provide a temporary shelter. On the country, the soft attitude in refuge issue of Thailand government has accepted the majority of oversea Yunnanese who were fled from Northern Myanmar ¹¹ (IFENG.COM, March 22, 2013).

Based on my interview information from one former leader of border-control police in southwest Yunnan, he has mentioned to me that during the 1990s, the economic expansion of mainland China attracted many Yunnanese refugees back to Yunnan. But the complex situation of Yunnanese refugees on the Yunnan-Myanmar

¹¹ The information above is refers to the news report in IFENG.COM which title is “The civil War of Myanmar: the huge wave of Karen refugees (in Chinese: 缅甸内战: 波涛汹涌难民潮 克伦族人数最多) on 22of March, 2013, http://news.ifeng.com/shendu/sdzb/detail_2012_03/22/13382444_0.shtml

border and the stringent immigration policy of mainland China did not allow those refugees unable to regain legal citizenship in China. Thailand's rapid development at the same time produced a huge demand for low-skilled workers. This meant that in the 1990s, most of Yunnanese civilian refugees along with other ethnic minorities in Northern Myanmar continued to flee into Thailand to seek their livelihood. Since the late 1980s many KMT villages of northern Thailand experienced an influx of Myanmar's Yunnanese refugees and they account for a third to a half or more of the total population in these villages (Chang, 2006).

In September of 2009, clashes between forces of the Myanmar military junta faced off against the MNDA (Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army), forcing many civilians in Kokang to escape to refugee camps in Yunnan or to illegally enter Northern Thailand to resettle with their Yunnanese relatives¹² (Branigan, August 28, 2009; Storey, Sep 10, 2009). The later fighting between the Kachin Independence Army and the Myanmar government Army triggered another refugee crisis on the border area of Southwest Yunnan, Northern Myanmar and Northern Thailand. In February 2015, the Kokang offensive of MNDA made the refugee crisis in China-Myanmar border became more serious, forcing more than 30,000 civilian refugees to seek shelter in Yunnan and another part of civilian refugees were fled into Thailand illegally¹³ (BBC NEWS, Feb 18, 2015; Central News Agency, Mar 2, 2015; Kantar, April 8, 2016; VOA NEWS, Mar 18, 2015). Until November of 2016, a co-ordinated

¹² The above information is refers to the news report as follow:

(1). The news report in The Guardian on 28 August 2009, which title is "Thousands flee Burma as army clashes with Kokang militias", <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/aug/28/burma-shan-refugees-fighting-china>

(2). The report in the China Brief Volume:9 on September 10, 2009, which title is "Emerging Fault Lines in Sino-Burmese Relations: The Kokang Incident", <https://jamestown.org/program/emerging-fault-lines-in-sino-burmese-relations-the-kokang-incident/>

¹³ The above information is refers to the new reports as follow:

(1). The news report in MYANMAR TIMES on 2 March, 2015, which title is "Kokang: For Myanmar and China, this time it's different", <http://www.mmmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/13297-kokang-for-myanmar-and-china-this-time-it-s-different.html>

(2). The news report in BBC NEWS on 18 February, 2015, which title is "Fighting continues in Myanmar's troubled Kokang region", <http://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-asia-31527384/inside-myanmars-troubled-kokang>

(3). The news report in VOA NEWS on 18 March, 2015, which title is "Fighting Intensifies in Myanmar's Kokang Region", <http://www.voanews.com/a/fighting-intensifies-in-myanmar-kokang-region/2685901.html>

ethnic armed group (includes various ethnic armed groups such like MNDAA, AA, KIA and TNLA) attacked around Muse in Northern Shan State which forced more than 70,000 civilian refugees to fled from their home again crossed border to seek safety in Yunnan. Thousands of people have been displaced by decades of fighting between the military and ethnic armed groups in Northern Myanmar, which is home to several large groups operating close to the borders with China and Thailand¹⁴ (Kantar, April 8, 2016).

Although the local government of Yunnan province has given enormous aid to the Myanmar's civilian refugees in the border area since 2000s, the strict immigration control of mainland China is still unable for those civilian refugees to regain the permission of long-term residents. By contrast, many international humanitarian agencies were mainly set up in the Thai-Myanmar border, and the soft attitude of Thai government made most of civilian refugees considered Thailand as a better place of refuge. After a series of war and political upheaval in Northern Myanmar such like Shan State, Kachin State and Wa State in last thirty years has directly forced large scale of Myanmar's Yunnanese groups (includes both Yunnanese Han group and ethnic minorities) has fled to Northern Thailand. Majority of these Yunnanese refugees were the civilian who fled from Yunnan after China's liberation. And under the help of their relatives relation in Yunnanese villages of upland Northern Thailand, many of Myanmar's Yunnanese refugees has entered into Thailand through the both legal and illegal way. Such as in Ban Hin Taek village, because of the similar language, living culture and custom among each Yunnanese group in upland Southeast Asia, many of Myanmar's Yunnanese refugees could well integrated in the local Yunnanese community in Ban Hin Taek village. During past twenty years, there are large number of Myanmar's Yunnanese refugees has seek refuge with Yunnanese villages in upland Northern Thailand. Although the Thai government unable to statistics on the number of Myanmar's Yunnanese refugees, the number of these

¹⁴ The above information is refers to the new reports as follow:

(1).The news report in THE DIPLOMAT on April 8, 2016, which title is "Kokang Refugees in China", <http://thediplomat.com/2016/04/kokang-refugees-in-china/>

(2).The news report in THE IRRAVADDY on April 22, 2016, which title is "Lack of Aid Leaves Kokang Refugees in 'Dire' Situation", <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/lack-of-aid-leaves-kokang-refugees-in-dire-situation.html>

refugees has keep increased in recent years. For instance, the Arunotai village (บ้านอรุโณทัย) and the New Village Nong Bua (บ้านใหม่หนองบัว) of Chiang Mai province has concentrated a large number of Myanmar's Yunnanese refugees during last twenty years. And the local village committee of the Arunotai village said to me that the new migration of Myanmar's Yunnanese refugees accounts even more than one half of the total population of these Yunnanese villages. Nowadays, the Myanmar's Yunnanese refugees already became the main composition of Yunnanese group in Northern Thailand. The relative relationship of Yunnanese group between Northern Myanmar and Thailand has strengthened the connection among each Yunnanese group, and this relative network of Yunnanese group may also increasing the population of the number of Yunnanese in Northern Thailand today.

5. The Yunnanese People in Ban Hin Taek village

The Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek village include various groups of Yunnanese. Aside speaking Yunnanese, they also may be divided according to the time they arrived in the village, which relates to the different historical layer I have discussed the previous four sections. According to information provided by the local village committee of Ban Hin Taek, most of the Yunnanese villagers come from two waves. The largest consisted of civilian refugees (including both Yunnanese Chinese and various ethnic minority groups from Yunnan) who fled the border areas of southwestern Yunnan at the time of collectivization and the Great Leap Forward in China. The second largest wave was the Yunnanese refugees who constantly fled from battle zones of Northern Myanmar. The chairmen of the local village committee also mentioned that the total population of these two kinds of groups may account for over 70% of the Yunnanese population in Ban Hin Taek today. Although both Yunnanese Muslims and the KMT Yunnanese are not considered as major components of Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek in terms of their numbers, both groups are still crucial to the earlier history of the village, and to the current structures and processes of village life, such as in local economic, politics and educational life. Unlike other KMT Yunnanese villages, various ethnic minorities from Yunnan have shaped the distinct multiethnic structures of the village which made the ethnic

composition of Yunnanese group became more complex but also diverse. Moreover, it is also a unique feature which distinguishes Ban Hin Taek from other KMT villages in Northern Thailand.

In addition, the four different waves of Yunnanese's migration have also produced four different generations of Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek today. Nowadays, according to the information which provided by village head of Ban Hin Taek, majority of Yunnanese families who were come from the largest migration wave of mid twenty centuries have generally consist of four different generations. But majority of first generation of these Yunnanese families were died around 1990s, and the second generation of these Yunnanese families are still core group in Ban Hin Taek in terms of village management. In addition, most of Yunnanese families who constantly fled from battle zones of Northern Myanmar to Ban Hin Taek were also commonly consist of three generations. Only a small part of Yunnanese families are consist of two generations, due to most of them were come to settled in Ban Hin Taek no more than twenty years.

6. Conclusion

The Yunnanese Chinese living in Northern Thailand today are Yunnanese because of their diverse and layered connections to Yunnanese people in China. Besides speaking a common Yunnanese dialect with many variants, they also have shared stories of their origins that relate to the patterns of their migration into the region. Their language, and the history and pattern of their migration, helped to create distinct historical layers and connection among Yunnanese people, and to link those from Yunnan to their Yunnanese now living in Myanmar and Thailand and also with other migrant Yunnanese, minority groups, Thais and Chinese, too. The important role of migration history has contributed to stereotyped views of the Yunnanese for some of the Thai public. But today the composition of Yunnanese groups in Northern Thailand is much more diverse and complex. Based on the time of their arrival and settlement in Thailand, Yunnanese groups in upland Northern Thailand today roughly consist of four main waves or layers tied to when they migrated from Yunnan. The four waves

are as follows: first wave descendants of Yunnanese Muslim-caravan traders who migrated from Yunnan since late 1800s. Second, the descendants of KMT 93rd force who were separately relocated in the border village in upland Northern Thailand after they completed withdraw from Northern Myanmar in 1961. Third, the Yunnanese civilian refugees (includes both Yunnanese Han group and large number of ethnic minorities) who were fled from border area of southwestern Yunnan from the time of collectivization in China (late 1950s) and fourth, Yunnanese refugees from Myanmar (also includes both Yunnanese Han and ethnic minorities) who were constantly fled from battle zone of Northern Myanmar to the Yunnanese villages of upland Northern Thailand, and this process was continued until today.

Most Yunnanese people in Northern Thailand follow passive modes of migration that were formed by paths taken by previous family relatives and their networks spanning the region. The Yunnanese played a crucial role in maintaining these networks for migration in the last fifty year. They helped create different historical layers of Yunnanese in the region and complex cultural component made this group shaped their multiple identities during last two centuries. And the stereotyping and ethnic labels of Yunnanese groups have sometimes obscured their ethnic identity and cultural place in Thai society today. The complex and multiple identities they have created lead them to call themselves ‘Yunnanese (*yunnan ren*)’ [Yunnanese people] or ‘Yunnanese Chinese’ to better distinguish themselves from the Thai-Chinese community of Central Region of Thailand. However, as a marginal group in contemporary Thailand, most Yunnanese still struggle at the bottom rungs of Thai society.

Chapter III: New Alliances for Yunnanese People in Upland Society

Having provided some basic tools for understanding who the Yunnanese in Thailand are in the previous chapter, this chapter will focus on one major strategy that the Yunnanese use to shape their identity in this dynamic ethnic environment. After presenting basic information on the basics of Ban Hin Taek's geographical, demographic and economic and religious basics, this chapter will focus on how the way that Yunnanese people involve themselves in interethnic marriages, interethnic trading relations, and interethnic ritual action in the village. By doing these things, the Yunnanese help to establish a locally-grounded identity for themselves in Ban Hin Taek which is flexible, adaptive and fluid, and so able to distinguish themselves from other ethnic groups in the area.

1. Basic information of Ban Hin Taek Village

Ban Hin Taek is a border village set in Mae Fah Luang District of Chiang Rai province in northwestern Thailand. The village is well known by its historical links to the drug lord Khun Sa. A news report in the Bangkok Post says that Ban Hin Taek was the first Akha Village in Northern Thailand ("Venturing through the Ghost Gate," Jan 17, 2008) (Bangkok Post). However, it is hard to find any records and clue to demonstrate when was Ban Hin Taek village have been founded. Most of the attention given to Ban Hin Taek has only occurred since it became the base of Khun Sa in 1964, when he brought his troops and thousands of refugees from Shan state in Burma (including Shan people, Yunnanese Han, Yunnanese Muslim and other ethnic minorities from Shan state) to resettle in this then small border village. Because of its geographical advantages, during 1970s to early 1980s, Ban Hin Taek was a crucial base of Khun Sa's force both in upland Northern Thailand and in the Golden Triangle Area. As the main camp of Khun Sa's force, drug trafficking of Ban Hin Taek led by Khun Sa was became very successful in the period from 1970s through early 1980s. In January 1982, the Thai army, joined the Border Patrol Police, to attack Khun Sa's base in Ban Hin Taek. (Rowley, January 1, 2008). Although the SUA force of Khun

Sa retreated into Burma in January 1982, drug trafficking in Ban Hin Taek was still active, run by various of local armed forces until early 2000s.

Ban Hin Taek rests in an intermountain basin rich in water resource and forest resources along the upland Thai-Myanmar borderland areas. Most of the villagers' houses are concentrated in a small basin surrounded by high hills, covering about 4.5 to 5.0 square kilometers. There is only one road, passing southeast to northwest direction through the village, and connecting to route 1130 in Mae Fah Luang District of Chiang Rai province. The two main routes extend from the northwest of Ban Hin Taek village and separately connect with various frontier stations on the Thai-Myanmar border. There are, moreover, more than 10 other villages around Ban Hin Taek, including Ban Hui Peng (บ้านห้วยผึ้ง), Ban Lao Lio (บ้านเล้าลิ่ว), Ban Huai Uen (บ้านห้วยอื่น) and Ban Na (บ้านนา), which have close relations the trade in Ban Hin Taek village. Ban Hui Peng is the second largest Yunnanese village close to Ban Hin Taek, and the two villages are just a kilometer apart.

The total official registered population of Ban Hin Taek village is 5,680, which consists of more than 40% Yunnanese Chinese, 40% Shan, 10% Akah and the remaining 10% a mix of Lisu, Yunnanese Muslim, Wa and Lahu groups. Of the nearly 2230 households in this village, 45% are run by Yunnanese Han, 40% run Shan, and the remaining 15% consisting of Akah, Yunnanese Muslims, Lisu people and Lahu. There are also 300 to 350 villagers who do not have legal citizenship, and they are mainly the floating population and stateless refugees from Myanmar. As for the population distribution of Ban Hui Peng, the total number of official registered population there is 4265, of whom more than 50% are Yunnanese Chinese and the remaining nearly 50% consisting of 30% Akha, 10% Lahu, 10% Lisu, and 5% Shan and Wa.¹⁵

¹⁵ Due to most of Yunnanese were classified as ethnic minorities such as Lisu and Lahu by Thai government, the local Thai official was not divided Yunnanese group into a separate ethnic classification. Hence, the data of the ethnic distribution of Ban Hin Taek and Ban Hui Peng were briefly estimated by the local official of village committee.

Based on my interview information of local residents, it seems that about half of Akah people were the earliest inhabitants in the Ban Hin Taek, and they may have entered the border area of Northern Thailand from the early 1900s. The rest of Akah families have been resettled in this village from other, mostly upland areas, in the 1960s and 1970s. Most of Shan people were part of Khun Sa's force that relocated to Ban Hin Teak in the 1960s and 1970s. More than half of the Yunnanese families (including both Yunnanese Han and other ethnic minorities) arrived with Khun Sa when he moved from Shan state in Burma to Ban Hin Teak in 1964. The composition of Yunnanese groups in Ban Hin Taek nowadays is complicated, with Yunnanese villagers having arrived in different historical layers, as pointed out in chapter two. As discussed there, the Yunnanese groups in Ban Hin Taek mainly consist of the Yunnanese Muslim, descendants of the KMT 93rd force, Yunnanese civilian refugees (includes both Han and other ethnic minorities) from Yunnan in the decade after the late 1950s, and Myanmar's Yunnanese refugees from 1980s. According to the information provided by local village committee of Ban Hin Taek, the Yunnanese civilian refugees (includes both Yunnanese Han group and large number of ethnic minorities) who fled from border area of southwestern Yunnan since the Great Leap Forward form the largest group of Yunnanese population in the village, while Myanmar's Yunnanese refugees who have been fleeing the battle zones of Northern Myanmar are considered as second largest Yunnanese group now in Ban Hin Taek. Most of the older generation of these Yunnanese families in Ban Hin Taek had joined the local armed force of Khun Sa during 1960s to 1980s period. In addition, the fathers' generation of thirteen Yunnanese Muslim families in Ban Hin Taek also served Khun Sa's force since they settled in Ban Hin Taek in early 1960s. This Muslim group played a crucial role in Khun Sa's force in the 1960s to 1980s, not only transporting materials for Khun Sa's armed force but also being involved in drug trafficking in the Golden Triangle Area.

Agriculture is important to the village, with villagers maintaining a traditional "slash and burn" cultivation pattern of the upland areas in Ban Hin Taek. Although opium cultivation once was crucial to Ban Hin Taek, agricultural production is still

the main source of income for most local residents today. The Thai government program of “substituting planting crops for opium poppies” was launched in late 1980s, and since that time, most farmers of Ban Hin Taek have focused on planting and growing corn (maize) as a major crop. But the soil and climatic conditions in Ban Hin Teak area cannot produce enough crops to meet food demands of the local population. Hence, even though the agricultural planting has been improved in Ban Hin Taek in the last twenty years, the limited capacity of land has made Ban Hin Taek village dependent for its daily supplies of vegetables on the markets in Chiang Rai.

The people living in this landscape and in this economic situation mostly use Thai language and Yunnan dialect for their daily communication. Most Thai people and Shan people in Ban Hin Taek only speak Thai. A small part of the Akha and Lahu are also only speakers for their ethnic language. But these monolingual ethnic minorities generally live with their own clans and are settled on the periphery of the village. So most of the Akha people are settled with their clans in the steep hills where located in the southeastern and northwestern area in Ban Hin Taek village. Most of the Yunnanese groups in Ban Hin Taek today (including Yunnanese Han, Yunnanese Muslim and other ethnic minorities from Yunnan like Lisu and Lahu, etc.) are multilingual, and this phenomenon is even more common in the younger generations. Although numbers of elder generation of Yunnanese were often monolingual in their Yunnanese dialect when they first settled in this village, their heirs are proficient in spoken Thai, their Yunnan dialect, and other language of ethnic minorities, such as Tai-Lue, Akha, and Lahu. And this multilingual advantage of the Yunnanese group has been a key factor that has helped many Yunnanese families to become middlemen in trade and social relations in Ban Hin Taek and beyond, as we will see in later chapters.

The housing construction and arrangement on the both sides of the main street in Ban Hin Taek differs considerably from that of ordinary villages in rural Northern Thailand. Most of the house gates are decorated with Chinese characters showing the spring festival couplets and the image of door god, which is like rural village in southwest Yunnan. All the households of Yunnanese Muslims and most households

of Yunnanese Han are concentrated in the central area of village, and a few of the Shan and Akha households are also included in village center. The rest of the households of ethnic minorities, like Akah, Lahu, Shan and Lisu were separately settled in the periphery of the village.

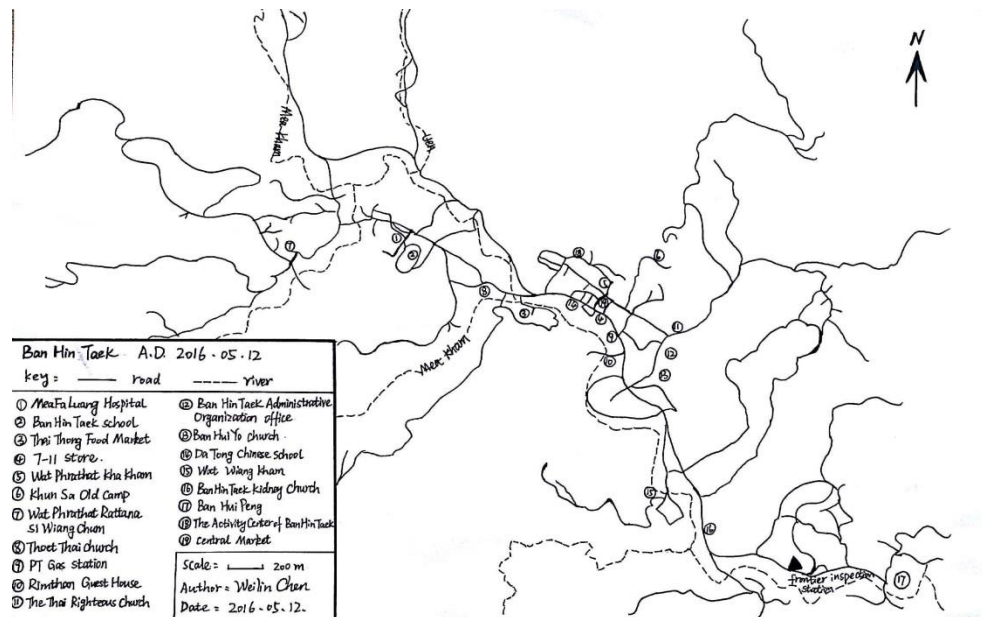


Figure 3: The map of Ban Hin Taek village

Source: This map is hand painted by Weilin Chen, May 12, 2011

As shown in the map of Ban Hin Taek (figure 3), there are also institutions like the Thai school, the Chinese school, the hospital, the administrative office, moreover, and a few frontier inspection stations along the route to Ban Hin Taek. The religious lives of the villages center on the three main Buddhist temples in the Ban Hin Taek located in the south, the north, and the southwest parts of the village, respectively. The Buddhist temples Wat Phrathat Kha Kham (วัดกาคำ) and Wat Phrathat Rattana Si Wiang Chum (วัดพระธาตุรัตนศรีเวียงชุม) in the village are done a typical architecture of Theravada Buddhism, but it have received significant effect from Tai Lue culture of Shan states in terms of architectural appearance and internal structure, while Wat Phrathat Kha Kham (วัดกาคำ) is near Khun Sa's Old Camp, and it has been turned into a

small museum. The architecture of the Buddhist temple วัดเวียงคำ (วัดกาขาว) in Ban Hin Taek is also mixed with elements of Mahayana Buddhism and Vajrayana Buddhism, which is including various statues such as Guanyin (in Chinese: 观音), Ksitigahba Bodhisattva (in Chinese: 地藏菩萨) and Manjusri Bodhisattva (in Chinese: 文殊菩萨) inside the building. And the main Buddha hall is surrounded by the Prayer Wheel. Because of large scale conversion efforts by Protestant Christians since the 1960s, nearly all Akha, Lahu and Lisu families in Ban Hin Taek, are devout Christian. They generally attend the Christian church services every Sunday with their whole families, in one of the four different churches in different parts of the village. There is also one Muslim Mosque and one Catholic Church (Thoet Thai Church คริสตจักรเทอดไทย) in the central area of the village.

Nowadays, about two thirds of the in Ban Hin Teak villagers are Buddhist. Almost all of the Thai families and Shan families are the loyal follower of Theravada Buddhism. Moreover, most Yunnanese families practice Mahayana Buddhism, and are deeply influenced by Confucian rituals, ancestor worship, and animist beliefs. Generally, those Yunnanese families worship Bodhisattva (Guanyin, 观音), an image of which they keep in their homes. As shown in figure 4, they also maintain the Confucian tradition to worship the Tablet Tian-Di-Jun-Qin-Shi (The Tablet of Heaven - Earth - Sovereign - Parent - Teacher, 天地君亲师) in their drawing room of their houses.

New forms of cultural integration have increasingly occurred between Yunnanese groups and other ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek today. These mixes have led Yunnanese of Ban Hin Taek to redefine and re-interpret their relationships with other ethnic minorities in upland society. Nowadays, the religious belief, living habit and customs, and ethnic identities still differ among each group in Ban Hin Taek, but the mutual respect has become a vital function so that Yunnanese groups in Ban Hin Taek can live with other ethnic groups in harmony. And multilingual skills

or language advantages of the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek allows them to use multiple strategies to negotiate with different local ethnic minorities. This skill has helped them strengthen their group status in the village and in upland society.



Figure 4: The traditional Tablet of Tian-Di-Jun-Qin-Shi in Yunnanese Home
Source: This photo was taken by author on June 2016 at Ban Hin Taek village.

The ethnic formation process of this harmony condition between Yunnanese group and other ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek today is not only simply based on mutual respect, but also deeply related with the complex and subtle relationships among Yunnanese and other local ethnic minorities in term of family relation, trade cooperation and culture acceptance.

2. Family relationship and ethnic identity

As mentioned in the chapter two, the population structure of the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek today is different from those of other KMT Yunnanese villages in the area. Since China's Great Leap Forward, various ethnic minorities fled from Yunnan to Ban Hin Taek. This has created a distinct multiethnic structure in this village. This multiethnic structure is also a unique characteristic which differentiates Ban Hin

Taek from other KMT villages in Northern Thailand. In the past fifty years, as different kinds of contact have occurred among the different ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek village, there has been intermarriage among Yunnanese Han, Shan, Lisu and Lahu. This has led to some cultural integration in terms of language, living customs and rituals among these groups. It has also made a complex ethnic ecology and more porous and diversified the ethnic boundaries among Yunnanese and other local ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek. The intermarriage between Yunnanese and different ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek not only created tight family relationships, but also reconstructed Yunnanese sense of their ethnic identity through their negotiation with different ethnic minorities. This usually involved mutual cultural-understanding and a reconstruction of ethnic boundaries.

In this section, I will focus on patterns of intermarriage between Yunnanese and other local ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek. I will correlate and analyze interview information and wedding rituals to further show how Yunnanese established family relationships to form new alliances with other ethnic minorities in upland society. By doing so, this section will provide a new perspective for understanding how intermarriage relationships may reconstruct the ethnic boundary between Yunnanese and other ethnic minorities.

2.1 Intermarriage between Yunnanese and local ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek

Traditional and conventional ideas about the intermarriage with ethnic minorities in the elder generation of Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek has been deeply influenced by traditional Chinese views of marriage. Most older Yunnanese Han males in Ban Hin Taek retain a strong patriarchal ideal for their marriage and form of a family. At first, these older values has made it very difficult for them to accept intermarriage relation with other local ethnic minorities. They retained a sense of cultural superiority of the Yunnanese Han people above other minority groups. This attitude made many of them consider intermarriage with local ethnic minorities as a kind of socio-cultural downgrading of their status. And it could be that the political upheavals in mainland China that sought to dismantle family structures, and they became stateless refugees,

outside of the new People's Republic of China, they may have stuck even more strongly to their local social customs of their home areas like marriage customs, in order to retain their identity. This included the traditional national concept of Han identity and the family status concept “*men dang hu dui*” (门当户对, marriage should [ideally] be between families of equal social status). This notion was strong among the first generation of Yunnanese Han people in Ban Hin Taek of the 1960s and to 1980s, which perceived it as important for a marriage to occur between two Han people. According to the record of village committee, in this early phase of resettlement, however, the Yunnanese groups in Ban Hin Teak were mainly confined to the upland areas around the Thai-Burma border, and more than 75% of first generation of Yunnanese in Ban Hin Teak were men who served in the Khun Sa force. Even though the limited geographical condition restricted their choice of marriage partners, only a few of the first generation of Yunnanese males chose to marry females who came from local ethnic minorities like Shan, Lisu and Lahu, with the largest number marrying Shan (Dai) women.¹⁶

During my field trip to Ban Hin Taek last summer, my informants in the local village committee indicated that many first and second generation of Yunnanese Han males in Ban Hin Taek generally preferred to marry Shan women rather than other local ethnic minorities. My interviews attributed this phenomenon of the Yunnanese group to various factors. First, the Yunnanese thought that the family formation and patriarchy culture of Shan (or Dai) people was similar with that of the traditional Han family, since it promoted a patriarchy where wife should maintain domestic affairs and the husband should be the main breadwinner. Most Yunnanese men also thought that most Shan female were more docile and industrious than other local ethnic minorities, and they well know how to follow the lead of their husband in family relationships. Second, the language spoken by Shan group (Tai-Lue or Dai Lue) could help these Yunnanese men who could not speak Thai to establish relationships and

¹⁶ This information is based on the interview information of three influential Yunnanese people in local Ban Hin Taek, and most of them have rich experience in the position village head or vice head in Ban Hin Taek. They also have rich experience to preside over a wedding ceremony in village. Besides, all of them have mentioned to me that most of first generation of Yunnanese have ethnic prejudice to other local ethnic minorities, “especially for those highlander who have black skin and uncivilized living habitat”. And they also mentioned that this phenomenon is quite common in Yunnanese female when they first settled in Ban Hin Taek.

contacts with the local Shan community. Moreover, although the Thai government was concerned by the Shan group in border areas of Northern Thailand, Thai communities in the valleys of Northern Thailand generally were acceptable to the Shan group in comparison to other ethnic minorities, due to the close connections of Thai-Kadai groups. Third, because many Shan people who were led by Khun Sa in Ban Hin Taek were from native Shan chieftain families, many Yunnanese soldiers of Khun Sa's force also considered intermarriage with these highly placed Shan families would effectively shore up their social status in Ban Hin Taek. Those families who combined with both Shan and Han ethnic identity via intermarriage commonly had various advantages for their livelihood in Ban Hin Taek in local trade and cross-border trade.

Although above information from my interviews showed that many Yunnanese men in Ban Hin Taek preferred to marry Shan or Dai people, some Yunnanese also married other local ethnic minorities like Lahu and Lisu. From the early 1970s to 1980s, the Thai government continued to formulate a series of policies to verify the identity and authenticated it for each ethnic minority in upland areas of Northern Thailand. As one former village head has recalled to me that, however, since the Thai government had serious concern about the threats of Khun Sa's force on the Thai-Myanmar border, "most Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek, including the civilian refugees and Yunnanese ethnic minorities, could not gain legal citizenship, except for a small part of KMT soldier's family". Hence, to help them get legitimacy in the area, many Yunnanese men in Ban Hin Taek turned to marrying local ethnic minorities, not just with the higher status and more similar Shan, but also with the Lahu and Lisu people. This would enable them to become legitimacy and therefore gain legal citizenship in Thailand (there will be more discussion about Yunnanese's citizenship in Chapter Four below). Such a situation also made domestic relations of Yunnanese group in Ban Hin Taek became more diverse and complex. Most Yunnanese Muslim men in Ban Hin Taek strictly follow Islamic laws for marriage, so they married with Islam groups of the lowland area of Chiang Rai or Islam groups from southern Thailand.

Nowadays, intermarriage between the third or fourth generation of Yunnanese and local ethnic minorities was a common phenomenon in Ban Hin Taek. Nonetheless, the total number of marriages between Yunnanese women and men of other ethnic groups is much less than the marriages between Yunnanese men and some of other ethnic minorities. Although there were some changes, the norms tied to marriage for Yunnanese men in Ban Hin Taek is still strongly influenced by traditional norms that are part of Han Chinese culture and the idea of marrying someone of the same socio-cultural status (“*men dang hu dui*”). Especially for Yunnanese Han families, parents generally expect that their son would marry with a woman from another Han family, but the parents also expect through their son’s intermarriage with other ethnic minorities to strengthen the relationship with a high-status family. Besides, most Yunnanese families also expect their daughter-in-law should be “an industrious female who is proficient in the Yunnanese dialect and who would obey her husband’s family culture”. As I learned by interviewing Mr. Yang and Mr. Zhao:

It is good for us (Yunnanese male) and our son to married with the baiyi (Shan), Lahu and Lisu women of influential family in this area (around Ban Hin Taek village). Because their power and relation could help us to make a living more easily in here after their daughter married with us, and their daughter’s name also can add to our zupu (族谱 genealogical record). Anyway, more and more ethnic minorities here can speak Yunnan dialect and adopted our hanren (Han Chinese) culture. They do not have too much problem to get along with us, and those ethnic minorities think that Yunnanese man is conscientious, bold and also smart to know how to get along with different groups in each zhai (village). But all of our Yunnanese know that the Ban Hin Taek is the place of the Khun Shan and baiyi (Shan people). Although our Yunnanese people marry with Shan people could bring some benefits to our family, this place is still mainly dominated by Shan.

(quote from the interview information Mr. Yang, a local merchants in Ban Hin Taek)

Many in our earlier generation of our ancestors looked down on the baiyi, laohe and luoluo people due to their uncivilized culture. Nonetheless, I think the urban Thai people also saw our Yunnanese same as just other Chao Kaw (hill tribe group) and they cannot distinguish us from other hill tribes at all. Thai people despised both we Yunnanese and other ethnic

minorities in a same way. So the intermarriage is a good thing, since it makes our connection with other ethnic minorities closer. Our living is hard in this remote upland, it just going to make our living more badly if our Yunnanese always feels superior or do not join with other ethnic minorities. (quote from the interview information Mr. Zhao, a local Chinese teacher in Ban Hin Taek)

The two informants quoted above, Mr. Yang and Mr. Zhao, show that the attitudes of Yunnanese families about intermarriage with ethnic minority families was not only shaped by the patriarchal culture and norms of traditional Chinese family, but it also depends on a reciprocal altruism which build up among Yunnanese and other local ethnic minorities in upland society around Ban Hin Taek. This kind of idea that intermarriage makes us stronger is still widely accepted by the Yunnanese families in Ban Hin Taek today. Based on my observations, Yunnanese groups generally considered their ethnic culture as superior to other ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek in terms of their family values, children's education, and their language, too. This sense of superiority made many Yunnanese consider other local ethnic minorities as lower in the social hierarchy in upland society. This kind idea of the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek still strongly influences their choice of intermarriage in terms of social status.

In addition, however, Yunnanese in the village there still perceive intermarriage with other ethnic minorities as an important way to maintain affiliation with other groups in upland society around Ban Hin Taek. The dominant status of men and traditional patriarchy has made many Yunnanese families want to accept a wife from other ethnic minorities. This is because the family formation of most Yunnanese families in Ban Hin Taek makes the husband the one in charge of property, the disciplining of their children (but often not the rearing), and the management of the home, with the wife having a lower status in the family. This family pattern made the female who has come from other ethnic minorities subject to the Yunnanese husband's family, with the wife generally expected to be more proactive to integrate into the ethnic culture of Yunnanese group. Nonetheless, the wife of other ethnic minorities was still regarded as vital link among Yunnanese group and other local

ethnic minorities. This helped to maintain or strengthened the sense of identity to each other.

The above family pattern, where Yunnanese intermarry with minority families, has also influenced interethnic marriages in Ban Hin Taek by multiethnic culture. The descendants of these families have become able to publicly embody both Yunnanese identity and other ethnic identities based on the influence of their mother's group, and, more recently from Thai culture, too. Despite this influence, I have noticed that these trends have not removed the effects of traditional Yunnanese style patriarchy and the perceived strength of "Han Chinese" culture. This has led to many ethnic minority families who have intermarried with Yunnanese spouses to passively adopt many forms and priorities from the culture of their Yunnanese spouses.

This assimilation process consists of various complex patterns. First, women who marry into Yunnanese households from other ethnic minority groups are typically expected to play an obedient role in the Yunnanese husband's family. This leads to a weaker influence of the wife's side of the family in terms of the minority language, ethnic culture and religious belief. This trend also leads the children and the next generation of this interethnic marriage to normally inherit the ethnic identity from their father's side. The stronger Yunnanese patriarchy and the expected weakening of the wife's ethnic group culture also may lead to intense friction in these interethnic marriages, especially when the wife comes from an ethnic group where matriarchy or matrifocal relations are dominant. The frequent and intense friction in family formation between Yunnanese patriarchal preferences and the matrifocal or matriarchal preferences of other ethnic groups, some interethnic marriages between Yunnanese and other local ethnic minorities have failed. The failure of interethnic marriage shows the failed negotiation between individual Yunnanese and other local minorities, and also may intensify prejudices about ethnic groups and interethnic relations among Yunnanese and other minority people.

In short, the increasing numbers of interethnic marriages among young descendants of Yunnanese and other ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek nowadays has

had two big effects. It has first helped the Yunnanese to extend their more patriarchal kinship networks into upland areas around Ban Tin Taek village, even as these networks have produced some interethnic tensions and somewhat weaker than before. Second, it has made the ethnic identities of many Yunnanese descendants more fluid than that of their parents and grandparents. They express these fluid ethnic identities in various social activities among other Yunnanese and other ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek. In the following section, I will analyze an intermarriage wedding ceremony between a Shan and a Yunnanese Han family to show how the negotiation of ethnic identities has occurred among Yunnanese group and Shan ethnic minorities in today's Ban Hin Taek.

2.2 The intermarriage wedding ceremonies of Shan- Yunnanese Han in Ban Hin Taek

According to the interview information from a famous Ajarn¹⁷ (ethnic Shan) in local Ban Hin Taek village who were generally invited to preside over the core ritual of wedding ceremony of local Shan families, he mentioned to me that a traditional Shan wedding could briefly include into four major processes. First, a marriage proposal (or match-making) is arranged by the matchmaker of bridegroom no less than three times. Next, there is a ritual of engagement between two families. Third, there is a wedding ceremony in the bride's house. Finally, the bridegroom will be asked to go to live with bride's family at least one year after wedding ceremony. This is in sharp contrast to the pattern of a traditional Yunnanese wedding which has widespread similarities with Chinese Han culture and is more complex than the Shan customs. According to the interview information of one former *guan-shi-ren* (Yunnanese Han people)¹⁸, he mentioned that the traditional Yunnanese wedding is consists of six major phases. First, the parents of the bridegroom will propose a marriage. Second, the

¹⁷ This Ajarn is come from local Shan community of Ban Hin Taek village, he is not a monk but he has shared special and important status in local society. He inherited the knowledge of traditional Shan ritual from his father in terms of wedding and funeral.

¹⁸ The word "guan-shi-ren (in Chinese: 管事人)" is come from the Yunnan dialect, which literally means "a person who is manage the affairs", and it only could take charged by male. This person is widely respected by Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek, and his duty was preside over the core ritual of wedding. And he may also be invited to arrange the feast of wedding and funeral by Yunnanese families. As this former *guan-shi-ren* told me, the content of core ritual in Yunnanese wedding ceremony has been handed down from generation to generation through oral tradition. Hence, the information about traditional Yunnanese wedding which I write in this section is based on the oral narrative of one former *guan-shi-ren* in Ban Hin Taek.

bridegroom's family will send betrothal gifts to the bride's home and entertain the relatives of both families. Thirdly, the bride's family will return a betrothal gifts to the bridegroom's family a day before the wedding ceremony. Next, there will be a wedding ceremony. Fifthly, the bride will return to her mother's home on the third day of the wedding. Finally, the bride will allowed to return bridegroom's home no less than seven or thirty days after. Although in both Yunnanese and Shan tradition, marriage is an affair between two families rather than between two individuals, there are many differences in the traditional wedding ceremony of Shan and Yunnanese in terms of ritual, family relationship and ethnic identities.

Nowadays, the intermarriage between Yunnanese family and Shan family is common in Ban Hin Taek. The process of the intermarriage wedding ceremony is still greatly depends on income factor and social status of both families. In order to take into account the different ethnic culture and religion belief of two families, the ritual of intermarriage wedding ceremony among Yunnanese group and other local ethnic minorities also have been simplified to some extent. But on the other hand, the phenomenon of intermarriage also produced a new platform of cultural acceptance among Yunnanese and other ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek.

In the one wedding ceremony of Yunnanese Han and Shan where I have attended in Ban Hin Taek was held between two local merchants' families on late April of 2016, and the living standard of both families was relatively better than the most ordinary families of Ban Hin Teak. It is a common intermarriage between a Yunnanese Han man and a Shan woman who both worked in the tourism service industry of Bangkok. After this young couple decided to get the married, the parents of the young man were invited one local Shan-matchmaker to bring the betrothal presents to propose a marriage with the parents of the young woman. In order to show the respect to the custom of Shan group and the sincerity of man's family, the matchmaker who has represented the man's family had to went to propose a marriage with young woman's family in three times. The Yunnanese family did not ask the Shan family to follow the custom of Yunnanese, which is the Yunnanese tradition that bride's family normally should return another betrothal gifts to bridegroom's family

at the day before the wedding. But the Yunnanese (man's) family said that they expected to “qu or tao” the daughter (Chinese: ‘娶媳妇’ or ‘讨媳妇’, means take a wife, the bride has to live with the bridegroom's family after they get married) of Shan family rather than let their son ‘shang men’ (Chinese: 上门, meaning the bridegroom will live with his bride's family after they get married), which strongly reflects the Yunnanese secular view about “nan qu nu jia” (Chinese: 男娶女嫁, meaning men should take a wife, women should marry to men and live with husband's family) of traditional marriage. After the parents of two families assented to their marriage, one month later, both families held a feast to celebrate the engagement in Shan woman's house, and fixed the date for wedding.

During the stage of proposing intermarriage, the Yunnanese family would like to follow the customs of bride side. And they also tried to satisfy the requirement of Shan family as much as possible, which mainly in order to showed sincerity to bride's family. The Yunnanese family not only considered the intermarriage engagement as a crucial ritual to create new relationship between the two families, but also perceived it as an important occasion to build mutual acceptance of ethnic culture among Yunnanese and Shan groups. In consideration of the Yunnanese ethnic custom of bridegroom's family, the date of wedding has fixed on the first month of the Chinese lunar year.¹⁹

In the Shan traditions around Ban Hin Taek area, the wedding ceremony has to hold in the bride's house, and the bride's parents have to preside over their daughter's wedding. However, this tradition of Shan group was very different from the wedding ritual of Yunnanese Han group in Ban Hin Taek who was commonly hold the wedding ceremony in bridegroom's house and hosted by an eldership of bridegroom's relatives. Once the Yunnanese group has decided to build one intermarriage relationship with other local ethnic minorities, the matchmaker has played an

¹⁹ Because most of young generation of Ban Hin Taek village are migrant workers where separately distributed in the different cities of Thailand, the date for the wedding is usually fixed around the time of the Chinese Spring Festival, when those young generation have returned to the village.

indispensable role that to help the two families to reached agreement about the acceptable pattern of wedding ceremony. Nowadays, hence, the most common pattern of intermarriage wedding ceremony between Yunnanese group and other ethnic minorities is held two wedding ceremonies at bride's family and bridegroom's family respectively. And the core ritual of two wedding ceremonies will held in same day which includes early ceremony in bride's house and later ceremony in bridegroom's house. Moreover, generally, once the bride is allowed to live with bridegroom's family after they get married, the bridegroom's family has to covered all the cost of two wedding ceremonies.



Figure 5: The Yunnanese-Shan intermarriage wedding in Shan bride's house
Source: This photo was taken by author on May 2016 at Ban Hin Taek village.

The core rituals of the wedding ceremony in bride's house have preserved most of the Shan tradition, and the bridegroom's side also follow this tradition as much as possible. After Yunnanese bridegroom and his relatives has arrived at bride's house on appointed time, the bride's family has sending several Shan elderships as representative to receive the betrothal gifts from bridegroom in front door. And the Ajarn was recited the scriptures of betrothal gifts when the bride's family has formally received the betrothal gifts from bridegroom. Then, Shan bride and Yunnanese bridegroom were moved to the drawing room to attend the blessing ritual.

The blessing ritual was presided over by Ajarn, and the bride's parents were sited beside them. The participator of blessing ritual were mainly consisted of four part which includes the master of ritual (Ajarn), the parents and male elders of bride's family, the village head of bride side, and the male elders of bridegroom's relatives. And the bridegroom's relatives were dressed in modern style suits, but both bride and bridegroom were dressed in tradition Shan cloth. The first step of blessing ritual was that bride and bridegroom should bow down to the bride's parents and the two ritual masters. After that, the bridegroom has to give a certain amount of money to the bride's parents, two ritual masters and village head respectively. This etiquette was perceived as indefensible part of Shan Wedding ritual, which indicated that bridegroom not only have been accepted as a member of bride's family but also indicated that's bridegroom will become a member of the Shan group in bride's village. Then, the two ritual masters were started to recite the blessing scriptures of traditional Shan, and use the cotton thread intertwined of the hand and shoulder of this new couple. The duration of core wedding ritual in Shan bride's house has spent one and half an hour, which is largely simplified in many details of traditional Shan ritual. And the bride side mainly entertained their relatives and fellow of their Shan village, which is mainly confined within the living area of Shan group around Ban Hin Taek.

The core ritual of wedding ceremony in Yunnanese bridegroom's house was combined with modern customs of Han Chinese and also simplified in comparison with Shan ritual. After the bridegroom have brought bride and her relatives arrived at bridegroom's house, the Yunnanese family would set of firecrackers to greet the bride on appointed time (Chinese: 吉时, also called "*ji shi*", means suspicious time). And bridegroom would carried the bride to stride over a brazier in front door which signified that bride will became a member of bridegroom's family after they enter this front door. In front of one table, there were several tributes on it which includes half-cooked meat, wine, tea, three chopsticks and three bowls. Next, firstly, the bride and bridegroom have to bowed down and worship the Heaven and Earth; secondly, they should bowed the parents of bridegroom and served tea to two elders, and the parents would gave a luck money ("*hong bao*", red bag) to young couple; last, the core ritual

of wedding was finished after the bride and bridegroom exchanged bows. By contrast, the Yunnanese group has paid more attention to entertain their guest of wedding. In this case, the bridegroom's family have not only invited their relatives, friends and bride's families to attended wedding ceremony, but also widely invited the leader of village committee, the headman of each local ethnic minorities and even the some leader of local armed forces of Myanmar to join the *da-ge* (is a folk dance which popular in southwestern Yunnan) in evening party. Whether in wedding or special festival, *da-ge* is an indispensable folk custom among some local ethnic minorities of Ban Hin Taek that made each ethnic minority could celebrate with host family through dance. Even though the *da-ge* was not belong to the Han tradition in wedding ceremony, majority of Yunnanese Han family in Ban Hin Taek nowadays has well



Figure 6: The Yunnanese-Shan intermarriage wedding in Yunnanese bridegroom's house

Source: This photo was taken by author on May 2016 at Ban Hin Taek village.

adopted this folk custom by other ethnic minorities. The *da-ge* activities were continued the whole night, and it commonly ended in next morning. Nowadays, the manifestation of *da-ge* in those intermarriage wedding was combined with multiple ethnic culture of dance form. And Yunnanese group have also perceived *da-ge* as an indispensable occasion of wedding ceremony that could help them to build close relationship with other ethnic minorities around Ban Hin Taek.

Based on the above case of intermarriage between Yunnanese Han family and Shan family, it presented a new pattern of alliance among Yunnanese group and other ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek. The intermarriage has played a positive role to strengthen the stability of the social relation among Yunnanese group and other ethnic minorities. The intermarriage is become an affair between two ethnic group rather than between two families or two individuals. And it is also a readjustment process of family value and ethnic identities through the intermarriage among Yunnanese and local ethnic minorities. In consideration of ethnic relations in upland society, the Yunnanese group has paid more attention to balance the family status of bride's side. In this case, the agency of Yunnanese made them flexible adjusts their ethnic identity when they encounter a special occasion of intermarriage, and both families have showed more mutual understanding in order to balance the new relation among different culture group. In addition, the occasion of intermarriage also became an important platform that made each ethnic group could learn living skills and production skill from each other. For instance, nowadays, many local ethnic minorities like Lisu, Akha and Lahu group in Ban Hin Taek have adopted the Yunnanese way to make a feast. And most of Yunnanese families also preferred to service several dishes with Shan flavor in wedding banquet. However, under the impact of globalization on the young generation of Ban Hin Taek, more and more intermarriage wedding among Yunnanese families and other ethnic minorities were adopted western style today. The traditional ritual of wedding ceremony among each ethnic group in Ban Hin Taek has gradually dispersed in the young generations, but it has a renewed trend in local wealthy family. One of my informants is a local guan-shi-ren (Chinese: 管事人) who always be invited to arrange the feast of wedding and funeral in Ban Hin Taek village. He has mentioned to me that the intermarriage among Yunnanese and other ethnic minorities today almost have no difference in the feast, "most of young Yunnanese adopted western wedding no matter them married with Lisu people or Lahu people because it save more time and money". But he also mentioned that "only some relatively wealthy families has pay more attention to maintain traditional core ritual in intermarriage wedding, not only due to it will cost more money and time to arrange one traditional wedding but it also seems that those

wealthy families in Ban Hin Taek more care about to embody their ethnic culture and social status through grand wedding.

In general, the family backgrounds of younger interethnic marriages with Yunnanese enhance multilingual skills of both sides of married couples in Ban Hin Taek, and creates more opportunities for Yunnanese people to relate with different upland communities in the area. Interethnic marriage with other local ethnic minorities is a common phenomenon by young Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek today. This phenomenon has helped a majority of Yunnanese villagers to form complex and fluid ethnic identities, which has made the culture among Yunnanese, Shan people, Lisu people and other local ethnic groups almost indistinguishable for community outsiders.

The new family relationships which are established through interethnic marriage among Yunnanese and other local ethnic minorities have helped to reinforce a loose unity in upland society around Ban Hin Taek. It also seems that new alliances among Yunnanese and other groups have been formed, and that these alliances may make the ethnic boundaries among various ethnic minorities less clear and indistinct. Nonetheless, based on my observation, intermarriage patterns among Yunnanese and other local ethnic groups still strongly depend on reciprocal altruism. Even though the above case has shown how both the Yunnanese family and the Shan family has sought to compromise their relations in the intermarriage ceremony, this process is not smooth and there are still some tensions, frictions and problems that appear when both families expect to maintain their vision of good relationships with one other. The above case shows the particular influence of both families and their background in Ban Hin Taek village. But my observation of the two wedding ceremonies has led me to believe that there is some hidden competition between the parents and clans of both families in order to clarify the relations of each side in the interethnic marriage. This is especially true in debates about the potential leading role of each family and the cultural inheritance for the next generation. Differences of ethnic identity, cultural orientation may result in misunderstandings, prejudice and even conflict between two families. Interethnic marriage in Ban Hin Taek is generally consider as an

indispensable but a soft link of kinship between families of different of ethnic cultures. This has may have helped Yunnanese to extend their culture effect into different ethnic minorities groups beyond the village itself. However, the functions of intermarriage for Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek resembles a double-edged sword. If an interethnic marriage fails, it may also intensify tensions in the ethnic relations more generally and sharpened ethnic prejudice between Yunnanese and other ethnic groups.

The above case study also made me notice that there is a situation where the first two generations of Yunnanese tended to keep more to themselves as *Yunnan ren* (Yunnanese) through marrying Yunnanese. Even though some of them turns to intermarrying with other local ethnic minorities such as Shan people to improve and integrated themselves into Thai society, but they still could not be fully part of Thai society until the policy of ID card system have been expanded (the “ID card system” issue will have more discussions in Chapter four). And the superior position of Yunnanese in terms of economic, culture has not only brought some crisis awareness to them, but also caused invisible conflict between Yunnanese and other ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek. One of my Yunnanese informants is a local shopkeeper in Ban Hin Taek who has study live in Bangkok 15 years, he told me that “the prominent advantages of Yunnanese always made themselves envy by other minorities”, and the dominant statues of Shan group in Ban Hin Taek made them tried to push Yunnanese aside in terms of local government system. And he also complained to me that the ethnic minorities such as Shan, Akha, Lisu and Lahu have more opportunities than Yunnanese in terms of to compete the position in government institutions. Hence, the intermarriage between Yunnanese and other minorities are considered as indirect ways to establish mutual understanding among each ethnic minority. One effect of interethnic marriage may be to weaken the ethnic boundary and to accelerate the cultural integration among Yunnanese and other minorities in Ban Hin Taek. In the interethnic marriage between Yunnanese and Shan, Han or Chinese cultural identity may have weakened as a new family structure takes shape in or around the village, helping to spread aspects of the ethnic groups’ social network to Yunnanese in upland society. But it also helps Yunnanese to maintain their low-profile identity so that they can fit into a dynamic socio-cultural and ethnic situation

in the upland society they are part of. From another perspective, it is still is a very complex negotiation process which cannot resolve many of self-contradictions faced by Yunnanese. Although they may expect to adopt a low-profile identity to maintain a safe ethnic position in upland society, Yunnanese there still also seek to influence ethnic relations with other ethnic groups in upland society. And some wealthy Yunnanese families in Ban Hin Taek have a sense of cultural superiority over other ethnic groups which may be seen in the way they shape the form and length and elaboration of the traditional wedding ritual. In this changing ethnic environment, some better off Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek today seek to highlight, in ritual and cultural terms, their ethnic identity and ethnic boundary with other local ethnic groups.

3. Economic relationship

As the crucial strategic area of Khun Sa's force in Northern Thailand, Ban Hin Taek village was not only a political center of Khun Sa's camp, but it also was an important trade hub for upland society of Northern Thailand. Even though it is hard to find the relevant official record of trade situation before 1997 for Ban Hin Taek, many of my informants have indicated that the Ban Hin Taek has had a prosperous cross-border trade since Khun Sa and his Army has resettled in the mid-1960s. And there are many cross-border traders and Yunnanese caravan who have been active between the Shan state of Burma and Ban Hin Taek from late 1960s to early 1990s. In this section, I will discuss how Yunnanese established close economic relations to form a new alliance with other ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek today.

3.1 Cross-border trade between Thai-Myanmar borders

The caravan trade between southwestern Yunnan and Northern Myanmar has gradually disappeared from the 1960s, but this pattern of cross-border trade were still active in the Thai-Shan state border until the Khun Sa's force has formally surrendered to Myanmar government on January 1996. During my field trip in Ban Hin Taek and under the help by local village committee, I have chance to interview

seven former caravan traders in villages.²⁰ As they recalled to me that, during the most prosperous period of cross-border trade from 1970s to 1980s, the Ban Hin Taek brings together large numbers of Yunnanese caravan from the Shan state of Northern Myanmar and Northern Thailand. And due most Yunnanese merchants were generally good at several spoken languages such as Burmese, Yunnan dialect, Dai Lue and Thai language, those Yunnanese caravan were became an biggest trade group between Shan states and Khun Sa's area of Northern Thailand.

In addition, as a former caravan trader recalled to me, most of cross-border trade of Yunnanese caravan is legal and they mainly brought daily supplies from Northern Thailand to sales in the different city of Shan state. Then, these Yunnanese caravans were purchase some high margin product such as jade and gem from Shan state to sales in the border city of Northern Thailand, but most of those Yunnanese caravans were concentrated in Ban Hin Taek to make trades. The long-term cross-border trade of Yunnanese caravan made this group has not only further cement trade relations with the oversea Chinese group in Shan state, but it also made Yunnanese caravan has built closely trade relations with different ethnic minorities around Ban Hin Taek throughout their journey of cross-border trade. There are two main reasons for this phenomenon. One is the living area of most ethnic minorities around Ban Hin Taek such as Akha, Lahu, Lisu was relative insulation from the valley society, which made them have to rely on 'middle men' --Yunnanese caravans to brought most basic daily necessities such as matches (also called 'yang huo'), cloth and kerosene lamp. The other is the multilingual skills of Yunnanese caravan gives them a tremendous advantage to monopoly the trade with different hill tribe, which made those Yunnanese caravans became an indispensable intermediary between other ethnic minorities and valley society.

²⁰ The caravan traders in Ban Hin Taek also called as pao-huo-ren (in Chinese: 跑货人), which means "the salesmen who do not have fixed store" in Yunnan dialect. Most of these former caravan traders I have meet in Ban Hin Taek is around 50 to 60 years old, and most of them were engaged in caravan trade with their farther since they are 12 to 14 years old. They have rich experience in cross-border trade among the upland area of southwestern Yunnan, Northern Myanmar, Northern Thailand, and Lao, too, and some of them have been service for Khun Sa's Army in a long time.

In addition, the opium trafficking of Khun Sa in Golden Triangle Area was another crucial factor that made Yunnanese group have built interdependence trade relationship among Shan group and other local ethnic minorities around Ban Hin Taek. According to the information provided by these former caravan traders, during the most prosperous period of cross-border trade around 1970s to 1980s, even though many of Yunnanese caravans in Ban Hin Taek were legally engaged in cross-border trade between Shan state and Northern Thailand, there were still a number of Yunnanese caravans were loyally serviced for Khun Sa and his opium business. The multilingual skill, caravan experiences and business-minded let those Yunnanese caravans were reused by Khun Sa. And through the opium business of Khun Sa, the connection among Yunnanese group, Shan group and other local ethnic minorities was also closely linked with each other. The local ethnic minorities such as Akha, Lahu and Lisu were work on opium cultivation; the subordinates of Khun Sa were charged in purchase semi-finished product from those local ethnic minorities and reprocessing into finished product; and Yunnanese caravan who have serviced for Khun Sa were responsible for the transported those finished products in the Golden Triangle area. This pattern of opium business was same as one tightening industry chain that made the productive relations among Yunnanese group, Shan group and other ethnic minorities were closely linked with each other. Based on the information of these informants, during the period from 1970s to 1980s, the opium business was also made Ban Hin Taek became the major trading hub and it also create a new economic alliance among Yunnanese and other local ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek area. However, this kind of economic alliance was gradually disintegrated after Khun Sa has completely surrendered to Myanmar government on January 1996. Moreover, the cross-border trade form of Yunnanese caravan were also completed disappeared around the 1997 in Ban Hin Taek, a number of Yunnanese merchants have changed to operated small business in local market.

3.2 The Local market in Ban Hin Taek

After the Thai government took full charge of Ban Hin Taek village around 1997, it brought huge changes for this 'economic alliance' among Yunnanese group, Shan group and other local ethnic minorities. After the Thai government had separated Mae

Fa Luang area from Mae Chan district, this district was officially upgraded to a full district on 5 December 1996.²¹ In addition, the Ban Hin Taek area has completely set up as center of trade and merchandise's distributing during Khun Sa period. Hence, Ban Hin Taek village is still the major trading center of upland area in Mae Fa Luang district after this place has fully opened the door to lowland Thai society in Chiang Rai province. With the transformation of the mode of life among Yunnanese, Shan, and other ethnic minorities since the early 1990s, the original mountain trade was unable to meet the consumption demands of modern product for the local residences in Ban Hin Taek and its neighbor villages. And the poor agriculture situation of mountainous region was also unable to ensure the daily food supply in Ban Hin Taek area. As the central town of the Mae Fa Luang district, the Ban Hin Taek was naturally developed as one of the biggest trade centers that closely linked with the lowland market of Chiang Rai.



Figure 7: The morning market in central area of Ban Hin Taek village
Source: This photo was taken by author on February 2017 at Ban Hin Taek village.

The Yunnanese group due to benefit by their multilingual skills, business-minded and rich experience in mountain trade, more than two thirds of store in the main street of Ban Hin Taek today were operated by Yunnanese families. Most of them were engaged in the business of general merchandise, vegetable wholesale and Chinese restaurant. Be different from the weekly market of the neighbor village, there

²¹ พระราชกฤษฎีกาตั้งอำเภอเหนือคลอง อำเภอนายายอาม อำเภอท่าตะเกียบ อำเภอขุนตาล อำเภอแม่ฟ้าหลวง อำเภอแม่ลาว อำเภอร้อยภู อำเภอพุทธมณฑล อำเภอวังน้ำเขียว อำเภอเจาะไอร้อง อำเภอข่าน อำเภอโนนดินแดง อำเภอปางมะผ้า อำเภอสนธิ อำเภอหนองม่วง อำเภอเบญจลักษ์ อำเภอโพนนาแก้ว อำเภอปงศล้า อำเภอดอนมดแดง และอำเภอสิ้ออำนาจ พ.ศ. ๒๕๓๙. Royal Gazette (in Thai). 113 (62 ก): 5–8. November 20, 1996.

are early market every day and a large scale of night market opened once a week in Ban Hin Taek village nowadays. The merchandise resources of local market in Ban Hin Taek were strong relied on the supply from lowland market of Chiang Rai province. And more than 10 neighbor villages' daily supplies were relied on the local market in Ban Hin Taek today.

As most active group of the business man in the local market of Ban Hin Taek, the Yunnanese group has brought their advantages of economic into full play. And with the increasingly number of intermarriage relationship has built between Yunnanese group and other ethnic minorities, the multi-ethnic background made the economic advantage of Yunnanese became more distinct. Through the network of relative relationship between Yunnanese and other ethnic minorities, they have created more opportunity to let them get hold of more business resources from other ethnic minorities. And the supply and demands relationship of general merchandise was still well maintained between Yunnanese group and other ethnic minorities until today. Except the traditional business, the most common small business model in local Ban Hin Taek is cooperated with different ethnic minorities. For example, in many Yunnanese's restaurant or grocery store, the shopkeepers are more like to hire the shop assistants who come from ethnic minorities family, "because they are honest and very helpful to sales good to other minorities". In the jade industry of Ban Hin Taek which mainly controlled by Shan group, the Yunnanese were generally considered as the best candidate to do the jade processing by most local Shan employer. It seems that each ethnic group have well performs its own functions in the local business structure of Ban Hin Taek.

In addition, expect the common trade and cooperation in local market as mentioned above, another special trade pattern among Yunnanese merchants and other ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek may also well reflect the important role of Yunnanese in the economic network of upland society. In my three month field trip in Ban Hin Taek village, I found the limited supply capacity of local market are unable to meet the demands of varied social consume needs. Hence, majority of Yunnanese merchants there are also played another important role in local economic network

such as “purchasing agents” between upland residents and lowland market. Based on my observation in this kind of trade pattern, these “Yunnanese purchasing agents” in Ban Hin Taek village today are still adopt old-fashioned but flexible way to purchase some specific goods in lowland market or border market which their buyers have oral entrust them to buy.

This kind of old-fashioned trade pattern is mainly consisting of three steps. First step, the local residents would find these Yunnanese merchants and oral entrust them to buy some goods which may unable to get from upland market, and these purchasing lists which entrusted by local buyers is including wide variety of goods, for instant, it could be some common daily necessities like food material, farm tools and kitchenware, but it also could be some uncommon consume needs like an specific automotive components, a bucket of petrol and even a plane ticket. Second step, these Yunnanese merchants would make an appointment with their buyers to pick up goods once they accept the deal. Last, the buyer would come to pick up their goods at the appointed time and pay to these Yunnanese merchants which is include service fee, and the profits of these Yunnanese merchants in this kind of trade is mainly come from service fee rather than price difference. This trade pattern in Ban Hin Taek village today is still relying on oral agreement and it also strong relying on the mutual trust between merchants and buyer. Some Yunnanese merchants mentioned to me that most of their buyer are come from other local ethnic minorities such as Shan, Akah and Lahu “who are monolingual or who are do not familiar with lowland market in Chiang Rai”, and these Yunnanese merchants never charge any deposit from their buyer, because they think “the mutual trust between *yunnan ren* (Yunna people) and other ethnic minorities shaped this unwritten rule in this old-fashioned trade pattern of Ban Hin Taek”. And some of them also commented to me that this trade pattern which dominant by Yunnanese group in upland society not only built the stable economic link with lowland market, “but the modern goods which we bring form lowland market also made the life style of people in Ban Hin Taek more like a modern village”. On the other words, this trade pattern was not only strengthened the economic position of Yunnanese group, but it also consolidated a new economic alliance among Yunnanese group and other local ethnic minorities.

4. The Ritual Activity Center of Ban Hin Taek

In central Ban Hin Taek village, there is a Ritual Activity Center of Ban Hin Taek close to the local market. This auditorium is known as the “*hui-guan* 会馆 or *li-tang* 礼堂 (meaning “guild hall” or “ritual hall,” respectively)” by most local residents, and it can accommodate nearly 1000 people for community activities. The sponsoring organization for built this Ritual Activity Center of Ban Hin Taek is the Local Autonomic Committee of Ban Hin Taek village, and all construction fund of this auditorium were donated by nearly all villagers in Ban Hin Taek. The major donors of construction fund were the Yunnanese, Shan, and a smaller part by other ethnic minorities. The architectural modeling of this building is modeled on ancestral temple (in Chinese: *zongmiao* 宗庙) of northern mainland China, which is received significant influence of the architectural culture of late Qing Dynasty and architecture style of Confucian Temple. This auditorium was built by late 2015 and used at the end of 2015.



Figure 8: The Auditorium of Activity Center (*hui-guan*) in Ban Hin Taek village
Source: This photo was taken by author on February 2017 at Ban Hin Taek village.



Figure 9: The Lisu- Han wedding feast in *hui-guan* of Ban Hin Taek village
Source: This photo was taken by author on May 2016 at Ban Hin Taek village.

The main function of this auditorium is to provide a place for most of villagers in Ban Hin Taek to hold the weddings and funeral ceremonies of their own family. It also could provide a public site to hold a festival ceremony for the village. And the Local Autonomic Committee of Ban Hin Taek village has elected a few Yunnanese people as the main manager for this place. This auditorium has adopted a membership system, so that every member (with a family regarded as a member) should pay 400 Baht per year as a membership fee. As the member of the ritual hall of Ban Hin Taek, each member's family was required to send a family member as representatives to help the feast if other member's family has funeral or wedding ceremony. This pattern of 'mutual help' among villagers is still very common in the rural area of southwestern Yunnan today, but it is normally restricted to small group of one ethnic group. However, this auditorium has mainly played an indispensable role among Yunnanese group and other ethnic minorities in the Ban Hin Taek. As the main manager, Li, said:

The original intention of establishment this *hui-guan* was mainly to be a place that belongs to all the villagers in Ban Hin Taek. As the main initiator, our Yunnanese and Shan hope our village will have more unity and also expect we can keep harmony with different groups. You can join our *hui-guan* no matter what ethnic group you are. The entire membership will come to help to make a feast no matter whose family needs help. And more than ninety-five percent of villagers in Ban Hin Taek have already joined us today.

(Quote from the interview information Mr. Li, a manager of The Auditorium of Activity Center of Ban Hin Taek)

Nowadays, even though the activity center of Ban Hin Taek was just opened two years ago, it has been widely endorsed by the villagers of Ban Hin Taek. In the last five years, numbers of surrounding Yunnanese villages of Ban Hin Taek have also established their own auditorium or *hui-guan* one after another. The *hui-guan* or auditorium have reinforced the collective notion ‘village or Ban’ for each village, and permits all to use it. This has helped to weaken the collective consciousness of different ethnics for most local residents nowadays. To some extent, the function of *hui-guan* has not only provided convenience place for local villagers to make a feast, but it also strengthened the new collective identity of younger generation in Ban Hin Taek through a series of ritual and ceremony among Yunnanese and other ethnic minorities.

4.1 Wedding and Funerals

As regard to the ceremony of wedding and funerals in the daily life of Ban Hin Taek village, the Yunnanese group here were well maintained the tradition for entertained guests. Whether funeral or wedding ceremony of Yunnanese group, the most common pattern of entertaining guests is *dai-ke* (待客, means make a feast in a funeral or wedding ceremony to entertain guests). And for most Yunnanese family in Ban Hin Taek, *dai-ke* is generally considered as the most important part of funeral or wedding ceremony nowadays. Moreover, in the early time, as a unique tradition of funeral and wedding ceremony, *dai-ke* was merely adopted by a few Yunnanese families in Ban Hin Taek village in consideration of the fact that the Yunnanese group expected to keep the low-profile identity to avoid the excessive concern of the Thai government. During this earlier time, most local ethnic minorities still maintained their own tradition in funeral or wedding ceremony, and only a few intermarried with Yunnanese families and other local ethnic minorities would adopt Yunnanese’s tradition to make a feast. In the last twenty years, however, this situation significantly changed for most of the younger generation of Ban Hin Taek. With an increasing number of intermarriage relationship between Yunnanese group and other ethnic minorities, the perception of funeral or wedding ceremony of young generation in Ban Hin Taek were strongly influenced by cultural globalization.

Nowadays, most families of Yunnanese, Shan, and other ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek have adopted a new pattern to held funerals or wedding ceremonies in the *hui-guan*. As regard to wedding ceremony, most of family in Ban Hin Taek has completed the core ritual in their house and only invited their relatives to attend the core ritual. And they would make a feast to treat their guests and held the *da-ge* dance in the *hui-guan* after completed the core ritual. However, a number of family also directly held western style wedding ceremony for their young generation in *hui-guan* and simplified the core ritual of traditional wedding ceremony. This pattern of wedding ceremony was not only adopted by Yunnanese families, but it also widely accepted by Shan families and other ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek today. At the same way, most of families of Ban Hin Taek have still held the core ritual of funeral in their own house today, but they generally considered *hui-guan* as an appropriate place to make a feast to treat their guests.

As mentioned above, make a feast in the *hui-guan* already became a common phenomenon in the Ban Hin Taek today. As the main folk customs among Yunnanese group and other ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek, the ritual of wedding and funeral which are distinct among different groups can express the characters of a collective identity and strengthened the ethnic boundary among different groups. However, the pattern of *hui-guan* have more emphasis all of the residences in Ban Hin Taek village as an alliance in the daily ritual, which has effectively weakened the concept of ethnic boundary among the young generation of Yunnanese group, Shan group and other local ethnic minorities. Through the transformation of the pattern of daily ritual, the collective identity of young Yunnanese generation of Ban Hin Taek has reflected the characteristic of fluid, diversiform and even chaotic. With the increasingly numbers of families in Ban Hin Taek has adopted similar pattern of daily ritual through the organization of *hui-guan*, at least on the surface of daily practice, the ethnic boundary among Yunnanese groups, Shan group and other local ethnic minorities has become more indistinct than before.

4.2 The celebration of Festivals

Like other overseas Chinese groups in Thailand, the Yunnanese of Ban Hin Taek consider the Chinese Spring Festival as most important traditional celebration of the year, and it is as important to them as the Songkran Festival is to the Thais. Until the late 1990s, due to the complicated political situation affecting the Shan states and border areas of Northern Thailand, most Yunnanese families of Ban Hin Taek still kept the Chinese Spring Festival as a low-profile celebration. After Thai government officially took full control of the Ban Hin Taek area in late 1990s, the local Yunnanese group was beginning to organize a series of activities for celebrated Chinese Spring Festival on every year. However, due to the second largest ethnic group in Ban Hin Taek is Shan group, who has same tradition with Thai group to celebrate Songkran Festival. Hence, more than half of families in Ban Hin Taek have not the tradition to celebrated Chinese Spring Festival. Nonetheless, during last twenty years, the Local Autonomic Committee of Ban Hin Taek village has generally set up the *da-ge* activities at Eve of Chinese Lunar New Year and makes a feast to entreat all the villagers in Ban Hin Taek. Especially after the membership system have establishment in *hui-guan* (The Auditorium of Activity Center of Ban Hin Taek), majority of the member of *hui-guan* would attended the dinner of the Eve of Chinese Spring Festival in Ban Hin Taek. At same way, the Yunnanese group and other ethnic minorities were also actively to help local Shan group to hold a series of celebration ceremony during the Songkran Festival period.

Nowadays, the Yunnanese, Shan and other local ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek village already have reached a tacit understanding through the membership system of *hui-guan*. Whether in the Songkran Festival or the Chinese Festival, the mutual help for celebrated each important festival among Yunnanese, Shan and other local ethnic minorities have become the order of the day. Although different ethnic group in Ban Hin Taek were still maintained their own folk custom and traditional culture to celebrate each festival, the pattern of *hui-guan* was showed a sense of mutual acceptance of the cultural relationship among different ethnic group in upland society. The *hui-guan* unites the social activity of the entire village who attends the daily activities (includes funeral, wedding and festival celebration) in the village

rather than divide this unit into the different ethnic group and households of clan. This new pattern of festival celebration was also largely benefited by the complex relative networks of intermarriage relationship among Yunnanese group, Shan group and other ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek. With the increasingly number of intermarriage relationship has built among different ethnic group in Ban Hin Taek village, it may make the ethnic boundary among each ethnic group gradually became indistinct and unclear. In this new pattern of social organization in Ban Hin Taek, for most of Yunnanese, “certain attachments and sense of belonging come to precede at particular points of time” and it “raised both in relation to individuals who, for example, adopt a new ethnic identity to collectives involved in project of redefining themselves” (M. Vandenhelsken, and Karlsson, Bengt G., 2016). Nonetheless, the daily operation of *hui-guan* is strong supported by Yunnanese group in Ban Hin Taek, and this organization also demonstrated that Yunnanese expected to balanced ethnic relations among different minorities. In general, *hui-guan* was also made most of villagers in Ban Hin Taek has considered their village as a diversified alliance in upland society of Northern Thailand nowadays.

5. Conclusion

The multilingual negotiation among Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek and other local ethnic minorities allows the Yunnanese, along with the ethnic minorities they ally with, to form flexible forms of ethnic identity. They do this by creating networks of connection that do not erase differences among minorities in upland areas of Northern Thailand. And the multilingual negotiation among Yunnanese and other local ethnic minorities are tied to the ways that we have examined in this chapter: through making new family relationships and multiethnic economic relations, and using new multiethnic organizations.

First, interethnic marriages between Yunnanese families and other ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek has become more common than it was twenty years ago. It is more common, to a large degree, to help the Yunnanese legitimize their place in the village and also to extend their kinship networks into upland areas around Ban Tin

Taek village. The effect of these family relationships established through the intermarriage among Yunnanese and other local ethnic minorities has reinforced a unity in upland society. This phenomenon was also made majority of Yunnanese form complex and fluid ethnic identities, and they expressed this fluid ethnic identities in intermarriage occasion they were encountered.

Second, whether in the time of Khun Sa or today, the economic relations among Yunnanese and other local ethnic minorities has formed an important alliance in cross-mountain trade. Through complex family relationships and interethnic marriage between Yunnanese and other local ethnic minorities, a multiethnic network reinforced trading relations. This has made the economic advantage of Yunnanese became more distinct. The supply and demand relationship between Yunnanese and other ethnic minorities was also consolidated a new economic alliance among Yunnanese and other ethnic minorities.

Finally, the establishment of *hui-guan* (The Auditorium of Activity Center of Ban Hin Taek) has further shown that the Yunnanese group in Ban Hin Taek has made a flexible ethnic identity as part of marking diverse types of alliance among the different ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek village. In the activities of the *hui-guan* (The Auditorium or Activity Center of Ban Hin Taek), the social action unit is the entire village group who attended the daily activities (includes funeral, wedding and festival celebration) for the village rather than divide this unit into the different ethnic group and households of clan. And the pattern of *hui-guan* gives more emphasis to all of the residents in Ban Hin Taek village as an alliance in the daily and communal rituals that are outside of the religious diversity of the village. This helps identify ethnic boundaries among the younger generations of Yunnanese, Shan and other local ethnic minorities, while also encouraging collective, village-wide ritual action among different ethnic groups. The fact that this village-wide organization is seen as being Yunnanese helps to give importance to the Yunnanese in the multiethnic social texture of the village.

Overall, then, the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek are able to shape identities for themselves as a distinct group among many ethnic groups by how they interact and negotiate with other ethnic groups in the village. This chapter has looked at three key sites where such negotiations occur: interethnic marriage, interethnic trading networks, and interethnic village action that both recognize and reify cultural and ethnic differences. The negotiations occurring in these three sites are never problem free, however, and indicate ongoing tensions, friction and problems in the negotiations among the Yunnanese and other local ethnic groups, which reflect the complex and diverse ethnic ecology where Yunnanese part of, and the persistent need to continue negotiations in order to ensure their survival.



Chapter IV: Complex Relationships of the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek to the Thai Nation-State

The previous two chapters of this thesis have examined some features of the Yunnanese in northern Thailand and how they establish social and economic relations with local minority groups in Ban Hin Taek to establish their distinctive identity there. They also helped build and organize a community activity hall and system to run communal ritual events for all members of the village. But Ban Hin Taek is in Thailand, and since the 1990s, this village has been more deeply embedded in the political structures and cultural forms of Thailand. What are the relations of the Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek to Thai state, Thai royal family, Thai culture and the Thai economy? That is the question that this chapter seeks to answer. It will do this first by examining the relations of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek to the ID card system that gives them legitimate residency and citizenship in Thailand. The chapter will also examine how Yunnanese people in the village relate to events and institutions set up by the Thai royal family, especially the Border Patrol School. This has helped them to maintain their identity, but in a “low profile” (Singh, 2017) way, without getting the attention of either Thais or other ethnic groups in the area. It will finally explore how the Yunnanese have become part of a new Thai economy in Thai urban centers which centers on services and tourism. In all these ways, the Yunnanese have found distinctive ways to negotiate flexible and fluid relations for themselves in relation to the Thai state, Thai educational culture, and the Thai economy, while allowing them to remain Yunnanese in a low-key way.

1. Previous Approaches to Understanding Yunnanese Relations to the Thailand

Debates on citizenship relations and the identity of ethnic minority in modern Thailand has been hotly debated for decades among scholars. The scholarly debates on the homogenizing policies of the Thai government often center on whether the emphasis on “Thainess” is something that discriminates against ethnic minorities and

results in the unfair treatment of these non-Thai groups (Hayami, 2006b; Keyes, 2006; Laungaramsri, 2015; Singh, 2017). James Scott (2009) has entered into these debates in his book *The Art of Not Being Governed* about upland peoples whom, he argues, have worked to limit their contact with expanding state systems in Southeast Asia as they have extended their efforts to control reach from lowland areas into upland areas. The upland peoples seek to limit contact, he argues, in order to better maintain their ethnic solidarity and to avoid the problems of entering into the state. Although there is little doubt that states in Southeast Asia often seek cultural homogeneity among their subjects, and that this has affected “Thai identity,” the cultural anthropologist Aihwa Ong (1999) has proposed the notion of “flexible citizenship” as a way of understanding how people in these states negotiate their relations to the state. She also argued that subjects do this since states use laws to create internal “zones” of law and forms of “graduated sovereignty,” where state subjects “different sectors of the population to different regimes of valuation and control” (Aihwa Ong, 1999) (page 217). More recently, Laungaramsri (2015) has argued that the ID cards of ethnic minority in Northern Thailand “are not only the state instrument of control but survival resources to be assessed, classified, and circulated” among the subjected populations there according to values based on how much “a given card has a negotiating power in dealing with police authority and how much freedom of mobility it entails” (Laungaramsri, 2015).

During the earlier history of Ban Hin Taek village, it was nearly thirty years under the rule of Khun Sa. This situation left the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek in a relatively small and isolated upland society. They and their borderland living conditions were, moreover, largely outside of the sphere of influence of both the Burmese and the Thai state in the 1960s to early 1990s. This coincided with a period of prosperity of the Yunnanese who were part of the caravan trade in Golden Triangle Area. In this system of cross-border trade at the time, the Yunnanese did not work in a zone marked by sharply defined state boundaries, since the borderlands were loosely monitored by both Burmese and Thai authorities. During this time, high levels of population mobility and mixed habitation of minority groups outside of government control contributed to distinctive patterns of acculturation in upland society. This

could have weakened ethnic boundaries among different minority groups in or around Ban Hin Taek. But most older Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek saw the clearest ethnic boundary between their group and mainstream national Thai in geographic terms – based on whether they lived in upland or lowland areas. Since the Yunnanese have long lived in upland areas in the area around Ban Hin Taek, they have been able to establish special ethnic relations between Yunnanese and Thai society. This has had a great impact on how the Yunnanese and the Thais have understood and related to one another.

Based on the living experience with two local Yunnanese families and my observation with people in Ban Hin Taek today, the relations with mainstream Thai culture has changed for the Yunnanese. For the older generation of Yunnanese, the mainstream national Thais commonly represented the dominant group in lowland central cities of Thailand. When I lived in Ban Hin Taek, most of my older informants were frequently used a phrase “*man gu ren zai chu*” (a phrase come from Yunnan dialect, means ‘the place where Bangkok people are live’) to explained to me how did they understand the meaning of mainstream national Thais. And they also tried to use the words “*nong cun ren* (means rural people in Yunnan dialect) and “*da cheng shi ren* (means metropolitan in Yunnan dialect)” explained to me how they understood their relation with mainstream national Thais. Based on my casual conversation with several older Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek, I found the concept of mainstream national Thais for them is complex, but to some extent, their understanding about this concept are still mainly on account of differences of ethnic culture between “*tai guo ren* (Thai people)” and “*zhong guo ren* (Chinese people)”. It included the model of cultivating the plains, using authentic Thai language, a distinctive kinship structure and a residential model that was very different from that of other marginal groups in the upland area. In addition, the general perspective of my elder Yunnanese informants in Ban Hin Taek also indicated that they generally considered mainstream Thai society as a large aggregation that centered on dominant urban residents from Bangkok and hundreds of plain cities in central Thailand. As ethnic identities have changed in the last two decades or so, the relations of younger Yunnanese to mainstream national Thais has also changed. Due to I have got a volunteer job in local Chinese school of

Ban Hin Taek during my field trip, I have lots of chances to get along with young generations of Yunnanese. And based on my observation, Younger Yunnanese simply tend to view mainstream Thai society as a dominant cultural group which they belong with. They are from central Thailand and have capabilities to lead in popular modern culture and conventional ideas and social activities in contemporary Thailand.

The differences of cultivation model, language environments, residential model, ethnic culture and ethnic identities between Yunnanese and mainstream national Thais means that the Yunnanese people have to face a tough choice when they tried to integrate themselves into Thai society nowadays. As a marginal group in northern Thailand, the above factors also make the assimilation process of Yunnanese group has embodied complex but selective trend when they experienced the transformation of ethnic identities in contemporary Thai society.

To provide a new perspective on the Yunnanese people in Northern Thailand in relation to the Thai state and Thai society, this chapter will thus analyze how Yunnanese of Ban Hin Taek negotiated a series of complex relations to the evolving Thai color-coded ID card system, Thai monarchy, Thai education. They did this to establish a type of flexible “Thai identity” which was part of an environment in shaped by the notion of “graduated sovereignty.” This allowed them to create a legitimate status in Thailand, which in turn permitted them adopt a “low profile” form of their cultural identity (Singh, 2017) while carrying out their lives in the village and establishing relations to others in the village, in the region and elsewhere in Thailand. This chapter will use this new perspective to examine how Yunnanese villagers in the borderland village of Ban Hin Taek, Chiang Rai Thailand, negotiate and recreate their Thai identity in Thailand today.

2. The Meaning of the Colored Cards (Bat Si) and Their Relations to the Thai State

In the period from the early 1960s to late 1980s, many stateless refugee and displaced people illegally entered the frontier areas of Northern Thailand. The border security

and refugee management on the Thai-Myanmar border was both porous and unstable. The situation has improved since the 1990s, but there are still many stateless refugees who present the Thai government with problems for its border management. Just like other stateless refugee and displaced people in the border area of Northern Thailand, a persistent problem plaguing Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek has been how to gain legitimate standing and citizenship from the Thai government so that they can legally resettle in Northern Thailand. The story of how this happened is complex.

Because the remnant KMT Army forces were generally considered to be the majority of Yunnanese people in the 1980s, the Thai government saw the Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek as a politicized group on the Thai-Burma frontier. So in this period, a so-called “colored cards” (Bat Si) system was designed as a means of identifying individuals and helping to secure borders by controlling how people were able to move across the border (Laungaramsri, 2015). Unlike the formal Thai ID card for natural citizens, the “Bat Si” was a temporary ID certificate issued to qualified people in the 1960s to 1990s – and included such people as cross-border migrants, displaced person, and indigenous people (highland minorities) in frontier areas of Thailand. The ID card also became an important officially-issued Thai identifier for identifying an individual’s relation to the Thai state. In other words, determination of legal Thai citizenship has largely depended on the type of Bat Si one had, and when it was received, since different types of Bat Si were used over time to indicate different ethnic backgrounds, status, and relationships to the Thai state.

For Yunnanese people in Northern Thailand, unlike the modern term “identification card” (*shen-fen-zheng*) in modern Chinese, the Thai identification card is often known as a “*tai-guo-zi*” or “*gong-min-zi*” (Chinese: 泰国字 or 公民字, which means ‘the [document with] written words of the Thai State’ or ‘[document with] written words for [being a] citizen’). This older and special term for “identification card” is now rarely used in Yunnan province, but the word *zi* (written words 字) is still widely used by the Yunnanese community in Northern Burma and in Northern Thailand for “government issued citizenship papers”. As the most established group of Yunnanese in Northern Thailand, most families tied to the former KMY 93rd Army held one of

three types of Colored Cards. The first kind, a White ID card, was issued to former KMT Yunnanese soldiers who had contributed to the Thai state's fight against the Hmong communist force (also called the "Lao communist force") on Pa Dang Mountain (ผาตั้ง) in 1970-1971, along with two batches of supplementary registrations of White ID card for the families of Yunnanese soldiers allowed to add their names in late 1970s and early 1980s. Then, after the KMT soldiers fought against the Burmese Communist Force in Kao Yai Mountain (เขาใหญ่) in 1984, the Thai government issued a second type of 'colored card'—the 'Yellow ID card (Bat Si Lueng, บัตรสีเหลือง)' to KMT soldiers and also to the immediate family members of former soldiers in the KMT 93rd Army. According to the information provided by Laungaramsri's (2015) article, the Thai government identified the Yellow ID Card as the "Haw Chinese Immigration Card". Four years later, in 1988, the Thai government began issuing a third type of Colored ID card—the Orange ID card (also known Bat Si Som, บัตรสีส้ม) as a temporary residential permit that for relatives of those who held the Yellow ID Card (Bat Si Lueng).

Although the main principles of the Colored Cards' classification system derived from contributions made by the KMT 93rd Army to Thailand, some of my informants let me know that a number of old soldiers and their families in Ban Hin Taek were unable to gain the above three types of Colored ID Card since the Thai government did not have a systematic and standardized way of determining the identity of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek who may have fought in these battles. One of my interviewees, Mr. Jiang, a former KMT soldier in Ban Hin Taek, recalled that "the Thai government sometimes suspected the KMT Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek of keeping close relations with Khun Sa and his drug business," so Yunnanese of Ban Hin Taek were often seen as being part of an unruly force working for Khun Sa. And, he continued, some Yunnanese thought that "local Thai officials attempted to exclude KMT Yunnanese soldiers in Ban Hin Taek from any identity authentication program." In addition, he also mentioned that "local Thai officials usually appeared in some Yunnanese villages without any advance notification, so that once people have missed that day to register their information with local Thai officials, they would have no

chance to acquire the *gong-min-zi* (Thai ID card) issued to former KMT soldiers.” Such accounts suggest that some Yunnanese soldiers of former the KMT Army felt that did not have a chance to acquire any of the above three main types Bat Si in that early stage.

From 1990 onward, the Thai government implemented a new Colored ID Card policy for nine specific groups of upland ethnic minorities (including the Lisu, Akha, Hmong, Lahu and non-hill tribes such Shan and Mon). This system also allowed Yunnanese people who were married with local ethnic minorities, including those in Ban Hin Taek, to acquire legal Thai citizenship with their partner. This kind of Colored ID Card was named the “Highlander ID Card” by Thai government. Since it is blue in color, it is generally called “Bat Si Fah” by most villagers in Ban Hin Taek. At that time, the criteria that Thai officials allowed for different ethnic groups to qualify for the blue ID card were mainly based on impressionistic things, such as physical appearance, language competence (language of local ethnic minorities) and being able to show aspects of Thai national identity (such as singing the Thai national anthem).

These simple methods of “one size fits all” for determining whether one could receive a Thai ID card overlooked ethnic diversity in upland areas of Northern Thailand and limited the ways that groups like Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek who lacked a place among the nine new categories could gain legitimate status in Thailand. Because of this situation, many Yunnanese saw Lisu and Lahu people as having similar appearance and folk customs as their being the Han Chinese (*han-zu*) that they thought of themselves as. This led many Han people from Yunnan in Ban Hin Taek to “pretend to be Lisu and Lahu people” to “pass the test of Thai officials and acquire the Bat Si Fah” as one of my informants said. Many Yunnanese relied on their multilingual skills and intermarriage relationships among different hill tribes to pass “the [minority] language test of Thai officials” to become the first batch of legal “Blue ID Card” holders in Ban Hin Taek in 1990-1991. As many as 70% of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek—assessed by the main language that they speak, the arrangement of their homes, the customs they practice and their self-identification

as “Han people”—have been officially identified as Lisu and Lahu people according to their Bat Si Fah. Information provided by local village committee also suggests that more than 75% of Yunnanese villagers in Ban Hin Taek held the Blue ID Card (Bat Si Fa). By holding Bat Si Fa, they and their descendants were able to gain legal Thai citizenship in the 1999-2000 period.

I did in-depth interviews with a number of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek who were former “Blue ID Card” (Bat Si Fah) holders and who are now Thai citizens. Almost all of them showed a sense of superiority about their “Bat Si Fah” background in comparison with other Colored ID Card holders. They also told me that perhaps as much as 90% of first batch of Bat Si Fah holder in Ban Hin Taek were Yunnanese Han people rather than indigenous upland minority people, because they said that “the real ‘Chao Kaw’ (Thai: ชาวกว, ‘hill tribe’) did not really care if they could acquire an ID card at that stage, because they even did not understand what ‘citizenship’ meant.” One of my interviewees, Mr. Zhao, who is a descendant of former KMT Yunnanese family in Ban Hin Taek, mentioned that “local Thai officials have shown much less concern with the ‘Chao Kaw’ (hill tribes) in comparison with the ‘Chin-Haw’ (Yunnanese Chinese), since local Thai officials generally considered Bat Si Fah holders as uncivilized minorities who may not have the smarts of the ‘Chin-Haw’”. In other words, gaining the “Bat Si Fah” brought more freedom to Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek in their daily life and border trade. As Mr. Zhao also recalled, the activities of Yunnanese people in Northern Thailand were carefully watched by Thai government in the 1980s, and their Chinese orientation and intense Han identity always made trouble for them.

This trouble may be seen from the mid-1980s, when the Thai government took some drastic measures to deal with Chinese education in upland Northern Thailand. They closed all the local Chinese schools that had been founded by Yunnanese villagers up to that point. The Yunnanese people or ‘Chin-Haw’ at the time were under suspicion in both Ban Hin Taek and other parts of upland Northern Thailand, and many of them had to disguise themselves as other hill tribe groups to avoid the regular checks made by local Thai officials. Yunnanese villages had become a major

target of the Thai government, and many Yunnanese Chinese teachers could be jailed once they have been discovered by local Thai officials. After 1990, however, most Ba Si Fah holders of Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek no longer worried about these limitations against Chinese education in upland areas of Northern Thailand, since most of them thought the “Bat Si Fah was best identification documents to prove they are harmless highlanders,” and not Chin-Haw, as one of my informants told me.

Two additional case studies of local families in Ban Hin Taek also provide a new perspective on understanding the relations between “fake highlander ID card” and the Thai identities of Yunnanese people. One case among my Ban Hin Taek informants was Mr. Chen, a local merchant who has operated a grocery there for more than twenty years. Both of his parents considered themselves “*han-zu*” (ethnic Han Chinese) in Yunnan, but they had moved to Shan State in Burma a half century ago or so. In the early 1980s, in order to escape the unrest in the Shan state, his family fled to his uncle’s house in Ban Hin Taek. After he had studied the Lahu language, Mr. Chen easily passed the Lahu language test and obtained his “Bat Si Fah” in 1991. The fact that he had dark skin allowed him to argue that “my black skin helped convince Thai officials that I must be a real *lao-he* [an insulting word for Lahu people in the Yunnan dialect].” After he got his Bat Si Fa for being a Lahu man, he married with a Yunnanese Han woman and started a stable life in Ban Hin Taek. He has since, in 1999, acquired an official Thai ID card. His house is arranged in a traditional style for ethnic Han Chinese in Yunnan, and he usually speaks Yunnan dialect with his family members. Moreover, his family has kept up Han traditions in terms of its daily ritual, custom and eating habits. Since he is a well-known merchant in village and has also received Thai education in a local Thai school, he is usually recommended as a “representatives of Lahu people” to attend different community activities, such as village elections and holiday celebrations. On such social occasions, Mr. Chen has acted like ordinary Thai person, regularly doing a “wai” (in the Thai manner) and he speaks fluent Thai language with Thai officials. In order to “act like a real Lahu” in social occasions that demand it, his wife has had many Lahu clothes made for him so that he can attend different Lahu social activities. He said to me that “I tell Chinese tourists that I am a Han Chinese [*han-zu*] from Yunnan, but sometimes I tell them I

am Thai-Chinese, and I also tell Thai people I am a Lahu of Northern Thailand. It is common for Yunnanese of Ban Hin Taek to assume and live according to their different roles and identities in everyday life as required by circumstance. It is a basic rule of living in this place”. When we talked about the meaning of the Thai ID card, he mentioned that “for older generation Yunnanese, the Thai ID card is more like an insurance card, which can provide as proof of their legal citizenship. But for our children, it means more like offering equal rights in terms of getting an education and job opportunities.” This case does an excellent job of showing how a Yunnanese man from an older generation created official Thai identity, used it in diverse social and cultural contexts, and adjusted to suit different circumstances.

A second case is that of a local Chinese teacher Mr. Wang, who has lived in Ban Hin Taek more than thirty years until he retired two years ago. He was born at one traditional Han Chinese family in Lashio of Shan state, Myanmar, and he left home with his friends to resettle in Ban Hin Taek in the late 1980s. Since he found many Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek had gotten their “Ba Si Fah” by “pretending to be ‘Chao Kaw’”, as he put it, he married a local Lisu woman to get his ‘Bat Si Fah’ in late 1991. To escape the closing of Chinese schools in upland Northern Thailand, he moved to live with his wife’s family and lived peacefully there for several years. Since returning, he has taught Thai and Chinese to his wife’s families and led them to open a Chinese restaurant in center of Ban Hin Taek. From 1999, he said that “I wore my Lisu clothes and went to local government office to get my formal Thai ID card.” He is usually is recommended as a “Lisu representative” to attend royal activities in Mae Fah Luang district, saying that “it is the greatest honor for our Thai people”. Today, both he and his Lisu wife are fluent in the Yunnan dialect, as well as Lisu and Thai. The interior of his house has kept both Yunnanese traditions as well as many portraits of the Thai Royal family. As a former holder of the “Bat Si Fa”, he told me that “although most urban Thai people still hold prejudices against the ‘Chao Kaw’, having the *tai-guo-zi* (Thai citizenship card) at least has given us equal rights like urban Thais, even if we have little chance to use those rights in such activities like voting.” He plans to send his first grandson to local Buddhist temple to become a monk and to be educated, and he mentioned to me that it was important “to learn how

to be a real Thai, which is good for our young generation to make a living in Thailand.” This case also shows the flexible ways that Thai identity is negotiated by the Yunnanese living in Ban Hin Taek and how they understand the value of Thai identity for the younger generation of Yunnanese.



Figure 10: The interior decoration of Yunnanese villager-Mr. Wang's (pseudonym) House in Ban Hin Taek village.

Source: This photo was taken by author in February 2017 at Ban Hin Taek village.

Another group of Yunnanese people fled from Northern Myanmar in the 1970s. Most of them have gotten a different kind of Colored ID card—a Pink ID card (Bat Si Chompu, บัตรสีชมพู)—which were mainly issued to Burmese refugees who entered Thailand in the 1960s and 1970s. A small part of the newer Yunnanese residents in Ban Hin Taek who fled from Northern Myanmar after the 1990s also hold a Green ID Card (Bat Si Kiao, บัตรสีเขียว) or Alien Labor Card (Bat Raeng Ngan Tang Dao, บัตรแรงงานต่างด้าว). The Bat Si Kiao is mainly held by new Yunnanese refugees from Myanmar, while the Alien Labor Card was a specialized card those new Myanmar's Yunnanese refugees who are considered as migrant workers in Thailand. A few of both Green ID card and Pink ID card holders have successfully acquired their legal Thai citizenship in the past ten years, while some others appear to have obtained their temporary

identity certificate by paying bribes to local Thai officials or paying a “high handling charge to an agent in Burma” as one man said.



Figure 11: Several Yunnanese Han people of Ban Hin Taek dressed with their Lisu costume to presented gifts to the Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. This photo is considered valuable gifts which have reflected the strong sense of Thai identity of Mr. Wang.

Source: This photo was taken in 1997. And it provided by the private collection of one local Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek village.

The Thai government has formalized and standardized the identity authentication process of the Bat Si system in past ten years or so. This has made it extremely difficult for most new Yunnanese migrants to now gain Thai citizenship or legal standing. One typical example of this is a Yunnanese peddler, Ms. Jin, who was born in Lashio, Shan state, and who fled to Ban Hin Taek in 1992, but who lacks the papers from any country. She did get her Pink ID card by paying bribes to local Thai officials in 1993, but she could not get the formal Thai ID card in 2000, since lacked the necessary documents to prove her genetic relationship with any legitimate Thai citizen. Therefore, even though she has been allowed to stay at Ban Hin Taek by the local Thai government, she would be illegal once she left this specific part of Chiang

Rai province. This situation has meant that Ms. Jin's life is confined to Ban Hin Taek village. It has led her to complain to me that her Bat Si made her "have no future for the rest of her life."

Despite this situation, many young illegal Yunnanese migrants from Myanmar still see Thailand as a more promising destination today than China or central Myanmar. During my field trip in Ban Hin Taek, I met several young female Chinese teachers who claim they come from Kokang of Northern Burma and have all been stateless refugees in Ban Hin Taek for ten years. All the young female teachers have married with local Yunnanese people and most are well integrated into local life in terms of their language ability, familiarity with customs and living habits. And they have mentioned to me that "intermarriage is considered as most effective way to help us to gain legal Thai citizenship, since it is hard to make living in Thailand today without *gong-min-zheng* (Thai ID card)." Many such migrants also see Thai citizenship as a springboard to help them escape the ongoing unrest on the Thai-Myanmar border.

The above case studies provide new perspectives to understand the different ways that Yunnanese people negotiate their relations to the Thai state through the ID card system. It also shows how Ong's notion of "flexible citizenship" works in a legal environment of "graduated sovereignty." There are, that is, different ways for Yunnanese to negotiate their relations with the Thai state and different forms of creating legitimate status and citizenship in Thailand by Yunnanese people. With the emergence of modern citizenship patterns in Thailand, and a complex set of ways to define it and practices for attaining it, the concept of citizenship in Thailand has not only emphasized flexible forms of national identity and citizenship. This also represents a set of relations to the state that may aspire to one of a singular form of national identity but exists through the realities of what Aihwa Ong (1999) has called "graduated sovereignty." People who have entered Thailand establish a wide range of relations to legitimate status in the Kingdom and seek to use the available system to permit them to remain in Thailand. For Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek village, Chiang Rai, this has meant using the range of options available to them in the

evolving color-coded ID Card System, including their physical appearance, linguistic ability, marriage, clothing, and customs – all used in appropriate ways to gain legitimate status in Thailand, including citizenship.

Although the Thai government has outlined how ethnic identities of marginal ethnic groups shall be protected by the law, the goal of having a single standard for legitimacy in Thailand has also sometimes worked to accelerate the assimilation process of those marginal ethnic minorities into Thailand. Laungaramsri (2015) has argued that changing and unevenly implemented card practices by the Thai state reflects shifting ideas of citizenship and the state's concerns about mobile populations in borderland areas (Laungaramsri, 2015). The colored card system has also shown Yunnanese people's special ways to seeing and to make their legitimate relations of citizenship and the state, which corresponds with the graduated sovereignty notion of Aihwa Ong. These Yunnanese have made a fluid form of "Thai identity" tied to a "flexible citizenship" that suits different situations and socio-political contexts faced by individuals or families. The graduated and variable nature of the colored card system also results in an uneven treatment of many non-Thai groups in upland Northern Thailand. For most of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek today, gaining a legal Thai ID card is only the first step to fully becoming part of Thai society. During the negotiation process of establishing their Thai citizenship as a social reality, there are many cases of Yunnanese who put a huge effort and make big compromise just to survive. As a result, the elaborate negotiation process often triggers some frictions and tensions between Yunnanese and mainstream national Thais in Thai institutions. Also, since not all who attempt to get their ID cards succeed, some Yunnanese become stateless refugees, and have to learn how to live even further below the official radar and off the books. Since there are still a large numbers of stateless refugees, many illegal migrant works of Myanmar today tried to use various illegal channels to acquire legal Thai citizenship. This phenomenon has contributed to national Thais has deepened the stereotype of those marginal groups. Although most Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek now have acquired formal Thai ID cards, they sometimes face difficulties in participating in various activities available to Thai citizens. Their ethnic

background, type of colored ID card, and even Thai accent may force them to face various double-standard treatments and prejudices from some parts of Thai society.

Further complicating matters of identity is the fact that many Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek still also hold a “Lisu or Lahu ID card.” This has given rise to a new special Yunnanese group in Ban Hin Taek who want to seek national identity and ethnic identity in Thailand today. They still keep the routines and customs of Han ethnic groups from Yunnan in their daily practice, while also adopting ethnic cultural customs which can show the corresponding Lisu or Lahu ethnic identity of their Colored ID card. This lived dilemma appears “in relation to individuals who... adopt a new ethnic identity to collectives involved in a project of redefining themselves” (M. Vandenhelsken, and Karlsson, Bengt G., 2016).

The Bat Si system has made Yunnanese seek relations with upland minority groups to gain state legitimacy in Thailand. But once they receive that status, they also seek to maintain a “low-profile” cultural identity (Singh, 2017), so as to not to overemphasize their Yunnanese ethnic identity. Most of my informants also mention that even though this “low-profile” Yunnanese identity helps to keep them separate from mainstream Thai society, it could also provide a chance to protect their livelihoods in the border areas of Northern Thailand. After the closing of the Chinese schools in upland Northern Thailand in 1990, more Yunnanese people realized that keeping a low-profile could allow them to retain the crucial aspects of their Han Chinese and local Yunnanese identity in the long run while maintaining a place as legitimate Thai citizens or residents. Unlike some radical marginal groups, although Yunnanese people may be seen as vulnerable by mainstream Thai society, their “low-profile” identity strategy also suggests that they would not seek to participate much in the political life of the nation. Singh (2017) has argued, in contrast to James Scott, that ethnic minorities choice of living in highland areas is not the same as resisting the power of the nation-state”, even though their “low-profile” identity is tied with minimizing ethnic-based conflicts or subordination. It can sometimes support more chances to have a better livelihood. In this way, acquiring a Thai ID card forces this group of Yunnanese to negotiate their ways of living along the Thai-Myanmar

boundary in a new way, as a legitimate member of the Thai state. It also means that they need to gain some basic standardized consciousness of what it means to be a modern Thai citizen. This has made most Yunnanese groups abandon older patterns of living along the border which involved cross-border trade in the Golden Triangle Area. Given their limited market and social resources, the Yunnanese have had to leave the upland area and actively seek to become part of modern Thai society. Although the Colored ID Card has brought the legal citizenship to the Yunnanese people of Ban Hin Taek, they have limited roles to play in mainstream Thai society.

3. Yunnanese Understandings of “Thai identity” – Insider’s Perspectives

For most Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek, acquiring Thai citizenship is only the first step to build a basic relation with the modern national citizen system in Thailand today, as a necessary but not a sufficient condition for being Thai, so to speak. The controversial history and marginal ethnic-position of Yunnanese still bring Yunnanese with Thai ID cards in Ban Hin Taek face to face with various invisible barriers when they tried to integrate themselves into other aspects of Thai society. Even though Ban Hin Taek has rebuilt normal relations with much of lowland Thai society since Khun Sa surrendered to the Myanmar government in 1996, and especially since his death in 2007, the relative isolation of Ban Hin Taek from other centers still has made many limitations and unfair factors which made them unable or impossible to modify the older ethnic stereotypes toward the Yunnanese – seen as “Jin-Haw” tied to Khun Saw – held by mainstream Thai society to this day. This means that the Yunnanese are often seen as “Jin-Haw”, “Chinese diaspora” and “Chao Kao (ชาวกะเหรี่ยง)” by mainstream Thai society today. However, based on my participant observation of field trips in Ban Hin Taek, Yunnanese today have actively been involved in different kinds of social activities to create a distinct form and understanding of their “Thai identity”. This creation and understanding differs markedly from “Yunnanese stereotypes” in the imagination of many in lowland Thai society. Hence, this section will pay more attention to how Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek understands their relationship with Thai society today. To do this, the section will examine three

different aspects of cultural participation in Thai society showing the Yunnanese distinctive collective memory of their loyal ties to Thai royal family and to Thai education. This will help create a new perspective for understanding how the Yunnanese use the above three aspects to understand and reconstruct their unique relation to “Thai identity” in contemporary Thailand.

3.1 Loyalty to the Thai Royal Family

As mentioned above, the Yunnanese people in upland Northern Thailand have produced a special relation to the Royal Family of Thailand through a series of events that occurred in the 1960s to 1990 era. Their activities help to explain the special sensibility that the Yunnanese have for the Thai royal family. Based on the information where displayed in Civil Museum of Northern Thailand of Mea Salong (Figure 12) village, with fears of a “domino effect” of communist regimes taking over Southeast Asian countries one by one during the Cold War period having widespread in the 1960s to 1970s, the Thai government was concerned that the continuous harassment by Hmong communist forces in the upland frontiers of Thai-Lao border would let it became a big threat to the national security and democracy of Thailand. After the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, the development of communist forces elsewhere in Southeast Asia heightened the concerns of the Thai government. Hence, the Thai government reached an agreement with the Taiwan government in 1968 that allowed the Taiwan government to work with the remnants of KMT force in upland Northern Thailand to regroup and to assist the Thai Army to wipe out Hmong communists. In the 1970s to 1980s, the former KMT forces in upland Northern Thailand sent troops to help Thailand fight against Hmong communists seven times.

At this stage, the full support from King Bhumibol Adulyadej and Thai government not only inspired the former KMT soldiers but also strengthen the ties between the Yunnanese and Thailand. As the information displayed in the western hall of the Civil Museum of Northern Thailand, the Thai royal family also set up several development programs with the local Yunnanese villages to improve their infrastructure and educational resources. And King Bhumibol Adulyadej received the major leader of the 93rd KMT force in person and supervised Thai government to

issue Thai citizenship to those Yunnanese soldiers after they completely wiped out the Hmong communist force along the Thai-Lao border area. A series of philanthropic acts of King Rama the Ninth and Thai royal family had a great influence on the Yunnanese in upland Northern Thailand. As a crucial turning point of the Yunnanese there, the recognition of and ties to Thai royal family by the Yunnanese strengthened.



Figure 12: Plenty of images of Thai Royal family have been displayed in Civil Museum of Northern Thailand.

Source: This photo was taken by author on March of 2016, at Civil Museum of Northern Thailand.



Figure 13: Plenty of information about “the royal assistance to Yunnanese people” has been displayed in Civil Museum of Northern Thailand.

Source: This photo was taken by author on March of 2016, at Civil Museum of Northern Thailand.

Besides efforts of the king himself, another important member of Thai royal family—his mother, Princess Mother Srinagarindra—also made great effect to the local residents of remote village of Northern Thailand. As the information displayed in the western hall of the Civil Museum of Northern Thailand (figure 13), it shows that the Princess Mother Srinagarindra established a series of effective royal projects to improve the living condition of those remote villages in terms of education, medical condition, the pattern of agricultural production, handicrafts production and other projects. And in the 1970s, the Mae Fah Luang Foundation of the Princess Mother Srinagarindra brought more opportunities to those marginal groups in remote areas of Chiang Rai province, which let more and more hill tribes and Yunnanese have chance to learn how to plant economically viable crops and to make handicrafts rather than to engage in opium cultivation. At that stage, the Princess Mother Srinagarindra also became the most influential Thai royal member among each ethnic minority in upland Northern Thailand. After the 1970s, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn took over these Thai Royal Programs and she continually put a good deal of effort into improving the life of those ethnic minorities in remote border areas of Northern Thailand.

This unprecedented support from Thai Royal family had a great positive effect on these marginal groups (included Yunnanese group and other ethnic minorities in upland Northern Thailand) and creates a basis for establishing a sensibility of Thai national identity. The Thai Royal Programs likewise encouraged and respected the local ethnic diversity of upland Northern all the time, making different ethnic minorities to maintain both their distinctive ethnic identities and to acquire ways of gaining Thai national identity. One important way of creating this sense of national belonging was fostered and nurtured by activities led by the Thai Royal Family in far rural areas of Thailand like in far northern Chiang Rai province.

The Yunnanese people of Ban Hin Taek regarded Royal Family of Thailand as sovereign to Thailand. Nowadays, many local Yunnanese villagers still adopt the traditional Chinese way of calling King Bhumibol Adulyadej the “emperor” *huang-*

shang (皇上, official term for “emperor” in old Chinese) in the Yunnan dialect in order to show their highest respect for the royal family. In most of the ritually important living rooms of Yunnanese houses in Ban Hin Taek, both the portrait of Thai royal family and the family’s ancestral tablets are enshrined and worshiped in the daily life of Yunnanese families. Today, when royalty like Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn visits the village, the village committee of Ban Hin Taek sends representatives of Yunnanese and other local ethnic minorities to attend the activities, showing the importance of retaining local ethnic difference before the representative of the Kingdom of Thailand. Many local Yunnanese families consider being present before the Thai royal family as the supreme honor, and as a crucial step to relate themselves with Thai society, as seen by the photographs and other memorabilia they keep of these events.



Figure 14: The solemn portrait of the King Bhumibol Adulyadej in the mourning hall of Civil Museum of Northern Thailand.

Source: This photo was taken by author in February of 2017 in Mea Salong.

In addition, after the Yunnan Association of Chiang Rai was established in 1982, it became an important platform to help Yunnanese groups create different connections with Thai society and other oversea Chinese associations. And on every

important day of commemoration or Thai festival, the Yunnan Association of Chiang Rai would hold grand celebration to show their loyalty to Thai Royal Family. After King Bhumibol Adulyadej had passed away in October 2016, the Yunnan Association in December 2016 not only held a series of commemorative activities to show their highest respect to King Bhumibol Adulyadej, but they also set up a solemn portrait of the King Bhumibol Adulyadej in the mourning hall of Civil Museum of Northern Thailand to enshrine and express their deep condolences. This association perceived above activities for Thai Royal Family as a crucial embodiment which could to further reflect their conformity with Thai cultural norms but in ways that also resonated with those that were typical of Yunnanese people. By being both Thai and Yunnanese, it shows the distinctive ways that Yunnanese negotiate their relations with Thai society.

Nowadays, just like other local ethnic minorities in Ban Hin Taek, the formation of Yunnanese people's national identity is still tied to the positive effect of Thai Royal Family. Since most Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek expect to maintain their "low-profile" ethnic identity to avoid involvement in complex political conflicts in Thai society, they tend to separate the Thai Royal Family from the Thai government in their minds as different ways of understanding their national identity. As mentioned above, in activities related to the Thai Royal Family, Yunnanese people have tried to express a consistent national identity like that of other local ethnic minorities, but the consistent national identity of the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek greatly relies on the emotional bonds they have for the Thai Royal Family. Although mainstream Thai media and some parts of Thai society may not easily change the stereotypes about the Yunnanese despite their loyalty to the Thai monarchy, the Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek still see their ability to participate in those ceremonies as signs of their commitment and embodiments of their acting as Thai citizens.

3.2 Institutions of Collective Memory to Create Thai Identity for Yunnanese

For many in the first and second generations of Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek village, their understanding of Thai national identity has been influenced by their earlier experiences in relation to the Thai state, such as having helped Thai government to

fight against the Lao (Hmong) and the Burmese communist forces in the 1970s and 1980s. These were crucial events for them that helped them win recognition from the royal family and the military of Thailand. Even though the Yunnanese people there had been through a long process of gaining formal Thai ID cards via the Colored ID Card system, many of them still considered the Thai ID Card as best evidence to show that they made crucial contributions to defend the security and territory of the Thai frontier during Cold War period. The frontier battles fought during the Cold War period are also what makes most elder Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek think they have been able to feel being part of Thailand and to receive official recognition for it. It has become the key source of their Thai national identity. Nowadays, Yunnanese people do not only regard this past history as a supreme honor of their father's generation, but they also perceived it as an indispensable part of their Yunnanese ethnic identity in Thailand. Especially for descendants of former KMT soldiers, they showed more enthusiasm than other Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek to take part in different kinds of commemorative activities than their father's generation.

Today, the Shrine of the Martyrs of Tang-Nogb and the Civil Museum of Northern Thailand in Mae Salong are the most important places that embody and commemorate the contributions of the Yunnanese people in Northern Thailand to the Thai state. Each year, during the Qingming Festival (for grave-cleaning), different Yunnanese villages in Northern Thailand gather together in spontaneously-organized worship activities at the Shrine of the Martyrs (*zhonglie ci*, 忠烈祠) of Tang-Nogb and the Civil Museum of Northern Thailand (*taibei yimin bowuguan*, 泰北义民博物馆) of Mae Salong. The Civil Museum of Northern Thailand includes narratives of the history of KMT Yunnanese that mainly focus on the contributions made during the Cold War period when former KMT soldiers fought against the Hmong communists, at the request of the Thai state. The museum emphasizes how the Yunnanese are tied to Thai national identity through various contributions they made to the Thai government in the past. Unlike academic history, the version of history here is tied to a kind of collective memory presented in the museum in fragmented and subjective ways that require viewers to add their own feeling and interpretations. It often

contains a range of explanations that support “a single committed perspective”, in this case tied to the importance of the Yunnanese to supporting the Thai state, and it promotes a notion of “unchanging group essence” (Wertsch, 2002) (page 44), in this case of the Yunnanese as loyal to Thailand. In the fragmented version of the Yunnanese collective memory presented in this museum, we see their collective demands for national Thai identity and their expectations of their Yunnanese ethnic identity. In addition, whether in Ban Hin Taek or other villages in upland Northern Thailand, this honorable history was a key factor that made the Yunnanese group showed its ethnic superiority over other local ethnic minorities. It did this by institutionalizing the collective memory of their ethnic group in relation to Thai national identity. Because many of Yunnanese people see in this honorable history a close connection between the Thai nation and themselves as Yunnanese, this, then, has become a crucial step in their efforts to win cultural recognition as supporting Thailand for Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek. It allowed them to build a common national identity with mainstream Thai nation. However, since few in mainstream Thai society understand this part of Yunnanese history in Thailand, older stereotypes often prevails.

3.3 Effects of the Thai education

A former village head have recalled to me that, during the early 1970s, the living space of local residents in Ban Hin Taek, which included Shan, Yunnanese and other ethnic minorities such as Akha, Lisu and Lahu people, was largely confined to upland areas of Northern Thailand. Although older generations of Yunnanese there had been built close relations with other ethnic minorities of upland area in terms of sharing cultural and economic contacts, the relatively insular pattern of their lives and limited contacts with mainstream Thai society made Yunnanese have access to just bits and pieces of mainstream Thai culture. And the isolated conditions of Ban Hin Taek village permitted the Yunnanese to maintain their distinctive ethnic identity in upland society. The above situation was common for the Yunnanese people of upland Northern Thailand in the 1960s to late 1980s. This situation started to change when the various Thai education projects, directly patronized by the Thai royal family,

started opening in Ban Hin Taek since mid-1960s.²² It has brought significant changes to Yunnanese people and other highland ethnic minorities, contributing to a greater awareness of and participation in more aspects of Thai culture.

Nowadays, there are two main Thai educational institutions in Ban Hin Taek. One of Thai school in Ban Hin Taek village today is called Ban Thoet Thai School (in Thai: โรงเรียนบ้านเทอดไทย), which formerly known as Ban Hin Taek school. This Thai school is includes 324 students form Ban Hin Taek and several neighboring villages, it focus on pre-primary, primary education, and this school have been became managed objects of the Office of the National Education Commission and stated to use the basic education curriculum since 2001.²³ Another school in Ban Hin Taek is Chaopholuang Aupathum 3 school (in Thai: โรงเรียน ดชด.เจ้าพ่อหลวงอุปถัม 3), which was first established in 1964 and the school building have been rebuilt on July 27, 1983. This school is belong to the Border Patrol Police School Project and includes 422 students from Ban Hin Taek and several neighboring villages, and it focus on pre-primary, primary education.²⁴ The aim of the Border Patrol Police School Project was to provide Thai and general educational opportunities for children from different ethnic minorities of highland or remote regions of Northern Thailand.²⁵ This project also aimed to provide a platform to help the children from highland minorities to learn and to adopt forms of Thai identity in relation to the Thai monarchy, Thai religion, Thai language, and Thai modern history and culture.

²² Refers to:

(1) Titled “the history of Ban Thoet Thai school (in Thai: ประวัติโรงเรียนบ้านเทอดไทย)”, which is displayed in the official website of Ban Thoet Thai School:

http://www.thirdthai.ac.th/index.php?mod=blog&path=web/blog&id_sub_menu=43&namemenu=ประวัติโรงเรียน

(2) Titled “History of Border Patrol Police School (in Thai: ประวัติโรงเรียนตำรวจตระเวนชายแดน)” in the official website of the Border Patrol Police School Project:

http://www.bpp.go.th/bppmain_school/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=438&Itemid=53

²³ Refers to the information from official website of Ban Thoet Thai School:

http://www.thirdthai.ac.th/index.php?mod=blog&path=web/blog&id_sub_menu=43&namemenu=ประวัติโรงเรียน

²⁴ Refers to the information from official website of Chaopholuang Aupathum 3 school: http://data.bopp-obec.info/web/index.php?School_ID=1057120738

²⁵ Refers to the information from official website of the Border Patrol Police School Project (in Thai): http://www.bpp.go.th/bppmain_school/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=438&Itemid=53

Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn took over the Border Patrol Police School Project since the 1970s, and in the academic year 2014, Her Royal Highness's projects served 121,087 children attending 825 schools in 50 of Thailand's 76 provinces. These schools included 196 Border Patrol Police schools, 201 schools under the Office of the Basic Education and etc. (Projects, 2015). The article by Sinae Hyun also mentions that by enhancing Thai-language proficiency among highland minorities, the BPP helped to establish state authority and police surveillance in remote areas of Thailand (Hyun, 2014). That is, the Thai government tried to integrate or assimilate these marginal groups of upland Northern Thailand into the Thai nation, in part by using various Thai educational projects.

According to interview information from one former village head (Yunnanese Han people) in Ban Hin Taek, he recalled that many Yunnanese were stateless people in the 1960s to early 1970s period, unlike other local ethnic minorities, many young children from Yunnanese families in Ban Hin Taek at that time had no chance to receive any Thai education. Moreover, as this former village head recalled that the Han or Chinese background of Yunnanese group made Thai government has tended to see them as just another highland 'Chao Kaw' group from the very beginning. Up to the early 1980s, with the two Thai schools—Ban Thoet Thai and Chaopholuang Aupathum 3 school have rebuilt in Ban Hin Taek village in 1983 and 1983 respectively,²⁶ many young children of Yunnanese families were gradually accepted by the two local Thai educational institutions and started to received heritage Thai education in these two schools. According to the fragment paper record which provided by the staff of Yunnan Association, in the 1980s, in order to maintain Chinese education and their distinctive Chinese identity, Yunnanese people built more than sixty Chinese schools in upland Northern Thailand, received financial support from the government and civil society of Taiwan. Since those Chinese schools were taken on an open-access education pattern, it allowed more young children from other

²⁶ According to interview information which I got from many local villagers, the Ban Thoet Thai School was initially a Chinese School and named as Ban Hin Taek School, which received most of Yunnanese children in Ban Hin Taek from 1976 to 1981. But on January of 1982, this school have been worst affected by the battle between Thai Army and Khun Sa's force, many students and teacher were injured and died during this battle. And the buildings of this school were forcibly occupied by Thai government and they quickly changed it to be a Thai school at that time. As former chairmen of Yunnan Association recalled to me, at this stage, all of the Chinese school in Yunnanese villages of Northern Thailand have been closed and forcibly occupied by Thai government.

stateless highland minorities besides the Yunnanese to be able to learn Chinese in those Yunnanese villages. As former village head of Ban Hin Taek have recalled to me, Khun Sa also positively supported Yunnanese in the establishment of Chinese schools, the first of which opened in 1976, encouraging many in the younger generation from different highland minority to study Chinese. However, he also mentioned that the Thai government in 1982 took measures to prohibit all the activities in Chinese education among Yunnanese villages, and punished severely to those principles of Chinese schools.

Still, my informants have said that Chinese teaching went on informally and sometimes in secret in the late 1980s. The Thai government bans on Chinese language create a dilemma for many Yunnanese villages, who were forced to secretly operate their Chinese school outside the scrutiny of Thai government from mid-1980s to early 1990s. As some of my informants have recalled, in that time, many local leaders of Chinese school worried that the Thai language education of the two local Thai schools would impose a Thai identity into their young generation, and erode the Yunnanese identity that they wanted for their children, and lead to their looking down on their own ethnic Yunnanese and Chinese culture. Unlike the more passive position of other highland ethnic minorities, Yunnanese was the only minority that tried to use Chinese education to resist the “language assimilation policy” of these two local Thai schools. Nonetheless, as most of local villagers has mentioned to me, in mid-1990s, Thai government have restored older official attitudes and softened the entrance requirements of Yunnanese children and children from stateless refugee families to receive compulsory education in the both local Thai schools. Subsequently, Chinese language education facilities of Yunnanese villages in upland Northern Thailand were reopened in the late 1990s with the official permission of the Thai government, but these children only allowed went to Chinese school after they finished the study in the Thai school in late afternoon.

Nowadays, the policy shift of Thai government made most of the third and fourth generations of Yunnanese families in Ban Hin Taek receive a full Thai education in both two local Thai schools. As former chairmen of Yunnan Association have

commented to me, since the various Thai education project was widely available for marginal groups in upland Northern Thailand, the sense of belonging of ethnic identity and Thai identity for those younger generations of Yunnanese and other local ethnic minorities has transformed “because of their having passed through the full Thai education system, learning the language, and about the monarchy, religion and modern Thai history and culture”. The regulation of the local Thai School tried to create a monolingual environment for these students to strengthen a sense of being part of Thai culture and participating in Thai identity. The two Thai schools also usually holds large ceremonies in important festival times like for Wai Kru [for honoring teachers], Mother’s Day, and Father’s Day, which were required by the parents of students to participate in and which helped form a sense of Thai identity. But the Yunnanese people approved of the idea of these Thai traditional ceremonies since they are similar to those in traditional Chinese culture shaped by Confucian values. The Yunnanese parents also consider Thai education as an effective way to help their children to gain social recognition in today’s Thai society. Moreover, most Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek regard assimilation as the main strategy for Yunnanese villagers in Ban Hin Teak to escape the stigma and stereotypes still in some parts of Thai society.



Figure 15: The highland minority student from the Patrol Police School of Ban Hin Taek to attend local government activity

Source: This photo was taken in December of 2016. And it provided by the Thai school staff in Ban Hin Taek

There still is a tension between the Yunnanese and the two local Thai Schools in terms of their different ways of understanding ethnic identity and Thai identity. Since ethnic diversity has received substantial support from the Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, when she fully took over the local Border Patrol Police School Project, these schools generally held various activities every year to made a good response to the royal policy. One interesting example is that students who have special ethnic background such as Lisu, Akha and Lahu are required to dress in their ethnic costume to attend various social activities held every year in order to create a “positive impression of ethnic diversity” for those officials, and visitors of lowland cities. Many Yunnanese parents who came from intermarried families have complained that their young children have been reluctant to speak the Lisu language with them in daily family life, and only those formal activities can force their children to dress in ethnic costume. The also complained that the teacher of local Border Patrol Police School has put too much time and effort to letting their children attend those activities rather than focus on their studies, because “it is always could easily to please those lowland Thai officials when they saw our kids have dressed with colorful ethnic costume, those teachers made our children into ethnic performers, but in fact our children do not want to carry on our ethnic culture at all; they only like foreign stars and only dream of life in big city”.

The above examples have shown that the becoming Thai in terms of acculturation beyond being legally Thai is a complex phenomenon. The younger generations of Yunnanese and other local ethnic minorities have ambiguous relations both to their local native culture and to Thai culture. As scholar Hyun mentioned, the BPP school-building project sought to build a consolidated Thai nation-state by safeguarding Thailand’s territorial borders and by securing the cultural loyalties of border populations that would eventually constitute “a human border” for Thailand (Hyun, 2014). On the one hand, Yunnanese families in Ban Hin Taek expect their children to merge into Thai society through receiving standard Thai educations and by becoming fluent in the Thai language. On the other hand, the desire of retaining standardized forms of ethnic groups and showcasing them in public events and

ceremonies involving lowland mainstream people has made a dilemma about whether they want their ethnic identity more or Thai identity. Most older Yunnanese today want to maintain and expand Chinese education for their children as well as Thai education, even though a series of policy of Thai government had restricted the development of Chinese education in upland Northern Thailand. They also regard Chinese language education as the most important and effective way to make their young generation keep distinctive ethnic identity in today's Thai society. As one of local Chinese teacher mentioned to me that they realize that even if their children have been fully adopted a Thai identity, they will “still find it hard to gain equal socio-economic status in Thailand”. So they also want their children not to give up their distinctive Chinese identity. The above cases also reflect some inner tensions about how the Yunnanese understand their relationships with Thailand today. They are often able to show attitudes and to involve themselves in different social activities to prove their qualifications as good Thai citizens. But they also use a selective strategy, recreating a Thai identity that they learned in schools and use in formal government settings that is at odds with how they behave and relate to one another in light of their “Han identity or Chinese identity”.

4. New Chinese Communities in Metropolitan Thailand: outsider perspectives

Since 1990 or so, like many rural Yunnanese from Ban Hin Taek, attracted by the prosperity and opportunities in the urban economy of Bangkok, have moved there to work. They move with many other laborers into the big cities of central Thailand. The outflow of youth population may have started from the late 1980s, but has picked up since the 1990s. As scholar Chiang mentioned that in many KMT villages, about 90% of the young people belonging to families of early settlers have left the villages (Chang, 2001). As more and more Yunnanese people entered into urban Thai life and the mainstream urban culture in central Thailand, the Yunnanese actively look for a new ethnic position in modern Thai society which they are part of. To some extent, it has also made Yunnanese re-examine their relationship with mainstream Thai society and to the Yunnanese culture they grew up in.

This section will look at the six main groups of Yunnanese who have moved from Ban Hin Take to central Thailand, mainly in Bangkok, and who are outside of their home village. I hope to examine how Yunnanese from rural areas establish themselves in today's urban Thai society. By using several case studies from these family units, the section will discuss how Yunnanese understand the relation between their social position and ethnic identity in Thai society today.

4.1 From low skilled labor force into the Chinese tourism business boom

During my field trip in Ban Hin Taek village from March to June of 2016, I have three chances to meet several former chairmen of Yunnan Association and Yunnanese business leader when they invite me to attend some social activities which organized by Chiang Rai's Yunnanese association in Mea Sai city. Based on the interview information from these former chairmen and local business leaders, their narratives help me to briefly restore the development history of Yunnanese group in central Thai area from 1980s to today.

According to the interview of information from few former chairmen of Yunnan Association, since late 1980s, with the increasing market demands of intensive labor force in the manufacturing industries of the Bangkok Area, most of young Yunnanese worked as low skilled labors in different factories. And a small part of them were engaged in the local business in terms of oolong tea processing, tourism development and vegetable trade. Apart from moved to major cities of central Thailand, Taiwan is another desired destination for Yunnanese Chinese of Ban Hin Taek. As most of these business leaders recalled, since the early 1980s, Taiwanese government agencies have issued a series of policies for young descendants of former KMT soldiers in upland Northern Thailand, mainly focusing on helping them got jobs and legal citizenship through entry into Taiwan's higher education system. However, many stateless Yunnanese had to illegally purchase a Thai passport to go to Taiwan, it made Yunnanese's descendants were still hard to acquired legal citizenship in Taiwan. This problem has directly made majority of Yunnanese' descendants have engaging in low skilled jobs or working illegally in Taiwan nowadays. The unstable policy of Taiwan

government made many Yunnanese people have returned to Thailand and mainly engaging in the service industries of central Thailand.

In addition, as mentioned in chapter two, the continuous inflows of refugees from Myanmar into Ban Hin Taek and other neighboring Yunnanese villages have become the main component of Yunnanese population in upland Northern Thailand nowadays. Ban Hin Taek and other Yunnanese villages have not only functioned as safety refuges by those Yunnanese refugees of Myanmar. They also considered Thailand as a desirable place to make a living in comparison to the alternatives. According to the interview information from several business leaders, they recalled that, after acquiring the Bat Raeng Ngan Tang Dao (Alien Labor Cards) from Thai government since 1992, a large number of new Yunnanese migrants went to the central Thailand area. Nonetheless, at this stage, most of them were still working as low skilled labor force in manufacturing industries due to the lack of professional skills and higher education, as well as lacking language skills.

Early in the 1990s, there was not having a certain region of Bangkok where Yunnanese people living in a small community. As most of the migratory workers were from the bottom of Thai society, the Yunnanese people of Ban Hin Taek were settled in different districts of Bangkok. Most of the business leaders I have interviewed with have mentioned to me that, in order to integrate into Thai society, many Yunnanese from Ban Hin Taek tried to hide their real ethnic background, since many of them thought that the “people from Bangkok society easily put an ethnic label on those marginal groups”. One example came from one of my informants who was run a soybean-milk restaurant in Hui Kwang area since 1994. He recalled that Yunnanese people in the 1990s had to practice their Thai language so it does not have a “Jin-Haw” accent and also to hide their real ethnic identity if they want to get a job to work with Thai people. This was because people in Bangkok always saw “Yunnanese as the ‘Chao Kaw’ and descendants of drug traffickers”. And if they said anything about Ban Hin Taek or Khun Sa, it would directly create a sense of discrimination by Thai people. This account is not only a common dilemma of Yunnanese from Ban Hin Taek, it also reflected a common phenomenon of ethnic

identity in conflict between the dominant groups of central Thailand and marginal Yunnanese groups in general. In addition, by concealing their Yunnanese background, they recognized a prevalent negative Thai view of the KMT Yunnanese, both for their former military activities and for their presumed drug trafficking (Chang, 2006). Hence, to assimilated themselves, the Yunnanese needed to use passive strategies to escape the stigma and stereotypes in Thai society. Many informants agreed that the best way to be accepted as Thai was to master the standard Thai accent and to adopt Thai identity.

Based on my year of observing six Yunnanese families who moved from Ban Hin Taek to Bangkok since early 1990s, I have noticed that the elder parents of these families have not shown the same enthusiasm as the Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek today to ask their descendants keep their Yunnanese ethnic identity in their daily life. Because they thought it is an inevitable trend that their children's generation will become the "fully Thai people" due to the overwhelming social influence of dominant Thai cultural influence in Bangkok. Moreover, as the second or third generation of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek, they have also complained to me that to keep multiple identity among Yunnanese, Thai and Chinese has meant that they have not been able to fully participate in today's Thai society, and this awkward position made them unable to integrated themselves into any group, whether Thai, Thai-Chinese, or non-Thais.

However, the situation has changed in early 21st century, since much of the economic resurgence of central Thailand has been shaped by mainland Chinese people, especially small business men, entrepreneurs and overseas students who come to Bangkok and who are concentrated in Ratchada and Huai Khwang districts. This expansion of Chinese business life in Bangkok has drawn many Yunnanese from Ban Hin Taek and other neighboring village into the Chinese service industries for these districts, doing such things as Chinese foodservice, rental agent and small businesses selling Chinese products. Moreover, the expanding Chinese tourist market in Thailand since 2010 has led to many Yunnanese to Bangkok and other cities and brought more business opportunities for the Yunnanese from Northern Thailand, largely due to their

ability to speak standard Mandarin Chinese and their ability to write Chinese characters. Based on the consumer demands of Chinese tourists, many Yunnanese people have been able to establish and to expand their business in different sectors of the service industries that cater to Chinese tourists. In the last five years, large Chinese restaurants and Chinese food shops have opened in Huai Khwang and Ratcahda districts, and many export corporations have been registered by these Yunnanese people. The export trade done by these companies has mainly concentrated in exports of cosmetic products, rubber products, and fruit to mainland China, and the sales types of products in most of Yunnanese stores also highly depend on the preferences of Chinese tourists. Moreover, today, many young Yunnanese salesmen have tried to make sales cooperation with famous Chinese e-commerce platform to expanding the consumer market in mainland China. More recently, many Yunnanese people of upland Northern Thailand have established their own business in major tourist cities which are popular destinations for Chinese tourists visiting Thailand.

Nowadays, like other Yunnanese people of upland Northern Thailand, many of the younger third or fourth generation of Yunnanese from Ban Hin Taek have been part of the Chinese-centered tourist industry in Chiang Mai, Bangkok, Pattaya and Phuket. These people not only have an advantage of language skills (spoken and written standard Mandarin Chinese) unavailable to many more established Thai-Chinese families, but they also a Chinese cultural sensibility and orientation. Both of these things have helped them to integrate themselves into the process of economic development in contemporary Thai society centered more on relations with the Chinese tourists and traders. The prosperity and development of Chinese tourism in Thailand has inspired many young Yunnanese from northern Thailand by their ethnic culture. And many young Yunnanese people of Bangkok also send their children back to the Ban Hin Taek village to learned Chinese language, because they expect their children to adopt this distinctive ethnic identity to help them gain more advantages when they look for jobs in Thailand today.

Although this conclusion may not represent all Yunnanese understandings of their ethnic identity, it seems true that some Yunnanese young people of Ban Hin Taek have considered to maintained their distinctive ethnic identity as an effective measure to created additional economic benefits as same as other marginal group in upland Northern Thailand. One interesting example of Ban Hin Taek's Yunnanese was found in the Golden Triangle Museum, where is a tourist attraction built in a remote district of Pattaya. This museum has privately built in 2007 by several Yunnanese businessman of Ban Hin Taek, and it mainly aimed to receive mainland Chinese tourists during last five years. The intention of this museum is to symbolically embody the past history of KMT 93rd Division, but it also produces other ethnic groups of a wide range—geographic and ethnological others such as Akha, Kayan and Hmong in reference to the past living situation of 93rd Division, or it may try to create more attractions for Chinese tourists for business purposes. Ironically, the theme and narratives of “past history of opium and KMT 93rd Division” was became a core content which directly displayed in the Golden Triangle Museum of Pattaya. The commercial measures of this museum make the past history of Yunnanese people turn into isolated, fragmented and dramatic after the real history of Yunnanese people have been hidden. However, the growing numbers of Chinese tourists made this program has gained tremendous commercial incomes. This attempt of this museum to structure the past and create a set of foundational beliefs of ethnic identity would be determined by the demands of commercial benefits. Even though this case may not represented all the Yunnanese's in today's Thai society, the exaggerated measures of this small part of Yunnanese people of Ban Hin Taek have reflected the conflict between the value of ethnic identity and commercial benefits when they tried to well integrate themselves into the business world in contemporary Thailand. Besides, it is seems true that the commercial value of certain minority culture has become one of main factors that stimulated those people of marginal groups to maintaining their distinctive ethnic identity, but it is only confined to the aspect of social practice. And it may become a common phenomenon not only in Yunnanese people, but it also may become common for those marginal ethnic minorities in contemporary Thai society.

4.2 The internal conflict between Yunnanese people and other Chinese groups

In modern Thailand, ethnic Chinese business groups formed the majority of the private sector in the national economy (Anderson, 2016). Most of the dominant Thai-Chinese communities like Teochew, Hokkien, Hakka and Hailamese have been settled in Bangkok for more than a century. These Thai-Chinese groups are regarded as the dominant groups that involve most of the business sectors in the Thai national economy, especially in agro-business, manufacturing, banking, finance, and construction. As a new and relatively small ethnic Chinese group now in the central region of Thailand, the Yunnanese people are still young in taking chances to create a special position in the national economy of Thailand. Like other ethnic Chinese groups in Thailand, the major leader of former KMT 93rd Army—General Duan Wen Xi—founded the Yunnan Association (云南会馆, *yunnan hui-guan*) in Bangkok in 1966, which the aim of providing a platform to promote the commercial cooperation among Yunnanese, Thais and other Chinese groups in Thailand today. However, the dominant position of central Thai-Chinese groups in the national economy has meant that it is difficult for Yunnanese to break this pattern even though they are actively involved in the Chinese tourist business in today's Thailand.

As the late scholar Benedict Anderson has argued, these well-established Chinese communities were very sharply distinguished by their occupation. The dominant ones especially did everything they could to make sure that the others wouldn't come barging in (Anderson, 2016). And Wasana Wongsurawat has recently written about this divide going back to the early twentieth century: "The Chinese merchants and entrepreneurs who made up most of the Siamese middle class were allowed to keep their Chinese identity provided that they clearly, and oftentimes overtly, expressed their absolute and undivided loyalty toward the crown" while "the lower-/working-class Chinese either assimilated with the majority or faced persecution for sedition of all sorts" (Wongsurawat, 2016).

Some of my informants in Ban Hin Taek likewise recall that Yunnanese people have had to face this dilemma of finding a place in a hierarchically organized Chinese

community. Grounded in occupation, class, education and cultural origins, the Yunnanese are familiar with the divide dating back to at least to the 1980s. Even though the rapid economic expansion of Thailand in that period helped them to establish their small businesses in Great Bangkok, they were still unable to access much of the traditional business sector of central Thailand since it was almost monopolized by Teochew and Hailam communities. And some of them also mentioned that internal tensions among the various “Chinese” groups, including the Chinese business groups, has been very common for a long time, as pointed out above. The dominant Chinese groups in central Thailand generally consider the Yunnanese people and other marginal Chinese groups as impure, unrefined, and uncivilized Chinese since their father’s generation of Yunnanese came from a marginal part of China and have faced many challenges along the way. The prominent economic status and dominant social influence had given those mercantile Chinese communities in central Thailand gives them a sense of ethnic superiority over other Chinese groups.

Although all Chinese groups in Thailand shared something similar in terms of their Chinese cultural identity, there are large internal and historical differences that persist dividing the southwestern ethnic Han culture represented by the Yunnanese and southeastern *chao-shan* culture represented by Teochew group. This reality may strengthen the mutual distrust rather than lead to their mutual acceptance and understanding between Yunnanese group and dominant Chinese group of central Thailand in terms of ethnic identity and culture identity. As for Yunnanese-run business in Bangkok today, the former chairman of Yunnan Association has commented that there are only about 15% of total population of Yunnanese people who take part in the tourist business in Thailand today, but more than 60% of Yunnanese people are still mainly are farmers in upland Northern Thailand for most of their livelihoods and income. He also mentioned that even though the Chinese language advantages of many young Yunnanese made them were very active in Chinese tourist businesses, the majority are just tour guides since “it could let them make quick money”. The concern of the former chairmen of Yunnan Association may reflect one potential development bottleneck of Yunnanese people’s economic role in

Thailand's national economy today. The former chairmen also mentioned that the overall strengthen of Yunnanese Association is ranking in eighth among major nine Chinese association in Thailand today, which made them recognize that "the social status of Yunnanese in Thai society today is still tenuous and uncertain".

5. Conclusion

This chapter has examined some ways that Yunnanese people who are in Ban Hin Taek have worked to relate themselves to the Thai state and to Thai society. After discussing some of the ways they have previously been understood, I examined the role of color-coded ID card system as a special way for the Yunnanese to create a distinctive way of understanding and making relations to the Thai state. They use the available options to them through the rules and a regulation tied to the ID card system to create a flexible form of "Thai identity" that is most suitable for their situation and socio-political options. The Yunnanese villagers perceived the ability to speak Thai and participate in Thai government functions and ceremonies as an indicator of their commitment to become Thai citizens. Yunnanese today have actively involved in different kind of social activities to prove their distinct understanding to their "Thai identity", which is completely different with "Yunnanese stereotype" in the imagination of many in Thai society. However, by showing their loyalty to Thai monarchy and participating in the Thai education system, the Yunnanese are using a selective strategy to recreate and balance their "Yunnanese-Thai identity" so that their "Thai identity" would not conflict with their "Han identity or Chinese identity". In addition, the rising role of mainland China in trade and tourism in Southeast Asia has allowed more Yunnanese to work in economic social sectors in Thailand in urban areas which are tied to the Chinese tourist business. Although Chinese business dominate many sectors of the Thai economy, there is a hierarchy of Chinese communities in Thailand, so the Yunnanese are normally classed at the lower ranks of this hierarchy. As Benedict Anderson and Wasana Wongsurawat have argued, this hierarchy of "Chinese" groups in Thailand has contributed to the difficulty of new working class groups, like the Yunnanese, to fit into the Thai economy and social order. Although the "low profile" approach has worked for their fitting into Thai

society, it is more challenging for Yunnanese who want to create a Chinese identity in relation to other Chinese groups. These tensions remain powerful, and they also lay the context for the next chapter of the thesis, which will examine how the Yunnanese have learned to create flexible identities in relation to other groups of Chinese.



Chapter V: Relations of Yunnanese People in the Ban Hin Taek Village with Transnational Chinese

The Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek are a distinctive group based on the language they speak and their migration from Yunnan into different parts of mainland Southeast Asia. As seen in chapters three and four, the Yunnanese have created an identity for themselves as a group by negotiating distinctive ways of relating to local minority groups in and around Ban Hin Taek, and by relating themselves to the cultural and official institutions of the Thai state and Thai culture. But the Yunnanese also consider themselves to Chinese. This claim of Chineseness is one that is flexibly negotiated with other Chinese groups with whom they have had connected. Chapter four ended in an analysis of the relations of the Yunnanese of Ban Hin Taek to the dominant Sino-Thai groups in central Thailand and pointed to a hierarchical structure of “Chineseness” for Chinese groups in Thailand. This chapter will explore the relations of the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek to Chinese groups outside of Thailand, mainly those from Taiwan and from China, and consider how their relations with these outside Chinese groups has changed in the last few decades, and how these changes have affected the identity of the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek.

1. The Changing Context of Northern Thai Yunnanese and Chinese groups

The relations of Yunnanese people in Northern Thailand with different groups of transnational Chinese have been long debated in Taiwan media and oversea Chinese media of Southeast Asia. One part of the story stems back to the early nineteenth century when early waves of Yunnanese-Muslim caravan traders worked the frontiers of southwestern Yunnan, northern Burma, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. In chapter two, I discussed how several waves of migration out from Yunnan in the past two centuries created different historical layers of Yunnanese people across northern parts of mainland Southeast Asia. These groups form the majority of Yunnanese-speaking people now today’s upland Northern Thailand. Moreover, the complex migration history of Yunnanese people into northern Thailand has helped to keep them to

remain closely connected to one another socially and culturally. They have also kept and altered their political affiliations and economic cooperation with different transnational Chinese in China, Northern Myanmar and Taiwan since the 1950s.

The development of relations among Chinese groups in different parts of Asia, including Southeast Asia, has led to significant changes in last half a century in terms of political communication, economic cooperation and cultural exchange. This may also be seen in the relations of Yunnanese people in the Ban Hin Taek village, who have altered their ties to different transnational Chinese of Asia and Southeast Asia. The earliest and most influential transnational Chinese group tied to the Yunnanese of Northern Thailand has been those from Taiwan. They helped Yunnanese villages to create more frequent contacts between Yunnanese people of Northern Thailand and transnational Chinese of Taiwan in terms of culture, education, politics and other things. The close relation between Yunnanese people in Northern Thailand and people of Taiwan have made significant influence to those Yunnanese people in terms of Chinese cultural identity and even their political stand.

However, with a part of Yunnanese people in Northern Thailand are turns to re-established contact with the Chinese people of China in last fifteen years, it also directly and indirectly affected the relation of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek village with different transnational Chinese entering a new era. The rising position of China today leads a renewed trend that made more and more oversea Chinese groups in Southeast Asia refocus to strengthen their Chinese identity to promote their social status in economic world, the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek are also trying to create a flexible form of “Chinese identity” to fit them into today’s Thai society. And transformation of the relations of Yunnanese People in Ban Hin Taek with different transnational Chinese was not only showed their cultural demands for Chinese identity, but it also reflected a more complex and ambivalent process showed that how Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek understand their relations with different transnational Chinese groups.

The above background lays out the context for this chapter, which will provide a macro perspective on how Yunnanese villagers in Ban Hin Taek negotiate themselves with transnational Chinese groups from China and Taiwan, sometimes through their ties to Chinese-Thai groups in Thailand. This chapter will achieve this end by combining a historical review of these relations with information collected on field trips and in interviews. This will allow us to further explore the shifting relations of Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek with transnational Chinese from China and Taiwan. The chapter will also provide a new angle for understanding the inner conflict through the “Chinese identity” negotiation process of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek with transnational Chinese groups from China and Taiwan.

2. From 1960s to early 1970s: The Anti-communist Period

In 1966, the major leader of the former KMT 93rd Army—General Duan Wen Xi founded the Yunnan Association (云南会馆 *yunnan huiguan*) in Bangkok. At the time, it received direct financial and political support from the Chiang Kai-shek government on Taiwan. The original aim of the Yunnan Association today was to provide a platform to promote the communication, cooperation and mutual assistance among Yunnanese, Thais and other Chinese groups in Thailand. But the Yunnanese Association was initially seen as the representative organization of the remnants of former KMT forces in Thailand. The Yunnan Association was devoted to helping this group find assistance and to create cooperation with different political group in the Cold War era. In the 1960s, the largest group of the former KMT forces was concentrated in two villages of Northern Thailand—Mae Salong village of Chiang Rai province and in Tang-Nogb village of Chiang Mai province. Of these, Mae Salong was regarded as the political center of the former KMT forces, while a majority of former KMT senior soldiers and their families have lived in Mae Salong until today.

During this period, as the Communist Party of mainland China and the Kuo-min-tang on Taiwan had intense conflicts and opposing views about who represented “China” on the world stage. Until the early 1970s, Taiwan was seen as the legitimate

representative of China in global institutions. This created an intense political polarization between mainland China and Taiwan. And this situation meant that most Yunnanese, largely remnants of the KMT force in Southeast Asia, helped to ensure that they were seen as “KMT Yunnanese people” in Northern Thailand, and therefore had almost no relations with mainland China from the 1960s to 1980s.

In this stage, even though many of these first generation of Yunnanese in Northern Thailand were able to maintain their “Yunnanese identity” in terms of the Yunnan dialect, traditional rituals and folk customs in their daily practice, the sense of Chinese identity for these elder Yunnanese was deeply tied to their political affiliation. And their sense of Chinese identity for the elder generation of Yunnanese largely came under the sway of the national identity of Republic of China on Taiwan. During my field trip in Mae Salong in 2016, I found that many of my informants were descendants of former KMT soldiers, and most of them recalled that their father’s generations had been highly influenced by their soldier’s career, which always made them “self-consciously consider themselves as old Yunnanese soldiers of the Kuomintang” as one informant told me. Besides, the chairmen of local village committee of Mae Salong also recounted to me that, “since the early 1970s, the resources and support of the Taiwan government to KMT villages was mainly concentrated in Mae Salong village due to the former core forces—the 5th Army of the KMT 93rd Division were relocated here”. Hence, in this period, the KMT Yunnanese groups in Mae Salong, then the dominant town in Thailand with Yunnanese in it, were generally perceived as the core of the Yunnanese community in Northern Thailand. All of the informants I interviewed, all of whom were former Yunnanese civilian refugees who were fled from Yunnan to Mae Salong at late 1970s, stressed to me that KMT families in Mae Salong have preferential rights to get assistance from the KMT party of Taiwan (at the time the only political party allowed there), and most of Yunnanese’s living conditions had been significantly improved “because they are first group of people who were taught by Taiwanese to develop business, such as tea processing and tourism.” Since many of the Yunnanese there were civilian refugees of Yunnan, they did not have intense political stances like the KMT families in Mae Salong, but they still often tried to merge into the KMT

Yunnanese group since it had such political, social and economic dominance in that time. This situation has led many people – both inside and outside the village – to consider Mae Salong village as a “KMT Yunnanese village” as one scholar has called it (Chang, 1999). The close relations of Mae Salong with the people and especially the government of Taiwan are reflected in various aspects in local political culture, and the “KMT village” is widely adopted as a marketing slogan by local people in Mae Salong to attract tourists today.

Ban Hin Taek village, by contrast, has also been home to Yunnanese people for many decades, and it has kept close connections with KMT Yunnanese after Khun Sa made it a key base, and due to his personal relations with KMT force. The relation between Khun Sa and KMT forces in this early stage could be traced back to the early 1950s, after the KMT forces completely failed in the Chinese Civil War and withdrew to Thai-Burma border in late 1950s, and a part of remains of KMT force were split into several local armed forces in both Burma and Northern Thailand. A part of these KMT forces established a provisional Military University ‘the University of Anti-communist & Soviet Union’ in Mong Hsat of Burma. According to the exhibition contents in the Civil Museum of Northern Thailand, although this provisional military university only existed for two years, it trained a number of controversial leaders in the local armed forces of the Golden Triangle area: besides Khun Sa, there was Lo Hsing-han, Pheung Kya-shin, and others.



Figure 16: Khun Sa's memorial Museum in Ban Hin Taek village
Source: This photo was taken by author on February of 2017

According to the information found in Khun Sa's memorial museum in Ban Hin Taek, during the mid-1950s, Khun Sa established his small armed force, and many

former KMT soldiers gained important position after his force resettled in Ban Hin Taek village at 1964. Arguably the best known former KMT soldier was Zhang Suquan, who was deputy leader of Khun Sa's forces. The displayed information in this museum also showed that the Taiwan government appointed Khun Sa as "committee member of Oversea Chinese Association (Chinese: 华侨协会联合会第四届执行委员会参事)" in 1969, which aimed to ensure support from Khun Sa's forces for the KMT, which still wanted to counter-attack mainland China. In addition, as the first donor of funds, Khun Sa's Chinese name Chang Chi-fu (in Chinese: 张奇夫) had been carved on the tombstone of the former major leader of KMT 93rd Division—Duan Wenxi's cemetery in Mae Salong village. Many of materials and clues which I found in both Ban Hin Taek village and Mae Salong village indicate the close relations among Khun Sa, Ban Hin Taek and the KMT force during this period. Nowadays, however, many photo materials of Khun Sa where was displayed in the Civil Museum of Northern Thailand of Mae Salong village have been covered or erased. As one of my informants explained, the reason for this is because the Yunnanese people are afraid the Khun Sa's image may allow the Thai publics are relate them with the stereotype such as "Jin-Haw or drug traffickers", and those depicted label as "the descendants of drug trafficker" had "brought dilemma, prejudice and even discrimination to their group". Nonetheless, from 1960s to 1970s, it is true that Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek have kept a close relation with Taiwan government through the Khun Sa's effect.

In 1975, Khun Sa personally gave the financial support to local Yunnanese group to build the first Chinese school of Ban Hin Taek (it called Da Tong School of Ban Hin Taek, Chinese: 满星叠大同中学). The record of school history of Da Tong School shows that Khun Sa has hired one former officer of 93rd KMT Army was first president of this Chinese school, and the major teaching staff in this Chinese School are come from KMT force. As one of my informant recalled, on one side, Khun Sa named this Chinese school as "Da Tong (Chinese: 大同)" meaning he expected to follow the "great harmony" ideology which was advocated by Sun Yat-sen, and put

the famous Confucian view “make no social distinctions in teaching (Chinese: 有教无类)” into effected in the educational philosophy of this school. This educational philosophy made many young child who come from highland minority family have chance to receive education. On the other side, one former soldier of Khun Sa’s force has recalled to me that the half-Chinese lineage “made Khun Sa have a strong sense of his Han identity”, it drives him to encouraged his troops and the local villagers of Ban Hin Taek to accepted Chinese education. At this stage, however, due to lack of education resources, the Chinese education in Da Tong School was largely depended on the available language knowledge of these KMT Chinese teachers. And for those Chinese teachers in the Da Tong School, they still followed the traditional methods of Chinese education in the period of the Republic of China, which has deeply influenced by traditional Confucianism and the “military effect of Kuomintang”. At that stage, many of second generation of Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek recalled that “the main purpose to us to accepted Chinese education is not only to learn textual knowledge but also have to accept military training in school.” This teaching method has made effect of Taiwan have indirect reflected on the second generation of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek village, which made many of them consider the political culture of KMT as an important element that shaped their Chinese identity. Although the Chinese education have helped Yunnanese people to maintain their distinctive Chinese identity in terms of language and traditional ethnic culture, but it also made the Chinese identity of Yunnanese people was tightly related to their political stand.

Overall, at this early stage, the isolated situation of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek made them hard to created contact with other oversea Chinese among Southeast Asia, and the political stand of KMT Yunnanese was also made the indirect relation of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek with Taiwan became more tightly but also politically. This situation made the “Chinese identity” negotiation process of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek was under the significant effect of political culture of KMT force, and it shape important part of Yunnanese’s Chinese identity at that stage.

3. 1980s to early 2000s: the effect of educational link with Taiwan

For most KMT Yunnanese people—the descendants of KMT soldiers who fled China in 1950 or so after being defeated by the Communist forces—living in Northern Thailand, the stage of 1980s was generally regarded as the turning point for their predicament. At this stage, many press report in mainstream Taiwanese media did not only attract a lot of attention in Taiwan society, but the area also got more notice from other transnational Chinese groups in Hong Kong. An especially important moment was the publication of Bo Yang's novel *Alien Realm* (Chinese: 異域, Yiyu)²⁷ in Taiwan and Hong Kong from 1970s to 1980s. This novel was also turned into two films, in 1990 and 1993, respectively. The dramatic presentation of the history of KMT Yunnanese in these two films helped to remind some parts of the Chinese transnational community, albeit in a fictionalized way, of the sacrifices that the Yunnanese group made for a China that was lost and different from the China on the mainland and now getting more recognition. The effects of Bo Yang's novel and films made of them, brought new attention to the KMT Yunnanese people in Mae Salong village of Chiang Rai province from people in Taiwan, and also from Hong Kong and Singapore at that stage.

During the 1980s, the Taiwan government took measures to help the living conditions of the KMT Yunnanese people in Northern Thailand by providing money, resources and expertise for infrastructure and Chinese language and culture education. As regard to the aid program of Taiwan government for KMT Yunnanese people in Northern Thailand, it mainly concentrated on the improvement of Chinese education resources and living condition in each “KMT Yunnanese village” during 1980s, and these Chinese education institutions have been regard as most important medium which link the Yunnanese in Northern Thailand with people of Taiwan.

²⁷ This compelling story cemented the image of ethnic Yunnanese in Southeast Asia as heirs to the KMT, but it was a novel that has only tangential links to history. And most information of his film also misled the people in Taiwan, Hong Kong and the other overseas Chinese groups in Southeast Asia by presenting all Yunnanese groups of Northern Thailand as dependents of the KMT 93rd Army.

At same period, according to the record of school history of Da Tong Chinese school, the Chinese education in the Ban Hin Taek village have been worst affected by the battle between Thai Army and Khun Sa's force in 1982, many students and teacher were injured and died during this battle. Nonetheless, the former principal of Da Tong Chinese school told to me that under the financial support of Khun Sa and donation of villagers, the school were soon rebuild after the battle, "and school have received many assistant and teaching materials from Taiwan since that time". And the Da Tong Chinese School has also become an important medium which maintained the relation of Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek with people of Taiwan.



Figure 17: Da Tong Chinese school in Ban Hin Taek village
Source: This photo was taken by author on February of 2017

At that stage, the teachers of this school were still mainly consisted of the former KMT officer and the "defector" from the Great Cultural Revolution of China. And the teaching materials form Taiwan had effectively elevated the quality of Chinese education. But one of my informants-Mr. Li who have accepted Chinese education in Ban Hin Taek has recalled that most of teachers in local Chinese school were "fully adopted Taiwan's way to teaching us which made us have strong political bias to mainland China since we are very young." And this informant also mentioned that the local Chinese school in Ban Hin Taek villages were also pay a lot of attention to military training for young students, and "students of local Chinese school have to spend majority of time to learned political and military thing that advocated by Khun Sa." During 1980s, as same as other Chinese school in KMT Yunnanese villages, the students of Da Tong Chinese School have also deeply influenced by "Taiwan's educational method". Although these young generations of Yunnanese people in local

Chinese schools have also accepted traditional Chinese education and adopted Chinese culture as an indispensable part of their distinct Chinese identity, the political polarization with mainland China served as a potential idea that made major effect to those second and third generations of Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek. As Mr. Li mentioned that the Yunnanese students at that time “only able to learn the knowledge of China from the Taiwan’s book, and it deepened our fears to mainland China but made us think we have very close relation with people in Taiwan.” Besides, the Chinese educations at this stage have not only given young Yunnanese a strong sense of political identity of Taiwan, but it also cultivated specific good will of young generations for Taiwan. In contrast to the first generation of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek, the understandings of “Chinese identity” for many second and third generations of Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek have been transformed. One interesting example is come from my observation of field trip in Ban Hin Taek that majority of Yunnanese people who were born from early 1970s to late 1980s are able to speak fluent mandarin with distinctive Taiwan accent, and local residents said that most people from this generation have working experience in Taiwan, “many of them have returned to Ban Hin Taek around 2000 due to citizenship problem in Taiwan”. And based on my observation in village, Yunnanese from this generation is become hard core in village that are devoted to maintaining and developing relation of Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek with people of Taiwan in terms of local Chinese education and tourist cooperation.

In the 1980s, the Taiwan government, under the encouragement of the Thai government, sought to help more stateless Yunnanese in Northern Thailand acquire legal citizenship in Taiwan (Hung, 2017). Toward this end, they formulated policies which provided dozens of full scholarships in each year for the descendants of former KMT soldiers. These policies allowed most Yunnanese students who got the full scholarship to study in Taiwan to soon get legal citizenship on Taiwan, regardless of their stateless status. At that stage, the Taiwanese government policy was seen by young Yunnanese people as the most promising way to proceed, especially for those unable to get legal Thai citizenship in Ban Hin Taek and other Yunnanese villages. One informant who now is an employer of local a tea factory in Ban Hin Taek

received a full scholarship from Taiwan. He told me that the good relations of Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek with people of Taiwan made their generation has “strongly yearn to live in Taiwan” so that many of them “regarded Taiwan as the dream destination under the educational effect of local Chinese school”. He further mentioned that many Yunnanese people of this generation also had an affinity with Taiwan’s pop culture, which made them “want to try all available means to go to Taiwan”.

From the late 1980s, however, as the Taiwan government added more restrictions to Yunnanese to go to Taiwan, all stateless Yunnanese students in Ban Hin Taek and other Yunnanese villages found it more difficult to apply for Taiwan’s full scholarship. They also supported new efforts to develop economic livelihood of Yunnanese in the area by promoting growing tea and other crops (Hung, 2017). Then, in 1992, the Taiwan government completed cut off the state-financed scholarship program for Yunnanese students in Northern Thailand. That made it much more difficult for Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek to get legal citizenship in Taiwan. From 1980s to late 1990s, because the Yunnanese people of Northern Thailand strongly relied on the educational resources support from Kuomintang Party in Taiwan, the problem of stateless Yunnanese people have not been taken seriously by the Taiwan government when Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) took power in 2000. Even though this issue has been given more attention when Kuomintang party return to power on Taiwan from 2008, it is still difficult for many thousands of stateless Yunnanese young people to have a regular livelihood on Taiwan.²⁸ As Ms. Zhang, one of my informants, recalled about her ten years of life in Taiwan, she became aware that “the Yunnanese were perceived by Taiwanese society as a vulnerable group”, and also that they usually “looked down by urban Taiwanese”. In addition, after the ruling party of the Taiwanese government changed into the Democratic Progressive Party in 2000, the strong political identity of Yunnanese people, who

²⁸ The above information is mainly referred to the information from news report as follow:

(1). Title: Descendants of former Kuomintang soldiers to obtain residency, Taiwan News, July 16, 2008, <http://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/692934>;

(2). Title: Descendants of KMT soldiers living in limbo, Taipei Times, Nov 03, 2007, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2007/11/03/2003385991>;

were close to the stereotype of “KMT descendants” or “KMT stateless refugees” had less value, and even led to their marginalization in terms of DDP policy. Since most Yunnanese in Taiwan still maintained as intense sense of their Chinese—i.e., KMT—identity as their father’s generation, the “de-China-zation policy” of President Chen Shui-bian made further eroded the social status of Yunnanese people on Taiwan²⁹ (Central News Agency, July 16, 2008; Lee, Jun 26, 2008; Loa, Nov 03, 2007; "Taiwanese ID remains a dream for some people," Jun 26, 2008). As Ms. Li mentioned, a large amount of Taiwan media was sent to the Yunnanese and struggle tensions between KMT and DDP party made many Yunnanese frustrated and then return to Thailand, mostly “because we felt that going to Taiwan would be like returning home, but the Taiwanese people tended to see us as illegal migrant workers”.

After these and other policy changes on Taiwan, many of the Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek started looking for work in large cities in Thailand rather than on Taiwan. From the early 1990s, the relations of changes of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek with Taiwan also made the understanding of many Yunnanese people for their “Chinese identity” and political identity have been gradually transformed. And the passive social status of Yunnanese people in Taiwan society also drives them tried to reexamine their relations with transnational Chinese on Taiwan.

In general, at this stage, the relations of the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek with Taiwan stems mostly from aid and ties that relate to Chinese education and resources. Taiwanese aid helped to shape the attitudes and sense of being Chinese for many of the second and third generation of Yunnanese, so that Taiwan’s politics and culture loomed large for them. This bias also meant that they often had less knowledge of and

²⁹ (3). Title: Taiwanese ID remains a dream for some people, Taipei Times, Jun 26, 2008, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2008/06/26/2003415705>

(4). Title: KMT troops’ descendents may earn resident status, Taipei Times, Jul 05, 2008, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2008/07/05/2003416583>

(5). Special series: the Protest of Thai-Burma Chinese in 2008 (Chinese: 2008泰緬華人抗爭), CoolLoud website (Chinese: 苦勞網)) July 03, 2008, <http://www.coolcloud.org.tw/tag/2008%E6%B3%B0%E7%B7%AC%E8%8F%AF%E4%BA%BA%E6%8A%97%E7%88%AD?page=0%2C1>.

did not understand mainland China as much in this time. But the political and educational links of Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek with Taiwan, whether directly or indirectly, made their understanding of “Chinese identity” for many second and third generations of Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek affected their favorable views toward the transnational Chinese in Taiwan and less than favorable views of mainland China. And this generation had a strong influence on the relations of Yunnanese with transnational Chinese and to Taiwan. However, the dilemma and the issue of legal citizenship which Yunnanese group have encountered in Taiwan society made them realized their low social status in today’s Taiwan society. And it also becomes a key turning point that made Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek to re-examine their relation with transnational Chinese in Taiwan.

4. From early 2000s to today: conflicts on Chinese language education between Taiwan and China

As mentioned above, the new DPP takeover the Taiwanese government in 2000 led to policy changes that affected relations between the Yunnanese people in Northern Thailand and the transnational Chinese of Taiwan have gradually transformed since early 2000s. Nonetheless, the sustained resources support of Taiwan government and non-government organization made significant effect on the Chinese education in Ban Hin Taek. However, the conflicts among different Chinese educational institutions and associations have resulted in the significant change on the relation of Yunnanese in Northern Thailand and mainland China. And these changes also has had dramatic effects on the Chinese education of Yunnanese in Northern Thailand today. The information of this section mainly derives from my interviews at each Chinese educational institution which I visited during my field trip in early 2016. I combine it with different information produced by the chairmen of each institution. I organized the section in a chronological way to better show the major changes that have occurred.

From the late 1990s, Chinese education of Yunnanese people in Northern Thailand became legal and could be openly taught. Once the Thai government

rescinded the old ban on Chinese education from 1990, many Chinese schools in Northern Thailand quickly opened and their numbers expanded. As a result, there are now more than ten Chinese Schools that have opened around Ban Hin Taek and nearby villages. Soon afterwards, in 2003, the Chinese Teachers' Association of Chiang Mai (Chinese: 清迈教师联谊会) and the Chinese Teachers' Association of Chiang Rai (Chinese: 清莱教师联谊会) were established with support of the Yunnan Association (Chinese: 云南会馆). The main initial purpose of the Chinese Teachers' Association was to provide schools with Chinese language teaching materials from Taiwan, along with social resources and the right protection for each legal Chinese school in Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai provinces. There are now nearly ninety Chinese schools spread among Yunnanese villages of Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai and Mae Hongson that registered as members of the Taiwan-supported Chinese Teachers' Association. This development gave Taiwan a strong place in restoring Chinese language teaching and culture in Northern Thailand. With the founding and expansion of these teachers' associations in the early 2000s, Chinese educational institutions in Northern Thailand have brought significant advantages to local Yunnanese group in terms of their Chinese educational resources. So in the early 2000s, Chinese language teaching in Northern Thailand was largely associated with the transnational Chinese of Taiwan.

In 2006, however, the Consulate General of the PRC was opened in Chiang Mai. Among its many activities, it established relations with several Yunnanese area schools, such as in Arunothai village (บ้านอรุโณทัย) of Chiang Mai. This development led to a dispute with the Taiwan-run Chinese Teachers' Association of Chiang Mai and both the Yunnanese Association and the Chinese Teachers' Association in Chiang Rai about the right materials and way to teach the Chinese language, debating about what the right materials and the right educational resources should be. Subsequently, both the Yunnan Association and the Taiwan government have cut off the educational resources and material assistance to the Chinese schools in Chiang Mai province which have established relation with the Consulate General of the PRC China in

Chiang Mai. As a result, because of the use of educational resources and support from the PRC, in 2010, the Chinese Teachers' Association of Chiang Mai (which includes 23 local Chinese schools in Chiang Mai province) separated itself from the former Yunnanese institution which retained strong ties to the Kuomintang Party of Taiwan (which had returned to power in 2009). And then, in 2011, the Chinese Teachers' Association of Chiang Mai became the Senior High School of Chinese Teacher's Association of Chiang Mai (*Qingmai gaoji jiaolian zhongxue*, 清迈高级教联中学) in Arunothai village (บ้านอรุโณทัย) of Chiang Mai. It is the main co-operating Chinese educational institution in Northern Thailand for both the Chinese Teachers' Association of Chiang Mai and the PRC government.



Figure 18: Yunnan Association of Chiang Rai

Source: This photo was taken by author on February of 2017 at Mea Sai city



Figure 19: Senior High School of Chinese Teachers' Association of Chiang Mai

Source: This photo was taken by author on February of 2017 at Arunothai village

More recently, some schools in Chiang Rai villages have also started to use resources and books from the PRC. The Chinese educational institutions in Yunnanese villages of Chiang Mai province were seen as “competing” with both Yunnan Association and the Chinese Teachers’ Association of Chiang Rai in terms of their educational resources, cultural identity and political allegiance. In the last five years, two local Chinese schools —Hui Peng Chinese School and Jian Qun Chinese School, which belong to the Chinese Teachers’ Association of Chiang Rai—have joined the “counter-association” in Chiang Mai. Both these Chinese schools were geographically close to Ban Hin Taek village, and many Yunnanese students of Ban Hin Taek today also study Chinese in Hui Peng Chinese School. As a result, the educational resources and cultural resources of mainland China have also started to influence the region around Ban Hin Taek, and even been attracting students from Ban Hin Taek. This change has not only had an impact on local Yunnanese people in terms of their “Chinese identity” and political identity, but it also is reflected in the inner conflict of Chinese education institutions in Ban Hin Taek. In the next subsection of this chapter, I will use Ban Hin Taek as an example to further analyze how this “competitive relation” between two local Chinese educational institutions could influence the flexible form of “Chinese identity” for Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek. And based on this case, the follow sections will also focus on how the conflict of Chinese education in Ban Hin Taek and Ban Hui Peng village has effected the relation of Yunnanese there with transnational Chinese from China today.

4.1 The competition for educational resources

As discussed in chapter three, Ban Hui Peng (บ้านห้วยผึ้ง) has had close trading relations with Ban Hin Taek village in recent years. Ban Hui Peng and Ban Hin Taek are only kilometer apart, and since Ban Hui Peng has the second largest Yunnanese population. The basin where Ban Hin Taek and Ban Hui Peng both lay is generally considered as one of biggest central regions of Yunnanese people in Mae Fah Luang district of Chiang Rai province. Most children of Yunnanese families in Ban Hin Taek and Ban Hui Peng today would be expected to get a basic Thai education in the

corresponding Thai school of their village. But as to the choice of Chinese education, for most Yunnanese young children in both villages, which one they study in depends on the wishes of their parents. Since Chinese schools have been established in both Ban Hin Taek and Ban Hui Peng, students were normally automatically sent to nearest Chinese Schools, so there was little competition for students' resource between two schools. But in the last five years or so, there are an increasing number of young Chinese students in both villages, and many Yunnanese people of Ban Hin Taek have chosen to send their children to the Chinese School of Ban Hui Peng. Moreover, there are more Yunnanese students in Ban Hui Peng who study Chinese in Da Tong Chinese School of Ban Hin Taek. In addition, many local students from highland minority families also go to study at the Chinese Schools in these two villages. Since 2014, the neighboring Chinese schools in Ban Hui Peng have openly received Chinese educational resources support from the Chinese Teachers Association of Chiang Mai and the government of mainland China. Moreover, many educational resources of mainland China have entered into nearby Ban Hin Taek in terms of Chinese teaching materials and Chinese volunteer teachers.

These developments have produced a small "Chinese educational reform" for Yunnanese people in both Ban Hin Taek and Ban Hui Peng. Like other educational institutions of the Chinese Teachers Association of Chiang Mai, the Chinese School of Ban Hui Peng had to adopt both Chinese teaching materials and the teaching methods of mainland China. The school was also required to abandon their Taiwan's teaching methods and earlier Chinese teaching materials which were provided by Taiwan government. Because Taiwan's teaching materials and mainland China's teaching materials are quite different, the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of The State Council in China has organized the local Chinese teachers in Ban Hui Peng to attend training courses in Yunnan province in order to help those teachers use the new Chinese teaching materials of mainland China more effectively. After this, although the Chinese School of Ban Hui Peng started to adopt new teaching materials of mainland China, it still largely maintains many of the earlier teaching materials and teaching method of Taiwan. This was because the school principal was concern that the Simplified character Chinese teaching materials of mainland China were very

different from the traditional character Chinese teaching materials of Taiwan. This difference embodies a big difference in “Chinese culture” between mainland China and Taiwan and it has both cultural and political dimensions in terms of “Chinese identity”. Since the Da Tong Chinese School of Ban Hin Taek and most of the Chinese schools in Chiang Rai province “are still firmly standing on Taiwan’s side” in this matter, the principal of Chinese school in Ban Hui Peng told me that they are afraid to “abandon Taiwan’s teaching materials and teaching method may let this school to be isolated by other Chinese educational institutions in this area”.

At present, in May 2017, the Da Tong Chinese School of Ban Hin Taek village continues teaching Chinese using traditional Chinese characters and the Chinese language education system used on Taiwan. Moreover, it prominently displayed the Republic of China (Taiwan) flag and the portrait of Sun Yat-sen in the classroom. In the last twenty years, many non-government development organizations of Taiwan have also regularly sent volunteer teachers from Taiwan to Da Tong Chinese School of Ban Hin Taek village. This has helped to keep tight and close relations of Chinese School of Ban Hin Taek with people of Taiwan by retaining more cultural contact between transnational Chinese people of Taiwan and Yunnanese people of Ban Hin Taek. However, the long term educational assistance of Taiwan has also made part of the Yunnanese people realize that both Taiwan’s teaching materials and teaching methods may not suitable for Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek in a changing global environment where the sense of what it means to be Chinese is changing. As several local Chinese teachers in Da Tong Chinese School have complained to me, neither the mainland Chinese teaching materials nor Taiwan’s teaching materials were suitable for the Yunnanese students of Ban Hin Taek, because “there is a big gap between contents of textbooks and Yunnanese student’s ways of thinking and living”. That is, the students want to learn the Chinese language, but the cultural references and ways of thinking as found in both countries’ teaching materials are quite different in both Taiwan and in China. These teachers also mentioned that both sets of teaching materials focus a lot on the “correct Chinese identity and Taiwanese identity with political bias”, which may give young Yunnanese students in Ban Hin Taek village “an excessively prejudicial or unrealistic yearning for Taiwan and mainland China

today”. Many educators and committee leaders in Ban Hin Taek and Ban Hui Peng have also expressed their hopes of keeping long term favorable relations with all kinds of transnational Chinese groups, whether from Taiwan, mainland China, or Singapore, Malaysia or elsewhere, but they also hope to maintain their “low-profile” Chinese identity to protect their group away from political conflict between mainland China and Taiwan. This is important since they are living in Thailand, not in either Taiwan or China. Many of the young generation of Yunnanese people nowadays have strong sense of being part of Thailand and so have a strong Thai identity. And they think that an overemphasis on their “Chinese identity” may make it harder for them to be seen as Thai enough and so they will be seen as “outsiders” to mainstream Thai society. This may also let Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek have a hard time to integrate themselves into today’s Thai society.

Even though this small “Chinese educational reform” has not had a large effect on either Ban Hin Taek village or Ban Hui Peng village yet, the rising role of China today has made most Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek change their old view about mainland China today. With the explosion of Chinese tourist and increasingly economic cooperation between Thailand and mainland China, most Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek have realized that accepting a Simplified character Chinese language education in Chinese School might become a valuable choice for the next generation. In the last three years, the teaching materials of Chinese School in Ban Hui Peng still largely maintained Taiwan’s traditional method, but this school has also continuously accepted volunteer teachers from mainland China under the assistance of the Chinese Teachers’ Association of Chiang Mai. Those young Chinese volunteer teachers have mainly come from the Yunnan province in China. Because these teachers share a similar cultural background with Yunnanese people in both Ban Hin Taek and Ban Hui Peng, it let them integrate themselves into the local life in two villages in terms of language and local custom. During my field trip in Ban Hin Taek, many local Yunnanese villagers have expressed approval of the attitudes that these volunteer teachers of China have due to their “effective help of local Chinese education, which has made the young generation form positive views about mainland China and Taiwan.” However, the principal of Da Tong Chinese School does not agree this

method of their neighboring Chinese School, and emphasizing that the Chinese School should maintained Taiwan's pattern of teaching and organization. When I visited different Yunnanese villages in the Chiang Rai area, indeed, this attitude was relatively common for many Chinese school principal in the area. In fact, most local Chinese school's principals in Yunnanese villages of Chiang Rai are heirs to "KMT families", and many of them kept the traditional positive political view of Chinese identity as residing in the Kuomintang Party on Taiwan today. The attitudes of these school principals directly made great influence on local Chinese education in Ban Hin Taek, which made many young generations have a political bias against mainland China. Nowadays, Chinese education in Ban Hin Taek and other Yunnanese villages in Chiang Rai province is still dominated by heirs of the former KMT leaders, all of whom come from a KMT background. As some of my interviewees have mentioned, even though the local Chinese school in Ban Hin Taek highlights a strong political identity with Taiwan, it is not representative of all Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek. They also secretly complained to me that they do not want their young generation become the victim of the political conflict of Chinese educational institutions between the Taiwan-leaning Chiang Rai schools and the PRC-leaning Chiang Mai area schools. They thought that best way to encourage young Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek to maintain their Chinese identity is to create more favorable and regular interactions with a wide range of transnational Chinese groups, such as those from Singapore, Malaysia, the USA, and not just those tied to Taiwan or China.

4.2 The Fluid form of "Chinese identity": Memorial ceremony and Festival

Nowadays, most Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek village are of the second and third generation of residents, descendants from the KMT. Even though the Yunnanese leaders of local committee have put a large effort into Chinese education, the numbers of multilingual speakers have declined in third and fourth generations. Because of this, both Yunnan Association and the Chinese Teachers' Association of Chiang Rai have placed more emphasis on hosting memorial ceremonies and cultural festivals as ways aiming to strengthen Chinese identity of young Yunnanese peoples in Northern Thailand today. It has been demonstrated in various social events of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek, such as the celebration of the Spring Festival and the Mid-

Autumn Festival. In the follow section, I will use my observant and interviews at several different social occasions which the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek encountered to further analyze how Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek negotiate their Chinese identity in different social scenes.

4.2.1 The Memorial Ceremony for Confucius

Like other Yunnanese groups in Northern Thailand, besides the traditional Chinese festivals such as the Spring Festival and the Mid-Autumn Festival, the Memorial Ceremony for Confucius (Chinese: 祭孔典礼) is regarded as one of most important social activities for Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek village. Under the influence of transnational Chinese from Taiwan, a memorial ceremony for Confucius is held and Yunnanese also see it as Teacher's Day for local Chinese teachers. It generally is hosted in the Da Tong Chinese School of Ban Hin Taek village on September 28th each year. Most parents of Yunnanese families in Ban Hin Taek also consider this ceremony as an indispensable activity which may let the young generation gain a strong sense of Chinese identity. During the Culture Revolution in mainland China, because the traditional Memorial Ceremony for Confucius was considered as a feudalistic and superstitious activity by the ruling party, the Memorial Ceremony for Confucius almost disappeared from mainstream culture of China since early 1960s. Nonetheless, the rituals of Memorial Ceremony for Confucius are still deeply part of people in Taiwan and Korean today. Hence, to some extent, holding the Memorial Ceremony for Confucius also reflected close relation of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek with transnational Chinese in Taiwan today. For this activity, several key leaders of oversea Chinese educational institutions of Chiang Rai province, local Thai officers, and director of Taiwan's non-government organization and the key member of village committee are invited. At the beginning of the ceremony, all participants were required to stand up to sing the Thai National Anthem, and then sing the National Anthem of the Republic of China. After this, all participants made three bows to the portrait of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej along with the portrait of Sun Yat-sen. Next, the follow core rituals done by the students. Although these rituals of the Memorial Ceremony for Confucius in Da Tong Chinese School of Ban

Hin Taek are simplified by local Yunnanese people, they still well maintained the core part of this ritual, such as the ritual of beating the drum three times (Chinese: 三击鼓), thrice kneeling and nine times bowing (Chinese: 三跪九叩), Eight Yi dance (Chinese: 八佾舞) and other rites.



Figure 20: The Memorial Ceremony for Confucius in Da Tong Chinese School
Source: This photo was provided by the staff of Da Tong Chinese School

This traditional Chinese ritual for Confucius is also something that Chinese people in mainland China for the last decade or so have been revitalizing as part of enhancing Confucian traditions and state authority. But since this tradition disappeared about half a century ago in mainstream Chinese culture of mainland China, most young Chinese people in China today barely know it. There are few people in China today who consider this tradition as important to mark their Chinese identity. By contrast, this ceremony is widely done to gain support by Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek and other Yunnanese village in Northern Thailand today, and it also considered as a crucial indicator for Yunnanese people there as a way to embody a key dimension of their “Chinese identity” under transnational Chinese influence from Taiwan. In addition, the Memorial Ceremony for Confucius as an important embodiment of Confucianism independent of any state, not only reflecting high respect for Yunnanese’s and traditional Chinese respect for Chinese teachers, but it also shows that the Da Tong Chinese School in Ban Hin Taek still plays a key role in keeping cultural relation and ethnic relation between Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek and transnational Chinese of Taiwan, as well as more general Chinese traditions.

4.2.2 Memorial Day for the National Protection War

Another important social activity that shows the “effect of transnational Chinese of Taiwan” but also of the importance of Yunnan in Chinese history, appears in the shaping of Chinese identity and political identity of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek today by the Memorial Day for National Protection War, also known as anti-Monarchy War, which took place between 1915 to 1916, during the early Republican period, when there was a fear that an emperor would return to China. The memorial day commemorated Yunnanese efforts to restore the Republic of China. There was a short war that started as a reaction to Yuan Shi-kai’s efforts to end the Republic of China start a new Chinese empire in late 1915 just a few years after the Qing empire ended. Although Yuan was the first full president of the Republic of China since 1912, he declared himself Emperor on December 12, 1915. This was a major threat to the young Republic and led to a short-lived civil war in China and so a short war was fought in late 1915 and early 1916. This war had a strong Yunnan connection, since three military leaders there, Tang Jiyao, Cai E, and Li Liejun declared independence from Yuan’s new empire. They formed a National Protection Army to fight against Yuan. They also declared the independence of Yunnan on December 25th, 1915. This day marks a successful defense of the young republic. The National Protection War also symbolized the start of the separation between the North and the South after the establishment of the Republic of China, which is regarded as crucial stage of the process of democracy for the Republic of China.³⁰

Nowadays, the Yunnan Association in both Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai province have hosted this social activity on December 25th each year in the past twenty years. Today, to emphasis the important status of Yunnanese people in the past National Protection War, the Yunnan Association of Chiang Rai has renamed this activity as the Memorial Day of Yunnan’s National Protection War (Chinese: 云南首义护国纪念日). Every year, important figures of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in

³⁰ Sun Yat-sen proposed December 25th as National Day for the Republic of China. Even though his proposal was not accepted at that stage, the Memorial Day of National Protection War was considered as one of most important days of national remembrance in Taiwan until today.

Thailand, the former KMT soldiers in Yunnanese villages and Chinese teachers were invited as representatives. Like other Yunnanese villages in Chiang Rai province, the village committee of Ban Hin Taek would send several Yunnanese people as representatives to attend this social activity in the Yunnan Association of Chiang Rai. This activity was generally held as a banquet, where all participants were required to stand up and first sing the Thai National Anthem, and then sing the National Anthem



Figure 21: The activity for Memorial Day of Yunnan's National Protection War in Yunnan Association of Chiang Rai

Source: This photo was provided by Yunnan Association of Chiang Rai

of the Republic of China. After this, several keynote speakers gave speeches about the National Protection War. But the “effect of Taiwan” in this commemorative activity is reflected by the interior decoration of banquet hall. For example, the main hall of Yunnan Association has been fully decorated with the national flags of Thailand and Taiwan as the Republic of China, and the portrait of Sun Yat-sen is hang in the most prominent position of the wall. As the chairmen of Yunnan Association mentioned to me, this activity shows the crucial status of Yunnan in the early history of the Republic of China, and it also “reflected closely relation of Yunnanese people in Northern Thailand with the people of Taiwan today”. Due to the political polarization between China and Taiwan, few in China know about the history of National Protection War and it is not commemorated in most of China today. However, until recently, there were occasional commemorative activities about the Protection War held in Kunming, Yunnan in China. To some extent, through the early historical event of the Republic of China, the social activities of Yunnanese shows that Yunnanese

people of Chiang Rai today still share strong sense of Chinese identity and political identity with transnational Chinese people in Taiwan, and link that to Yunnan.

4.2.3 The social activities with official institution of China

There are a number of newer celebrations done by Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek today to show their tied to the PRC and its people. These celebrations help to promote a positive relationship with transnational Chinese people from China. With the opening of the Consulate General of the PRC China in Chiang Mai in 2006, they have assisted local Chinese schools in neighboring Yunnanese villages of Ban Hin Taek. This has helped the China's overseas institutions in Northern Thailand to play a positive role to effectively introduced social resources from other transnational Chinese of Southeast Asia to Yunnanese villages in Northern Thailand. For example, the Consulate General of the PRC China in Chiang Mai has prompted donations from many overseas Chinese chambers of commerce from Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong to get materials and equipment that promote facilities in local Chinese schools of Yunnanese villages in Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai in past ten years.

The steps taken by overseas Chinese institution in Chiang Mai have inspired many private investors from China to establish business cooperation ventures with Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek village and other Yunnanese village of Northern Thailand in their tourism, their agriculture products, and other exports in Thailand. In order to maintain this good relations with the people of China, Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek also actively attend various social activities and event which held by overseas Chinese institution in Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai provinces. One of most important social events of overseas Chinese is the Reception of PRC China's National Day, which is held by the Consulate General of the PRC China in Chiang Mai each year. The Reception of PRC China's National Day in Chiang Mai is considered one of most important social events by the government of China and it is promoted and run to enhance relations with different oversea Chinese communities in Northern Thailand. This social event would also widely invite important figures of the local Thai government, representatives of Chinese educational institutions, among others. Even though this overseas Chinese meeting has mainly created stable relations with

Yunnanese people in Chiang Mai rather than in Chiang Rai, the Yunnanese representatives of Ban Hin Taek and other Yunnanese villages of Chiang Rai have been gradually attending in larger numbers for this social event in past five years.

With the rise of China's economic and political roles in today's world, many Yunnanese in Chiang Rai province also have formed more positive views of China even as most of them also maintained close relations with Taiwan's government. Most of the Yunnanese communities of merchants in Chiang Rai have realized that by promoting relation with overseas Chinese government agencies and people of China may bring more business opportunities to Yunnanese people in Chiang Rai area in terms of their tourist business. But when I visited Yunnanese Association of Chiang Rai, the main leader has told his opinion to me that he thought "some local Yunnanese over frequent to attended social events with China's oversea agency made them feel betrayed, because it means those people were also showed their political identity with China government which is largely against the principal of Yunnan Association". However, with growing social influence of China's oversea institutions among each Chinese community in Northern Thailand, the young leaders of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek have also tried to promote the contact with transnational Chinese of China. As one of them told me, he thinks it does not contradict their Chinese identity to kept contact and maintained good relations with transnational Chinese groups from both China and Taiwan, because the rising role of China to a large degree stimulated their motivation to maintain Chinese identity. And those young generations of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek and other village of Northern Thailand were also inspired from the successful experiences of other oversea Chinese in central Thailand, which has motivated Yunnanese people tried to create more positive interactions and social connections with different transnational Chinese groups in today's world.

4.2.4 Visiting Relatives in Yunnan

In the past ten years, the networked digital communications have rapidly developed and expanded across Northern Thailand. This has helped Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek village to open more channels and to receive more current information from China. With satellite television becoming popular in Ban Hin Taek since 2008 or so, modern

media technologies have had a significant effect on Yunnanese and in changing their previous impressions of China. During my field trip to Ban Hin Taek in the summer of 2016, I found that most Yunnanese families watched popular Chinese TV channels in their everyday life. And the younger generations of Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek today also excited at using Chinese social apps to help their families re-connect with their Chinese relatives in Yunnan. One of my informants, a Mr. Lei, is an heir of a KMT Yunnanese family in Ban Hin Taek, and his father came from southwestern Yunnan. He was a key person who focused on helping villagers to maintain their relations with the Taiwan government in the 1990s to early 2000s. More recently, he has had more chances to contact Chinese people from Yunnan, after new official Chinese educational resources have been introduced into Northern Thailand. Through the frequent contacts of Chinese people from Yunnan with his village, Mr. Lei started pay more attention to the news from China's TV channels. He discussed with me the tremendous development that China has made has also impressed him greatly, making him proud to be a descendant of China.

Another important phenomenon that has occurred recently, according to the information provided by local village committee, is that after more and more Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek have reconnected with their relatives in Yunnan in the last decade. Many Yunnanese families have gone to Yunnan to visit their relatives and attend and perform rituals for their ancestors and family there. This includes the Qing Ming festival and others, too. This could be considered as a new trend that Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek have promoted to reinforce their Chinese identity under the growing recognition that their homeland matters and an awareness that China is now a dominant player regionally and globally, especially in today's Southeast Asia. It also allows the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek to embody a flexible form of Chinese identity, as they have shifted the source of their identity and pride from the KMT that came out of Yunnan and had representation on Taiwan to their actual homeland and the contemporary power that China represents for them. They have adjusted their Chinese identity according the different dimensions of Chinese identity relevant at any given time.

Overall, the above case demonstrates how Yunnanese applied their flexible form of Chinese identity with different transnational Chinese groups as they have established, relaxed, cut off, or re-established relations with the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek. These sources of identity are dynamic and fluid, operating on at various socio-political and cultural levels and are not fixed essences. It also shows a key characteristic of Yunnanese's Chinese identity—as the individual (or group) moves through their daily life, adjusting their ethnicity “according to variations in the situation and audiences encountered’ (Nagel, 1994). Moreover, as a marginal group with diverse ethnic components, it will bring more opportunities to help the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek to create their social status in highland society by allowing them more ways to negotiate and cooperate with different transnational Chinese groups.

5. Conclusion

Like their negotiations with the local minority groups in northern Chiang Rai province, and with Thai officials and institutions tied to the Thai state, the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek have also shaped their identities by negotiating with various transnational Chinese groups as the political dynamics of Chinese identity have shifted. In so doing, the Yunnanese have been involved in developing new sorts of identities for themselves as individuals and as an ethnic group, and also helped to rework the various forms of transnational Chinese identity for the 21st century.

The complex migration history of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek village of Northern Thailand prompted them to negotiate their Chinese identities in several ways since 1950 or so, when both and ties to home areas of Yunnan and to the KMT were strong and as the PRC took shape. First, they have sought to remain close to their direct relatives or people from the same town or village in Yunnan. They also were encouraged to keep close to the political groups that they had identified with from the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949, which shaped their behaviors in Burma and Thailand during the ensuing Cold War. They finally made various forms of economic cooperation with different transnational Chinese groups in mainland China, Northern

Myanmar and Taiwan since 1950s, mostly tied to the conflicts tied to Communist groups in the region during the 1950s and 1960s (Hung, 2017).

In the period from the 1960s to 1990 or so, the Yunnanese people of Ban Hin Taek village received significant assistance from the both governmental and non-governmental institutions on Taiwan, which remain mostly under the control of the KMT and focused on economic development (Hung, 2017). Due to these strong cultural contacts and political connections between Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek and the institutions and people on Taiwan, the second generation of Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek gained a strong sense of political identity with Taiwan.

Most recently, after the late 1990s and the Asian Financial Crisis, the understandings of “Chinese identity” for many older second generation and most third generations Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek has been transformed. Ties to Taiwan weakened as the DPP took control over the KMT for much of the period. The Yunnanese people negotiated and adjusted with new transnational Chinese groups, in many cases from the PRC, and the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek adjusted their sense “Chinese identity” by coming to identify more strongly with the people and institutions and sensibilities of mainland China. So recently, this new China has provided more social, cultural and economic capital to the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek than has Taiwan, and they have gravitated toward China more than Taiwan. Nonetheless, Taiwan is still generally perceived as most important oversea Chinese group for many Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek and even for Chiang Rai today, but the transnational Chinese from China is also making inroads through its oversea official institutions in Northern Thailand have made significant social effect to those Yunnanese villages in Chiang Rai province.

Overall, Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek want to maintain good relations and to be able to effectively interact with different transnational Chinese people in today’s world. The Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek have been driven to attend various social events and activities to maintain and to adjust their fluid Chinese identity as their sense of what Chinese identity is has been evolving. Through the socio-cultural

negotiation with transnational Chinese of Taiwan and China, Yunnanese villagers in Ban Hin Taek have not only shaped their new Chinese cultural construction of ethnicity, but they also actively to create their ethnic position as “Yunnanese,” but also as “Han” (*Hanren*) or as “Chinese” (*Zhongguo ren*) whenever possible for living well in contemporary Thai society, and as participants in a larger world order where China matters, even as it too, is changing.



Chapter VI: Conclusion

1. Main Findings

This thesis used anthropological methods to examine how Yunnanese villagers in the borderland village of Ban Hin Taek, northern Chiang Rai Province, Thailand negotiate their identity in today's world. To analyze how they have learned to survive in the complex and changing sociopolitical circumstances by negotiating flexible identities, I have analyzed how these negotiations take place at three different levels: locally, among upland ethnic groups; nationally, in relation to mainstream Thai groups; and transnationally, with different transnational Chinese groups. As a marginal group with a longstanding presence in Northern Thailand, the Yunnanese have sought to establish their distinctive collective identity through forms of socio-cultural negotiation with dominant groups and other ethnic minorities in ways that differ from standard narratives of cultural assimilation, state-making, and modernity in Thailand.

The Yunnanese have created fluid and flexible collective identities to fit into a dynamic socio-cultural-political ethnoscape at local, national and transnational levels across Thailand, largely to ensure their survival in an uncertain and changing environment. Yunnanese villagers in Ban Hin Taek have learned to survive by adapting themselves to their socio-cultural environments by using flexible social negotiation strategies, and to shape an adaptable collective identity that is distinct from those of local ethnic groups, from Thai society, and from transnational Chinese communities. One distinctive strategy they have used in this process is maintaining a "low-profile" form of identity for themselves, deliberately aiming not to stand out in the changing and multiethnic world where they live (Singh, 2017). By researching the complex socio-cultural-political negotiations pursued by the Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek today, we learn how more about a neglected type of ethnic complexity and national recognition in contemporary Thailand. I have also tried to make clear that the necessary negotiations of the Yunnanese people in Ban Hin Taek for their survival in

changing circumstances have not only been challenging, but also have not always been perfect or successful.

A historical review of the Yunnanese migration history into Northern Thailand in this study has shown that the migration patterns helped to create distinct historical and generational layers, which have produced diverse forms of connection among Yunnanese people passing between Yunnan, Myanmar and Thailand with other groups of Chinese, minority groups, and Thais. This Yunnanese migration history, distinct historical and generational layers and complex cultural components have shaped their multiple identities in the last two centuries. And the stereotyping and ethnic labeling of Yunnanese groups tied to the overland traders, KMT, to Khun Sa, or “Chao Kao” do not reflect the flexible ethnic identity and diversity of their ethnic structure and distinctive cultural constructions of Yunnanese groups in Thai society today.

The thesis has had three main objectives. The first objective has been to examine how Yunnanese villagers in Ban Hin Taek negotiate their identity with local ethnic groups in upland areas of the northern borderlands of Thailand. This part of the study has shown that the multilingual negotiation among Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek and other local ethnic minorities is achieved through the reconstruction and consolidation of their ethnic links in terms of intermarriage, economic cooperation and making multiethnic civil organizations. Their negotiations allow the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek village to form a flexible ethnic identity as part of forging diverse types of alliance among the different ethnic minorities in upland areas of Northern Thailand. The case studies included in this part also showed that the diverse types of alliance among Yunnanese and different ethnic minorities have achieved balanced ethnic relationships and a stable ethnic ecology in the upland society of Northern Thailand today, while not ignoring the tensions and difficulties in negotiation that lead to imperfect forms of identity. These negotiations have formed an ethnic base that retains flexible ethnic diversity and ethnic boundaries among Yunnanese and other ethnic minorities, even though on the surface of their collective image they might appear to be indistinguishable in daily practice for outsiders.

A second objective of the thesis has been to explore how Yunnanese negotiated their identities in relation to mainstream national Thais. Toward that end, this thesis analyzed how Yunnanese villagers in and from (insider and outsider) Ban Hin Taek negotiate their identities with mainstream national Thai institutional actors. The study in this part has shown that, first, Yunnanese people in Thailand have used the color-coded ID card system in a special way to indicate a distinctive way of understanding and making relations to the Thai state. They use the available options to them through the legal system and regulatory regime tied to the ID card system to create a flexible form of “Thai identity” that is most suitable for their situation and socio-political options. They often then seek to create a “low-profile” identity to operate effectively in their social, legal, and cultural environment in the Thai state (Singh, 2017). This has led to a construction of Thai identity among the Yunnanese of Ban Hin Taek village, where the Yunnanese see their ability to speak Thai and to participate with Thai government officials and in and Thai ceremonies as signs of their commitment to becoming Thai citizens. They also show their loyalty to Thai monarchy and participate in Thai education tied to customs and ceremonies. In all of these ways, the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek have been active participants in Thai nationalization processes in order to align themselves with the Thai nation and to promote their ethnic position and collective image in today’s Thailand. However, some case studies of this second level of identity negotiation between Yunnanese and mainstream Thai official culture also shows the difficulty of negotiating, creating and maintaining a durable Thai identity for themselves in all situations. It reflects an ambivalent process in the construction of Thai identity for the Yunnanese, since it shows how Yunnanese have selectively sought to establish and to balance a kind of “Thai identity” amid the “demands of heritage Thai identity” that seems at odds with their “Han identity or Chinese identity”.

The third objective in this study was to analyze how Yunnanese villagers in Ban Hin Taek negotiate their identities with transnational Chinese groups from China and Taiwan. The complex migration history of Yunnanese people into Ban Hin Taek has helped to create tight social relations, political connection and economic cooperation

with different transnational Chinese groups from mainland China, Northern Myanmar, and Taiwan. By negotiating and cooperating with different transnational Chinese groups, the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek create a flexible and multifaceted form of “Chinese identity” in a dynamic political situation that they employ as social capital in the local economy and society of Chiang Rai, and more broadly, Thailand. This study also indicates some of the characteristic features of Yunnanese identity in individual (or group) daily life of people in Ban Hin Taek. This shows that ‘ethnicity can change according to variations in the situation and audiences encountered’ (Nagel, 2004). Moreover, since the Yunnanese are a marginal group with diverse ethnic components, the complex forms of negotiation they use in Ban Hin Taek help them to create a social status in highland society by negotiating and cooperating with different transnational Chinese groups, without ever fully matching the Yunnanese or Han like people from China or Taiwan today.

The three-level analysis of identity negotiation of Yunnanese villagers in the borderland village of Ban Hin Teak at the heart of this study has provided a fuller understanding of the complex ways that Yunnanese have used to shape their identities in the village by helping them adapt to the dynamic and diverse socio-cultural-political environments they are part of. The collective identities in Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek mainly consisted of Yunnanese language skills, a sense of social solidarity and group self-awareness, and a sense of being “Yunnanese” or “Han” Chinese. The different motivations and forms of agency which drive Yunnanese to achieve and promote their social status and social recognition in today’s Thai society might prompt Yunnanese to shape their flexible ethnic boundaries and collective identity when they encounter various social scenes in the local, national and transnational levels. These dynamics help to produce flexible collective identities among Yunnanese groups, but never completely and rarely without trouble or tension.

The identity negotiations by Yunnanese villagers in the borderland village of Ban Hin Teak are never perfect or smooth. They always reveal tensions, friction, and problems as they evolve among the Yunnanese and the different social-cultural-political situations and groups they encounter. These frictions and tensions are also at

work in each of the three-levels of negotiations and are never fully resolved. Locally, their multilingual skills and flexible negotiation strategies allow the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek village to form a flexible ethnic identity as part of forging diverse types of alliance among the different ethnic minorities. But the sense of their cultural authority, the different family formation and economic differences may also end in tense relations and conflicts between Yunnanese and other local minorities in upland society. And these frictions and tensions deriving from these negotiations may sharpen when Yunnanese expect to keep low-profile ethnic identity in the Thai state and also to expand their dominant status in upland society. Nationally, Yunnanese people use the available options to them through the legal system tied to the Thai ID card system, loyalty to the Thai monarchy, Thai education system, and the economic structure and ethnic advantages to create a flexible form of “Thai identity” that is most suitable for their situation. This may permit the basic survival of the Yunnanese as an ethnic group, but the urgent desire to strengthen and pass down their Yunnanese ethnic identity as part of a recognized Chinese identity in today’s Thai society is not easy to do. It is often difficult to both maintain a visible public Thai identity while also maintaining a “low profile” Yunnanese identity when there is an ethnic gap of mutual acceptance between Yunnanese and mainstream national Thais. Transnationally, by negotiating and cooperating with different transnational Chinese groups, the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek have shaped a flexible form of “Chinese identity” that they employ as social capital in today’s Thai society, but the different political affiliations and different cooperation demands tied to different types of “Chinese identity” for each transnational Chinese group has made it difficult to keep ties to both. This dilemma is partly resolved by claiming that no matter the political source of the relationship to Chinese, they are all still seen as “Chinese” (Hung, 2017).

Various types of friction and tensions may also come from the cognitive difference produced by the different demands of ethnic identities among different generations of Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek village. From an intergenerational perspective, the different generations of Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek today have different understandings of their relations with other local ethnic minority groups,

with mainstream national Thais and with different transnational Chinese groups. To ensure that they achieve and maintain a distinctive ethnic position in the diverse but complex social-cultural-political circumstances they are part of, the elder generation of Yunnanese today are generally more open to flexibility in their identity negotiations than many in the young generation. However, the slow influence of assimilation trends made by mainstream Thai society means that many in the young generation realize that by keep multiple identities among Yunnanese, Thai and Chinese has not allowed them to fully participate in today's Thai society. This awkward position has also not allowed them to fit easily into any group, whether Thai, Thai-Chinese, or non-Thai. Hence, to assimilate themselves, many young Yunnanese prefer to use passive strategies to escape the prejudice and stereotypes in Thai society, in part by paying more attention to how they fit into mainstream national Thai society. This accounts for a common dilemma faced by Yunnanese from Ban Hin Taek and reflects a common phenomenon of some tensions in fitting into an ethnic identity between the generations in today's overland and oversea Chinese groups in Thailand.

Moreover, Yunnanese people in mainland Southeast Asia are a marginal group that is often more commonly classified as a type of "highlander" group in Northern Thailand than it is with being Chinese. They have lived on the peripheries of settled societies and expanding states and have often lived mobile lives in that area. To survive in this ethnically, economically and political complex and changing situation, they have sought to maintain patterns of identity that are open and flexible. More recent influences like nationalism, modernization and globalization have also prompted them to climb to the marginalized mountain and affected their local communities. It can also lead intermediary groups like the Yunnanese to mediate mainstream national Thai life and that of indigenous highlanders. They have adapted flexible strategies to achieve a collective sense of being in multiethnic cultural settings. In addition, with the recent growth in importance China in Thailand and elsewhere in Southeast Asia too, people have come to recognize a larger and more varied form of Chinese and "Han" identity among the diverse groups of people who claim Chinese roots. Among these latter groups are the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek

and elsewhere in Northern Thailand, who may be able to gain new development opportunities in the expanding tourist industry attracting increasing numbers of Chinese to Southeast Asia. So, although they are one of marginalized groups among other Chinese descent groups in Thailand, the Yunnanese in Ban Hin Taek are notably different from the dominant Chinese groups in central Thailand. A clear ethnic boundary and gap faced by Yunnanese group is still hard to be weakened by their flexible form of collective identity when Yunnanese tried to integrate themselves into mainstream Thai society. By adopting flexible identity creation, the Yunnanese can keep an appropriate distance with the Thai state and adopt a “low-profile” (Singh, 2017) lifestyle, which permits them to maintain a distinct, but sometimes ambiguous, ethnic boundary between them and other local ethnic minorities, national Thais and transnational Chinese, too. This thesis has examined this boundary in the village of Ban Hin Taek.

2. Limitations

Although the research results generally confirm the main objectives of this thesis, there are still some limitations in this study. First, nearly all of the materials used in this research come from interviews and participant observation during my three-month field trip to Ban Hin Taek village in 2016. The methods used for this analysis of this study relied on qualitative approaches and interpretations, with no use of quantitative methods. In part, this was due to limited sources of data for the village, and the importance of qualitative ways of understanding that are typical of people living in the village. Second, since this study is mainly based on my three-month field trip in one Yunnanese village, the limitation of time in field trip may let the author be unable to get more deep understanding and observation to the research object. Moreover, although there have been some comparisons made to other villages in the area, the study is mainly based on the study of a single village. To determine whether and to what degree Ban Hin Taek village is typical or unusual would require a fuller comparison with nearby Yunnanese villages. Next, since Yunnanese people in Northern Thailand and other parts of Southeast Asia differ, their situations and group divisions are complex, so my study may not fully represent the ways that all

Yunnanese people negotiate their identity with different social-cultural groups in Thailand today.

3. Contributions

Despite these limitations, this study has provided new perspectives on understanding how ethnic groups – especially those with ties to Yunnan and Southwest China – live on the borderlands of Thai nation-state today. The research approach and the results of present a solid start and substantial findings that address the question of how Yunnanese have learned to survive a complex and changing situation while creating their identity in Northern Thailand. It thus helps us to understand how the complex ways that structures and workings of multiethnic Thai society, including important aspects of their relations to Yunnan and China, work today. Moreover, this study also improves our understanding of how Yunnanese groups on the borderlands of Southeast Asia and China relate to the complex social, legal, and cultural environment there. By focusing on the Yunnanese as type of Chinese, it finally contributes to a better understanding the complexity of 21st-century transnational “Chinese” identity in Thailand and Southeast Asia.

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APPENDIX



จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
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APPENDIX I THE SCHEDULE OF THE FIELD TRIP

1. First Stage of Field Trip

Date	Location	Important event
Mar 1, 2016 to Mar 3, 2016	Mae Sai city, Chiang Rai province	a. Visited Yunnan Association of Chiang Rai; b. Visited Chinese Teacher's Association;
Mar 4, 2016 to Mar 6, 2016	Mae Salong village, Mae Fah Luang, Chiang Rai province	a. Visited Civil Museum of Northern Thailand; b. Visited Cemetery of General Duan;
Mar 7, 2016 to Mar 9, 2016	Ban Hin Taek village, Mae Fah Luang, Chiang Rai province	a. Visited Da Tong Chinese School; b. Visit Khun Sa's Old Camp
Mar 10, 2016 to Mar 13, 2016	Baan Haw District, Talad Muang District and Sanphakhoy District	a. Visit location of Yunnanese neighborhoods;

2. Second Stage of Field Trip

Date	Location	Important event
Apr 28, 2016 to July 17, 2016	Ban Hin Taek village, Mae Fah Luang District, Chiang Rai province	Attend a wedding ceremony (Shan with Han) in Ban Hin Taek. (Apr 30, 2016)
		Attended the ceremony of local Chinese school's opening day. (May 2, 2016)
		Attended a wedding ceremony (Lisu with Lisu) in Ban Hin Taek village. (May 9, 2016)
		Attended election activity with Ban Hin Taek villagers in Yunnan Association of Chiang Rai. (May 15, 2016)
		Attended a local activity in Jian Qun School in Ban Na village. (May 25, 2016)
		Attended a wedding ceremony (Lisu with Han) in Ban Hua Mea village. (May 28, 2016)
		Visited local Buddhist temple in Ban Hin Taek. (May 29, 2016)
		Visited Civil Museum of Northern Thailand with Ban Hin Taek's villagers in Mea Salong. (Jun 5, 2016)
		Attended the activities of Dragon Boat Festival with local villagers in Ban Hin Taek.

		(Jun 10, 2016)
		Attended a funeral of Yunnanese families in Ban Hin Taek. (Jun 27, 2016)

3. Third Stage of Field Trip

Date	Location	Important event
Jan 27, 2017	Bangkok	Attended a new year celebration in Yunnan Association
Feb 13 to Feb 15	Ban Hin Taek	Visited Khun Sa's Old camp and interviewed local village committee
Feb 16, 2017	Mae Sai, Chiang Rai	Visited Yunnan Association of Chiang Rai.
Feb 17, 2017 to Feb 21, 2017	Arunothai village, Chiang Mai	Visited Teacher's Association of Chiang Mai
Feb 22 to Feb 24	Chiang Mai	a. Visited Yunnan Association of Chiang Mai b. Visited Yunnanese Muslim temple

APPENDIX II: THE SCHEDULE OF THE FIELD TRIP

1. The informants (interviewees) of Ban Hin Taek village

Number	Gender	Age	Occupation	Date for interview
1	Male	69	Former village head	May 3 to May 11, 2016
2	Male	58	Shopkeeper of grocery store	May 19, 2016
3	Female	53	Restaurant owner	Feb 16, 2017
4	Male	36	Local Chinese teachers	May 14, 2016
5	Male	52	Core member of village committee	Jun 3, 2016
6	Male	63	Former vice principle of local Chinese school	Feb 14, 2016
7	Female	52	Shopkeeper of Food wholesales	May 29, 2016; Feb 22, 2017
8	Male	56	Principle of Chinese school	May 4, 2016
9	Male	49	Local Chinese teacher	Feb 14 to Feb15, 2017
10	Female	36	Local Chinese teacher	Jun 13 to Jun 15, 2016
11	Female	42	street peddler	Jun 1, 2016
12	Male	36	street peddler	May 27, 2016
13	Male	37	Owner of hotel	Feb 16, 2016
14	Male	71	Former caravan trader	Feb 14 to Feb16, 2017
15	Male	57	Former caravan trader	Feb 14 to Feb16, 2017

16	Male	63	Former caravan trader	Feb 14 to Feb16, 2017
17	Female	32	Teacher of Thai school	Apr 30, 2016; Feb 19, 2017
18	Male	61	Principle of Chinese school	Feb 15 to Feb 19, 2017
19	Male	47	Staff of village committee	Jun 2 to Jun 5, 2016
20	Female	59	Greengrocer	Jun 12, 2016
21	Male	36	Local Thai officer	May 29, 2016; Feb 26, 2017
22	Female	21	Chinese teacher (volunteer form China)	May 17 to Jun 2, 2016
23	Male	19	Chinese teacher (volunteer from China)	May 17 to Jun 2, 2016
24	Female	28	Chinese teacher (volunteer from Taiwan)	May 17 to Jun 2, 2016
25	Male	22	Chinese teacher (volunteer from Taiwan)	May 17 to Jun 2, 2016

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2. The informants of Chiang Rai city and Chiang Mai city

Number	Gender	Age	Occupation	Date for interview
1	Male	65	Former Chairmen of Yunnan Association	May 15, 2016 (Mea Sai, Chiang Rai)
2	Male	54	Chairmen of Yunnan Association	May 15, 2016 (Mea Sai, Chiang

				Rai)
3	Male	52	Leader of Teacher's Association of Chiang Rai	May 15, 2016 (Mea Sai, Chiang Rai)
4	Female	42	Core member of Leader of Teacher's Association of Chiang Mai	Feb 17 to Feb 21, 2017 (Arunothai village, Chiang Mai)
5	Male	49	Staff of Teacher's Association of Chiang Mai	Feb 17 to Feb 21, 2017 (Arunothai village, Chiang Mai)
6	Male	53	Business leader of Yunnan Association	May 15, 2016 (Mea Sai, Chiang Rai)
7	Female	47	Business leader of Yunnan Association	Jan 27, 2017 (Bangkok)
8	Male	67	Former Vice Chairmen of Yunnan Association	Jan 27, 2017 (Bangkok)
9	Male	53	Staff of Chinese government	Dec 10, 2016 (Kunming, Yunnan)
10	Female	39	Staff of Chinese government	July 21, 2016 (Kunming, Yunnan)

2. The informants (interviewees) of Bangkok

(All of informants of this section are come from six Yunnanese families who moved from Ban Hin Taek to Bangkok since early 1990s. From February of 2016, I have keep contact and frequently meet them in Bangkok until today.)

Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	Living area
1	Female	47	Restaurant owner	Huai Khwang
2	Female	29	Make-up wholesales	Huai Khwang
3	Female	33	Restaurant owner	Ratchada
4	Female	42	Estate agent	Ratchada
5	Female	52	The owner of travel agent	Huai Khwang
6	Female	36	Restaurant owner	Ratchada
7	Female	39	Food wholesales	Huai Khwang
8	Male	40	Restaurant owner	Huai Khwang
9	Male	49	Make-up wholesales	Ratchada
10	Male	45	The owner of Hotel	Huai Khwang
11	Male	55	The tourist agent owner	Ratchada
12	Male	36	Freight forwarder	Huai Khwang



VITA

Ms. Weilin Chen was born in Yunnan, China in 1993. She earned Bachelor's Degree in Journalism, Faculty of Communication, Yunnan University of Finance and Economics in 2015. From 2012 to 2014 she attended several public welfare programs of China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation, which focused on improving the living standards of people in impoverished areas and to better the water and health conditions of children in rural southwestern Yunnan. She is also interested in trans-regional research in southwestern China, Myanmar and Thailand, and in linguistic anthropology.

From 2015 to 2017, she attended the Yale-Yunnan Minzu Summer School project in Kunming. She also participates in a National Social Science Foundation Program of China which focuses on researching the social linguistics of the Yunnan Dialect in Northern Thailand.

