

CHAPTER III

NORTHERN THAI SOCIETY AND MAEHUGPATTANA VILLAGE

3.1. Social and cultural characteristics of northern society

The northern region of Thailand was once part of the Lanna Kingdom. When literally translated, “Lanna” means a million rice fields, signifying characteristic of the society where most families have been engaged in agriculture for centuries. Many lived a simple life depending on the availability of natural resources such as fertile land in the river valleys surrounded by forests and mountains. Those who lived on the hills grew rice and other crops depending on the seasonal rains. Farmers grew crops sufficient for the survival of their families.

It is believed that many northern villages were established by extended families. Therefore, most of the people in a community were related by blood, had the same surname, and had close relations wherein families built their houses in the same compound. The temple was the center of the community; it was used for community activities such the teaching of Buddhism by monks, religious ceremonies, village festivals and meetings among community members. Village committees and senior members of the community comprise the primary group of people who encouraged community members to hold and participate in community activities.

There is high level of social interaction in northern communities which leads to a certain level of social control within the community in that the society is close and people know one another very well. Residents work together in watching out for thieves or strangers in their neighbourhood, helping to prevent crimes in the community. Family problems are discussed among the family members, however, when they cannot be resolved within the family, it is common to consult with their neighbours or even the village head or monks in the village.¹

¹Chailairudee Charoenpukdee, “Social control in northern Thai village communities.” (M.A. Thesis, The Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University, 1986), p. 89.

Apart from a shared belief in Buddhism, northern people are also animistic, believing that ghosts and spirits reside in various places such as trees, rivers, and the like. They also believe in ancestral spirits which are referred to as *Phee Mod Phee Mang* by local people. It is believed that after one's ancestors pass away their spirits stay to protect their children as well as to ensure the wellbeing and prosperity of family members. At a community level there is also a community spirit protecting the entire community.² Ancestral spirits and community spirits also play a role in the social control of the community. Not only are the ancestral spirits believed to protect people against harm but they also punish those who do not respect them or do bad things. Punishment may take the form of bad luck, ill health, and the like.³

Most of northern villages have a shrine where community spirits reside. It is a sacred place where ceremonies are performed by community members in order to ensure peace and prosperity, especially for the agricultural production of the community. These ceremonies also request good health for the people of the community, success in their work and lives, and no disasters. Such ceremonies and activities not only bring peace of mind to community members but also create unity and sense of belonging. They have mutual beliefs which fall under protection of the same spirits. When there are problems in the community such as failure in agriculture all residents share the same hardship. They pray to their community spirits for protection and for the survival of everyone. This type of shared belief system creates community awareness and unity.⁴

There are many community activities which illustrate the uniqueness of northern community culture. Some of these activities may also be practiced elsewhere in the country but are of less significance in terms of values and beliefs when compared with the north. Examples of these distinct northern community activities include the tradition of paying respect to older people called *Rod Nam Dum Hua* which takes place during the Thai New Year. The tradition of *Tan Kuai Salak*, also known in the central language as *Salakapatr*, is an event which occurs after the harvest

²Renu Atthamet, Research abstracts on culture 1 (Bangkok Section, Northern Section and other Research Sections, Bangkok, 2000), pp. 83 - 84.

³Chailairudee Charoenpukdee, Social control in northern Thai village communities, pp. 50 - 51.

⁴Rattanaporn Sethakul, One century of the economy of northern village communities: 1899 - 1999 (Bangkok: Sangsan Publishers, 2003), p. 212.

season. People get together and make merit by donating money to the temple. It often involves entertainment activities such as drinking and dancing along the village streets while moving toward the temple to offer the donation. It is a way for community residents to raise funds for the village, relax after the rice season and make merit together. It encourages villagers to feel involved and have sense of belonging which leads to subsequent unity among them.⁵ Another activity is *Poi Luang* which is a day for people to celebrate the new building of the temple such as an ordination hall. The community may have received some funds from the local government or through their own fundraising or donations which were sufficient to build one of the temple buildings. Village committees work together with senior monks in organizing the celebration.⁶

3.2. Changes in society

The previous examples of high levels of participation in community activities generally take place in areas far from large cities today. Presently, northern village communities have changed substantially due to host factors such as the government's development policies, capitalism and globalization. Changes came rapidly when Thailand began to introduce strong capitalist national economic development plans in 1961 under the government of Prime Minister Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat. Rattana Sethakul⁷ examined changes in the economy of the northern communities over the past one hundred years. Since the introduction of the first economic development plan, a large budget was allocated to improve the infrastructure and agricultural production of the country. Earlier plans aimed to improve the living standards of the people by developing the country's economy by maximizing the benefits of the country's resources and increasing the export of agricultural products.

The study also found that in the late 1960s the influence of capitalism on northern communities was much more obvious. Business people from outside the region began to invest in local businesses such as buying crops directly from the

⁵Renu Atthamet, Research abstracts on culture, pp. 83 - 84.

⁶Manee Phayomyong, Traditions from seasonal festival of Lanna Thai and tales from Khrao Utthahom (Chiangmai: Faculty of Education, University of Chiangmai, 1985), p. 29.

⁷Rattanaporn Sethakul, One century of the economy of northern village communities: 1899 - 1999, p. 212.

farmers, encouraging them to grow more commercial crops while at the same time bringing consumer goods to sell in the communities. The fifth national social and economic development plan was initiated in 1982 and sought to decrease the differences between Bangkok and rural areas. An important part of this plan was making Chiangmai the main northern city for government offices, businesses and services. The city began to expand to include suburbs. Some communities that were closer to the cities or main transport routes became new local trading centres where hotels, agricultural equipment suppliers, grocery shops, gas stations, and the like were built. Since the early 1980s, the country's economy has expanded rapidly resulting in Thailand becoming a newly industrialized country. The government strategy was for the upper northern region to serve as a trading centre with neighboring countries such as Myanmar, China, and Laos.

When people were encouraged to grow more profitable cash crops, land was in demand with high market value. Additionally, when the area became a new trading center, land prices increase. Yos Tuntasombat⁸ studied the economic changes in the north and found that many people were choosing to sell their land for various reasons some of which included having too many children, the land was not adequate for everyone in the family to cultivate, needing money to pay off debts, and not having enough labour to help in the fields as their children were now working in the non-agricultural sector. In other circumstances they were persuaded to sell their land by businessmen who wanted more land to grow higher-priced agricultural products, to build agricultural processing factories, to build housing estates, resorts or hotels, or just for general speculation purposes.

Many farmers in the north have lost ownership of their land and may never be able to afford any land in the future because of rising prices. Agricultural areas in many villages have decreased. Many villagers now rent other people's land at high prices to grow rice which is barely enough for family consumption. Furthermore, farmers also need to pay for labour and chemicals. These factors mean that many must take loans resulting in heavy debts, especially during years of severe drought,

⁸Yos Tantasombat, The dynamics and flexibility of farmers' society: economic community in northern region - the paradigm on community in the Third World (Chiangmai: Faculty of Social Science, Chiangmai University, 2003), p. 159.

flooding, or low price of the products. Their income decreases significantly and they have no choice but to continue to borrow more money from different sources to pay off the old debts and invest in the new growing season. Thus, their debts accumulate.

The development of tourism, border trade and industries have brought in people from other regions as well as legal and illegal labour from neighbouring countries which has served to diversify the social, political and economic structures of northern communities. Such development is often followed by the expansion of towns and the establishment of hotels, resorts and entertainment venues which in turn bring more and more Western culture to the communities. There are more new kinds of consumer products, food, movies and music. Young people imitate the behaviour of singers and movie stars which include the use of drugs for entertainment and consumption of more luxury goods such as brand name clothes and high-end mobile phones. The gap between the old and the young continues to widen.

The increasing taste for consumerism, and the fact that more people leave home to work in the city, has led to an overall negative image of agricultural activities—many view it as hard, low and boring work. Some parents even encourage their children to leave home to find a better job in the city with regular income. During times of economic boom villagers are able to find work in the city easily, especially manual labour work at construction sites where transportation is provided by the owner of the business to bring villagers to work in the morning and take them home in the evening. This is similar to transportation arrangements available for those who go to work in factories such as those in the Lumphoon Industrial Estate. Young people prefer this type of factory work as it is viewed as being more fun than growing rice and they are able to work with their peers, which makes work enjoyable for social reasons.⁹

Northern people have become more individualistic over time. Due to the increasing dependence on work outside the agricultural sector, people need to leave their families to live in flats or condominiums in town. Children in these families have little chance to interact with other children in city environments like they once did in

⁹Rattanaporn Sethakul, One century of the economy of northern village communities: 1899 - 1999, p 306.

their village community. There are more people from other communities and other regions who come to work in the area; these outsiders do not know one another. There is a general sense of fear and lack of trust among them.¹⁰

There may also be problems regarding parents' participation in activities organised by their children's schools which helps to foster cooperation between teachers and parents. Parents are often either too busy with work or cannot afford to take time off work as this means less income for the family. Apart from this, some teachers have moved in from other areas and may not be as likely to associate with other community members or participate in community activities.

The value of traditional beliefs and the practice of these beliefs through the worship of ancestral or community spirits and respecting those in seniority have changed considerably. When people move out of their village to live in bigger towns or cities they adapt their lives to the more modern form of community. There is more availability of scientific information and knowledge through education and the media and many people no longer closely follow their traditions. Traditional social control that was once able to determine people's behaviour and actions has been weakened or lost completely.

3.3. Effect of economic and social changes on the narcotics situation

A large number of northern villagers are poor and in being poor, many people are eventually led to become involved in the politics of narcotics in a variety of ways. "Progress" and "development" have, in actuality, made many people poor; consumerism, an effect of capitalism, has led many people who are already poor to suffer further hardship because their incomes will never be able to meet their increasing material wants. Out of desperation to make money after the loss land, failure in agriculture, difficulty to find work, and the desire to pay off debts, many people see the drug trade as a way to deal with their poverty.

¹⁰Duangchan Arphawatcharut Charuenmuang, Urban growth and urban environment of cities in the north: A case studies of Chiangmai (Chiangmai: Social Research Institute, Chiangmai University, 1993), p. 158.

Some poor people remain in the agricultural sector where the work is hard and the pay is low. The ONCB reported in 2003 that a large number of methamphetamines abusers in the north were agricultural workers.¹¹ Their hard work to make ends meet and the need to relax after work may be one of the reasons they choose to take drugs. Some villagers can no longer make enough money in their community, so they are forced to move to larger towns and cities to provide labour for factories and construction sites. As described in Chapter 2, the number of factory workers and labourers who are drug abusers and addicts is among the highest.

Movement of villagers such as going to town each day to work, migration to other towns, and youths leaving home each day to work or study not only brings the city lifestyle into the village. It also brings in other types of influences which include the regular use of drugs which can later influence other fellow villagers. This also weakens the unity among the villagers and weakens the sense of belonging within the community. Residents have less time to associate with others and to participate in activities in the community. The changes are more obvious among people who move away from home and settle down in towns or cities. When there is a need for cooperation to solve community problems such as drug problems, these people may not want or be able to help.

Apart from this, being a new center of development, a lot of people, including some who have moved to the north from other areas, may not understand the socio-economic and political nature of the communities they work and live in. Some may not seek to participate in community activities. When parents are too busy with work and do not have time for their children and to participate in school, this often leads to problems. One of these potential problems is students getting involved with drugs at school because their parents may not know or have time to do something about it. As a consequence, there is a lack of cooperation among teachers, students and parents in tackling the narcotics problems at schools.

Education is important for the development of the country and the students own personal development. Although young people from villages often move to town

¹¹ONCB, Thailand Narcotics Annual Report 2003, p. 29.

to study and lose contact and the closeness with others in their village, they do gain better educations. However, the government has failed to prepare for the expansion of education and there is now overcrowding in many public schools. Teachers are not able to look after the students very well, which could also be a reason that the methamphetamines epidemic is so widespread among school students. Furthermore, some students leave home to stay in apartments or rented houses on their own or with friends. It is known that some of these students engage in drug-related behaviour.

The government campaigns and law enforcement do not seem to be effective in solving this problem. There are still a high number of young people spending time at entertainment venues who are also involved with drugs. There are not enough suitable activities that are attractive to young people to engage in during their free time. Instead, the government has initiated development programs that take people away from their village communities and has led many to become individualistic; parents work hard and have little time for their children.

The problems caused by rapid social and economic changes are very serious and many people have been unable to adjust to the changes quickly enough; they have subsequently become quite unhappy. While many earn more money, it is still not enough for them to live the lifestyle desired because of the influences of consumerism and materialism. Thus, many people have begun to try and find ways they can live happily again, based on the way of life that was once practiced by their parents and ancestors. Facing the same kind of problems, villagers can develop an understanding and sympathy for one another. They learn to appreciate what they have and turn to self-sufficient economy, maximizing their resources and using local wisdom and other cultural capital. Groups and networks of people in the community are organized to help villagers better manage their own lives and resources.

There is a certain level of resistance to change and persistence in trying to preserve their culture among community members in the north. This is particularly true for Chiangmai as it serves as the center of development and businesses in the northern region. People of Chiangmai are more exposed to outside culture. However, a study on the eating behaviour of Chiangmai people found that sticky rice and northern dishes are still the primary food for most of them. In village communities, northern

food is still the main food for all three meals, even in situations where villagers bring lunch from home to eat at work during the day in the city.¹²

Remaining social capital is used to combat outside influences. For example, in Nan province, community meetings continue to be held at a local temple where the abbot, village committees and community members gather to discuss issues. The Hug Muang Nan group was established from the initiative of a monk who saw that people would benefit from getting together and working to preserve local natural resources and traditional ways of life. The group has expanded to cover community networks throughout the province, with support from local people and organizations. Some of the group's activities include projects for the preservation and conservation of local rivers and forests. These projects aim to allow the people to benefit from forest products in long-term, sustainable ways. There are also programs to conserve and preserve traditional lifestyles of villagers after they move to city areas where there are normally difficulties and restrictions on doing so.¹³

Although the narcotics problem is severe in the north, there are more and more people who are banding together to tackle the problem, since they are no longer able to sit back and endure the damaging effects of drug problems in their communities. These networks of people have many levels as well as bring with them different types of practices and purposes. In general, most are striving for the improved well-being of the people in the communities. They encourage participation of community members to empower them to achieve self-reliance. While northern society has changed much in its socio-economic and political nature, there still remain strong cultural and social traits in many communities throughout the region.

Moreover, there is an increasing number of groups attempting to promote northern traditions and culture to help people appreciate and value their local roots. These various types of social, cultural and political networks help to make communities strong. With regard to narcotics problems, when a community is strong, people are able to work among themselves to define what problems exist and how to

¹²Punnee Ounsakul, *in Office of the National Committee*.

¹³Rattanaporn Sethakul, *One century of the economy of northern village communities: 1899 - 1999*, p. 322.

best approach solutions via the existing social, cultural, economical and political capital which still remains in the community.

3.4. Maehugpattana village

3.4.1. Location and physical characteristic

Maehugpattana is a village in Tambon Nongyaeng, Sansai district, Chiangmai province, located eight kilometers from the Sansai district office and 30 kilometers from the city of Chiangmai. North and northeast of the village are mountains which form two reservoirs, the Huaykieng reservoir and the Huayhug reservoir. The Maekuang Dam is just behind these mountains, three kilometers northeast of the village. To the west is Huaykieng village, to the south Toongkaotok village, and to the east Phrabat and Nongbua villages.

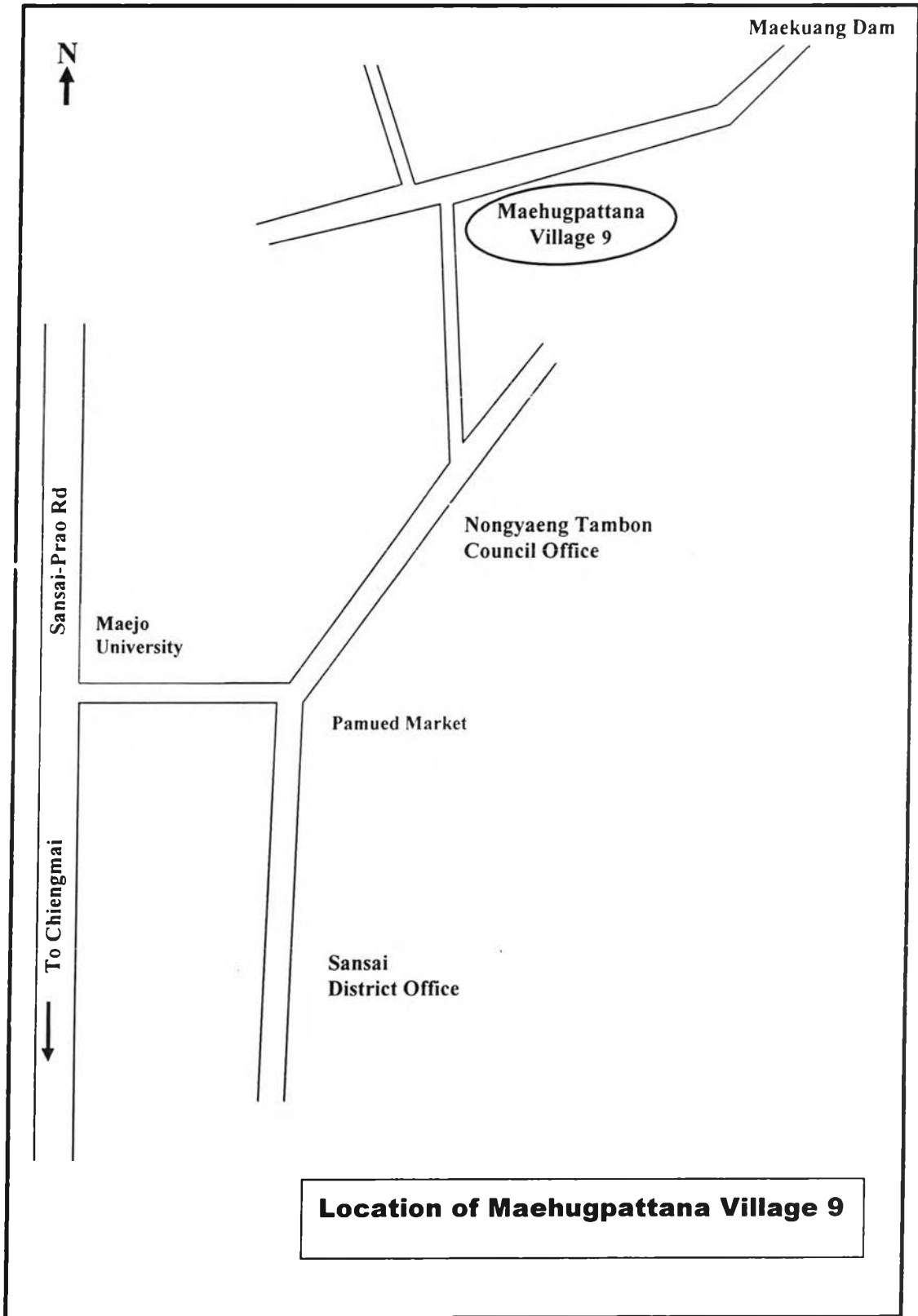
Most of the Maehugpattana residents are originally from Kiengka village in Doisaket district, Chiangmai province, about 10 kilometers northeast. They were relocated as a result of the construction of the Maekuang Dam. As a result of this construction, five villages fell within the flooded area of the dam, two of which were resettled in Tambon Nongyaeng in 1979—Huaykieng (located immediately west of Maehugpattana) and Maehugpattana. This resettlement fell under the responsibility of the Department of Irrigation which prepared seven-rai¹⁴ plots of land for each family in addition to also paying them compensation, the amount depending on the size of their land and its contents. This provided the families with the necessary funds to build homes on their new land and to begin developing and farming. However, the families were not able to choose their new plots of land, but rather, had to draw a number to determine which plot they would get. In terms of ownership of the land, residents were given only the most basic of land rights whereby they own the property but are not able to use it as collateral or for any type of commercial use.

The new land was flat and rather infertile with high sand content along with a concentration of stumps, shrubs, and other brush. Even after the completion of the

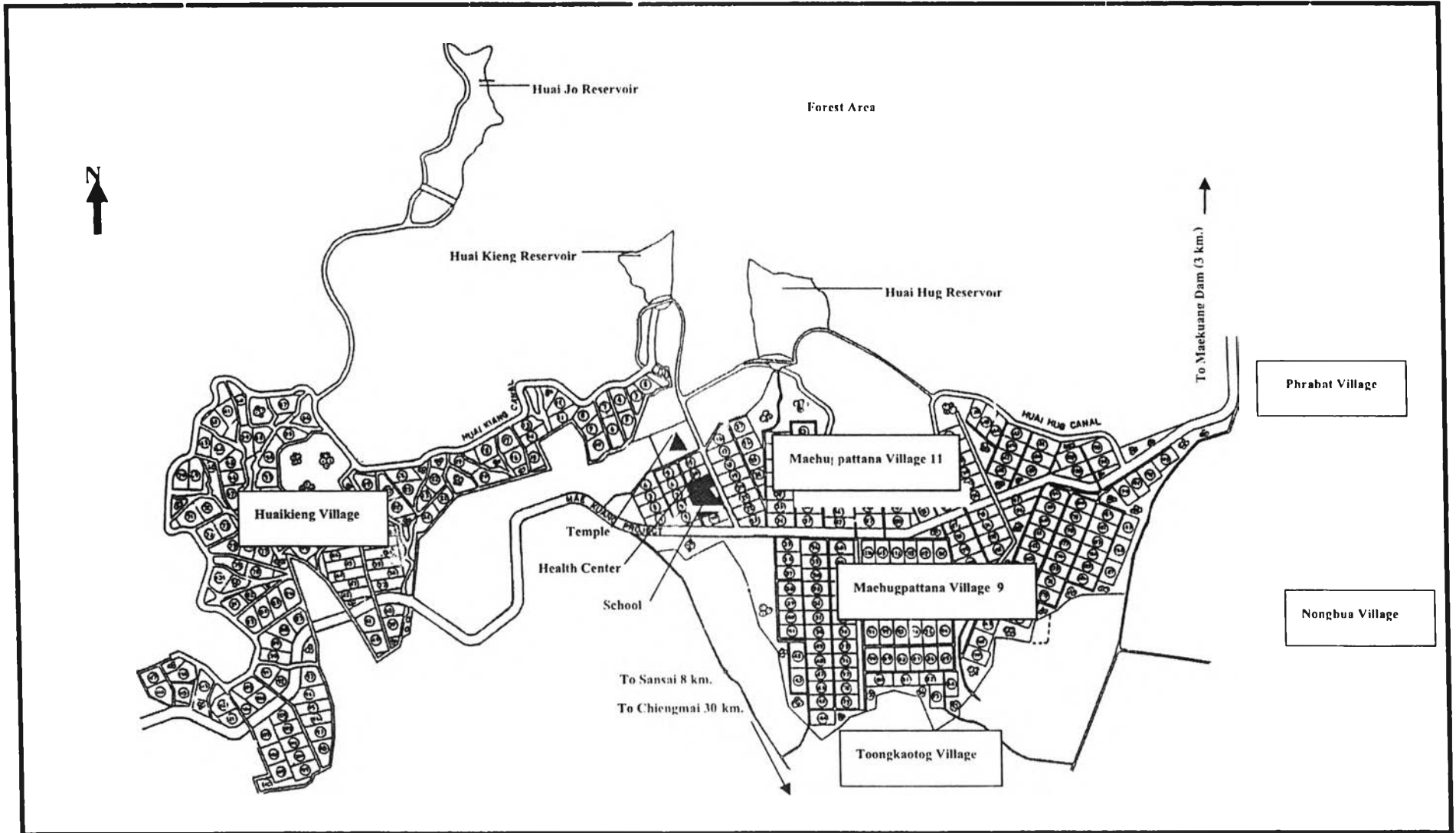
¹⁴2.5 rai is equal to one hectare.

Maekuang Dam construction project, the village was still without sufficient water sources, especially for consumption. Initially, villagers were provided with water drawn from a reservoir north of the village, but this was not sufficient, particularly during the dry season when water levels are low throughout the region. As a result, residents dug wells on their land; however, as the water table was deep, there was not enough water for use throughout the year. Residents who had wells with access to larger quantities of

Map 1. Location of Maehugpattana village



Map 2. Maehugpattana Village 9



water on a regular basis would commonly share with their less fortunate neighbors. At times when there was no water at all in their personal wells, residents were forced to seek alternative sources from neighbors which were often much further away, residents were able to obtain no more than three buckets for their daily family use.

Smaller concrete irrigation canals were also constructed and extended from the main canal; these small irrigation channels run throughout the community along small lanes and property lines allowing families to easily draw water directly onto their land. In 1998 a water tank was constructed to provide drinking water for each household; however, this was not sufficient to provide for all residents. Thus in 2004, a new tank was built to replace the old, and this new tank now supplies sufficient drinking water for the entire village.

The main roads which run through the village are paved, while most of the small lanes remain unpaved. However, as the Tambon Council budget for road pavement is approved year after year, many of these smaller lanes are slowly being paved. It was not until the early 1980s that electricity came to the village and throughout rural Thailand. Today, each household has electricity and there are street lights throughout the village, along with telephone service.

After completion of Maekuang Dam, the east-west irrigation canal was constructed to run through the middle of the village, with a road simultaneously constructed along the canal route. Residents were then able to draw water from the canal for daily use.

3.4.2 Demography

In 2001 Maehugpattana was divided into two separate villages—Maehugpattana Village 9 and Maehugpattana Village 11,¹⁵ both within Tambon Nongyaeng, Sunsai district. The families living north of the irrigation canal are now residents of Village 11 and those living south of the canal, Village 9. For the purposes of this project, the dynamics of community development in Village 9 were examined

¹⁵In 2001 when the government began to implement its Village Fund policy, to give each village one million baht to loan to community members, people of Maehugpattana decided to divide the village into two separate ones so to be entitled for two million baht instead of one million baht.

in detail, which from now on will be referred to as Maehugpattana, unless in some cases specification will be given whether it is referred to as Village 9 or 11.

Population

Table 2. Population according to age

Age group	Population
60+	165
50-59	172
40-49	218
30-39	146
20-29	58
10-19	74
0-9	64
Total	897

Maehugpattana is comprised of 897 people or 211 families; this includes 468 males and 430 females.

Ethnicity

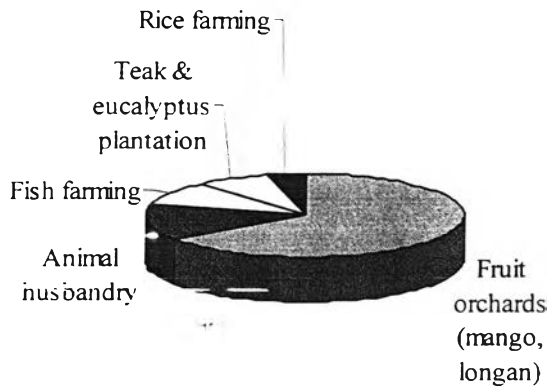
Most of residents of Maehugpattana are Lanna lowland Thai people whose parents are from the previous village in Doisaket district. There are a few families that have moved into the village from other communities in Chiangmai and other regions. Some of these new residents have moved to Maehugpattana with their entire family or to marry residents in the village.

Occupation

The majority of residents stated that they are involved in agriculture; however, residents are commonly engaged in more than one type of agricultural activity as shown in the chart below. The available land is used according to the following breakdown: 75% for mango orchards, 15% for longan orchards, and 10% for rice fields and residential areas.

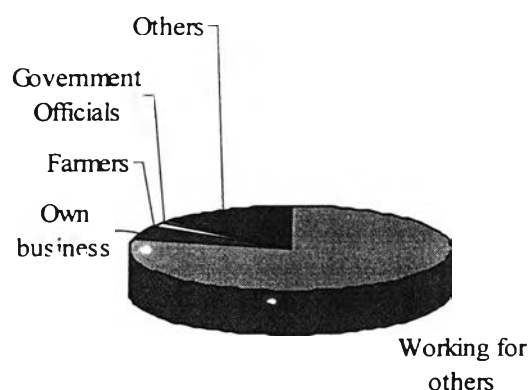
It may be seen that most people in Maehugpattana are farmers because a large number of households are engaged in agricultural activities. However, according to

Chart 1. Agricultural activities



the village recent survey, only four families stated that their main occupation is farming. while the majority, 166 families, stated that their occupation is ‘working for others’, which include odd jobs such as working as laborers in other people’s paddies, construction sites and factories. Two families are government officials and 10 have own business mainly merchants. There are 29 families whose breadwinners are elderly and generally do not work.

Chart 2. Occupations



While most families are involved in agricultural activities like fruit orchards as a means of generating income. these types of activities provide an income just one time per year during the harvest period. As a result, one or more members of each

family must work outside of agriculture in order to bring in some supplemental income. Approximately 30 residents are employed at a frozen food factory in Tambon Maejo, Sansai district, about 20 kilometers from the village; minibuses provide transport for workers to and from the factory.

There are three small grocery shops in the village. Most residents, however, prefer to go to the larger markets in Toongkaotok, a village two kilometers south of Maehugpattana. for their groceries and food items.¹⁶ In fact, a number of Maehugpattana residents (mostly women) sell their goods in this market and others on a daily basis. They often sell vegetables, either from their gardens or purchased from neighbors, during both the morning and evening hours at different markets. Some of these saleswomen also get up early each day to gather items such as mushrooms, vegetables, bamboo shoots, ant eggs, insects, and the like from nearby forests for sale in the markets. Many villagers also catch fish and shrimp in the Maeguang Dam and two reservoirs north of the village. If the amount of fish and shrimp caught is small, they are often simply sold within the village. However, if it is a large catch, it will be sold in the markets as well.

Some residents of the village have their own businesses, some smaller and some larger. Examples of these types of businesses include construction businesses and selling food in markets. There are three families in the community who have construction businesses in various locations throughout Chiang Mai province. Approximately 50 people work as day labourers on construction sites which provide transportation to take them to and from work daily. Another technique employed by entrepreneurial saleswomen is to go to the market in Chiang Mai city in the evenings to purchase vegetables at direct, wholesale prices and then sell them at their local fresh markets the following morning.

Approximately ten women in the village regularly obtain ready-cut pieces of fabric from nearby clothes factories to work on at home. They may only be sewing a single left sleeve of a shirt, but do so in massive amounts, sometimes as high as 10,000 pieces per week. This type of at-home work is paid according to the number

¹⁶As most families have access to at least one motorcycle, the trip to Toongkaotok takes just a few minutes.

of pieces completed. Some elderly residents also receive ready-cut bamboo pieces from factories which they then assemble into assorted basket designs.

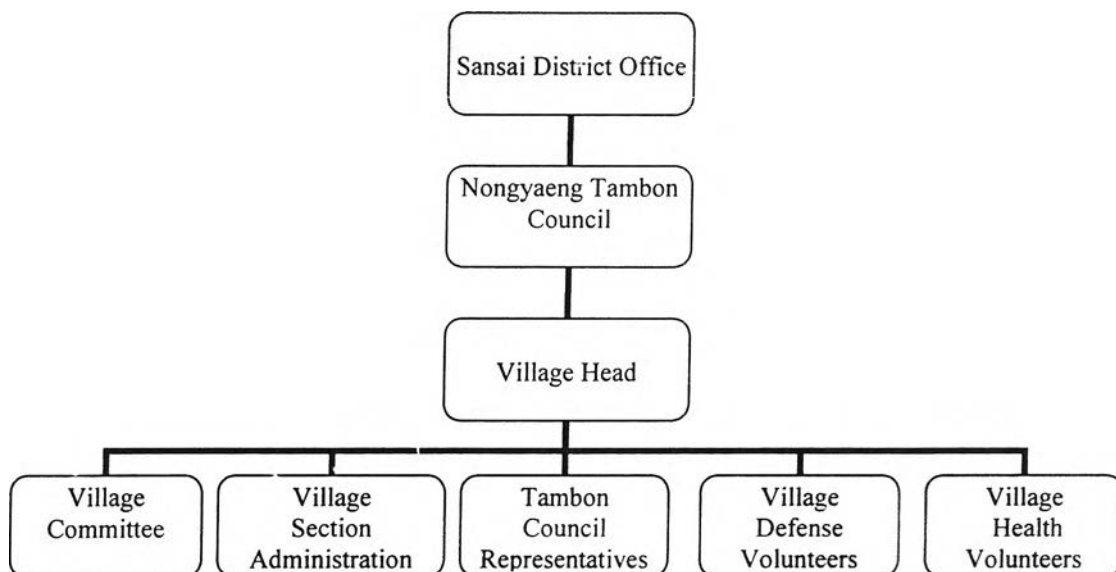
Within Maehugpattana, there are three types of household industries—1) home-made rice whiskey production, 2) drinking water production, and 3) carved, wooden toys. The production of rice whiskey is a process which has just recently been legalized by the government; it is sold locally to residents in Maehugpattana and nearby villages. Those families producing drinking water also sell their product in Maehugpattana and surrounding villages. The wooden toy industry has been categorized as a three-star One Tambon One Product (OTOP) item for Tambon Nongyaeng.

3.5. Administration

3.5.1. Official administration

The official administrative structure is formed according to the government's local administration under the Ministry of Interior. Within the village also formed smaller administrative sections which are under supervision of the village head.

Chart 3. Official administrative organization



The Sansai District Office receives policies from the regional and central governments and passes them on to the Nongyaeng Tambon Council or to the village head directly. Maehugpattana is one of the 11 villages under the Nongyaeng Tambon Council. Each village has two representatives on the council. These village representatives receive salaries from the government and serve four-year terms. The main relation between the village and the Tambon Council is regarding the budget and funding for community development projects, primarily related to infrastructure and public utilities such as roads, electricity and water supply. Each year the village committee writes an annual plan comprised of development projects to seek funding from the Tambon Council.

The present village head of Maehugpattana is in the third year of his second four-year term. He receives government policies from the district office and informs community members over the village speaker system which is centered at his house; he may also call an ad hoc meeting, depending on the level or urgency of the issue. He also speaks with residents about the policies at monthly village meetings. He serves as the head of each community project and activity.

Currently, there is an average of at least one meeting per week which is presided over by the village head with different village groups or committees. The reason for the high frequency of meetings is because there are many groups in the village and some groups carry out different community development projects which require regular meetings among the members or involved committees. There is a simple open building on the property of the village head which is used as the community center where meetings and major community events are conducted. The building is equipped with chairs, tables, a sound system, and an overhead projector with screen.

The village head has two assistants to help with administering the community and representing the head when he is not available. One of his assistants is elected at the same time as the village head and also serves a four-year term. The other assistant is an officer with special training from the government which qualifies him to work as an assistant to a village head. He serves in this position until retirement at the age of 60.

The village committee of Maehugpattana is comprised of the village head who is the leader, the two village head assistants, a secretary, a treasurer, a public relations officer, and other 19 other committee members. This committee has spearheaded various community development projects and activities in the village for the past five years. They attend most of the meetings in the village and have a certain amount of authority to represent fellow villagers in making decisions regarding assorted village issues.

The area of Maehugpattana is divided into four geographical sections,¹⁷ or *pok*, which coincide with the four main lanes in the village. Each section has its own committee which is comprised of a head, an assistant to the head, a secretary, a treasurer, a public relations person, and at least ten other committee members.

In order to have money for administration and to conduct community development activities in their section, each household initially pays 30 baht to the committee and then ten baht per month thereafter. The section committee is responsible for managing the money for its section's development work and activities.¹⁸

Not all community members must attend every monthly village meeting. It is most important for residents to attend meetings for their particular section, especially when the main agenda topic for the meeting is the organisation of a new village activity or project, and how each section may contribute to or participate in the activity. After the meeting, committees for each section will call a meeting for their section members to discuss issues among their individual section.¹⁹ When there is a

¹⁷A few years ago the Ministry of Interior has developed the policy of dividing villages into different sections. Its objective is to increase villagers' participation in community activities. This policy was implemented in Maehugpattana in early 2004.

¹⁸For example, on special occasions such as the King's or Queen's birthday people like to clean up their community. Members get together and clean up public places within their section. The budget may be used to buy soft drinks or snacks for people who come to work together. Occasionally there is a campaign which includes a competition among the four sections, such for the most well-kept area, with the winners receiving a prize from the village head. The money is used to prepare the section for the competition. Additionally, if a particular section has a large enough budget, loans to section members are also possible.

¹⁹When there is a meeting or section activity family representatives register or sign their names in a book to allow the village head to keep an accurate record of people's participation in community activities. The secretary of each section committee takes meeting minutes and reports to the village head directly or at the monthly village meeting.

major community event, work is divided among the sections and each section is given certain tasks. For example, residents in Section One would be responsible for building the stage and in Section Two for preparing the tents, chairs, tables, and the like.

There are 10 village defense volunteers²⁰ in Maehugpattana, referred to as *tamruad baan*, which literally translates as “village police.” They receive training from the district office and serve the community in terms of security and safety. A number of the male village committee members are also village defense volunteers. Their primary roles and responsibilities are to alternate in patrolling the village overnight from 8:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. When on duty, they wear a uniform and carry a wooden baton. If an event occurs which requires the participation of many villagers as well as people from other villages, like the Tambon Sports Day, temples night fairs, and the like, village defense volunteers from different villages throughout Tambon Nongyaeng will work together in providing security and convenience in terms of traffic control to participants in the festivities. There is no police involvement.

There are 20 public health volunteers²¹ in Maehugpattana who work directly under the community health center. There are regular meetings and training for these volunteers on various health issues. The nature of the work for public health volunteers falls into two areas. The first area includes policies from the ministry of public health on certain health issues. In this situation, the director of the community health centre calls a meeting to inform the volunteers of the policy and how it will directly affect their tasks. Examples of recent policies include plans of actions regarding the avian flu and dengue fever. Volunteers went out to randomly test chickens and ducks in the village and submit a report. They went around the village talking to villagers about dengue fever and sharing that residents should get rid of standing water where mosquitoes may lay eggs. The second area of responsibility for

²⁰The roles and responsibilities of village defense volunteers have been recently made more clear than in the past, particularly in response to the government policy on drug prevention and suppression. As volunteers monitor security and safety in the village, this may be affected by the influence of local drug use and drug trade.

²¹ In Thailand, public health volunteers have been helping the Ministry of Public Health through working at the village level for more than 28 years. They receive welfare benefits such as free medical treatments in government hospitals for all members of their family, 50% discounts on private room admission in hospitals, and 20% discounts on third-class train tickets.

the volunteers is to assist with community-initiated health projects or campaigns in collaboration with both the community and the community health centre.

3.5.2. Unofficial administration

Seniority and social relationships among community members play a significant role in administration of Maehugpattana. This is quite clear when examining the law and order system in the community. In the north, a village head is referred to as *Pho Luang* which literally means “big father.” In Maehugpattana the village head refers to himself as “father.” Similar to elsewhere in Thailand, people are often referred to by the titles such as uncle, aunt, brother, sister, and the like.

This informal addressing in the village has made the relationship among community members closer, as if they were relatives. Additionally, many people in the community do belong to extended families and thus many residents are related by blood. Therefore, it is natural when addressing one another to use their titles as if they were from the same family. The community is then compared to as one big family. This kind of relationship is often viewed as informal administration.

When there are problems or conflicts in the community people would treat one another in a friendly manner, as if they were from the same family. Older people such as senior residents and the village head are seen as being responsible for the care of the family and helping to discuss and solve family problems. When there are problems such as arguments, quarrels or conflicts among members of the community, or cases such as stealing and drug-related problems, the cases are rarely sent to the police station or related district offices. Rather, people are called together to discuss their situation with the village head and his assistants. Because the community is rather close, people know one another very well, and some families have close relations with one another, personal relationships are often used to compromise and solve problems.



3.6. Society

3.6.1. Social context

Despite now being separated by the central canal, Villages 9 and 11 do share a community health centre, a temple and school, which are all located in the same area within Maehugpattana Village 11. Within the larger Tambon Nongyaeng, there are two community health centers serving the 11 villages located within the tambon. The center situated in Maehugpattana Village 11 has a staff of three medical officers and one assistant and provides services for villagers in five of villages in the tambon. North of the health centre is the temple complex, with three monks in residence

There are three schools in Tambon Nongyaeng, each providing classes from primary school grade one through secondary school grade three.²² The school in Village 11 has 176 students and 11 teachers. The students come from villages in the surrounding area; one teacher is a resident of Maehugpattana Village 11. The number of students enrolled in the local school is somewhat low as many parents choose to send their children to schools in larger cities as these urban schools are believed to provide a better education than the rural, village schools. Minibuses run daily transporting students to and from the village. Annually, an average of 20 students from Maehugpattana Villages 9 and 11 attend Chonlaprathan Hinteak school in Doisaket district. This school is around six kilometers east of the village, with a school bus taking the children to and from school daily.²³

Ritual ceremonies

Culture and traditions were also greatly supported through community development in Maehugpattana. Some traditions have been passed on and practiced by people for a long time, since the time when they were living in the former village. Shared traditions and culture have resulted in shared “attitudes” and “faith” toward

²²Known throughout Thailand as Prathom 1 to Matthayom 3.

²³Many villagers have been attending Chonlaprathan Hinteak school since before the resettlement of residents to Maehugpattana. Some residents see attendance at Chonlaprathan Hinteak as a family tradition, whereas others indicated that the quality of education is better there than at the local school in Maehugpattana.

their traditional beliefs. Diverse attitudes can lead to expressions which counter one another; identical attitudes can affect the expressions which support one another for mutual benefits. “Faith,” a result of attitude, is also an important element of community development.²⁴ It can be interpreted as people’s strong belief or confidence in something or someone. Residents of Maehugpattana share an attitude and faith toward assorted aspects of the community’s traditions and culture, such as interdependence among extended family members, neighbours and friends, belief in the influence of a superpower, and belief in doing good things such as merit making.

When traced back far enough, the majority of village residents are related by blood, albeit distantly, as they have previously lived in a rather close community with residents marrying members of the same small community. After moving to their current village, the relationships among residents has remained close and many continue to marry members of the same community.²⁵

Members of extended families in the community continue to maintain strong bonds through their shared “faith” in the ancestral spirits. This can be seen in the traditional worship of ancestral spirits which continues to be widely practiced in the community. It is believed that ancestral spirits reside in an altar situated in the home of the eldest family member. When the eldest member passes away, the ancestral spirit is then invited to reside at the house of the next eldest person. In the ninth month of every year, each family will conduct a ceremony honoring their ancestral spirits during which all family members assemble together and make offerings to these spirits. When there are changes or additions in any family as a result of events like the birth of a child or marriage, the ancestral spirits are informed and offerings are made. Failing to do so is seen as an ominous omen which can lead to misfortune for family members.

Relationships among villagers in the community are strengthened through their belief in a spirit called the *Pee Poh Baan* or “paternal village spirit,” which looks

²⁴Phat Bunyarataphan, Community Development in the Country (Bangkok: Community Development Department, 1975).

²⁵The oldest and most extended families in the village are the Buakaewgerd and Namuang families.

after the well-being of residents located within the community—in this case, residents of Maehugpattana Villages 9 and 11. The local village spirit was invited from the previous neighborhood location in Kiengka village and is believed to reside in a shrine located at the northern edge of the village near the foot of the mountains. Similar to the ancestral spirit, the paternal village spirit is worshipped both occasionally and annually. Although the ceremony and its preparation are mainly prepared by adults, younger people and children also attend as it is believed to bring luck to their families and themselves.

When there are changes in the family, such as birth, marriage, building a new home, and the like, the paternal village spirit is informed and asked for protection. When there are problems in a family to which there seems to be no solution, people often turn to the paternal village spirit seeking help.

Community cultural events

Despite having been randomly assigned plots of land throughout the community which could create distance among residents, there are a number of traditional ceremonies in Maehugpattana that bring every household together as a single spiritual unit. Festivals and ceremonies not only develop people's shared "attitude" and "faith," but also provide "leisure" activities with "leisure" meaning not working or having free time. Activities such as festivals, plays, games, and the like help to maintain community being, foster unity and preserve local traditions and culture.

In Maehugpattana, traditional festivals such as *Songkran* or Thai New Year, *Loykrathong*,²⁶ *Phapa*,²⁷ and *Poiluang*²⁸ often involve high levels of participation among community members every year. Fun, entertainment and merit making often serve as the center of the ceremony. They serve to create strong relationship among

²⁶Each year Maehugpattana residents celebrate *Loykrathong* festival, along with other communities throughout the country. It is conducted on the full moon night of the eleventh month to worship and ask for forgiveness from the water goddess.

²⁷*Phapa* is an event that takes place annually or more to raise money and make merit. *Phapa* is conducted annually by Maehugpattana Villages 9 and 11 is to raise money for the temple. It can also be conducted to raise money for secular organisations or activities.

²⁸*Poiluang* is a celebration for a building or the construction of the village temple.

members of the Maehugpattana villages as there are no modern entertainment venues such as restaurants, pubs, cinemas or karaoke bars which would allow people to socialize.

Two other cultural events are worth mentioning as they enhance village unity in a situation where the physical layout creates a distance among members. They are *Songkhrobaan* and *Suebchata Moobaan*. *Song* means “to send,” *khro* means “bad luck,” and *baan* means “home or village.” Thus *Songkhrobaan* is often understood as a ceremony conducted to send away the bad luck which has occurred in the community in the past, at the present, and to wish for good luck and prosperity in the future. Villagers believe that a person or even the village itself will inevitably encounter bad luck. Therefore, one important purpose of this particular ceremony is to avoid this type of bad luck before it takes place. It is conducted annually or once every two years by the temple abbot and the elderly in the village.²⁹

The other ceremony is *Suebchata Moobaan*. The word *Sueb* means “to uphold or maintain,” *chata* means “fate or destiny,” and *moobaan* means “village.” Thus, *Suebchata Moobaan* means to uphold the village’s good fate or destiny. This ceremony takes place once every two or three years to ensure the continuity of prosperity for the village and its residents. The ceremony is rather spectacular in that each family wraps its home and other buildings and even the trees on their property with a single cotton string. This string is then extended and tied with that of the neighbours’. Eventually all the houses are connected with the string, which extends to and ends at the village temple. At the temple, the monks chant and give blessings for each home in the village which is received via the cotton string.

3.6.2. Community organisations

The definition of community development by Louis Miniclier, the second theory used in the framework for this study, is used in conjunction with Phat

²⁹During the ceremony itself, four baskets of food, flowers and an earthen buffalo are prepared. Each basket is placed at a corner of the village where the monk and the elderly chant and the monk sprinkles holy water onto the basket. It is believed that bad luck is sent away and any impending misfortune can also be avoided as the village is subsequently well protected from all directions or corners.

Bunyarataphan's theory to explain the development of community organisations in Maehugpattana. Louis Miniclier defines community development as:

a social process in which the people of a community organise themselves in planning and action; define their common and individual needs and problems; make group and individual plans to meet their needs and solve their problems; execute these plans with a maximum reliance upon community resources; and supplement these resources when necessary with services and materials from governmental and non-governmental agencies outside the community.

While the aforementioned social and occupational groups were unofficially formed, there have been a number of organisations in Maehugpattana that have officially been established to meet certain objectives. Some are organisations that were formed according to government policies. Many were initiated by the villagers to meet certain needs. "Group formation" in the community can be divided into groups that were formed prior to the 2001 anti-drug campaign and those formed after the campaign. Some groups such as youth groups and health promotion groups were formed under the initiation of community members because of the urgency of problems. The formation of these groups was seen as a solution to problems in the community and appear to work more effectively and have better outcomes than groups were formed under initiation of the government, such as village cooperatives and occupational training programs.

Government initiated organisations

Community cooperative

The Maehugpattana Agricultural Development Cooperative Ltd. was established in 1997 under government policy that a cooperative was needed in the village and would enable villagers to better help one another as a group. It began with 136 members and a board committee headed by the village head. The money used for the cooperative activities comes from five sources: 1) funding from Chiangmai Cooperative Association, 2) loans from the Government's Saving Bank and the Agricultural and Cooperative Bank, 3) members' investment with a minimum of 10

baht per share with an additional compulsory 10 baht saving deposit monthly, 4) the sales of agricultural equipments and chemicals, and 5) interest from loans.

The cooperative buys fertilizer, pesticides, seeds and rice and sells to members on cash and credit. Members may take out loans with a value not higher than three times the amount of their savings. Unfortunately, the cooperative has not made any profit; rather, it loses on average 25,000 – 30,000 baht every year due to high management costs. A lot of money goes to transportation and the allowance for officers who organise and run the activities.

Groups formed in haste often lack “faith establishment among group members and do not function effectively.” This could be the case of the village cooperative in Maehugpattana. One problem with the cooperative is the need to make more income, which is a shared problem among all of the residents of Maehugpattana. The process of seeking solutions to the problem and forming the cooperative to do this is that the cooperative was not initially planned by the people themselves; the process of community development was off track from the very beginning.

The Cooperative Auditing Department³⁰ of the Maehugpattana cooperative reports that the cooperative was founded according to the government’s policy, and not from the initiation of the community. Members are subsequently not actively involved in the cooperative’s business and activities. Some members do not pay their loans on time and responsible persons are unable to get the money back, making the already limited financial resource difficult to manage. The accounting system is also inadequate. For example, there have been no systematic records kept of the cooperative’s income and expenses. There are rarely meetings for the committee or among members, not even when there are problems. Such problems have remained until now.

³⁰Cooperative Auditing Department, Account Auditing Report on Maehugpattana Agricultural Cooperative Ltd., 2002. (Unpublished Report.)

Village fund

As described in the previous section the income of Maehugpattana residents is rather low because most people work in low-pay sections such as day labourers in construction, food factories, and cloth factories. The organisation of the village fund in 2001, therefore, attracted a lot of attention and participation from community members. Upon implementation of the government policy for village funds and the arrival of the 1,000.000 baht budget, village meetings were conducted to inform community members of the policy and to form their own committee, rules and regulations regarding use of the fund. Meanwhile, the villages saving group was also formed wherein residents could deposit money in the village fund and this money, together with the government fund, is then loaned out to members.

Although this policy was initiated by the government, the fund is managed by the villagers themselves. This leaves room for flexibility, discussion and decision making allowing the committee and members to analyze members' needs for loans in order to determine their eligibility and the amount of money they may borrow. There were 46 people who took loans from the village fund in the first year. The money borrowed was primarily used for agricultural activities and private business such as trading. To date, all the money borrowed has been returned on time. Some of the profit gained from interest on these loans was given to members of the savings group; some was also used to build a multi-purpose building for the community.

Community initiated organisations

Housewives group

The village housewives group existed prior to 2001 in Maehugpattana but its principle, roles and functions were not clear. The traditional expected role is for the members is similar to expectations for housewives in rural areas throughout the country—to help with cleaning, preparing and serving food, preparing flowers, as well as working at community functions or events such as weddings, funerals, religious events, and the like.

Prior to 2001 there were skill development training programs provided to housewives. These included training in how to make desserts, snacks and artificial flowers which were offered by the Department of Community Development. Although the women had access to new knowledge and skills through these trainings, they did not have the chance to use them to generate extra income as they did not know how to go about establishing a business as this involves factors such as investing money and marketing. Later, the village was allocated a budget to purchase ten sewing machines for the housewives group and the Department of Community Development provided the women with basic sewing skills training. However, once again, after the training there was no further management training to enable the people to use their skills to earn money. The sewing machines remain unused.

The two community development programs offered by government organisations did not produce effective outcomes because their organisation process involved little participation by community members. Thus, as part of the ongoing community development after the 2001 anti-drug campaign, the villagers made their own plans for how the activities of housewives group could be better organised. As part of the 2004 annual village plan, a clear and well structured plan for occupational development for the housewives group (complete with a group committee, program procedures, timeline and budget) proposed a budget to receive funding from the Tambon Council to purchase an oven and to hire an instructor from the Non-Formal Education Department to train the members in how to establish and run a bakery. The committee and members worked together on the marketing of the products. At the time this study was conducted, the group was in the training process stage.

Senior members group

Similar to the housewives group, the senior members group of Maehugpattana has always existed, but without clear policies and roles. The traditional expected role of the elderly has usually been that of leaders for religious and secular ceremonies. There are more than 160 people in Maehugpattana who are over 60 years old. Most of them do not work, although some earn income from making baskets; they have a lot of free time.

After the 2001 anti-drug campaign the senior group was better organised and in meetings residents discussed the types of projects older residents should be involved with as part of the annual village plan. It was suggested that nine-rai plot of empty public land near the outskirts of the village be used to build an herbal garden. There were many meetings to work out how to divide the responsibilities of the project, what to grow, what would be done with the products, how much budget was needed, and the like. It was agreed that the herbs would mainly be those used in cooking such as lemongrass, basil, chili, and the like. Thus, if the products did not have a high enough market value, the members could take the herbs home and use it for food. If they were able to be sold, the profit would be divided among members. Finally in 2004 an official project was formed called “Herbal Forest for Education and Health” and a budget proposal was sent to the Tambon Council. In the beginning of 2005, 100,000 baht was allocated and the land is now being prepared and some herbs have been planted.

Although the full outcome of the project has not been seen, the formation of the project followed what Louis Miniclier describes that he said the people defined their own problems and came up with their own plan towards the solution. The activity also provides “the change agent or the outer energy” as described by Phat Bunyarataphan which generates “income” for the members while at the same time providing activities that allow them to exercise and have “leisure” by maximizing the use of community resources and supplement financial resource was granted by the outside organisation.

Youth group

Another community organisation in Maehugpattana is the youth group. Its formal establishment was in 2000. Every step of “group formation” corresponds with Louis Miniclier’s theory of community development. Many factors that reinforce the success of the group are also as described by Phat Bunyarataphan. There were problems with youths in the village. Some of the young people got together to discuss the problems and how to solve them with specific plans and projects that had clear objectives and procedures. Members built up “faith” in their work by calling themselves “Stars in the Dream.” They raised their own money to run their activities

from a community ceremony. If needed, they ask for help; they learn dancing and music skills as “leisure” and to make “income.” Youth activities such as a milk bar and bicycle rally allow them to use their free time constructively.

Prior to 2000 there was some concern about young people’s behaviour in the village as many were involved in sexual relationships while still very young, some as young as 12 - 13 years old. Many ended up getting married at a very young age and did not finish school. Some boys and girls took up drinking and smoking and were suspected of being involved with drugs, especially methamphetamines.

Because of concerns about young people’s health, the director of the community health center created programs to address the issue. He talked to his assistant, then a 20 year old girl, about re-organizing the youth group and setting up activities for young people in the community. He surveyed how many youths were interested in joining the group and organised a meeting with those who were interested. At that meeting, a youth committee of ten people was established and his assistant was elected the leader.

Many activities of Maehugpattana’s youth group has been under the supervision of the director of the community health center and an officer from a local NGO called North Net Foundation, who had been working with communities in Sansai district focusing on sex education and HIV/AIDS issues. The two adults helped set up the group and led participation activities. The youth committee members and those who participated in the meeting were asked to convince other young people in the village to join the group.

In the beginning during meetings and workshops, the two adults encouraged the children to speak out and brainstorm what they thought were youth problems in the community and possible ways to solve them. Later, meetings and discussions were conducted without the adult presence. It was decided that the name of the group would be *Dao Nai Fun* or “Stars in the Dream.” The name was chosen because the youth saw themselves as standing out among other community members for taking action and getting involved in community work as if they were stars in the sky; so they became ideal or dreamed members of the community.

After the group was officially formed there have been many programs with the objective of encouraging youth participation in community activities which are beneficial for them and the community as a whole. However, these activities do cost money. The first amount of money that was used to run youth activities was raised during the Songkran of Thai New Year festival in April 2001, where the ceremony of paying respect to the elderly was organised along with a *Phapa* to which people could make merit by donating money which went to the youth group. That was the first amount of money for the youth group to begin their activities. From then on the youth group, as a well organised community group, has requested funding for various projects. More details will be given in Chapter 4 on the participation of youth groups in anti-drugs activities.

Health development group

After the completion of the 2001 anti-drug campaign it was thought that in order for the problems of drugs to be eradicated permanently from the community, other aspects of mental and physical health of community members would need to be developed. This was because there were still health problems in the village such as smoking and drinking problems, and the consuming of unhealthy food, which all had the potential to cause long-term social, economic and health problems for individuals, their families, and the community as a whole. Maehugpattana's health development group, established in 2003 is called *San Sam Wai*, and operates under the close supervision of officers from the community health center. The word *San* means "to weave," *Sam* means "three," and *Wai* means "age or generation." Thus, *San Sam Wai* literally means "to weave the three generations together"—the youth, the adults, and the elderly. A working team was set up and comprised of 30 people, ten from each age group. Activities developed with a focus on health improvement of the three groups.

A workshop was set up for the 30 members of the working team to provide them with a better understanding on the nature of program and their roles and responsibilities. There were regular meetings for the leading team to help plan programs and handle the management of resources. For long-term projects, such as one-year projects, there is project evaluation every three months in order to monitor its

progress and make adjustments for upcoming activities. At the end of the project they hold a meeting to wrap up the project and brainstorm suggestions for future programs before getting together again in order to write new proposals for the following year's projects.

In the past two years, after the establishment of the group, there have been a number of projects in the community which have been widely successful. The director of the community health center who serves as the group leader talks with community members and helps them to organise health development projects and write proposals which are often submitted to the Thai Health Development Foundation. Each of the projects has been granted funding. The director indicated that the Thai Health Foundation grants the funding every time because the projects are well constructed and involve high levels of participation and decision making by community residents. After the completion of a project, an evaluation is written up to assess the strengths and weaknesses and offer recommendations for future programs.

Examples of activities under the health development group of Maehugpattana include:

- A campaign aimed at decreasing the consumption of cigarettes and alcohol within the three age groups in the community;
- A one-day campaign and activity on preserving northern culture by promoting healthy, northern food;
- A one-day "Bicycle riding bringing knowledge to households" program organised by the youth group which occurs once every two months on Saturdays, with the goal to conduct the activity once a month;
- A one-day seminar and workshop on menopause was organised for both male and female members of the community aged 40 and above;
- The "Stars in the Dream" youth group runs health and entertainment radio programs in the evenings and on weekends;
- "Friends Corner" or "Milk Bar" is a youth group program aimed at getting the maximum number of youth in the community to come together monthly, usually in the evening between 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. on the first Saturday of the month to have fun and also do useful activities such as

making milk and playing games, all of which is facilitated by the team leader of the youth group;

- The herbal garden of the senior members is also an activity of the health development group; and,
- Aerobics dance is organised daily at the community health centre from 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

3.7. Relationship with external persons or organisations

3.7.1. Relationship with people from other communities

Maehugpattana is a rural village and there is no public transport which passes through the village; it is located just eight kilometers from the town of Sansai and 30 kilometers from Chiangmai. Most people use private transport, primarily motorcycles and pick-up trucks. There are few reasons why residents of Maehugpattana need to travel outside the community. They include things such as going to governmental offices for official contacts, children going to school in other communities, workers working in nearby factories, and people selling food or going shopping in markets or in town. Additionally, people from outside the community rarely go to the village except on special occasions such as sports or cultural events or festivals which take place in the community.

The tradition of “merit making” that involves participation of people from outside the community is still common in Chiangmai province; this includes Maehugpattana village. This is particularly true for the *Poiluang* or the celebration of a new building in the temple compound. The village committee writes a letter to invite residents from other communities in the area or throughout Chiangmai. At night, representatives from the invited communities dress up in their traditional northern costume and come to donate the money they had collected in their community to the host temple.

Most of the visiting communities also bring a northern performance troupe with them to perform on a stage that night. Maehugpattana itself has few types of performance by the youth group in the village. These young people perform in other

villages when they are invited. Village defense volunteers from communities in the same tambon are requested to provide security during both daytime and nighttime for these festivals.

3.7.2. Relationship with government and non-government organisations

There began to be more contacts between Maehugpattana and organisations outside the community after it launched its anti-drug campaign in 2001. This one-year project proved successful and attracted a lot of attention from local and regional government and non-government organisations who were willing to fund other projects initiated by the community, provided that it wrote up clear and constructive proposals.

These organisations are mainly funding bodies to which the community writes proposals for funding to support its various community development projects. These organisations include the Sansai District Office, the Nongyaeng Tambon Council, the Thai Health Promotion Foundation, the Office of Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) in Chiangmai, the North Net Foundation, and the Thai – U.S. Collaboration Office for Amphetamine Research under the Patronage of Princes Ubolratana (TUCAR). Each of these organisations has been providing on-going funding for various projects, all of which were initiated by the community itself.

Because of the success of the 2001 anti-drug campaign and its continuing community work to ensure sustainable community development, the ONCB has chosen Maehugpattana as a model village in an attempt to tackle narcotics problems at the community level in other northern rural communities in Chiangmai. Hence, in 2002 the Tambon Nongyaeng anti-drug network was established under the financial support of the ONCB, with the village head of Maehugpattana serving as president of the network. Later other communities in Tambon Muanglen (also in Sansai District) were added as part of the network; the number of member communities is increasing every year.

3.7.3. Relationship with other individuals and groups

The network and the success of the community work have led to increased relations between Maehugpattana and other communities where there are numerous visits by delegations to the community, and visits with the village head, committees and members of the community. Assorted research and academic institutes both locally and nationwide are also paying close attention to the dynamics of the community work in the village. The village head of Maehugpattana has been invited to give talks about his community to many organisations in Chiangmai and other provinces. The same is true for community youth leaders, a number of which have been invited to give talks about the activities of the youth group in other area.

On the other hand, because of its ongoing community development projects, community members such as the village head, village committee and committees of various community organisations visit other communities in order to obtain knowledge and experience of community work conducted in other communities.