

[23-1] English Summaries of the Papers Contributed to Tonan Ajia Kenkyu (The Southeast Asian Studies) vol.23, No.3 (Special Issue for Don Daeng: An Integrated Village Study in Northeast Thailand)

[1] EDITOR'S NOTE

Hayao FUKUI

This special issue introduces some of the results of an integrated village study of Don Daeng in Northeast Thailand. The fieldwork is completed, but it will take considerable time to analyse all the data obtained. The papers in this issue do not therefore represent the whole study; only those aspects in which analysis has progressed to a certain extent have been selected.

The research project was directed by Professor Yoneo Ishii of The Center for Southeast Asian Studies of Kyoto University and mainly funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Fieldwork was carried out for 7 months in 1981-82 and for 12 months in 1983-84. Sixteen Japanese and 3 Thai researchers were involved in the first term, and 20 Japanese and 2 Thai in the second. Most of them twice conducted fieldwork in the village for from 1 to 6 months. They included anthropologists, sociologists, economists, geographers, environmental scientists, and specialists in various branches of agricultural science.

Why so many researchers in different disciplines participated in this village study should be explained briefly. Village study is an established study method in anthropology. By viewing all the main elements that contribute to a particular society or culture as functionally interrelated, anthropologists try to grasp the society as an integral whole through detailed analysis of the relationships between the various core elements. This approach is not, however, without problems, insofar as "one man, one village, one year" is the routine practice. It is almost impossible by such means for an anthropologist to comprehend in detail a society or culture as a whole, and his analysis of reality is, therefore, usually incomplete particularly in the relationships between nature and society. We have attempted a new method of village study by an inter-disciplinary team, and have restudied a village that was first studied by an anthropologist, the late Koichi Mizuno, in 1964.

For agricultural scientists, village study is somehow adventurous. Like other natural scientists, their predominant method of research is experimental. To participate in a village study means to abandon this time-honored method and, engage instead in fact-finding fieldwork. Their work in the village may benefit their social scientist colleagues, but none is certain whether he will be properly rewarded in his own discipline. In view of the various

problems of rural development in developing countries, however, a comprehensive understanding of farming systems at different levels is relevant. Though there is no established method of research, it is a worthwhile challenge to seek such an understanding at the village level by means of village study.

Both social and natural scientists were thus agreed that an integrated village study was worthwhile. This research project is based on a consensus among us that no one would be satisfied with studying only limited aspects of the village, and that everyone is concerned with all aspects.

The presence of a group of researchers inevitably disturbed village life. At any one time about 10 foreigners together with 5 or 6 Lao-speaking university students who worked as assistants stayed in 2 or 3 rented houses or rooms in this village of 176 households. The team recruited 3 maids and 4 informants-cum-consultants throughout the fieldwork, and 5 or 6 temporary laborers, all of them villagers. Kin groups are called sum in the village. Our team was called sum jiphun (the Japanese kin group).

The main daily task of the social scientists was to conduct interviews. They visited the households one by one and attended all sorts of gatherings, secular as well as religious. Some worked outside the village, visiting neighboring villages, and offices and markets in the towns. Others surveyed land with a theodolite. Ingredients of meals were recorded, jars of drinking water counted, and well-water sampled for chemical analysis. Agronomists went out to the field in the morning, had lunch and a nap there, and followed the water buffaloes home in the evening. We also visited the villages in other provinces from where the villagers' ancestors had come, and the villages in frontier provinces to where relatives and neighbors had emigrated.

We believe that the villagers readily accepted us in the village, and that we adapted well to village life. Naturally our relationship with the villagers was quite different from that which a single anthropologist would have developed. That there were many researchers, however, did not seem to have a serious negative effect on the fieldwork. Rather, we felt that the potential shortcomings of single-researcher fieldwork were avoided to some extent. There was a great diversity of personalities and ages among the researchers as well as among the villagers, and this helped to establish multiple channels of communication between us. This in turn provided a counterbalance to the biases of individual researchers in gathering and interpreting information.

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To familiarize readers with some of the basic features of the village of Don Daeng, where our interdisciplinary team carried out village-settled studies, and to supplement the following papers dealing with specific aspects of the villages, this brief account provides background information on such topics as location and geography, climate, processes of village settlement and farmland development, changes in vocations and job opportunities, rice culture, land holding, landscape of settlement, houses, eating habits and nutrition, family and kinship, land inheritance, social and administrative structures, religion and religious life, education, and communication with the outside world.

[3] Typology of Rice Cultivation ~~in Don Daeng~~

Shuichi MIYAGAWA, Toshiro KURODA, Hiroyuki MATSUFUJI and Tomoo HATTORI

In Don Daeng, rice is grown in rain-fed fields, and the cultivation method, growth and yield of rice are directly affected by the water conditions, landform and soil fertility of the location.

Rice cultivation was classified into three types. The first type occupied lower landform units, which had plentiful water and fertile soil. Late-maturing glutinous varieties were mainly planted. Transplanting was earlier and harvesting was later than with the other types. Planting density was low. Yielding ability was stable in droughty years but the crop was easily destroyed by flood.

The second type occupied intermediate landform units, where water supply and soil fertility were moderate. Medium-maturing glutinous varieties were dominant. Transplanting and harvesting were of intermediate timing. Planting density was medium. Yielding ability was less stable in droughty years.

The third type occupied higher landform units with poor water conditions and moderate or poor soil fertility. Medium and early-maturing glutinous varieties and non-glutinous varieties were planted. Late-maturing varieties were rare. Transplanting was later and harvesting was earlier than with the other types. Planting density was high. Yielding ability was the lowest of the three types in droughty years, but as high as the other types in rainy years.

[4] Instability of Rice Culture

Yoshihiro KAIDA, Kazutoshi HOSHIKAWA and Yasuyuki KOHNO

The rain-fed rice production of Don Daeng village and its surrounding area is extremely unstable. Compared with an exceptionally bumper harvest in 1983, rice production in the preceding years were less than 4 percent in 1978 due to flood, 10 percent in 1979 due to drought, 5 percent in 1980 due to flood, 54 percent in 1981 due to light drought in the late growing season, and 18 percent in 1982 due to early-season drought and subsequent local submergence. The production in 1983 alone accounted for more than 50 percent of the total production in these six years.

The instability of production was analysed in terms of (1) the variability of rainfall and (2) the distribution of ponded water-depth and soil moisture in paddy plots. The rainfall analysis showed that (i) successful rice production in the western part of the Khorat plateau, where the Don Daeng village is located, is marginal due to scarce rainfall, (ii) seasonal distribution is variable due mainly to unpredictable onset of the monsoon season, and especially to the occurrence of dry spells of highly variable duration and locality, and (iii) rainfall is distributed unevenly over time, e.g., the sum of the 10 largest amounts of daily rainfall accounts for 50-60 percent, and the 3 largest amounts of daily rainfall for 20-30 percent, of the total rainfall in the whole rainy season. By a simple simulation model of water balance in paddy plots, the parameter D_2 , which indicates ponded-water holding capacity, was proved to be a good indicator of water conditions of the paddy land. This parameter varies considerable with location, being controlled largely by topo-sequence, and is closely correlated to the yields of rice.

Rice production in the individual six years was explained, at least qualitatively, by the corresponding variability of rainfall and water conditions in the paddy land.

Finally,, some implications of the extreme instability of rice culture in the village are discussed: (i) the total absence of modern techniques for intensifying rice culture, though such techniques have been introduced in non-rice farming, (ii) land holding and its inheritance and transaction, (iii) cooperation among kin in rice farming and consumption of rice, and (iv) the traditional village attitude toward emigration in search of better paddy land.

At the end of 1982, 900 persons lived in Don Daeng. The 235 ever-married women among them had given birth to 865 children. Data on the 865 children indicated that life expectancy had risen by at least 10 years during the past three decades; from 55.7 or 53.2 to 65.7 years. Because marital fertility of the 235 women began to decline only in the past decade, the village population would have had increased substantially had it not been for emigration. Actually, however, the village population increased at the rate of a mere 0.65 percent per annum in last 17 years. Of 641 living children of 176 householders in 1981, 190 left the village. About two-thirds of them were married. Of the married emigrants, about 60 percent were engaged in farming, half of them in neighboring villages and half in frontier provinces. Of the remaining married emigrants, and also the unmarried ones, most are engaged in various occupations in urban areas, of which local towns in the Northeast region are as significant as the Bangkok metropolitan area.

[6] The Process of Emigration in Search of Good Land to Mo Nua Village, Udonthani Province

Yukio HAYASHI

This descriptive report records the oral history of pioneer settlers who emigrated from Don Daeng village to other pioneer villages in order to acquire good paddy land. The main data were gathered at Mo Nua village, Udonthani province, which was established about 35 years ago by settlers from Loei province and later occupied by many Thai-Lao settlers. Collected in intensive interviews during three brief visits in the period 1983-1985, these data throw light on the process of emigration, which was a distinctive life-style among Thai-Lao villagers in the 1940s and 1950s.

[7] ~~Don Daeng Village in Northeast Thailand~~ An Economic Analysis of Endogenous Rural Economic Evolution and its Policy Implications

Hiroshi Tsujii

Drastic changes took place between 1964 and 1981 in Don Daeng, a small village located about 20 kilometers south of the rapidly

growing town of Khon Kaen, which the Thai government has designated as a decentralized regional development center of the Northeast. Despite the lack of rural development, that is, top-down development sponsored by the government, during this period, the economically rational villagers responded swiftly to the rapidly growing demand in Khon Kaen for off-farm labor and for such agricultural products as hot pepper and pigs. This response, together with small-scale auxiliary government assistance such as a partial subsidy for improvement of feeder roads to the village, brought about drastic changes in the village's economic and social structures. These changes resulting from the villagers' spontaneous and autonomous responses to rapidly increasing economic opportunities in the city are here termed endogenous rural economic evolution.

Although 50% of the villagers are still poor, such evolution has considerably reduced poverty in the village. It is, however, yet to extend far beyond Don Daeng and other villages near Khon Kaen. Extension to other parts of the vast Northeast of the government's decentralized regional and rural development strategy, through which cities are designated as regional development centers, and auxiliary government assistance is made available for infrastructural work such as construction and improvement of feeder roads to villages, and for decentralization of industry, urbanization, and provision of public services, should prove an efficient means to induce endogenous regional economic evolution based on the quick and spontaneous responses of peasants who are eager to increase their economic welfare.

[8] Kin Relationships and Kin Cooperation for Farming and Consumption

Masuo KUCHIBA and Takahiko TAKEMURA

Small groups of close-kin households in a Thai-Lao village were found to cooperate intimately in daily agricultural production and consumption, as if they formed a single household. The predominant relationships between households was that of parent-daughter.

Koichi Mizuno called this unit a 'multi-household compound' and characterized it as being formed at a certain phase of the family developmental cycle. Because of the postmarital uxorilocal residence rule and the inheritance pattern emphasizing female devisees in the community, a married daughter and her husband often stay in her parents' house for some years after marriage, before moving to their own house. When the daughter's household is not economically independent, her parents help and in return expect the help of their married daughter's family in farming. As a result an inti-

mate cooperative unit is formed between the households concerned.

Although such is the typical form of this unit, it is limited neither to one phase of the family developmental cycle nor to the parent-daughter relationship. Close mutual help is expected as norm between close kin with a strong religious background, and other relationships are also found which follow kin norms.

[9] Daily Activity Survey (1)

Satoshi KOIKE, Shinji SUWA and Haruo NOMA

A daily activity survey was conducted to analyse quantitatively the village life of Don Daeng in 1981 and 1983. Each sample farmer was requested to record on a daily basis what he or she did, and where and with whom the activity occurred.

The labor requirement for rice-growing was conspicuously seasonal. The combined labor requirement for cultivation of rice, upland crop (cassava) and vegetables was also significantly seasonal, and its pattern resembled that of rice-growing alone, because the farming of crops other than rice was not highly seasonal. In the slack season, although farmers spent more time on fishing (in the case of males) and handicrafts (in the case of females), they nevertheless worked fewer total hours and had more spare time than in the busy season.

Although division of labor exists between the sexes, both men and women are involved in rice-growing. In the sample households in which they were the two main workers, the husband and wife did the time-consuming work such as transplanting and harvesting jointly. As might be expected, the husband plowed the paddy fields. And in concurrence with this, the wife uprooted the seedlings. In this case, it is very clear that the husband and wife are indispensable partners in rice cultivation.

[10] Sharing of Merit and the Associated Social Relationships of Funeral Rites

Yukio HAYASHI

In the ritual complex of Don Daeng village, the funeral rites accompanying normal death are the most complicated of merit-making (tham bun) ceremonies, involving four stages of ritual: (1) rites held while the body is kept at home, (2) cremation rites, (3) collection of bones, (4) collective rites for transferring merit

to the dead. Although these rites are household-centered, close kin and many other villagers collectively participate with material donations and cooperation. For the relatives of the dead, the hosts of the funeral rites, the main object is to make a lot of merit and transfer it to the deceased in order to ensure a good rebirth. They fulfill a moral obligation to the dead, because villagers believe that the average person cannot accumulate enough merit during life to ensure a good rebirth.

Many other villagers participate in funeral rites, by helping the deceased's relatives, in order to make merit for themselves. By their definition, every participant in a merit-making ceremony gains a share of the merit. They help the host of the funeral rites in various ways, especially in the 'feast' held at the house of the dead. In this situation they gain merit through the host of the rites, who donates material and monetary gifts to the monks of the temple. The transferring of merit to the deceased by relatives and the sharing of merit among other villagers are interwoven in these rites, and this leads to the social circulation of merit.

[11] AN OVERVIEW ON NATURE, AGRICULTURE AND ECONOMY

Hayao FUKUI

Although Don Daeng village has long been involved in a market-oriented economy, rice production has neither been commercialized nor declined. Neither has it been intensified, despite the potential of a large increase of village population, which has not been realized because of emigration. The extreme instability and poor productivity of rain-fed rice on one hand, and the unreliability of cash income from other sources, farm and off-farm alike, on the other, are responsible for the persistence of rice cultivation in the traditional style. This results in a two-sector economy; one for acquiring goods, mainly rice; the other for acquiring cash. The former limits the maximum accommodable population in the village, while the latter determines the level of income. Emigrants from the village today have a variety of destination, though many still, traditionally, make for the frontier lands. The slow increase of population prevents the increase of village income from being offset by that of population. The persistence of the traditional rice cultivation promotes the preservation of the traditional customs, institutions and the organization of mutual cooperation among kin.