



ESRC Research Group on
Wellbeing in Developing Countries



Wellbeing in Developing Countries Project

Community Profile

**Ban Tha,
Yang Kham Sub-district,
Phon Sai District,
Roi Et Province**

January 2005

**Copyright © Katesaraporn Khungsaeng,
Parichat Phirun, Asok Ponbomrung, & Buapun
Promphakping**

January 2005

Community Profile

**Ban Tha,
Yang Kham Sub-district,
Phon Sai District
Roi Et Province**

- Project Title :** Wellbeing in Developing Counties
- Conducted by :** Wellbeing in Developing Counties in Northeast Thailand Project
Building 6th, Faculty of Humanities and Social Science,
University of Khon Kaen
Muang District, Khon Kaen Province 40002 Thailand
- In Conjunction with :** University of Bath, United Kingdom
- Supported by :** Economic and Social Research Council, United Kingdom
- Authorship :** Katesaraporn Khungsang, Parichat Pirun, Asok Ponbumrung &
Bunpun Promphakping
- Published in :** January 2005

Contents

	Page
1. General Characteristic of the Community	
1.1 Location and Territory	7
1.2 Topography	7
1.3 Climate	8
1.4 Soil Characteristic	8
1.5 Infrastructures	10
2 History of the Village	13
3. Demography Data	
3.1 The Population	14
3.2 The Origins of the Village	15
3.3 The Characteristic of the Family	15
3.4 Education	15
3.5 Public Health	16
4. Natural Resources and Utilization	
4.1 Agricultural Area	19
4.2 Water Resource	19
4.3 Forest Resource Utilization	20
4.4 Public Land	22
5. Community Economy	
5.1 The Evolution of the Village Economy	23
5.2 The Economic Condition of the Community	24
5.3 Workforce Migration	30
5.4 Financial Sources and Loans	31

Contents (cont.)

	Page
6. Ways of Life, Culture, Traditions and Beliefs	
6.1 The Selection of Wedded Pairs	31
6.2 Inheritance of Villagers	31
6.3 Beliefs	33
6.4 Culture and Customomy Involement in Birth, Old Age,Sickess and Sickness	33
6.5 The Regulation Tradition over 12 Months	33
7. Institution of the Community	
7.1 Relationship within the Village	36
7.2 Relationship with Wider Society	36
7.3 Local Administration	36
7.4 Villagers and Agrarian System	37
7.4 Wealth Ranking	38
7.5 Collective Economic Activity in the Community	39

List of Tables

Table	Page
Table 1 The calenda of activity throughout the year	29
Table 2 Schedual of tradition in the village	34

List of Figures

	Page
Figure 1 Topography of the village	8
Figure 2 Soil series map	9
Figure 3 Water supply tank and granary of village	11
Figure 4 Irrigated system	11
Figure 5 Plow machine applied to be Rod E-Tag	12
Figure 6 Pysamid of population	14
Figure 7 The Mun River during flood tidal (September) and abb tidal (March)	19
Figure 8 Dry fish from the Mun River	20
Figure 9 Kud Peang	20
Figure 10 Firewood from Pa taam Kud Peang	21
Figure 11 Cross section of the Mun River	22
Figure 12 The structure of Occupation in History	24
Figure 13 The structure of Occupations	25
Figure 14 The current structure of the migrant workforce	30
Figure 15 The structure of financila sources and villagers loans	31

Abbreviations and Glossary of Non-English Words

Amphur	district
Ban	village
Baht	unit of Thai currency
Baisrisuhkwan	a spirit ceremony to symbolize unit, involving the bidding of wrists with strings
Changwat	province
Dern	month
Isan	the northeastern region of Thailand
Khalum	Local prohibition
Kud	oxbow lake
Khum	a small group of households within a larger community
Mor Tham Yae	midwife
Mor Tham	healers
Na waan	sorn paddy farming
Na dum	paddy farming
Na prung	secondary rice farming
Na pi	main paddy farming
Nai hoy	cattle merchant
Phuk kor mue	to tie one hand with sacred chord
Phay	weir
Phu Yai Ban	village headman
Rai	local unit of land measurement in Thailand (1 rai = 1,600 sq metres)
Sin-sord	bride-price
Stang	100 stang = 1 baht
Sra	a pond
Songkran	the water festival and Thai new year
Tambon	sub-district
Thumbun	making a merit
TAO	Tambon Administrative Organization
Wat	temple

1. General Characteristic of the community

1.1 Location and Territory

Ban Tha is situated in the south east of *Amphur Phon Sai, Changwat Roi Et (Roi Et Province)*. Opposite *Ban Tha* is *Amphur Rattanaburi* in *Changwat Surin (Surin Province)*, the *Mun* river separates these provinces. *Ban Tha* is a village that has a history of conflict over the preservation of freshwater swamp forest.

The village is under the responsibility of the *Tambon Yangkham* Administrative Organization. The total area of the village is 4,200 *rai*. The village is located far from the district town about 9 km away, villagers use cars and motorcycles for the journey which takes about 25 minutes (one way). The main city of the province is Roi Et and is 88 km away.

The territory borders neighboring villages, these are:

To the North *Ban Lao Kaw, Tambon Yang kham, Amphur Phon Sai, Changwat Roi Et*

To the South is the *Mun* river (and *Amphur Rattanaburi* in *Changwat Surin*.)

To the East is *Ban Jik, Tambon Yang Kham, Amphur Phon Sai, Roi Et province*.

To the West is *Ban Sam Ka, Tambon Sam Ka, Amphur Phon Sai, Changwat Roi Et*.

1.2 Topography

The village is situated on the bank of the *Mun* River. The village is surrounded by a lower plain and a flood plain, so in the past, the village has been affected by flooding in the rainy season. The characteristics of the area slope from west to east of the village and also from north to south. Most of the area is agricultural (almost all paddy fields) and encircles the village from east to north through to the west. In the south the villagers benefit from the fishing trade and maintain this occupation throughout the whole year.

Moreover, the village has very fertile freshwater swamp forest, locally called *Paa Taam Kud Peang*—PTKP, which covers an area about 3000 *rai* (1 *rai* = 1.6 sq metres).

According to the topography mentioned above, the village is prone to flooding. There have been two major floods in the village to date. The last time that it flooded the water took one month to clear. These floods have been caused by the construction of *Ra Si Sa Lai* Dam at *Amphur Ra Si Sa Lai* in 1989 under the policy of the government. The dam causes intense flooding in the village area damaging lives, paddy fields, cultivated crops and the PTKP.



Paddy fields in rainy season

the *Mun* River in dry season

Figure 1 Topography of the village

Subsequently the villagers took part in protesting over the flood damage and demanded compensation from the government. Until the former Prime Minister *Chawarit Yongjaiyot*'s regime, the villagers were able to get indemnity of about 363,484,000 baht or approximately 35,000 baht /rai in 1997. (For further information please see appendices)

1.3 Climate

Climatically *Ban Tha* has 3 seasons much like the general climate in the North Eastern region. The dry season starts in March and lasts until April. The rainy season starts in April and lasts until November and the cold season starts in November and ends in February.

1.4 Soil Characteristics

Ban Tha has 2 kinds of soil clusters these categories are soil cluster number 2 and number 20 on the map (below).

Soil cluster number 2 (in the north and east of village area)

General characteristics: The soil matter is clay, the structure of the soil matter is solidly constructed and the surface has a gray color and below the surface is a gray color with brown and yellow or red spots. Water contained in the area is about 20-50 centimeters deep, and lasts for duration of 3-5 months, thus the soil has a low capacity to drain water, and the soil has a pH value of between 4.5 and 5.5.

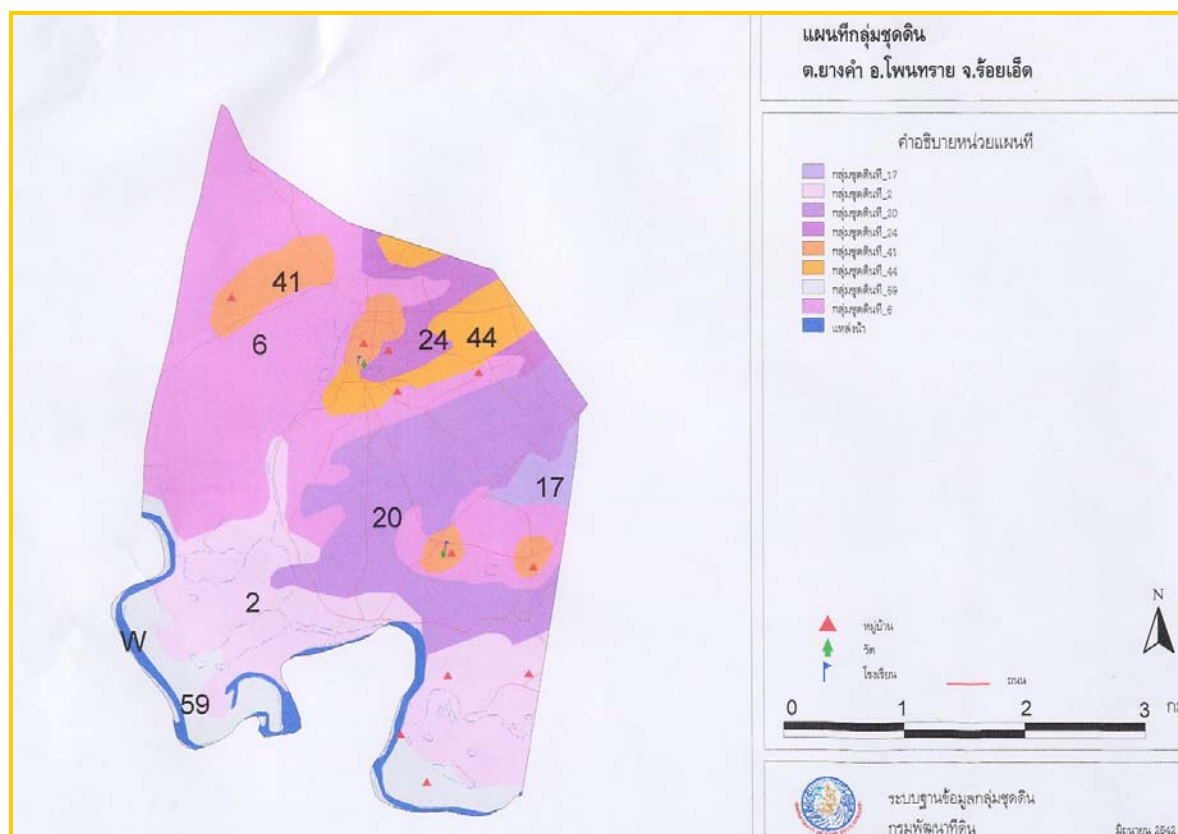


Figure 2 Soil series map

Soil problems: Soil properties are acidic and water is contained in the area for a long duration of about 3-5 months.

Appropriate for crop cultivation: The characteristics of the area of low land, clay matter and low capacity to drain water means that the area is appropriate for rice cultivation in the rainy season. In the dry season villagers grow crops, vegetables, or short term plantations. There is also an irrigated area from a natural water source; the villagers grow orchards or field crops and vegetables the whole year on this area. To do this they built a dike to encircle the area to contain the water and built a furrow to drain the water.

Soil cluster number 20 (in the south and west of the village area)

General characteristics: The soil matter in this area is sandy, below the soil mixes with clay. The light brown and gray color mixes with brown, yellow, or red spots. This area is flat and smooth; water is contained in the area of around 30-100 centimeters in depth and does not drain for about 3-4 months. It is very difficult for water to drain in this area as the soil quality is low, the soil surface pH value is about 6.0-7.0 and high in sodium, the area has limestone pH value reaching to 7.0-8.0 and in the dry season this area collects salt on the surface.

Soil problems: Soil is sandy. It is also salty soil and salt remains slough on the surface. In the rainy season water is contained in this area for about 3-4 months and soil quality is low.

Appropriateness for crop cultivation: soil cluster number 20 is not appropriate for crop cultivation because of the high quantity of salt. However in the rainy season villagers are able to grow rice but if without water they cannot cultivate crops.

1.5 Infrastructures

1) Communication. Historically the village had 2 roads and people had to walk from the village to go to other places. They used the crossroads in the north sector of *Ban Lao Kaw* to go to *Amphur Ra Si Sa Rai*. If villagers wanted to go enter *Amphur Phon Sai* or *Changwat Surin* they must walk to *Ban Lao Kaw* and then directly onto *Ban Yang kham* then turn left in *Ban Yang kham* and follow to main road number 2086 to go to *Amphur Phon Sai* and *Changwat Surin*.

The villagers also used waterway communication by taking the boat across to the other side in *Amphur Rattanaaburi*. This waterway communication was beneficial for Chinese traders for bringing rice and salt for the villagers.

Currently *Ban Tha* has 3 roads. The first road is laterite way and is not a convenient link from *Ban Lao Kaw* to *Ban Tha* as buffaloes and cows frequently block it. The second road is made from concrete under support from the District Administration Government Organization of *Tambon Yang Kham* in 2000. The last road situated in the north of the village was built with support from the *Tambon Yang Kham* Administrative Organization in April 2002.

The road that goes to *Amphur Phon Sai* or *Amphur Suwan Naphom* starts from the village to *Ban Lao Kaw* until it arrives at the temple of *Ban Lao Kaw*. It then links to the concrete road directly passing *Ban Yang Kham*, *Ban Ku* and enters *Amphur Phone Sai*. To commute, the villagers go by bus (*Song Taew*) in the morning, leaving at 07.00 am and coming back at 11.00 am, they pay 10 baht/person (one way) going to *Amphur Phone Sai* and 25 baht /person going to *Amphur Suwan Naphom*. Some of the villagers have cars and motorcycles through borrowing from relatives and neighbors.

2) Electricity. Electricity entered the village in 1975 and currently every household has electricity.

3) Water supply. The water tank is situated in the east side of village. It was constructed in 1991. The villagers use this water supply for taking a bath, washing clothes and dishes (as rain water is used for drinking and cooking)

4) Artesian wells. There are 3 places with underground water. The first is situated in the middle of the village in front of the house numbered 49; it was constructed in 1992 under support from the soil resources department, and has been unused since 2001 because it is brackish water. The second is situated in the northeast of the village. It is used by 7 households situated nearby. The third is situated in *Ban Tha*. Both of them are supported by the Rural Development Office.

5) Water container. In 1998 the villagers loaned money from the *Tam Mun* project which is a non-government organization for buying a water container to collect water in the rainy season. It supplies the villagers with drinking water for the whole year.



Figure 3 Water supply tank and granary of village

6. Irrigated systems. The village has 2 channels; the first was constructed in 1994 and is situated in the east side of the village (beside the Mun River) under support from The Ministry of Science and Technology. It is co – used with *Ban Lao Kaw* and *Ban Don Sum Ran*.

The second was constructed in 2002 with support from the District Administrative Organization and is situated in the north side of the village. It is co – used with *Ban Lao Kaw* in the dry season for growing a second crop of rice or sweet corn. The villagers who use it must pay 60 *stang* per unite (currency smaller than 1 baht e.g. pence in British money. One hundred *stang* is 1 baht).



Under ground channel



Encircle channel

Figure 4 Irrigated systems

7) Loud speaker of village. *Ban Tha* has 1 loud speaker; it is situated in the middle of the village. Constructed in 1992 they are still using it now.

8) Plow machine. The first owner of a plow machine in the village was Mr *Seang Homkai* (he is the representative of the village in *Tambon* Administrative Organization) in 1980. In the beginning neighbors borrowed it and filled the oil by themselves but now there are 40 plow machines in the village.



Figure 5 Plow machine applied to be *Rod E- Tag*

9) Rice Huller. The village has 2 machines, 4 villagers collected money to buy the machine they are *Mr Nai Phunnee*, *Mr Tim Srichai*, *Mr Winaii Pinya* and *Mr Prasit Mitngam* in 2001. The second one is owned by *Miss Tai* since 2001.

10) Pond (manmade). The village has only one pond and the owner is *Mr Khumpree*. It is co-used with neighbors.

11) Water Tank There are 2 water tanks situated in *Mr Dom Yongyod's* home area and another one in the temple. When the villagers are lacking drinking water, they are able to take it from both places for free.

12) Public phones. These entered the village in 2002. However the majority of villagers use mobile phones and home phones.

2. History of the Village

Ban Tha was founded around 76 years ago according to the elders of the community who were the first generation to live in the village. Before this time the area was covered with forest which consisted of trees, grass, and small wildlife including rabbits, foxes etc. and some bigger wildlife such as elephants and tigers. The villagers came from surrounding areas such as *Ban Nong Soung* and *Ban Sum* (in *Tambon Phon Sai* before it changed into an *Amphur*). Whilst the villagers lived in these areas, they left cows and buffalo to feed in what is now *Ban Tha* as it had plentiful grass and water from the *Mun* River. The villagers were able to seek food from this area too, for example mushrooms and bamboo sprouts, amongst others. The villagers moved to this area near the *Mun* River because in their opinion, if they lived near by the river, it would be more convenient for livestock such as cows and buffaloes and they could benefit from the nearby water for cultivation and paddy fields. Another reason for moving nearer the *Mun* River was because at that time the villagers from *Ban Nong Soung* and *Ban Nong Sum* encountered droughts. Subsequently the villagers started encroaching on the forest area and building houses and living in this area. The first households to move to this area now called *Ban Tha* totaled 7. The family names of these households are; *Mr Tom Obnoy*, *Mr Samut Sansree*, *Mr Sri Suksan*, *Mr Kang Kaenkawe*, *Mr Khamlai Homnan*, *Mr Nga Kantana* and *Mr Sang Lating*.

The name *Ban Tha* or beautiful-landing village was given to the village because it is located on the *Mun* River's banks which have beautiful landings and fertile natural resources, including fresh water prawns, shellfish and fish. The water is also beneficial for paddy fields and is a source of drinking water for cow and buffalo as well as a landing place for boats to stop and trade.

3. Demographic Data

3.1 Population

Ban Tha has 67 households and a total population of 407. Out of this population 205 people are male and 202 are female. The majority of villagers- about 277 persons - are in the workforce and are aged between 15-60 years old (population census graph). There are around 49 children and young people and about 34 older people (60 years +).

There are around 49 women of child bearing age and 35 (71.43%) of these use birth control. Of these 35 women, 27 have been sterilized, 5 take birth control medicine and 3 use intravenous methods. In comparison with other villages in the district (10 villages) we found that in *Ban Tha* there is a high proportion of women using birth control. The lowest rate of birth control in the district is about 29.41%.

Ban Tha's population has characteristics of equality. The population that is able to enter the workforce can earn enough income to support children and older people that are unable to enter the workforce. The proportion of male and female trends in the village is non differentiated.



Figure 6 Pyramid of population

3.2 The Origins of the villagers (lineage)

The majority of the population in Ban Tha is of Lao lineage. A minority, only 3-5 people are of *Souy* lineage - they are from *Changwat Surin* and *Chang wat Srisaket* and live in the village.

3.3 The characteristics of the family

The characteristics of the family in *Ban Tha* are that of the expanded household. Gratitude is a pervasive norm amongst *Isan* people and this means that people often look after their parents when they grow old. The population of workforce age often migrates to work in other places, leaving children with grandparents and other relations in the village.

The decision-making processes of people in the village vary according to household. For example, in some households the husband has authority to join in conferences and planning concerning paddy fields and other issues. In contrast the wife may have responsibility for meals and cleaning. In some cases, for example the expenditure of household loans, the wife and husband share decisions.

3.4 Education

Sixty six of the students of *Ban Tha* have study at primary school level 1-3 (compulsory education), 10 have study in high school, 2 to diploma level and 1 to Bachelor's degree level.

204 students graduated in education, these comprise of 7 from high school, 3 from diploma and 3 bachelor's degrees.

The students go to primary school in *Ban Lao Kaw*, close to *Ban Tha*, and they are able to walk and go by bicycle. Support from the family depends on the economic condition of the household: if they are in poor or medium condition they are able to support children until they graduate from *Mathayomsuksa* 3 and if they are good condition (high income) children have the opportunity to study until *Mathayomsuksa* 6. Students of *Ban Tha* are able to continue to *Ban Yang Kham* school and *Ban Phon Sai* school (situated in *Amphur Phon Sai*). Otherwise some students have the opportunity to study in *Amphur Suwan Naphom*, in *Roi Et* province if their household is in good economic condition. The students go to school by 6-wheel truck and this service costs 200 baht per person per month. Those studying at diploma level or higher live in other provinces, for example *Maharakam*, *Bangkok* and other cities.

Currently *Ban Lao Kaw* has a total of 197 students; 60-70 are from *Ban Tha*. There are 8 classrooms, 10 teachers and 1 janitor. School provides the following for children:

1. Lunch, with support from the Education district office, worth about 700 baht, for children who are below the standard weight.

2. Scholarships, with support from the *Tambon Yang Kham* Administrative Organization, worth a total of around 8000 baht per year. Forty children got this scholarship, an average of approximately 500 baht each.

3. Study equipment from the Education district office, worth about 100,000 baht.

4. Fellow scholarships, the total available per student are 200-300 baht.

There is an increasing tendency for students to continue in education. Government policy makes education compulsory for 9 years, and current employment conditions require that employees have graduated in *Mathayomsuksa* 3.

Supportive parental attitudes are required to assist children into the highest level of education. It is an opportunity to increase economic and social conditions in the future. However Ban Tha has the least number of students able to study in high school (*Mathayomsuksa* 6) because of the limited finances parents can afford to support their children.

Community education is the direct responsibility of the *Tambon Yang Kham* Administrative Organization, which effectively manages the education system for the community. The village is represented on the educational committee by Mr *Seang Homkai*. He is the member of *Tambon Yang Kham* Administrative Organization who represents the requirements and problems of villagers concerning education.

The condition of education in the community is weak. The rate of students able to read and write, and to continue education is low: only 7-8 out of 20 children are able to read and write. Mr. *Dum*, a teacher who is close to the children, reflects that there are at least two reasons for the weakness in education:

1. Children's families. Some parents do not help their children to practice reading and writing because they work in other provinces. They leave children with their grandparents, who do not know how to support them to practice reading and writing. According to Mr. *Dum* the difference between children who live with parents and those who live without them is noticeable in terms of their educational results: children who live without parents get low scores. Support from the family enables children to practice reading and writing.

2. Education equipment. Children are restricted from completing school if they do not have access to education equipment, for example science equipment and a library.

3.5 Public Health

1) **Sickness**, colds present a health problem in the rainy season for the population of *Ban Tha*, however this is not serious. People are able to get medicine and water for free for the duration of flooding. Hemorrhagic fever spread in the village in 2002 and 3 people were affected. There were no symptomatic cases in 2003.

The majority of villagers in *Ban Tha* have internal parasites. It is possible that the original reason for this was the environment of villages in the rainy season and water pollution from paddy fields. Villagers pick a certain kind of vegetable (*Ipomoea*) from the paddy fields for consumption which transport these parasites.

The most serious disease in the village is HIV. There are two villagers – a husband and wife - with HIV and they must be provided regularly with medicine from the public health office in the village.

2) **Remedies**, historically, if the sickness is not serious villagers would be treated by the local doctor and given remedies made from herbs. However if they did not recover then they were taken to hospital by cart, along the main road in *Amphur Phon Sai*. They would

wait for the bus to go to hospital in *Changwat Surin* (about a decade before the hospital in *Amphur Phon Sai* was constructed).

Currently villagers have options concerning remedial health action and recovery from disease. If illness is not serious, for example colds, pregnancy care, small accidents and stomach ache, then the villagers choose to go to the public health station in *Tambon Yang Kham*. If they are unable to recover then they go to hospital in *Amphur Phon Sai*. However if the illness is serious or requires surgery they must go to the hospital in Jureewat, the hospital in *Changwat Roi Et*, to Rom Pat Hospital in *Changwat Surin*, to *Changwat Khon Kaen's* hospital or to the hospital in Bangkok.

A list of remedial places and the conditions dealt with

Public Health Office

1. Fever
2. Stomach ache
3. Small accidents
4. First aid
5. Pregnancy care

Local doctor

Sore from poisonous snake or poisoned snake bite (if local doctor unable to cure then person goes to hospital).

Trader of medicines

1. The medicine for uterus maintenance.
2. The medicine for treating insect bites.
3. The medicine for treating muscular and bone pains.

Clinic in *Amphur Ra Si Sa Rai*

Bone remedies.

Clinic in *Amphur Su wan Naphum*

Bone remedies.

***Ra Si Sa Rai* Hospital**

1. Delivery.
2. Colds.
3. General diseases.

***Phon Sai* Hospital**

1. HIV treatment.
2. Delivery.
3. Accidents.
4. Bone diseases (if unable to recover, will return to local doctor, Mr. *Tai Morthum*).
5. Herpes.
6. Diabetes.
7. Colds and general diseases.

***Rom Pat* Hospital in *Changwat Surin* (private)**

Brain surgery.

Jureewat* Hospital *Changwat Roi Et

Check-ups, brain surgery and general diseases.

Hospital in *Khon Kaen* or the hospital in Bangkok

1. Brain diseases.
2. Serious diseases and treatment of those unable to recover in hospitals close by.

The majority of villagers choose remedies or first aid from the Public Health Office in *Tambon Yang Kham*, situated in *Ban Yang Kham*. The main activities of the Public Health Office in *Tambon Yang Kham* are:

1. Protection against non-infectious diseases.
2. First aid.
3. Checking diabetes (in cooperation with *Amphur Phon Sai* Hospital).

4. Registration of villagers in 30 baht health care policy. According to the villagers who have used this service, the quality of service is good but remedial care service is slow as is the issue of cards. The Public Health Office in *Tambon Yang Kham* is not completely equipped and slow communication hinders service delivery to villagers. However they are cooperating with the hospital, which helps them clean equipment once a week (every Wednesday). Otherwise the reason for slow card issue for villagers is that they are without the internet to check the database.

The other organization that looks after the health of the villagers is the group of Public Health volunteers. In *Ban Tha* there are 10 of them and *Yupin Cahimalee* is the head of group. The role of the Public Health volunteers is:

1. Enter traineeship under the responsibility of the Public Health Office in *Tambon Yang Kham* and the hospital in *Amphur*.

2. Coordinate health checks, for example give feces boxes for villagers to check for internal parasites.

3. Public promotions and campaigns for health, for example campaigning for protection from common house mosquitoes and fever from rats.

4. Check for diseases, for example diabetes, blood pressure, and tooth problems.

5. Manage the development capacity of Public Health

- 5.1 The Community Medicine Fund, started in 2000. The Community Medicine Fund purchases chemicals, through a hired worker, for attacking common house mosquitoes. It costs about 200 baht per person and is sprayed 2-3 times per year depending on the quantity of mosquitoes.

- 5.2 Manage meals twice a year for those who enter traineeships (about 50 people).

4. Natural Resources and Utilization

4.1 Agricultural Area

Total agricultural area in *Ban Tha* is 1,200 *rai* and these have a proper document as *Channod*, the villagers totaling 67 households are land owners and do not rent. Almost all land use is for farming paddy rice; the remaining land for houses, the channel and some land in the east side of the village is for mulberry cultivation.

Agricultural areas are in the west side of the village. The features of the villagers' farmlands are lower plains alternating with furrows between *Ban Tha* and the neighbouring village *Ban Lao Kaw*. Paddy fields encircle the village and all have different names (on the map) for example *Na Don KaYom*, *Na Rong Ree*, *Rong Neang*, *Na Nong Ya Plong*, *Na Nong SaNoo*, *Na Nong Tum*, and *Nong Wang*, they all produce different quantities of rice. From information provided by the villagers *Na Nong Ya Plong* in the Northeast of the village has the best quality of soil and rice production at about 400 kg/*rai*.

Soil nourishment- The villagers use both organic and chemical fertilizers for agricultural production. However the majority of land in the village compound is salty and must be treated before cultivation if not then this would affect agro-production. Agents from the Amphur department of agriculture enter the village to encourage and train the villagers in improving the soil condition, this involves using lime sometimes (once per year).

4.2 Water Resource

The *Mun* River is the main water resource of the village; its origins are from *La ong La mang* mountain in *Changwat Prajeenburi* in *Nakhon Ratchasima Province* in the middle and south of the northeastern region. In part of *Changwat Roi Et (Roi Et Province)* the middle sector of the *Mun* River passes to the south of the village. This water source is used for food and communication for villagers. In the dry season when the quantity of water decreases the villagers will be able to go fishing and trade on the other side. Opposite the



Figure 7 The *Mun* River during food tidal (September) and ebb tidal (April)

village on the other side of the river is the fertile freshwater swamp forest of *Amphur Rattana Buri, Changwat Surin (Surin Province)* and the villagers from *Ban Tha* and *Ban Lao Kaw* find it beneficial as it contains plentiful nature and food. The villagers are able to take a boat across the river when there are high levels of water and in the dry season the villagers are able to walk across to the opposite side.



Figure 8 Dry fish from the *Mun River*

Kud Kii Lek reservoir (oxbow lake) is situated in the west side of the village, about 400 meters away. Historically *Kud Kii Lek* only produced salt and was not used for consumption. Subsequently the villagers improved this area as they believed that it was able to alleviate some of the impacts from flooding. Until 1987 villagers operated the construction of a small reservoir and were supported by the ministry of agriculture and cooperatives. Currently the villagers benefit from *Kud Kii Lek* reservoir for their livelihoods, food, livestock (cows, buffaloes) and also for rest.

There are several *Kuds* (Oxbow lakes) in the PTKP area, for example *Kud Ting*, *Kud Peang* and *Kud Ta Pao* and the PTKP in the east side of the village. The PTKP area is the primary breeding ground for animals as well as being an important food source for the villagers and drinking water for cows and buffaloes.



Figure 9 *Kud Peang*

Several *Rong* (channels) are in the PTKP area for example *Rong Pai*, *Rong Pa Mai*, *Rong Yai*, and *Rong Sang* in the south of the PTKP. It is also the original channel linked to the *Mun River* and is also a breeding ground for wildlife. The area is managed by the village committee for the conservation of the PTKP.

4.3 Forest Resource

Ban Tha is close to two forest areas these are *Paa Taam* and *Pa Don*. The characteristics and benefits of the forests are:

Paa Taam This PTKP is used by another 3 villages, they also protect it, these villages are *Ban Lao Kaw*, *Ban Don Jik* and *Ban Don Sum Lan*. It is situated in the south east of the villages, with a total area of 3000 rai. It supplies food for villagers and animals lives. The area is also a primary area for breeding for both land animals and aquatic species. Historically, the villagers used the PTKP only for household consumption, however without conservation the resources started deteriorating. During last decade the villagers also used the resources from the PTKP for making an income without conservation. Subsequently, in 1989 the GRID Foundation, a non-government organization, started work in the village and in another 4 villages in *Tambon Yang kham* to promote forest conservation. The villagers now elect a committee to be the representatives of the villagers for the preservation of the forest area.

The forest products that the villagers gather from this forest and are able to use for consumption and sale are listed below. The majority are harvested seasonally, for example:

- Sweet potatoes are harvested during 3 months in August until September.
- Mushrooms start to be harvested in March –September.
- Sprout bamboo is harvested in March – September.
- Birds and rats are found during the whole year, in the rainy season they are easier to find as they live in large numbers in September- November.
- Turtles are found the whole year round, but currently there are few left.

The villagers are also able to find food for consumption or sale and firewood from the PTKP because it is easy to find. *Mai Sew* is the most popular firewood that has been used by the villagers.



Figure 10 Firewood from *Paa Taam Kud Peang*

The PTKP is not only beneficial for consumption but is also used as farmland for villagers who are without land. The management of this area is undertaken by the committee of all the 4 nearby villages. Currently, there are 5 households that use the area for cultivation and all of them are from *Ban Don Jik*.

Paa Koke (upland forest) *Ban Tha* has 2 upland forest areas; these are *Don Phu Ta* (spirit shine) and *Don Pa Cha* (cemetery). *Don Phu Ta* is situated in the west side of village and is more than 2 rai in size. The villagers' foundation shrine for ceremonies and respect to ancestors are in this area. *Don Pa Cha* is situated in the east of village and used to total about 30 rai before the *Mun River* eroded it and the villagers encroached upon it to live. Currently the total area remaining is only 5-6 rai. The villagers use it for their burial ground.

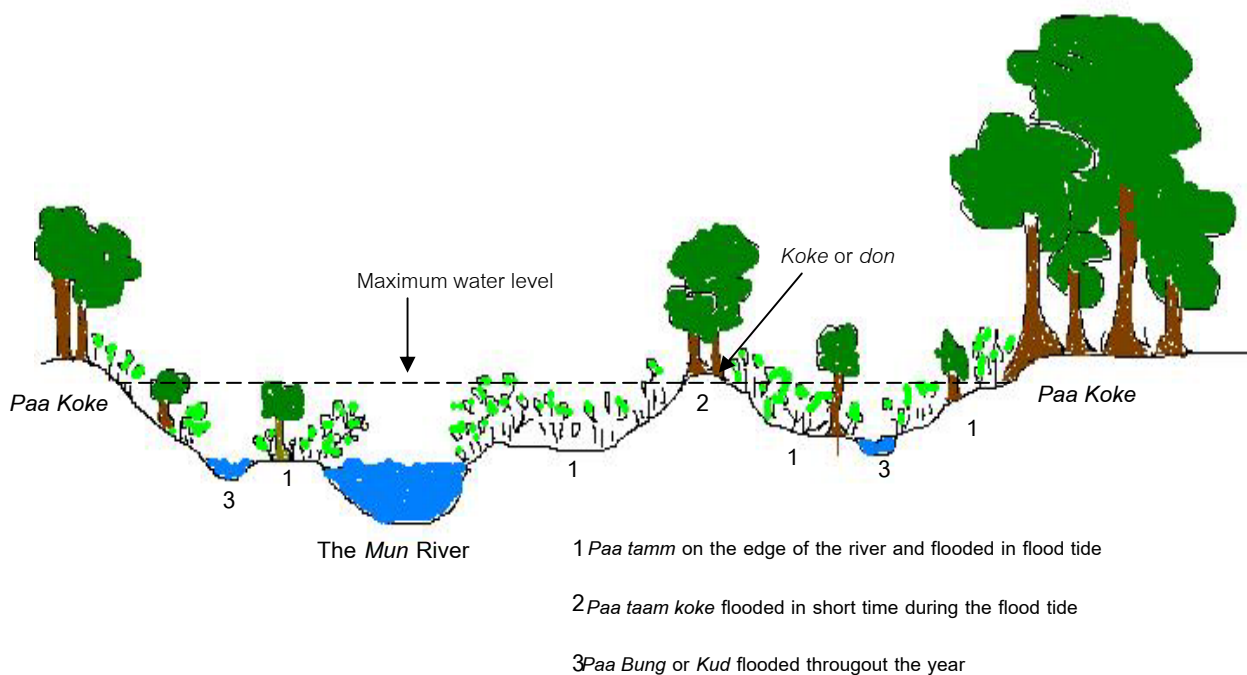


Figure 11 Cross section of the *Mun River*

4.4 Public Land

Ban Tha's public areas are about 10 rai in size (not including the cemetery and the PTKP) they are situated in the west side of the village (beside the temple and opposite the temple). The villagers also use this area for growing mulberries.

5. Community Economy

5.1 The Evolution of the village's economy

Commercial productivity and exchange has taken place since 1978. Villagers had historically lived an agricultural lifestyle, practicing paddy field farming, crop cultivation, plant fibre production, livestock farming and fishing.

1) Paddy farming, historically, the villagers mostly produced glutinous rice and only used local species for cultivation such as *E-Po*, *E-Lounge*, *E-teia*. Current crops of *Kaojao dokmai* and Jasmine rice or also called *Hom Mali* was introduced by the Agricultural Extension Department in 1978.

The villagers produced rice once a year by means of *Na dum* (transplanting of paddy seedlings). Cultivation started in May-June and harvesting took place between November and January. The villagers had two places for paddy farming; the side of *Ban Tha* and the side of Na Tam in *Amphur Rattanaburi*. Paddy farming was rain-fed as there was no irrigation system in place. The workforce consisted of family members and animals only. Once their own work had finished, people were able to work with others.

The economic structure at that time did not incorporate the monetary exchange of rice. After harvest, villagers would barter rice with mushrooms, *Ki Tai* (the ashes that fall from burning torches made of resin and oil), meals and tools (for example buckets and earthen jars). These exchanges took place with other villages; with *Ban Terng* situated to the North with *Ban Koo kun ta nam* and with *Ban Phon sai*. About 50 years ago a Chinese trader came to the village by motorboat (the landing place was in the west side of the village and is now replaced by the granary and water supply tank). He exchanged fermented fish and rice with the villagers of *Ban Tha* and their neighbours. The villagers took tuna and molasses.

2) Dry season crop cultivation, cultivated crops included fibre plants (sold at the factory in *Amphur Ra Si Sa Rai*), cucumbers, sweet corn, chili and peanuts. They were grown for consumption as well as being sold and exchanged with neighbors. The crop cultivation area was inside *Rattanaburi*, for example *Rong* (channel) *Puk Paw*, *Rong Teen Tho* and *Nong Puk Son*. Crop cultivation stopped in 1978 due to flooding.

Now villagers grow vegetables in jars because they are convenient for moving in the event of flooding and for household consumption.

3) Fishing Historically, fishing was dependent on available equipment which was made using the wisdom of villagers. It was practiced for family consumption not for commercial exchange.

The villagers created fishing equipment from materials available locally around the village. This included fishhooks (with handles made from Bamboo), *Sum* (a trap made from bamboo for catching fish in shallow water), *Yho* (made from dry wood), hand nets (made from bamboo and cord) and fishnets (made from cord).

Villagers were able to fish throughout the year. During *Num Su* (the flood tide between May and September) villagers would catch a lot of fish. The rain would wash the topsoil,

plant and animal matter from the upland forest (*Pa Kok*), upland (*Non*), landing (*Tha*), paddy fields and the village area into the river and the water would become turbid in colour. The first smell of fresh water attracted several kinds of fish for food and breeding, especially between 3.00 and 4.00 am. Fish movements in the early morning contrasts to their movement during the day, examples of fish caught are: *Ern* fish, *Kab Mun* fish, *Koon* fish, *Sauy* fish.

The villagers caught a lot of fish at ebb tide from November to September and in the dry season from February to April several kinds of fish remained in the reservoir or *Kud*.

When villagers had caught enough fish for consumption they would sometimes exchange their surplus with their neighbors. If many fish remained they would preserve them, for example by drying them, salting them and processing them in other ways. This meant that people were able to keep them for future consumption and for exchanging with rice.

4) Livestock, the villagers in *Ban Tha* have had cows and buffaloes since the time of their ancestors. The original reason for founding the village in this area was because it provided the necessary food and pasture source for animals. Cows and buffaloes were assets to the villagers because they could be used for plowing, carrying and consumption.

The villagers had to protect their animals well because if they were stolen it would be difficult to get them back. Now villagers leave the animals to graze at the side of *Amphur Rattana Buri* at flood tide and they return at ebb tide.

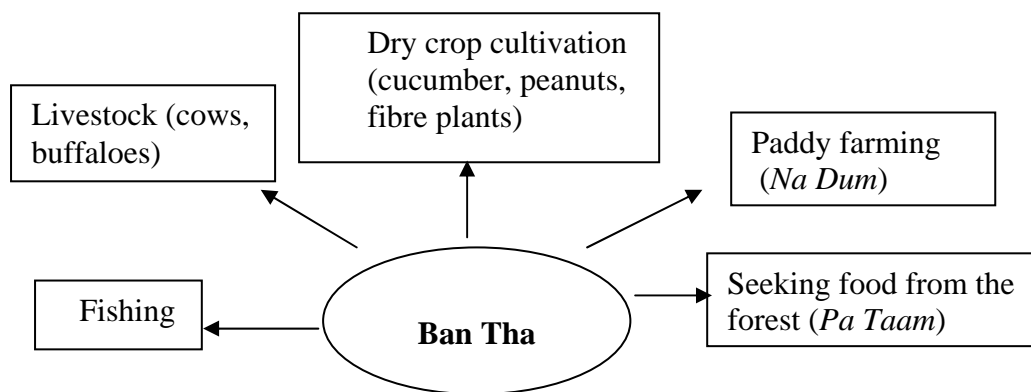


Figure 12 The structure of occupation in history

5.2 The economic condition of the community

1) Productivity and exchange The diversity in villagers' economic activity is increasing in *Ban Tha*, although they maintain an agricultural lifestyle through paddy farming, fishing, rearing livestock and seeking food (*Pa Taam*).

Villagers work outside of the agricultural sector, in other provinces. This has changed the lives and productivity of the villagers as before the member in family would work in the paddy fields. This transition means that workers must now be hired from outside the village in order to save time. When they finish they return to work in other provinces.

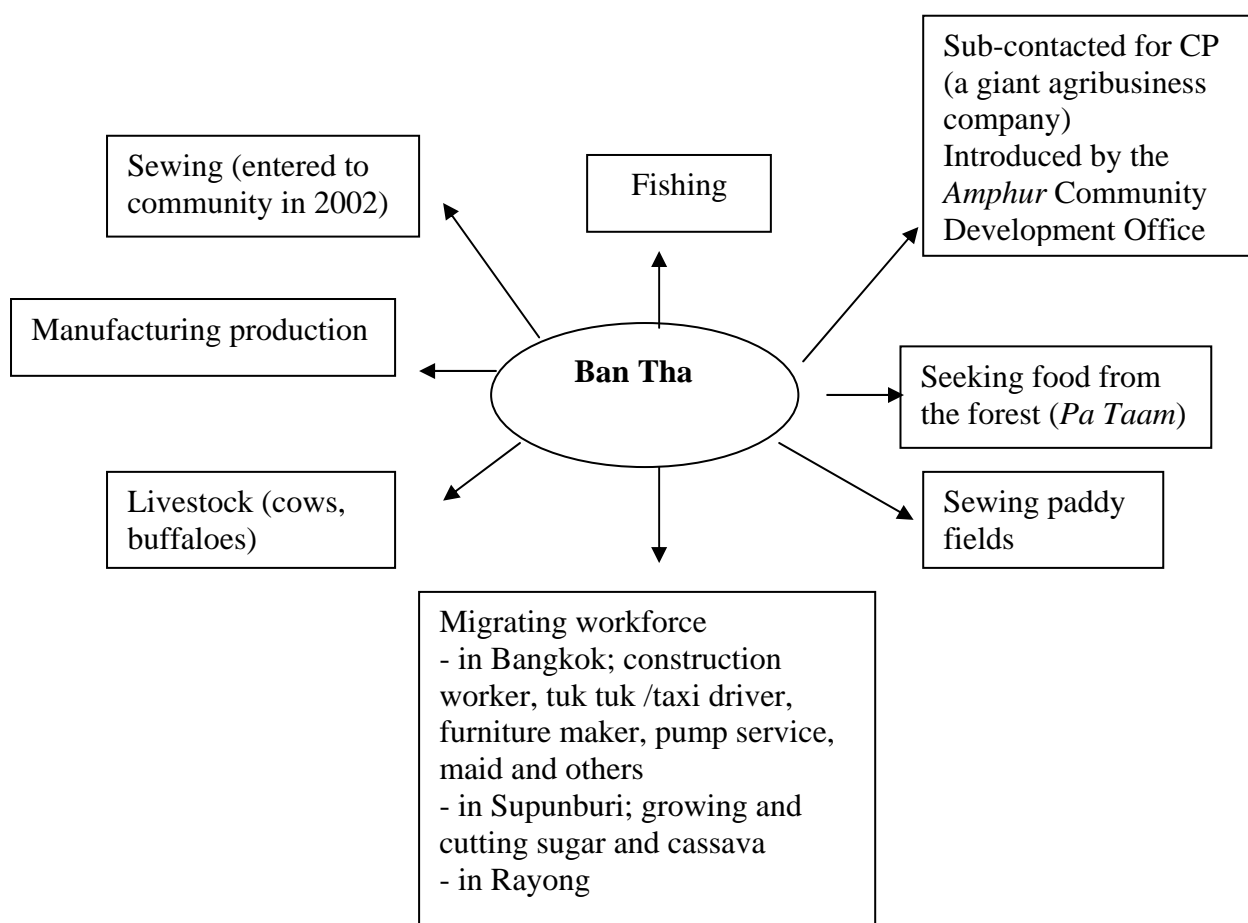


Figure 13 The structure of occupations

2) Main Occupation

According to village leaders, the main occupations of villagers are:

Paddy farming. This is the main occupation and has been supported by the government since 1978. Jasmine rice is grown for sale purposes and glutinous rice (*Kor Kho 6* and *Kao Dor*) is grown for family consumption. With yields of 720 kg/rai, rice production is high.

Villagers are able to sell rice at the shop in *Amphur Phone Sai* or *Amphur Suwannaphum*. Selling rice to the Rice Bank (the big granary) is unpopular amongst villagers since the Rice Bank accepts rice for only 1 month and for the majority of members a high quantity of rice is required. A minority of members who need the income for their families sell small quantities of rice and like to sell at a private rice mill.

The price of paddy in 2002 for jasmine rice was 5-7 baht/kg. Once villagers had sold the rice, they bought supplies for their families and repaid the Agricultural Bank and cooperative. This included selling white rice and buying glutinous rice for family consumption. Glutinous rice is not enough for consumption the whole year round. Some families have enough rice for consumption throughout the year because they have plentiful paddy fields. They are Mr. *Sang* and Mr. *Dom Yongyod (Phu Yai Ban)*.

The majority of rice farmers engage in sown paddy farming (*Na Waan*) because the amount of water enables them to increase rice production (more so than *Na Dum*). It saves time and money and decreases the number of workers employed. Plow machines are replacing buffaloes. Some families are without a plow machine and they must hire one from the owner in the village or a neighbor. This costs 400 baht /rai.

For about a decade the villagers in *Ban Tha* have practiced main rice paddy farming (*Na Pi*) and secondary rice paddy farming (*Na Prung*). They cultivated Jasmine Rice close to the village for sale, and secondary rice paddy farming (*Na Prung*) took place at the side of *Amphur Rattana Buri*, *Changwat Surin*, for consumption. In secondary rice paddy farming, villagers grew the local kind of rice; *Dok Mai* white rice, *Mouy Luang* glutinous rice and *Kaw Dor E- Teia*.

After the *Ra Si Sa Ria* reservoir was constructed in 1989, secondary rice paddy farms were inundated with water during the harvest period. This affected a minority of villagers and stopped them from practicing secondary rice paddy farming. In 1999 a law was issued by the government prohibiting villagers from living in *Pa Taam* at the side of *Amphur Rattana buri*. However they were able to leave cows and buffaloes to feed in *Pa Taam*.

During the harvest villagers were keen to use a harvest machine - this came from *Changwat Supunburi* and *Singburi* and cost 420 baht/ rai. Villagers were keen to use the harvest machine because the water that remained in the paddy fields made it difficult to harvest by hand.

There are three rice mills in the community, owned by Mr. *Seang Homkai*, Mr. *Rin Sama* and Mr. *Paitoon Limpinai*. Villagers would bring rice to a small rice mill in the village where it was exchanged with rice powder, which the owner would keep for feeding pigs.

In 1996 a granary was built in *Ban Tha*. This was to allow villagers to borrow rice for consumption and sale. In the beginning 20kg was collected from each household. Villagers were charged 20% interest (in kilograms) on their loan. They had to repay the loan after harvest was finished in December, and would borrow again in June.

2) Minor Occupation

The second occupation of villagers is keeping cows and buffaloes. In the village, 46 households have them. They began to keep cows and buffaloes in 2000, when the 'hundred thousand fund' (a policy from the current government) entered villages; this saw an estimated 280,000 baht enter *Ban Tha*. Before, there were only 7 households in the village with cows and buffaloes. The local breed is called "Wao Ka Jon" and the feeding ground for animals is at *Pa Taam*, next to *Amphur Rattanaburi*. If it is not raining villagers will leave them at about 9.00 am (*Choung Ngay*) to cross the river to the side of *Amphur Rattanaburi*, and they will return to the village at 5.00 pm. If it is raining villagers have to cut and carry grass for them. Villagers sell young cows and buffaloes for about 7000-8000 baht each to traders from outside the village.

Manufacturing occupations (from rushes). In 2000 the *Tam Mun* project and District Government Administration Organization of *Tambon Yang Kham* provided support for the production of reed mats and *Kra Tip* (containers for storing rice). Production takes place in women's houses. Products are sold at different prices (50, 60, 70, 80 and 90 baht): reed mats that are 1.20 metres wide and 1.80 metres long cost 80 baht each; mats that are 1 metre wide and 1.80 metres long cost 50 baht each. This activity can be done throughout the whole year.

Fishing Aquatic animals are caught for consumption and sale. In the *Mun* river basin and *Kud Ki Lek* (Oxbow lake) the most precious resource is fish (*pla*) and there are several kinds, locally called, for example: *Pla Nang*, *Pla Kod*, *Pla Noi*, *Pla Tong*, and *Pla Tong Kai*. There are also aquatic animals with shells, local called, for example: *Hoiy Kab*, *Hoiy Sob Nok*, *Hoiy Klom*, *Hoiy Ta Dang* and *Hoiy Tib Noud*. They are plentiful between March and May.

There are several kinds of fishing equipment and it comes in different sizes. The biggest is called E-Tong and costs between 10,000 and 20,000 baht. It is used by 2-6 persons. The wide muzzle reaches halfway across the *Mun* River and is able to catch about 300 kg fish each day. Traders come to buy fish from the villagers. However E-Tongs can only be used for two months in the whole year; March and April. Only 3 clusters of villagers in *Ban Tha* have E-Tongs. Other villagers use smaller equipment for example Rob, Mong, Sai, Sum, and Bed (hook). This equipment enables nearly every household to catch fish throughout the whole year.

Collecting Non Timber Forest Products-- NTFP. This takes place in *Pa Taam* at the side of *Amphur Rattanaburi*, a source of natural food for *Ban Tha*. The kind of food available includes the following: *Mun Sang* (sweet potato), found during August and September, *Hed Phung* (mushroom), found between March and September, *Hed La Ngok* (mushroom), which grows on a big tree (*Ton Yang*) and is found during August and September, and *Hed Poa* (mushroom), found in June. Bamboo can be found between March and September. *Kai Mod Dang* (young ant) can be found in March and April. Shell fish, for example *Hoiy*

Kong, Hoiy Pung and *Hoiy Kom* can be found in the Pa Taam area throughout the year, and are particularly plentiful in June.

Pa Taam has a wealth of naturally growing vegetables, for example *Puk E-hin* and *Puk Pai*. There are also several small animals for example birds, rats, turtle, rabbits, *Lin*, *Kra Tae* and Hen (a kind of squirrel) and these can be hunted throughout the year. Villagers are able to find firewood at the side of the *Pa Lao Soun Mon* area and other places at the side of *Amphur Rattanaburi*. They tie firewood together and carry it by boat to be used for household cooking. In the dry season it is carried by people.

An example of a good source of income in *Pa Taam* is *Hed Perng* (mushroom). There are enough for consumption and for sale, which generates income for villagers. Last year they had a lot and were able to sell them at 35 baht per kg. Also villagers were able to sell *Mun Sang* (sweet potato) for 35-40 baht per kg, and trading with Bangkok they would sell for 85 baht per kg. Villagers income averages up to ten thousand baht per year.

Villagers are also able to produce an income from employment in paddy farming – this can generate 120 baht per day. Sewing from factories in Bangkok can earn 12-15 baht per pack.

Trade There are two shops in the community however there is no market or shop that sells fresh food except for peddlers. They go by car, motorcycle and self-trader carriage. These peddlers have to bring kitchen equipment with them for example knives, *Huad* (rice streaming equipment), pans, flippers (used for frying) and cloths. They also bring fresh food for example pork, beef, fish, vegetables and dry food. Most peddlers come every day at about 07.00 am and in the afternoon at about 6.00-7.00 pm.

Villagers buy food from outside of the area because of the impact of flooding: when the Mun River flood reached *Pa Taam* it was difficult to find naturally growing food.

Activity/Months	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aus	sep	Nov	Dec
Paddy Farming											
- Main paddy faming											
- Secondary paddy farming				←							→
-Corn, peanut, chili and others	←		→								
Collecting NTFP											
-Sweet potato (without flood)								←	→		
-Hed Perng			←							→	
-Hed Pao						←	→				
-Hed La Ngok								←	→		
-Bamboo			←							→	
-Kai Mod Dang (youth ant)			←	→							
-Shell fish (Hoiy Kong,pung,kom)	←										→
-Rat bird	←										→
- Firewood	←			←							→
Cows	←										→
Poultry	←										→
Fishing	←										→
Shell fish (in Mun river)	←		←			→					→
Manufacture of Mulberry, silk	←										→
Employment outside village											
-Taxi/ tuk tuk driver	←										→
Maid	←										→
-Officer in super-market	←										→
-Furniture factory	←										→
-Textile industry	←										→
-Trade	←										→
Employment in village											
-Harvest by hand	←										→
Sewing	←										→
-Village's Shop	←										→

Table 1 The Calendar of Activity throughout the Year

5.3 Workforce Migration

For 76 years villagers have worked in the village and gone to help relations and neighbors in paddy farming or during the harvest season after finishing their own work.

In 1971 villagers began migrating to work outside of the village, in furniture factories and pump services in Bangkok. Migrants (almost all single youths) were encouraged by their relations and neighbors in the village. They would return to the village to visit their parents during the *Songkran* festival in the middle of April, and for the New Year festival at the end of December.

The village workforce was affected by the flood of 1978 and productivity was damaged. The government had entered the village to introduce villagers to commercial rice production, but profits on investments were lost due to the flood. After that villagers sought other livelihoods and work opportunities and started to move to Bangkok where they worked as taxi drivers, furniture factory workers, construction workers and as pump attendants (almost all young, single men).

According to village leaders, villagers currently move to other provinces (mostly to Bangkok and environs) to work in sewing and furniture factories, as super market sales officers, as tuk tuk and taxi drivers, as construction workers, in sugar and cassava fields and to work as maids.

Villagers return to the village for the *Songkran* festival to visit their families, except those who work as tuk tuk and taxi drivers who are able to manage their own time. Once they have worked in Bangkok for about 2-3 weeks they are able to return to the village.

Inducement from relations, neighbors and employers

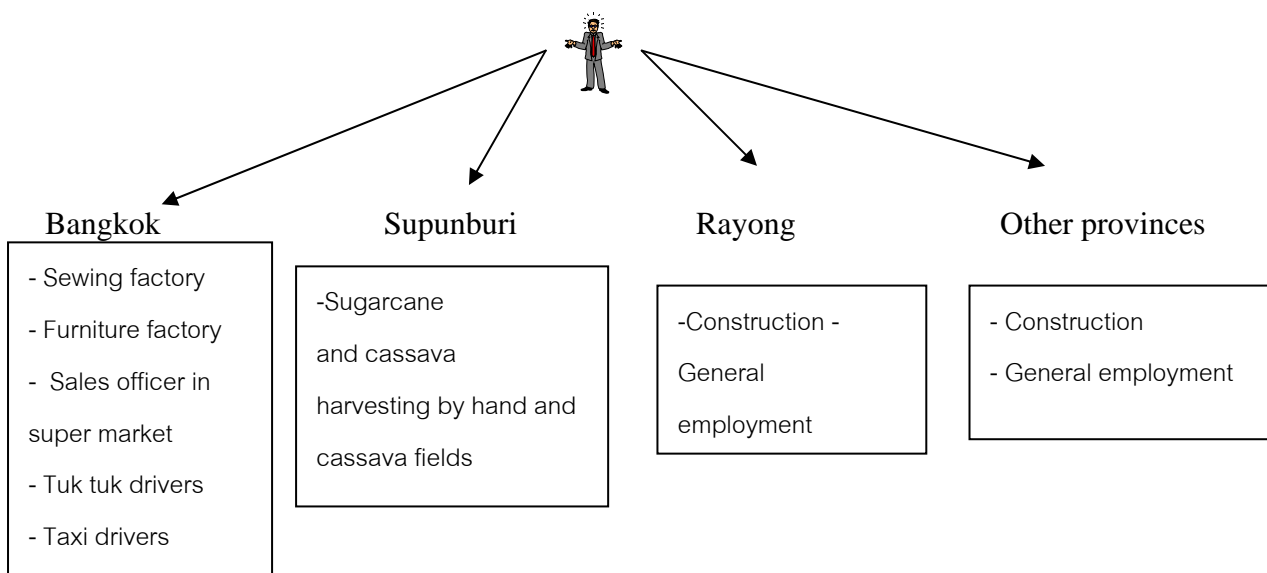


Figure 14 The current structure of the migrant workforce

Villagers' incomes depends on the kind of work they do, however the best income is made by taxi and tuk tuk drivers, and those working in furniture factories. Most income earned by villagers is spent contributing to household income and on agricultural products. It is also spent on conveniences such as televisions, refrigerators and other household equipment and on children's education.

5.4 Financial sources and loans

The Agricultural Bank is one source of finance for villagers and almost every household in the village is a member. Villagers borrow on average about 40,000 baht per household from this bank and the loan is invested in paddy farming, which gets damaged by flooding every few years. Villagers also take out loans from other funds in the village, for example the Village Fund and *Kor Khor Kor Jor*. Regulation of repayments depends on the different kind of loan activity; if villagers borrow money for keeping cows or buffaloes, depending on the duration they may have to repay over 3 years. If they borrow money for trading, they have to repay within one year. 2% interest per year is charged.

Other informal sources of finance in the village are investor Mr. *Seang Homkai* who charges 3% interest per month, and mortgager Mr. *Tai Purin*.

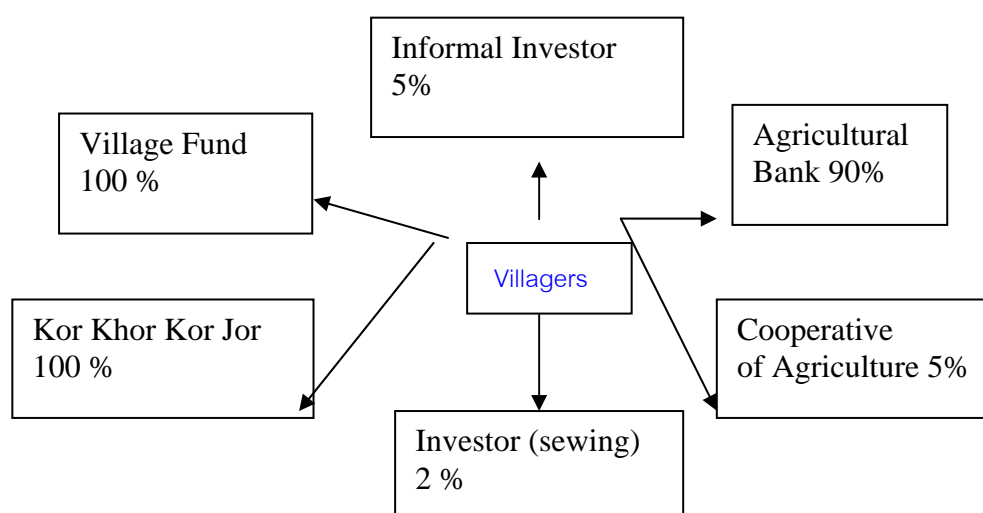


Figure 15 The structure of financial sources and villager loans

6. Ways of Life, Culture, Traditions and Beliefs

6.1 The selection of wedded pairs

Historically, the selection of a person's soul mate depended on the parents or senior members of a family but now it depends on the young people themselves. Parents and senior family members give young people the opportunity to select soul mates by themselves and hopefully they are able to take care of each other. Senior members of the family or parents get involved in the settlements of weddings or when the man asks for his lover's hand under the traditional customs of the village.

Villagers now select their partners quite differently from the way it was done historically because, as migration to other provinces has increased, so has the opportunity to meet people outside of the village community. The majority are married with people outside of the village. Once married, people must decide whose family they will live with, depending on the composition of the family and what pleases both of them.

The pattern of the wedding has not changed much throughout history. The groom's relations prepare *Kun Mak* (the settlement demanded of the groom's parents by the bride's parents before marriage). All relations go to the bride's family's house and the wedding takes place there. The bride's family must prepare gifts for senior family members, parents and relations on the groom's side. The gifts indicate the family conditions of the wedded pair, for example a family in good condition would prepare silk gifts, a medium condition family would prepare cotton or *Mon Kid* (pillows handiwork) gifts. One difference between current and historical marriage patterns is the increase of *Sin Sod* (the money given to the bride's parents by the groom's parents at the engagement ceremony).

6.2 Inheritance of villagers

Historically the son of the family inherits less than the daughter. It was considered that sons and their wives were able to find new assets themselves, especially in some parts of the land where, at the time, villagers were able to encroach on forest areas and could expand their monopoly over the land.

The villagers are able to benefit from heritage in 2 ways. First, if their parents are still alive and not old, the villagers must share useful inheritance. Second, if their parents are getting old or sick consideration is given to dividing their heritage for descendants.

The kinds of inheritance include for example land, paddy fields, field land, houses, cows, buffaloes, money and agro-equipment (plow car machine, rice huller car). Some households have a lot of land and they divide the land first before other assets. In other cases, those who take care of their parents (almost always the youngest daughter) have the opportunity to own their parents house.

Currently few descendants reject their heritage from parents or ancestors, because it is difficult to find land. It appears that the villagers of *Ban Tha* have not had any intense conflict over the division of heritage.

6.3 Beliefs

Villagers in *Ban Tha* maintain beliefs in the spirit of the earth, the ancestor spirit and the landing spirit *Por Yai kunge*. They believe that spirits will preserve their lives, family and animals. They also believe in the spirit of water - *Buppachat* – and in the spirit of the paddy fields and upland fields -Pong - in the *Lao soun mon* area, *Pa Kud Pong*, and *Pa Taam* at the side of *Amphur Rattanaaburi*. The villagers believe that there are two sides to spirits; the bad side will injure villagers, for example inflicting fever and sickness until death. If this happens, they must seek divination from *Mor Tham* (a wise person who knows how to heal). They must also know the kind of spirit it is and then a solution can be sought. *Mor Tham* would organise a ceremony, offer mercy to the spirit and then ask the spirit how to reach an agreement. Once a conclusion is reached, goodness is preserved. There are three *Mor Tham* remaining in the village; namely *Tumsuk*, *Nang Tun* and *Nang Tum Ma*.

6.4 Culture and customary involvement in birth, old age, sickness and death.

1) Birth Historically *Mor Tum Yae* (a midwife) played the important role of assisting births in the village because it was difficult to get to a hospital. After delivery, *Mor Tum Yae* would tie and cut the navel, wrap the baby, lay it in a *Kra Dong* (winnowing basket) and say “if this baby is your baby (spirit) come and take it today. If not, tomorrow it is my baby *Kroo Huk Kroo*”. Villagers believed this ceremony would enable still born babies to be protected and other babies to grow up easily, without weakness. Currently the village has 3 *Mor Tham Yae* but they have been in retirement for 20 years since villagers now use the public health station and hospital.

2) Sickness This can be attributed to the spirits in the community. If somebody in the village was sick after going to hospital and was unable to recover, they would think it was the effect of a spirit. They would seek a remedy with *Mor Tham*. It is a personal and community belief.

3) Death *Ban Tha* has one temple, *Wat Naramit Wipussanaram*. It was founded in 1948 and is situated upland. At that time there was only one *Kuti* (a house for Buddhist priests in a monastery) and one monk. Currently there are four monks in the temple.

6.5 The regular traditions over 12 months (*Dern*)

Dern Ary (January): Bun AudTa. The idea here is to offer food to priests and follow religious precepts, and to make dedications to the spirits of their relations that have passed away.

Dern Yii I (February): Bun Pee Mai (new year). They make food and other offerings to priests at the village granary, encircling the tree *Nam Kor* where they believe that good spirits live.

Dern Sam (March) *Bun Khum Khaw*, *Bun Khaw Jii* and *Bun Audta* (in *Khun 9 Kham Dern 3* in the Thai old calendar). For this ceremony villagers bring rice and offer it to the temple (they carry two loads suspended from the ends of a pole across the shoulder). The quantity offered by each villager depends on the impact of flooding during that year. After villagers collect the rice, they sell it and give money to the temple. In the evening the priests and

villagers must take part in ceremonies and priests must pray. In the morning villagers prepare *Kaw Jii* (rice anointed with egg and laid on the fire) and make offerings to the priests.

Dern Si (April) The older villagers put sand from the *Mun* River into a cup and place the cup upside down, behind the house. Also they make cups of *Kaw Dum* (black rice) and *Kaw Dang* (red rice) and lay them in the area whilst the priests pray.

Dern Ha (May): *Bun Pra Wate* or *Bun MaHaChad*, *Bun Par Pa*. Money is collected from villagers, depending on their willingness to offer, then offerings are prepared for the priests. The priests pray 13 *Kun* (chapters) during one day and one night.

Dern Hok (June): *Bun Leang Jao Pu* and *Jao Ta* (offerings for ancestors and the spirit of the landing). Offerings for *Jao Pu* is in *Khun sarm kham* (the third lunar month) and for *Jao Ta* it is in *Ram Kao Kham* (the day in June when the moon is 9 out of 15 sections full). In the ceremony for *Jao Ta*, villagers in *Ban Tha* and *Ban Lao Khaw* prepare food and make other offerings to priests.

Dern Jed (July) This month passes without any traditional activities. However villagers are included in the *Bun Bung Fire* activities within *Amphur Phone Sai*.

Dern Pad (August): *Bun Kao Pun Sa* is in *Khun 15 Kham* (the Buddhist Lent). During this time villagers offer food and other things to priests, including candles and materials that are useful in the rainy season. They prepare cups from banana leaves and flower decorations and offer them to priests. At night the villagers go to the temple for *Rub Sin* (a promise to follow the commandments pronounced by the priests) and *Viean Tiean* (walking around the temple 3 times holding lighted candles in their hands).

Dern Kaw (September): *Bun Khaw Pra Dub Din* in *Khun 15 Khum* (the full moon). Villagers make *Khaw Tum* (rice wrapped in banana leaves and boiled). These may consist of steamed rice, fish, chili, salt, fish produce, black rice, red rice and piper beetle. In the morning these offerings are brought to the temple and priests pray in dedication to the spirits of the village. After that the villagers who brought the offerings surround the temple to prey to the spirits of their ancestors.

Dern Sib (October): *Bun Khaw Sak*, *Wun Pen Dern Sib* (full-moon day). Before this day, villagers bring rice, fish produce and *Mun Sang* (sweet potato) as gifts for their senior relations. After that they prepare offerings for priests and make dedications for the spirits of their relations. For *Khaw Sak* food is offered from 8.00am until noon. After finishing at the temple, they must lay *Khaw Sak* on the paddy fields as an offering to the spirits of the earth, the paddy fields, the orchard, the cows and the buffaloes. They believe the spirits will ensure protection.

Dern Sib Ed (November): *Bun Ook Pun Sa*, in *Khun 15 Kham* (full moon) and *Bun Kra Tin* (the next day), in *Ram 1 Kham* to *Khun 1 Kham Dern 12* (until the end of the month). For this ceremony, villagers prepare food and other offerings for priests, as well as cups decorated with flowers to demonstrate their faith to Buddha.

Dern Sib Song (December): Bun Kra Tin. They worship the *Jao Ta* (spirit of the landing where boats dock) and cooperate with neighbouring villages, for example *Ban Lao Khaw* and *Ban Yang*. Villagers from each village compete to show their worship of *Jao Ta* and *Mae Cong Ca* (the spirit of water).

Schedule of Tradition in the village

Activity / Month	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
1. Bun Aud Ta	←→											
2. Bun Pee Mai		←→										
3. Bun Khum Khaw, Bun Khaw Jii and Bun Aud Ta			←→									
4. Bun Ban				←→								
5. Bun Pa Wate, Bun MaHachat and Bun Pa Pa					←→							
6. Bun Leang Jao Pu and Jao Ta						←→						
7. Bun Kao Pun Sa							←→					
8. Bun Khaw Pra Dub Din												
9. Bun Khaw Sak								←→				
10. Bun Ook Pun Sa									←→			
11. Bun Kra Tin and competition Soung Jao Ta										←→		
											←→	

7. Institution of the Community

7.1 Relationships within the village

Ban Tha is characterized by high intra-village relatedness. 70% of the community is related. Each family that first migrated to live in the village had several members in the household. Some had 9 children because firstly, a substantial workforce was needed to help with crop cultivation and paddy field work and secondly, birth control was not available.

The biggest clan in the community had the surname *Obchouy* (however there are currently few of them because female family members must take their husband's surname).

The reason that villagers continue to live in the community is that the ancestors owned land and this is valuable. They did not migrate to other places. They had relations in the village and felt warmer than they would have done in other places.

7.2 Relationships with Wider Society

Ban Tha has been involved with the outside community, both with government and private organizations, since the foundation of the village and heightened since the protection of *Paa Taam* and justice demand from government for indemnity due to the impact from the *Ra Si Sa Rai* Dam. A private company entered the village to assist villagers in their resistance to the government, and continues contact today. In terms of occupation, villagers are encouraged to manufacture (*Kok, Pue*) in the village.

According to village leaders, the types of involvement with outside organizations are:

1. Support from public organizations for example hospitals, public health stations, and politicians.
2. Public utility development, with support from the *Tambon Yang Kham* Administrative Organization.
3. Education provision, for example *Ban Lao Kaw* school and *Ban Sai Tong* school, and study trips organized with several Universities.

7.3 Local Administration

Initially, the village lived under the care of the village headman of *Ban Lao Kaw*. The headman's (*Phu yai ban*) name was Mr *Boon Pathum* This head was most likely a cousin of a family in the village.

After changing the *Phoo Yai Ban* 3 times, the government changed the status of *Ban Phon* to be *Tambon Phon Sai*, a sub-district under the rule of the *Kamnan* (the leader of Tambon). Mr *Bin Homkai* was the first *Kamnan* of this sub-district. His job was to look after the people in the *Tambon Phon Sai*. At that time he used a horse to ride and visit the villagers.

In 1975, *Tambon Phon Sai* was promoted to be *Amphur Phon Sai*. At this time, *Ban Tha* elected a new *Phoo Yai Ban* (village headman) next to *Kamnan Bai* and his name was Mr. *Kai Nintong*. He worked as *Phu Yai Ban* for 15 years before he died in 1990. During this time the village gained a lot of things, for instance electricity and a water supply.

The next *Phu Yai Ban* was Mr *Dom Yonngyod*. He acted as *Phu Yai Ban* for 15 years before retiring. In the duration of his leadership, many things appeared in the community, for example:

1989 The GRID Foundation, a non-government organization, initiated work in the village to encourage the participation of the villagers to join together for the conservation of *Paa Taam Kud Peang*. They operate the project on the basis of elected committees for management and regulations. There are 4 villages involved in this project; these are *Ban Tha*, *Ban Lao Kaw*, *Ban Don Jik*, and *Ban Don Sum Ran*.

1993 *Ra Si Sa Lai* Dam was constructed.

1995-1997 The villagers of *Ban Tha* joined with *Sa Much Cha Kon Chon* or the Forum of the Poor to protest against the government over compensation for the flood caused by the *Ra Si Sa Lai* Dam. Until 1997, the government agreed to pay.

2002 - The village was affected by flooding.
 - An educational institution often arranged a study tour in the PTKP and the *Taam Mun* Project, a non government organization, started work. This NGO encouraged alternative occupation for the villagers.

In July 2004 the village elected the new village headman Mr *Kew Dindong*. Currently, the village is under the *Tambon Yangkham* Administrative Organization--TYAO. The representatives of the villagers who are the members of the TYAO are Mr *Yam Yongyod* and Mr *Seang Homkai*.

List of the village headman of *Ban Tha*

1. Mr Boon Phathong first co- Phoo Yai Ban with Ban Lao Kaw (do not know the duration of his leadership)
2. Mr Boontong Sangngam, he had maintained this position for 15 years
3. Mr Tai Hormkai (do not know the duration of *his leadership*)
4. Mr.Tai Homkai became the *Khamnun* of *Tambon Phon Sai* (do not know the duration of his leadership), in 1975 *Tambon Phon Sai* was promoted to be *Amphur Phon Sai*.
5. Mr Kan Rintum, from 1975-1990.
6. Mr Dom Yongyod, from 1990- June 2004.
7. Mr Kew Dindong, from July 2004 to the present day.

7.4 Villagers and the agrarian system

The majority of villagers in Ban Tha have had title deed, locally called *Channod* (formal documentation for ownership of land) since 1998. There are only 3 families that hold *Sor Kor 1* (the first of agrarian law for villagers to show they own land) villagers cannot take out loans with this documentation.

The smallest quantity of land owned in the village is 3 rai and the largest area owned is 70 rai and so there are varying levels of wealth.

7.5 Wealth Ranking

The attitudes and perspectives of villagers toward living conditions in the community gave researchers convenient insights into the differential conditions in the village. Four villages, selected randomly, provided their opinions. This gave the opportunity for villagers to classify themselves and clusters of conditions in the community. Pre-specified criterion or classifications also presented households in differential clusters of condition. The results are:

Miss *Yun Nasan* classified the condition of villagers into 3 levels according to her background. Jor Por Yor (the basis of people) are:

First cluster: those enjoying good conditions; those without debt or with few debts (under 10,000 baht) and those with support and large paddy fields.

1. Mr. Dom Yungyod, because he has large paddy fields and earns an income from selling rice.

2. Miss Tao Pinatong, because she is supported by her husband who is taxi driver in Bangkok and is able to send her an income of around 20,000-30,000 baht.

3. Mr. Seang Homkai, because he has the largest paddy fields and earns an income from selling rice, and he benefits from a pig farm on loan from villagers.

4. Mr. Na Pindong, because he has no debt and is supported by his children. He has few paddy fields but these have not been affected by flooding.

Second cluster: those in medium conditions; those with debts of around 20,000 baht and whose income equals their cost of living expenditure. The majority of the population in village live in this cluster.

Third cluster: those in lower conditions than medium; those with debts of about 40,000-50,000 baht, who buy rice, have very young children, have few paddy fields, and borrow from every fund in the village. There is one person in the village in this condition and that is Mr. Mee PaNgam. He has 5 children, they work in Bangkok and send money home but this does not equal his expenditure.

Mr. *Tong Winitan* classified the condition of villagers into 5 levels:

1. Bought rice cluster: those who have few paddy fields (about 3-4 rai), and have to borrow rice from neighbours then return the rice after the harvest. There are about 5 such households in the village.

2. Lower than medium cluster: those who must rent out paddy fields, have debts, have no savings, but still have enough food to live by. There are about 10 such households in the village.

3. Medium condition cluster: those who were affected by the flood, have debts and have no savings, but have enough food to live on and are able to ask for a loan from investors. There are about 20 such households in the village.

4. Higher than medium condition cluster: those with a wealth of food and rice that they are able to sell. There are about 20 such households.

5. Good condition cluster: those who have savings and plenty of food, whose income is more than their expenditure but does not amount to 20-30 million baht. There are about 8 such households.

Mr. *Mee Leesaw* classified the condition of villagers into 5 levels:

1. Good condition cluster: those who have an income over 100,000 baht per year, from transactions in rice, cows, buffaloes and pigs, and benefit from loans. Those who have cars, shops, good family relations free from conflict with children and those who have paddy fields over 40 rai. There are 7 such households in the village: Mr. Seang Homkai,

Mr. Dom Yongyod, Miss Tai Yingmak Mr. Chom Yongyod, Mr. Tao Sankai, Mr. Nai Phutee and Mr. Wichai Chintanong.

2. Above medium condition cluster: those who have paddy fields less than 40 rai, who have ample food and are able to support children in their education. Those who have cows and buffaloes, are not in debt and who have good family relations. There are about 40 households in this cluster.

3. Medium condition cluster: those who have cows and buffaloes, are supported by children, have paddy fields around 20 rai, and who have debts. There are about 6 households in this cluster.

4. Lower than medium cluster: those who have debts, have little land (about 7-9 rai), are without support, have divided families and insufficient income. There are about 14 households in this cluster.

5. Lowest cluster: those who have few paddy fields (about 3 rai), are without support, whose children live outside the village. There are around 30 households in this cluster.

Mr. *Kamphoon YingmMak* classified the condition of villagers into 5 levels:

1. Good condition cluster: those who have money saved, benefit from loans and who have paddy fields around 30 rai. There are around 8 households in this cluster: Mr. *Seang Homkai*, Mr. *Dom Yongyod*, Miss *Chai Yingmak*, Mr. *Dom Yongyud*, Mr. *Tao Namchai*, Mr. *Tai Phutong* and Mr. *Wichit Piyatong* and Miss *Dern Suksem*.

2. Above medium condition cluster: those who are able to borrow from investors and save money, who are not in debt, who have a large number of paddy fields (over 18 rai) and who have a mortgage. There are 11 households in this cluster.

3. Medium condition cluster: those who are able to borrow from investors and who have paddy fields over 20 rai. There are about 29 households in this cluster.

4. Lower than medium cluster: those who are able to support their family, who has difficulty borrowing from investors, who are without support and are divided from their main family. Those are who have debts and have paddy fields under 10 rai. There are 10 households in this cluster.

5. Lowest cluster: Those who have few paddy fields (around 2-3 rai), who have debts, who work on paddy farms for subsistence, who have difficulty selling rice and are unable to afford the cost of fertilizer. There are about 10 households in this cluster.

People commented that they were unable to specify living conditions on the basis of paddy field size alone and that other factors must be taken into account in classifying the condition of villagers and their position in the social structure.

7.6 Collective economic activity in the community

The manufacturing and collection of reed (*Pue, lai*) is popular in *Ban Tha* because the government wishes to promote reed production through the “One Tambon One Product” (OTOP) scheme in the *Amphur* (district). However, there is competition in production levels throughout the provinces and regions.

Pue (reed) is grown in *Pa Taam*. Historically, villagers produced *Pue* for use in the household or for selling to neighbours and traders. Then, Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) –the *Tam Mun* project and GRID - entered the village and coordinated with villagers to run a reed production project. In 2000, villagers went on a trip to study *Lai* (reed), and the project estimates that it provided about 80,000 baht in support. The group bought about 60,000 baht worth of reed mats from members and the sub group in each

village and sold them to the main group. The group has not repaid the Tam Mun project yet.

When the group first started they produced reed mats only. Currently they produce several kinds of items, for example *Kra Tib Kaw* (small rice containers), Ta lub (boxes) and glass under lays ordered by customers.

There are group members in 8 villages in *Tambon Yang Kham*: *Ban Loa Kaw*, *Ban Dong Dang*, *Ban Nong Hanw*, *Ban Lao Don*, *Ban Pueng*, *Ban Peamas*, *Ban Don Ngoo Luem* and *Ban Tha*. Each village has a sub group belonging to the main group. In *Ban Tha* the head of the group is *Nat Yang Ngam*, the deputy is *Miss Rin* and *Miss Net Nasarn* does the accounting.

The villagers of *Ban Tha* are members of the manufacturing group network *Kok Pue Ra Si Sa Rai*. There are 31 people in the network and they must pay 50 baht for membership. In 2001, the *Kok Pue Ra Si Sa Rai* group network founded a savings group by themselves with the same members. The network provided an opportunity for other villagers to join. They had the opportunity to train in administration, management and accounting with support from the government community development office in *Amphur Phone Sai*. Including trainees, the number of group members increased to 42 people. This training gave them the knowledge and skills to develop their production and this has enabled them to increase their income.

The products sold by the group are of natural tones and colors and good quality. The members sell these products to the village sub group. The price of merchandise ranges from 50-90 baht, depending on the size and category. The sub group then sells to the main group and increases the value by about 10%. The main group then sells the merchandise to customers. At first, the *Tam Mun* project was the representative for the villagers in transactions with buyers. They were supported in terms of traveling expenses, meals and rent for representing the group in *Muang Tong Ta Nee* and other places. The price of merchandise in the retail group fixes the profit at 30%.

The group supports members by buying their products and deducting 10% from members' income. The first 5% is for members' deposits and the second 5% goes towards group capital for purchasing merchandise from members. The arrangement between members and the sub group continues to the main group and representatives of the network go to general markets, for example the OTOP fair. The pattern of management assures members that their products are in demand in the market.

The sub group has just managed to divide themselves from the main group in accounting matters in 2002 and now they have savings of 2,500 baht. They have managed to increase savings by deducting income from sale merchandise: 1 baht is deducted from every 10 baht of merchandise.

In 2004 the savings group gave a demonstration to villagers. The majority of members were from the manufacturing group *Kok Pue Ra Si Sa Rai*. Villagers commented that the administration committee consisted totally of women and so they were uncertain that this activity would be successful.

Members are able to borrow money from a group emergency fund and interest on the loan is 2% per month. Loans have to be repaid within three months; however repayment criteria are flexible depending on the level of impact from flooding.

The group dynamic: The group has new members joining and others leaving because they are unable to take part in activities due to time management issues. The operational problems of the group are:

1. Food merchandise gets damaged, for example fungi.
2. Members have no responsibility for controlling their production time.
3. The drought means there are insufficient quantities of some materials - *Kok* and *Lai* (reed). They must be bought from *Ban Sam Ka* and the price of dry *Lai* is 25 baht per kg.

Villagers' attitudes towards the *Kok Pue Ra Si Sa Rai* manufacturing group are that it should be strengthened, that more trainees are needed and that a solution to the food/ fungi problem is needed.

Granary group. This was founded in 1996 to enable the villagers to borrow and sell rice. If nobody borrowed they would sell the rice and committees had to manage the money made. The conclusion was to have two options: for villagers to borrow money or to buy rice for villagers to borrow.

In the beginning the granary group committee collected about 20kg of rice per family from members of the group. Members were then able to take out loans and the interest on the loan was about 20%. This had to be repaid after the harvest.

The granary committee has a total of 7 people who have held their positions for 4 years. The granary operates two times per year; the first time is in June when it opens for borrowing and the second time is in December when it opens for repayment.

Some years villagers are affected by flooding and the committee must sell rice at the market because the large granary (rice bank) is also affected by flooding. The committee sells rice in order to save money for villagers to borrow after the ebb tide so that they can buy rice. The group interest on the loan is 3% per month.

Rice Bank (large granary). This was founded in 1997 for farmers in the *Amphur* by a network of fertilizer cooperatives. A total of 10 villages are members of the Rice Bank. Currently the Rice Bank is situated in *Ban Yang Kham*.

The Rice Bank accepts only Jasmine rice 105 and this must be in quantities of 5 to 15kg. The majority is sold in Bangkok. Also, villagers are able to borrow rice for consumption and sale. The Rice Bank's interest on loans is 20% per kg.

There are 300 members in the Rice Bank from *Ban Tha* (50 families). The members hold a maximum of 10 shares, worth 100 baht each, and to enroll it costs 100 baht per member. They operate this process once a year, in February. They also have a conference at the end of every year to explain the effects of Rice Bank operation. When they have been running for a full 3 years they will share the profits amongst members.

Rice mill center. This was founded in 2002 and is situated in *Ban Hao Dong Tambon Si Sawang*. The group takes rice from members and pays high prices for it - more than in the market. For example a market price of 6.10 baht per kg fetches 7 baht in the rice mill. Ban Tha has few villagers that sell here because they do not have sufficient rice.

Fertilizer fund. This was founded in 1996 and the head of the group is Mr. *Tao Samtai*. In the beginning it was supported by the Office of Agriculture in the *Amphur*, the main purpose of this fund is to enable the villagers to use chemical fertilizers and then after the harvest the villagers can pay for what they have used. All families in the village are members. Repayments are made after harvest. Members were able to take out loans in 2000 and the interest is 10% per year.

Fishery group. This was founded in 1999 with support from the community development office of 40,000 baht. Operations are divided into two groups. The head of the first group is the *Phu Yai Ban* (the village head) and the head of the second group is Mr. Seang that was supported by CP Company, a giant agribusiness company in Thailand.

One million baht fund. This was collectively founded in 2001 by the government and the head of the group is Mr. *Dom Yongyod (Phu Yai Ban)*. It has 9 committees and villagers must repay within the year. Interest on loans is 5% per year.

Kor Khor.Kor Jor. Fund This was collectively founded in 1999 with support from the community development office. The head of the group is Mr. *Dom Yungyod the Phu Yai Ban* (village head). Villagers began with loans to 27 members, currently members borrow from this fund as a family. There are two main uses of money borrowed from this fund. These are as follows:

1. For keeping cows, to be repaid within 3 years.
 2. For trade, to be repaid within 1 year.
- Group interest on loans is 2% per year.

Saving money for productivity fund. This was collectively founded in 1998 with support from the community development office. Members must save 20-500 baht per month and are then able to borrow money from this fund. Profits are gained by charging interest and these are shared out to all members every two years.

Saving money Kor Khor.KorJor. fund This was collectively founded in 2000. The head of the group is Mr. *Dom Yungyod (the Phu Yai Ban)*. Members must save 20 baht per month, and only members who save money with this group are able to borrow.

Saving money group. This was collectively founded in 2002. Members save 20 baht per month and can take out emergency loans without interest.

Honestly saving money. This was collectively founded in 1995. Members deposit money and take out loans.

Grave activity group. This was collectively founded in 1977 with the cooperation of 4 villages; *Ban Lao Kaw, Ban Tha, Ban Jik, and Ban Don SumRan*. 20 baht is collected from each member for every person who dies.

Cattle group. This group started in *Ban Lao Kaw* and was collectively founded in 1999 with the support of the Thai –German Fund passed on by the GRID project. The members are: *Ban Yang Kham*, *Ban Lao Kaw*, *Ban Don Sum Lan*, and *Ban Tha*. The head of the group is Mr. *Samseang* and the members from *Ban Tha* are *Monthai Sikum*, *Kaew Dang Dong* and *Yom Yungyoth*.

The objective of the Cattle group is to encourage the farming of cows for beef and to produce manure. Other activities include saving and borrowing money; members are able to borrow 15,000 baht and repay at a rate of 1,200 baht per year. The group has accumulated 90,000 baht in capital and this can be used for loans in case a member has an emergency.

Appendix

แผนที่แสดงลักษณะภูมิประเทศบ้านท่างาม

