

Health Innovation Stories from Communities By Seri Phongphit

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A) Resource Management

In the past, people lived in the nature and with the nature. It was an inter-dependent relationship that sustained the balance with practices and rules which regulated the balanced relationships between man and earth, water, forest, mountain, natural resources, and natural products. People in the past did not exploit the nature to the extent it happened during the past decades when the society changed from subsistent economy to capitalism, from self-sufficiency to consumerism. Natural resources have been over-used not only for direct

consumption but as source of cash income for modern living.

Deterioration of natural resources and environment have significant impact on well-being of communities, not only as source of income, but as source of life. Natural resources used to be considered as "mother" who gives life to people : mother earth, mother water, mother rice.

Rehabilitation process of natural resources and environment means therefore rehabilitation of life of our "mother", so that she could give life to her "children", people, animals, trees, all living beings, air, and environment as a whole.

The case of Koh Yao Noi island, people sustain their living with resources from the sea. As Muslim community, they use their cultural and social capital to rehabilitate natural resources, which are deteriorated due to modern fishery, with commercial purpose, using modern fishing instruments such as large and sophisticated nets. Although such instruments are not legal for the preserved areas, but nothing is impossible for people with economic and social power.

Koh Yao Noi people started with learning. They

learned to understand the causes of environment deterioration, and jointly find prevention measures for further deterioration, and to gradually help rehabilitation process.

They gathered into small forums and grew into network from local to provincial level and then to regional level covering 13 provinces of Southern Thailand. This is a prove that community power still exists, but it has to derive from knowledge base and networking relationship base.

These networks jointly work out rehabilitation and preservation of costal resources such as mangrove, seaweed, and biological diversity, all form "community sea" as it happens with "community forest". At the same time, they jointly build up a sustainable local economy, not relying only on natural resources, but also by integrated community management, increasing production for consumption and reducing expenditure.

In the case of Koh Yao Noi Island, an NGO (Volunteers for Society Foundation) has important role in facilitating learning process, including also being catalyst which result in innovation and networking. In the case of Patoh Watershed, Chumporn, a GO such

Conservation and Management of Patoh Watershed has important role, especially a person like Mr. Phongsa Chunam who works with life and soul, loves and understands environment, and appreciates community participation in conversation of watershed forest, facilitates learning process for survival of community and forest.

However, the case of Phatoh belongs to the conservative model of environment preservation, which gives leading role to government organizations. If there are persons like Mr. Phongsa Chunam it would be fine, but most of the cases it is not so. The number of human resources and amount of budget used for environment preservation under such paradigm is not cost-effective. Had it been cost-effective, there would not have been such conflicts in relation to natural resources as it is happening all over the country today.

The method used by Mr. Phongsa Chunam started with learning process within the community, with young people, which is a good way to do. The problem is, if one day Mr. Phongsa Chunam will not be around, what would happen, would forest preservation sustain ?

It would not be much concern in the case of

Khao Chamao and the vicinity, because there is here a learning process managed by the community started with a small awareness of forest preservation, with some small activities. These grew in the meantime and gave rise to many other activities. This is a result of innovative ideas and creative thinking of leaders and of young people who live close to the nature. They realized that the more they revitalize and preserve the nature, the more the nature would become their "mother" giving them life, creative ideas from the great power of the nature, from the innocent spirit and endless imagination of the children.

Learning started with walking in the forest and ended with youth camping, whereby they learn about their native community. This has led to many other activities, for example "give back the land and provide food to elephants" which is a project about providing elephants with places to live and paths to walk. There are many other activities such as saving groups, whereby members save 1 Baht per day. All these are related to learning both formal and non-formal education, it is a learning from real life, learning with the nature.

The power of knowledge alone is not sufficient.

The power of Khao Chamao preservation group derived from the network of communities, especially the network of 12 sub-districts which link Khao Chamao preservation with community life in relation to economics, social and cultural life. The emphasis is on learning and self-reliance of family and community. This will be basis for sustainability not only for communities but also for Khao Chamao, which is source of life for the communities.

As to the case of Songkhram river, which is 420 kilometers long, originated from Phuphan mountain chain flowing through many provinces such as Udon Thani, Nhonkhai, Sakonnakhon, Nakhon Phanom. There are about 80 streams which flow into this river before it joins Maekhong river at Tha-uthen district, Nakhon Phanom province. Songkhram river has been providing life to millions of people for hundreds and thousands of years. It gives water, food, innumerable products for basic needs and sub-sistence, also source of income for many, with one of the richest biological diversity habitat of Thailand, including all kinds of forests that grow along side this river, where we can find rich variety of plants, herbs, vegetables and food.

It is important to know that Songkhram river is the only remaining river with the most delicious fish of the Northeastern region. Fish would come from Mekhong river. They go up the stream at the start of rainy season. There is so much fish that Songkhram river is best known for their famous and special salted fish and sour fish. This way of food processing is a local wisdom transmitted from generations. People in the past as today did not eat only for survival, they wanted and still want to enjoy eating, they look for good taste and good food. This is linked also to well-being of healthy community.

B) Community Management

In the past, there was practically almost no management, as it was part of community life as transmitted from generations. There were rules and regulations, rites and rituals, which people were born with. People were linked together and with the nature by belief of "phi" (spirit) and "kwan" (soul) expressed in

cultural forms.

Community management in the past derived from local wisdom of ancestors, transmitted through generations. They were taken for granted. As society changes, natural resources are exploited commercially, local people face new reality, namely the scarcity of natural resources. They are confused and do not know how to adjust to the situation, not knowing how to manage their resources, their community, their life. Once they cannot rely on natural resources, they sell their labour, community members to their own way to earn money for their survival. The community is weakened.

Some people migrate into urban areas with hope that they would earn more than living in the rural areas. What they do is to sell their labour, selling small consumer items such as Agricultural Community along railway at Thaphra, Khonkaen. Here it is still half urban half rural area. There is still some land for cultivation, although not that large amount as in the village. However, with some learning and new management they succeed to earn more than only to sell their labour, or to buy raw materials from elsewhere to process them

in the community. They can earn more money by growing flowers and make garland from these flowers.

A land of some hundreds square meters may not be large, but they can manage to grow vegetable, flowers, raise some small animals, and work all these out in a different way from others, such as using organic fertilizer, which add more values to the products. They gradually can solve their debt problems and regain security for their family.

This may seem to be a simple story, but it costed the people so much to adjust themselves. It was not easy for people to change their way of life from rural areas. Without appropriate assistance it would have been very difficult and would cost them much more. In this case this community was lucky to be assisted by the Population Development Association (PDA), who facilitated learning process and intermediated financial assistance from the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC). With the loan from BAAC they could obtain basic structure such as electricity, water and a better environment for their community.

As for the rural communities, there have been

efforts to reorganize community life through innovative ideas. The case of Muang Plueay Tambon Administrative Organization (TA0) is a new way of budget management. The usual way is to split the budget for each village community independently. Muangpluey considered its sub-district as its target and as an integrated entity, not separated parts put together. They realized that things are all interrelated and interdependent. They take roads as an example, and started to plan to build and improve quality of roads altogether. They considered roads as a network, and started to build these roads as a network, and not as pieces as before.

The TAO secretary here plays appropriate role, not as traditional "ruling class" or representative of power, but becomes facilitator for learning process, catalyst to cause innovation and networking.

By so doing, the civil society was empowered. This on its turn gave pressure on the TAO council, whose members are rather conservative, to approve the plan. The TAO secretary alone would not have been able to convince the TAO council.

This is an appropriate process and is firmly based scientifically, as it started with setting a

common purpose, moving then to learning with common principle, community participation, and finally with good organization, putting right person on the right job and right place.

This lesson should have raised intellectual power in order to confront with other problems such as health, natural resources, environment, debt, livelihood which are all interrelated and cannot be solves separately.

There are questions raised to the case of Nong Nong village, Chaturaphak Phiman district, Roi Et province. Development programme here is supported by a venerable monk, native of this community, who has a high-ranked position in the province. The community organization is an imitation of the government structure and system, with a cabinet consisting of prime minister and ministers. However, the question is the efficiency and effectiveness and the culture of working in traditional governmental way which is conventionally reductionist, and can hardly be integrated. This is the reason why the reform is on-going to get rid of the conventional bureaucracy. The challenge for this community is how to wisely adopt some positive

aspect of the government, and find its own integrated way to manage their own development programme.

This is the same problem that communities should find the answer, be it Nabua village, Nakohnthai district, Phitsanulok province, or Jansen community, Nakhonsawan province, who put much efforts in developing many "projects". The shortcoming of these projects is that the linkage between the projects are not that evident. It is not clear how these projects could become pieces of puzzle put together to make a beautiful picture, an economic and social system which can move by itself without totally depending on external support like plant on a pot, in need of continuous watering and care, without which it would die.

The models of sustainable community management are all based on knowledge, learning, and linking community activities for mutual support or as a synergy, which has multiplied results.

The issue which is unclear in many communities is learning. Usually, it is outsiders who organized learning process for communities. It was not consistent, and there was not strategic plan. Many meetings and training did not respond to the real problems and needs of the

people. Many of the times villagers attended these events because they could not avoid them, or because they were paid (per diem) to do so.

Many projects in the communities resulted from promotion of outsiders, GOs and NGOs. It has become a form of dependency. Some of the community leaders became "middle-persons", intermediating communities and outsiders, hunting for "projects". If there is transparency and community participation, it would be fine, but in many cases as that of Sakhoon, which has famous community leader, questions were raised in relation to good governance. In this case, if the community leader, who acts as "messianic figure" dies, the community would not be able to take on projects by themselves, they would have to wait for another new messianic leader.

This is an important issue which is a real constraint of community management today. It is a question of building a system, which would secure sustainability of the projects and activities which are linked together in an interactive and supportive way. This system would move by itself. It is lead by group of leaders, representing the whole community. One

member dies, the community would still carry on its development plan.

"Good and efficient system should help people to do right things easily, and make it difficult to do wrong things". This is confirmed by Klongpia savings group, which reflects this good system, which does not depend on one person, but on various factors, especially on joint efforts, joint action, and joint responsibility.

C. Networking and relationship

In the past, people lived as community, as group, as network, supporting one another and overcame many problems. People shared their labour, visiting one another, make friends, and lived in a spirit of kinship. Today the society changes. Some communities still preserve their traditional way of life, some others follow modern official administration, which divide communities into villages, sub-district, district, province, which do not mean "community" in traditional sense. People struggle for survival, so much that they do not

have time for one another as before. They live by their own and go their own way.

Some people live in the same area, have the same way of production, have the same problems, and many other things in common; they start to build network as the case of network of rice growers in the Mekong basin, Ubon Ratchathani. The term network here means to establish relationship and cooperation in production, processing, and marketing. From here they see opportunities for many other cooperation.

The starting point of networking is rice management. Farmers realize that they are rice producers but never set the rice price by themselves; the traders are the ones who set rice price. Farmers thought that traders had bargaining power because they had rice mill, so they too built their own rice mill, only to find out soon that rice mill is not always the answer to the problem. They realize that the most important issue for their network is learning. It is indeed a learning for self-reliance, for self-sufficiency economy and not for business. It is a farmer schooling, not an enterprise institute.

The focus of farmer school is curriculum

development which is done systematically, with data and methodology, monitoring and evaluation, and extending to other activities in order to respond to the needs of local communities. It is first of all for "survival" and not to be "rich". The activities are gas station, organic agriculture, fertilizer factory and others, which may look close to business, but they are only community enterprise for community survival on the first hand.

All of this is the basis for sufficiency livelihood. There is a continuous learning through local community radio, whereby people share their information. Although this process still have some problems and still depend somehow on external funding, but if communities engaged themselves directly in business, they would again risk as before, because they are not ready for business. They need to set up their own community economic system to ensure the sustainability and self-reliance of the community. Community cannot rely on individual projects alone. Networking is the key for community economic system. They need to support one another, especially in relation to production and consumption.

Networking at different levels is becoming

important basis for security and sustainability of community economy as in the case of integrated agriculture in Nakhon Phanom and other 6 provinces in the Northeast. They are supported technically by Thai-Belgian project. They are also supported by training on "Truth of Life" organized by the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives with Santi Ashoke.

What the network has learned together is the way of thinking and self-management for self-reliance starting with one's own family, and forming then groups to support one another, and link groups together into a network. This is the way they re-organize their production, their surplus from family consumption and set up a system to sell the products among networks, and even to external market, although this is not the main aim.

BAAC plays important role in facilitating learning process, which is followed by community enterprise. Many of these activities become "community cluster" meaning a set of activities which support one another, for example organic fertilizer factory, animal feed factory, production of soap, shampoo, washing liquid

for home use.

The importance of network is the emphasis on learning, with "research" from real practice, e.g. research on organic rice growing, survey of monthly income and expenditure. After a while, there is assessment and evaluation. It is therefore a systematic research which generates new knowledge which may not exist in textbooks. They come from real life, real practice. They are powerful research which have impact on communities and their network, which are linked by their heart, with determination to learn together, believing that this is empowering knowledge which leads toward self-reliance.

The network of Nakhon Phanom and other 6 province in the Northeast consists of 66 groups, with over 1,000 members. There is a coordinator to facilitate exchange of experiences and knowledge. They meet every month. It is a loosely structured network with the main aim of learning, self-reliance of family, and mutual support of the groups.

There are many other networks which are set up and managed with the same purpose, but they do not work that well. This is due to the lack of clear

understanding of "network" and "networking". They follow ready-made formula of networking without innovative ideas. It is not the case of Krabi Elderly People Group which in continuous search for new ideas. They use the fund received to buy a palm plantation. It sounds like to invest in order to have benefits for this group. It is something more than that.

The palm plantation was purchased on behalf of Elderly People Group with the intention to be learning centre, centre for activities of group members. It is the place where members share their experiences and knowledge about plants, herbs, and others. If it happens as planned, it would become a good role model for innovative ideas for these and other groups who receive funding to support their activities.

Networking has many meanings. Even in one community there could be a network, depending on the basis of this network and its efficiency in improving quality of life and sustainable development.

There is a small group of persons getting together forming a savings group in Nong Ya Ma, Roi Et province. The saving reaches 10 million baht within a few years, without community economic system as

basis; it is a pure "cash management". This is a situation which could one day bring the whole community to critical situation. The high interest this savings group gives to members is higher than ordinary banks. This incentive brings rapid and high deposit of members, who expect high interest rate. At the same time, the group has to find persons to take loan, so that the group would have interest to pay members. There are no details in the report of this case, how members use the loan, and how they repay the loan, and with what interest rate.

The lessons learned from One Million Baht Village Fund confirm that without learning process, and without community economic system, the fund is not used for productive activities, they generate not new one million baht debt, but several million, because one million is only down payment.

"Money is illusion, good is real" as said M.J. Siddhiporn is something we can prove in our daily life. The one who takes money as the end of one's life, could easily fail in life. Life has many better things than money. Money should be only means toward the end.

Community which lives together and its members

are linked spiritually, supporting one another, is a happy community which lives in a sufficiency economy. It is like a family, which is not common to be seen today. Even a family as such, it is difficult to find a happy family. The case of Nong-Por and Poo-Phai is seen therefore as something unusual.

The relationship between this grandfather and grandson is an example of those who stand up to face hardship of life together. However, this is an exceptional case due to the innovative ideas of Grandpa Phai, who never stops to invent toys, means for learning for his grandson and so that he could relate himself to the word. He is unfortunate to be born with some defections, but thanks to intellectual power and moral support of grandpa he could live almost equally to those who are born without any defection, physically and mentally.

Intellectual power is creative power which generate life. It is an endless power. It continuously generates new things because it comes not only from intellect but from the heart.

It would be a pity if schools and organizations concerned appreciate Grandpa Phai's works but have not drawn lessons learned, and have not discovered

the real power behind those creative inventions.

D. Learning and Management

If people would be healthier and happier today there should be a need of learning and management, and not let doctors alone care for health, teachers alone care for learning, government officials for natural resources and development, whereas villagers and people in the society remain only spectators of the on-going theater.

Learning for people in urban areas could be done many ways, such as the case of "mother and child relationship" project. It is the project about mother's breast feeding, which people agree on the value, but not many people could practice it as in the past, due to the conditions of life of today.

This network facilitates a group of persons to share their experiences and knowledge. There is a facilitator who helps analyzing and synthesizing knowledge from various kinds of experiences. They see

both potential and problems, and jointly find out solutions. They use this to campaign for breast feeding to be more effective and expanded in wider scale.

In fact, the case of people living in urban areas is an area which should be given much attention. The network of mothers and child should be a model or an example for many other networks in urban areas, to help people be healthier and happier like the network of Jor Sor 100 and networks of consumers with many forms and many issues according to the occupations, interests, problems, to provide them platform to share their concern, their problems, and experiences. These platforms will become powerful means as they reflect real problems, needs, and experiences of people.

This is a kind of an informal education. This is part of educational reform as well as non-formal education or formal education. The following case is an integrated one, so natural and spontaneous that one cannot say whether it is informal, non-formal, or formal education. This is the case of Children Love Forest School in Surin. They have trained 8-9 groups of children, who learn from the nature, the forest, the real life. They interact with the nature and reality around them. They do not limit

themselves to only listen teachers in the classroom, learn things by heart, and to go for exam.

This is an alternative schooling which may not happen in the schooling system as such, but the values and contents developed by this school could be models and examples for other schools, be they in informal, non-formal, or formal systems, to learn from and to apply in their contexts.

The difference between this school and others is the integration of process and output, life and learning, contents and forms of what is being learned. Many means are used to help children to have access to the truth of life, be it arts, theater, music, poems, creating dreams and imagination, help them to fly to the endless open world, as teacher Chued tells the children :

"Nature teaches us to be kind"

"Arts help us to be sensitive, to have imagination, to see the beauty of arts, to have inspiration from art

To draw, to think, to write, to express all this in the works done

To have them from the nature, nature is learning

place, place for works.

When the works are exposed, others see the beauty of nature.

They want to feel the same feeling

It is the processes which are linked together"

"Nature is great. It is both father, mother, and teachers

Ready to support and teach human beings at the same time.

Those who sense the meaning of nature will have the great spirit.

Which is ready to be one with the universe."

The way how teachers and students in this school in Surin could happen in communities today if there are appropriate means, or at least there is a will to learn, to revitalize the relationship among village communities which face the same fate as the case of "network of self-reliant community Bichanode", Bandung district, Udon Thani province. It started with the search for the real cause of problems and crisis of the society and the community, with support of officials of the community health centre, teachers, and some NGOs who facilitated learning process through

community platforms.

It started with one village then expanded to 28 villages in 6 sub-districts, with a learning centre called "Huay Leng Centre", although there is not yet a local economic system as a result of this learning process, it is believed that if they are consistent, something new must happen soon. This is only the beginning of a new era, whereby communities need much to reorganize themselves.

The main problem today is to develop learning means which will have important impact on the emerging local economic system for self-reliance as the case of many villages and over thousand sub-districts in all over the country today which have done their "community strategic plan", which is a process of learning, whereby communities search for their potential, their capital, resources, wisdom, and also problems of the communities, and make analysis and search for solutions by themselves. This is a learning process for self-reliance.

The heart of this learning process, known as "people research and development " (PR&D) is that community joint do their own research, by themselves and for themselves. It is a process to facilitate learning

process for communities to liberate themselves from dependency way of thinking and waiting for assistance from the state and outsiders.

This learning process help communities to search for their own "treasure", such as Dongyai forest which covers over 4,000 hectares. There is one sub-district called Sangthonoi, with 13 village communities, situated around this forest in the area of Hua Taphan district, Amnartcharoen province. This is a very rich mixed forest. It is the source of food and basic needs of communities, and source of fertility of soil, water, and biological diversity.

Through strategic planning, communities of this sub-district survey natural resources in their neighbourhood. They discovered with great surprise how deteriorated environment due to cash crop plantation rehabilitated by itself. Communities rediscovered their local capital, their real situation, income and expenditure, debts and problems. They started to reorganize themselves by doing their own planning, which they had never done before. There have been many plans, but all were done by other people, then imposed on them.

Communities learn how to manage their basic needs, such as rice, food, herbs, home-used items (soap, shampoo, washing liquids) and fertilizer, trying to produce all this by themselves as much as they can. By so doing, they reduce expenditure, increase their income, and solve their problems. The survey of environment and forest increases environment awareness. They realize now that without forest, there is not source of food, which they would have to buy all from the market.

Strategic planning means that community takes initiative to manage their own life. Up to now they let other people to do so for them, starting with 1961, the first year of the five year national economic and social development plan. When things failed, the communities suffered, not those who told them to do.

Community strategic planning is a synthesis of new knowledge by Village Foundation, through its experiences working with communities for many years with emphasis on learning and searching for community capital. Important experiences contributing to this method are those of Mr. Viboon Khemchalem, network of Inpeng in Sakonnakhon, experiences and application

of economic theory of Shayanov, the Russian thinker, and experiences of Mai Rieng, Nakhon si Thammarat province.

Mai Rieng is a learning community. It has a group of leaders who love learning, and have been searching for solutions from problems by themselves for many years. They started with trying to find solution for the problem of rubber. They set up their own community factory with their own fund. They realized later that it was not sufficient to solve rubber problem in a long term, as rubber is much more complicate. They decided to develop a "Rubber Strategic Planning", re-researching into the history of about 100 years since rubber was first planned in Thailand. They did it jointly with the association of rubber farmers of Nakhon si Thammarat province. The government of that period did not accept their plan, this government did, and could solve rubber problem and this is one of the main reasons of the high rubber price today.

After rubber strategic plan, Mai Rieng learned that rubber is only one issue in their life, it is not every thing. They decided to do community strategic planning the same way they did with rubber. This time it included

every thing, their whole community life. This is how Mai Riang has become learning place for many.

Mai Riang has become role model of how community reorganize themselves, and set up their own life plan in a systematic way. It started with learning of the community. Today Mai Riang organizes informal, non-formal, and formal education in an integrated way, with community as centre, and ranging from kindergarten, to primary, secondary, to tertiary education.

Mai Riang organizes itself in a system of production, investment, marketing, welfare, through which community moves the whole system by themselves. Leaders are only facilitators of learning and joint management.

Mai Riang leaders helped communities to regain their self-confidence through learning and research. They realize that in today's changing society there is a need of learning in order to cope with this rapid change, and to avoid being exploited by the larger system. They even asked themselves why most people in their community died with the same causes as those in urban areas. They collected data and found out that having almost the same way of life as those in urban areas,

Mai Riang people die the same causes inevitably. Knowing all this, they start to reorganize themselves, their way of life, their environment, their food, and their health. This is how they learn to discover things by themselves, and not copying ready made formula and answers from somewhere else.

Mai Riang is an important model of community enterprise, especially community enterprise cluster, meaning set of activities which complement one another and build a community sufficiency economy.

Conclusion

There are plenty of community experiences like flowers in the fields. Some of them are collected and put on a vase, not only to embellish the desk of someone, but in order to learn about the components, the beauty, and constraints, to see the differences and similarities, to draw lessons learned for further community learning and health management.

What can be conclude in all cases is that elements of value and sustainability derive from the fact that communities develop their potential through "learning", and use the knowledge acquired for the "management" of their resources, and further "development" of resources (see graphic below). This is an interactive process and circle

We learn from communities that community health does not begin with hospital or doctors or medicine, but starting from

1. Security of food and good environment
2. Security of work, and community welfare system
3. Knowledge in self health care with integrated wisdom
4. modern medicine and health service

However, learning process of communities is something against the mainstream, which is dictated and dominated by consumerism and capitalism which

raise endless desire and needs. Learning for self-reliance has to be an innovative in order to empower the communities.

Innovation could be an integration of 3 elements :

1. Local wisdom
2. Modern knowledge and technology
3. Innovative ideas

The problem of community health today is a policy problem which imposes on communities with centralized ideas, many of which have constraints and bias because they are not open for ideas from com-

munities. The policy is used to one ready made formula to be applied for the whole country without considering the plurality of socio-cultural context. Many of the cases, each scheme expects more political output rather a social one. It would be difficult to talk about sustainable community health if the state does not "give health back to the people", because sustainable health is something which cannot be "given", it can only come from "inside" the people and their community.



Academic Platform by People of Nabua Community

Synthesized and composed by

Phaisan Rewthongchai

The starting point of well being promotion through the community power of people in Nabua Sub-district, Nakhon Thai District, Phitsanulok Province, was the reconsideration of activities proceeded by the Community. The learning platforms have been used since 1998, at Nabua Community health centre. Mrs. Suwanna Mueangraphang as the State health authority, Pooyai (village headman) Prajerd Seerasan, and the villagers, joined to share their opinions on the issue

of developmental problems, that was how to build up the healthier and happier conditions for Nabua people. Such issue brought about and led to the well-being promotion in the following aspects:-

1. **Community Business.** The group of Nabua-medicinal-herb-cultivators established in 1998, was upgraded to be the Agricultural Cooperatives Ltd. for Nabua medicinal-herb group, in 2002. There were 238 members and capital of 44,510.- Baht at first. The members were promoted by the Cooperatives to cultivate and to process various kinds of medicinal herbs. The herbal products could be sold both in the community and outside. With noticeable results of its performance, the community organizations, community itself and State organizations gathered to support the extension of activities through various groups. Those groups have carried out various kinds of activities, i.e. cultivating mushroom by youth groups, processing medicinal herbs into biological extracts and compost, growing organic rice and vegetables, processing medicinal herbs into food, drinks and medicaments, raising swines at Bannamlom Community and loom weaving by Nabua Community. All resources existed

in community have been used for the performance of those activities. When the concrete results of their performances are appeared, more groups were established and assisted in terms of financial and technical supports by the community organizations, therefore each group becomes stronger.

2. Finance. Nabua's financial management has been carried out through the groups and the community's financial institutions, i.e. 1) 8 village banks with 1,500 members and revolving fund of 6,624,000.- Baht 2) 15 Truth savings groups with members of 15 villages and revolving fund of 1,120,000.- Baht 3) poverty-solving fund 4) fertilizer fund 5) economic-solving fund of Nabua Tambon Administrative Organization 6) fund for Village of Development Volunteers and Self Protection 7) village and urban community fund

3. Different Vocational Groups. The concepts of community business and financial management are linked into vocational promotion. There are different vocational groups in Nabua Community, i.e. farming and farm crops, animal breeding and housewives' products.

4. Environmental and Natural Resources Conservation. There are groups of volunteers against

wildfire and protection of forest use.

5. Social Aspect. There are Tambon Health Volunteers Club, Thai boxing amateur group, petanque group, local wisdom group, housewife group, youth group, funeral group, group of educational-institution committee member and group for village peace-security protection.

6. Politics/administration. There are Tambon Administrators Club, Scout group, group of Thai Volunteers for National Security, local administrators group and Tambon Administrative Organization.

The main principle and the factors in Nabua community's well-being promotion is to co-ordinate among the areas of overall Tambon civil society. The community power is encouraged by the process of Tambon people through the learning platforms. The ideas are practiced through all aspects of community development activities. The factors and the social capital are also used as its main principle. The focus on share of opinions, practices and experiences is effectively made, and those synthetic experiences are systematically submitted in the form of villagers' creatively academic platforms, of which count on the evaluation and progress of the actually holistic well-

being promotion.



Living Museum at Jansen Community

*Synthesized and composed by
Suphawan Vongkamjan*

Jansen Village, the community along railways, is situated at Jansen Sub-district, Takhli District, Nakhon Sawan Province. In the past, through the evidences of archaic-object discovery, the ancient city of Dhavaravati Kingdom was established here. The village is 88 kilometres far from the centre of the province, and 16 kilometres far from Chao Phraya River, in the low plain, with fertile soil and tropical climate. Nowadays 350 families live there and most of the villagers finished their compulsory

education, few are graduated. They earn their livings on agriculture, rice and vegetable growing and working generally as employees. The villagers came from different localities to live together. Jansen Sub-district was prosperous by trade.

After digging irrigative canals in 1955, the environmental conditions were changed; the trades became dull. That's why Chinese merchants moved out to other places; the adolescents abandoned their dwellings for working in town and the different types of activities were ended. The people in community have separated into groups, becoming estranged, lack of understanding, rarely getting together for community activities and working only for personal benefits. Later, Luang Por (Venerable Monk) Ode (Phrakhru Nisai jariyakhun) created the harmony in Jansen Community, by using remarkable activities: revival of traditions and cultures, restoration of ancient remains and archaic objects. He, the kindhearted and generous priest, could use Dharma principles for moral faith of the villagers. The great stupa containing Lord Buddha's relics and the museum were established in the temple, as the spiritual centre and the pride representatives of the

community; and they eventually became the learning sources.

After his death, the work was continually done by Luang Por Chareon (Phrakhru Niwatdharmakhan). The overall economic tasks were also extended through the people's way of life, cultures, weaving and forming the students as the young guides for museum's trip. The villagers have better economic status, employed, happier, more acquainted with each other and live together peacefully. Applying wisdom with the development, the villagers can use, as a tool, their potentials with the process of learning in the community. The temple with Buddhist priests, the schools with teachers and students, and the villagers as the base of working - are the fundamental organizations of the community. They are regarded as the model of creative troubleshooters and become the source of Jansen grassroot community. The remarkable activities are young-guide group with the students from schools in community, loom weaving group, and etc. The members can earn not less than 3,000 Baht/month. A part of their incomes is donated for maintaining the temples. The "We Protect Jansen" Club has set up the whole year

activity plan on community's cultures and traditions. The Jansen-community-way-of-life project has set up to carry out the religious activities, cooking local food, weaving, basketry, ancient-city sightseeing, museum trip and study tour of Jansen temple's landscape.

The structure for health promotion of Jansen community utilizes the cultural and traditional dimensions for the learning process. The temple is used as the linkage centre between the community and the school. More channels for occupations and income raising are promoted for the villagers and the school creates new texts from local experiences. Every sector of the community is happy to work together.

The main factor facilitating the achievement of well being promotion for the community is the readiness of community leaders with knowledge, rightness and mercy to the villagers, in revival of the community history and raising consciousness for their homeland. The social capital is used in creating different activities gaining four necessities of life, and maintaining their precepts, with the strong intention to live together peacefully.



"Mini MBA" in "Minifarm" : Agricultural Network along Railways

Synthesized and composed by

Krailert Taweekul / Prapatsorn Taechaprasertvitaya

The Centre for Integrated Agriculture Development of Banpai or Meechai Centre, the NGO, has organized and promoted the Vegetable Banks along the railway at Banrachakarn, Moo 7, Thapra Sub-district, Mueang District, Khon Kaen Province. Its strong intention is to raise the better living status for the farmers by renting the land of the State Railway of Thailand (SRT), drilling groundwater and providing water storage

tanks. The pipe system was set down through the cultivated areas in order to supply the water through 24 hours, in the area of 800 square metres per one member.

The villagers faced many problems, such as lacking of land and water for cultivation and for use in households; especially the government employees, living around the project plots, thus have no land of their own. After retirement, it is quite difficult for them to buy houses and lands. The leaders of the village therefore made a contact with the Banpai Meechai Centre, after observing the Vegetable Banks along the railway in the nearby community.

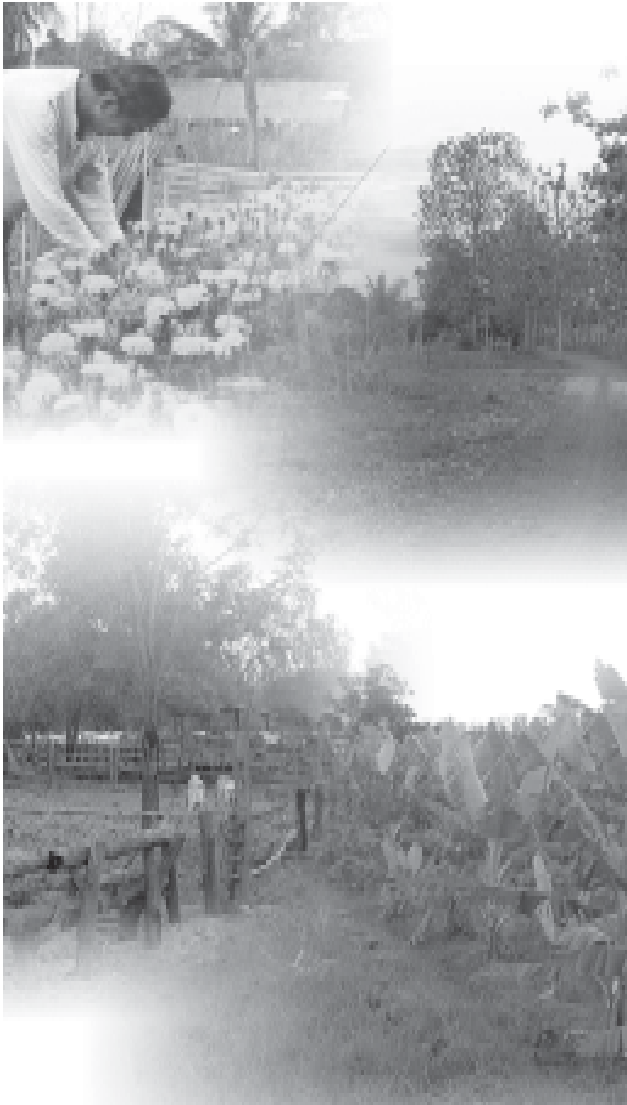
Twenty six members agreed to join the project by renting the land of SRT and borrowing money from the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives, to pay for water system, cultivated-plot preparation and production factors. Such costs cannot be supported by the NGO, Banpai Meechai Centre, however, the Centre took an important role and duties in trainings, study tours, instructions of management system and technologies for the establishment of Vegetable Banks.

Most of the members plant floricultures, i.e. jasmine, aster, marigold and chrysanthemum. Such

activities could make much more money for the members than growing vegetable on the equivalent area. Moreover, the members are satisfied to the markets for selling both fresh flowers and garlands, so they enjoy very much to participate in the project, as well as growing vegetables for themselves.

The groups, with the external advisors, take responsibilities and duties in the administrative management. They take the important roles in organizing irrigative water system, water transmitter system, electric system, collection of water charges and other kinds of costs. Both the leaders and the members are good factors for successful collection of a large sum of money about 80,000 Baht as their capital, repairing the irrigative system, sharing among the members and giving profits back to society.

The project well satisfies all members, the village on opposite follows such examples, i.e. division of cultivated plots, management and production. The activities are regarded as the obvious extension of results thus worth for the attended members. As long as they follow the regulations and procedures of the SRT, they can utilize such land for a long time.



Toom Home : Integrated Agricultural Networks of Nakhon Phanom Province

Synthesized and composed by

Krailert Taweekul / Prapatsorn Taechprasertvitaya

The Integrated Agricultural Networks of Nakhon Phanom Province was launched by the fund given by the Belgian Government through the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Co-operatives (BAAC), to promote and support farmers' integrated agricultural activities in 6 provinces of the northeastern part of Thailand: Yasothon, Roi Et, Kalasin, Sakon Nakhon, Nakhon Phanom and Mukdahan. Even though the project

supported by the Belgian Government was ended, the BAAC has continually supported by establishing the "Coordinating Centre for Integrated Agricultural Project" at Mukdahan Province.

The economic crisis of Thailand gave the serious impact to farmers in the project. The Coordinating Centre brainstormed to find out how to rectify against such crisis. The strategies of reducing the expenses, making more incomes, gathering capitals, learning by sharing experiences and building up networks have concretely set up.

The Integrated Agricultural Networks of Nakhon Phanom Province started to unite, as they shared the experiences from such economic crisis and learned that isolation could not solve such problem. The members have similar problems and needs. They realized that they have knowledge and skills, yet the quality of life was low. So they joined to drive the network systems of the provinces by utilizing various activities as the catalysts for fighting with such crisis. Each district established subgroups of the Networks and each group has the distinctive points of similarity and difference.

Toom Home Centre, core centre of the Integrated

Agricultural Networks of Nakhon Phanom Province, acts, at a provincial level, as the coordinating spot, meeting venue, exchange platform, marketplace, production house for grained organic fertilizer and farm plot of the Farmer School of the province. The member group of Na Kae District carried out the activities on the Farmer School, organic fertilizer and integrated agriculture. That of Ban Phaeng District carried out the activities on organic fertilizer and integrated agriculture. Those of Phon Sawan and Pla Pak Districts carried out prominently the mixing animal feed houses, the same as Renu Nakhon.

The Integrated Agricultural Networks of Mukdahan Province, under the management of the BAAC, acts as the coordinating centre to promote and link the groups together. The exchanges of knowledge and experiences, debates and relationship can facilitate and support the production and marketing. Besides both State and private agencies are also invited by the coordinating centre to take part in the important role for assisting the grassroots community networks.



The Weaving Webs of Love : Poo (Grandpa) Phai of Ban Sai Moon

Synthesized and composed by Boonyong Kethhet

All mankind though none could choose their birth, all could energize their lives and hope. Some of them failed, but many can insist to struggle with patience.

Poo Phai, a common countryman, was born in the year of administration alteration of Thailand, 1932. He finished his education at Prathom 2. He has been a farmer like his ancestors. After being ordained like a good Buddhist, he became a conscript. He had his

family with a wife and offsprings like the neighbors in the same culture. But the intellectual power and great innovative wisdom, he could change the life of his poor grandson who was disable both physically and mentally.

With the ground of love, generosity and care, his mental power was spread out into the systematic process of thinking, and went through the diversity of toys for his beloved grandson. They are not only toys for kids' relaxation by Poo Phai, but each of them is also considered to be a tool for healing each part of his grandson's body and mind. He tried to improve, mend, reinvent and increase in number with the intention for the player's joy, fun and relaxation according to the conditions of imagination therapy. Through thirteen years, he invented twenty one types of wonderful toys and gave the moral support to his beloved grandson who has physical, mental and intellectual disorders, until the boy has become more capable. Nowadays Nong (younger brother) Por therefore has gracefully received life heritage from his grandfather.

Such method, concept and simple way of conduct with hidden power and extreme spirit of Poo Phai could keep on, in balance, a set of knowledge

on local agriculture. They can give lights of hope not only for his young grandson, but also become the fine and customary examples for many neighborin families. Many institutions for disabled children must reconsider their roles and former body of knowledge for adjusting their visions.

Each toy which was elaborately invented by Poo Phai is simple in appearance, no matter what it is, wooden horse, wooden elephant, hammer, blowing pin wheel (maakpin), rake, mortar for pounding rice, tree cabin, ladder, double handrails, lute, pushable tricycle, wheel carriage, lift truck, sandsack, scissors, wooden slipper, and etc. If such tools are superficially seen, they cannot sting together all fervent hope of Poo Phai for his grandson.

Poo Phai and Nong Por are so often invited to demonstrate their wisdom and how to practise those tools in many organizations, even in foreign countries.

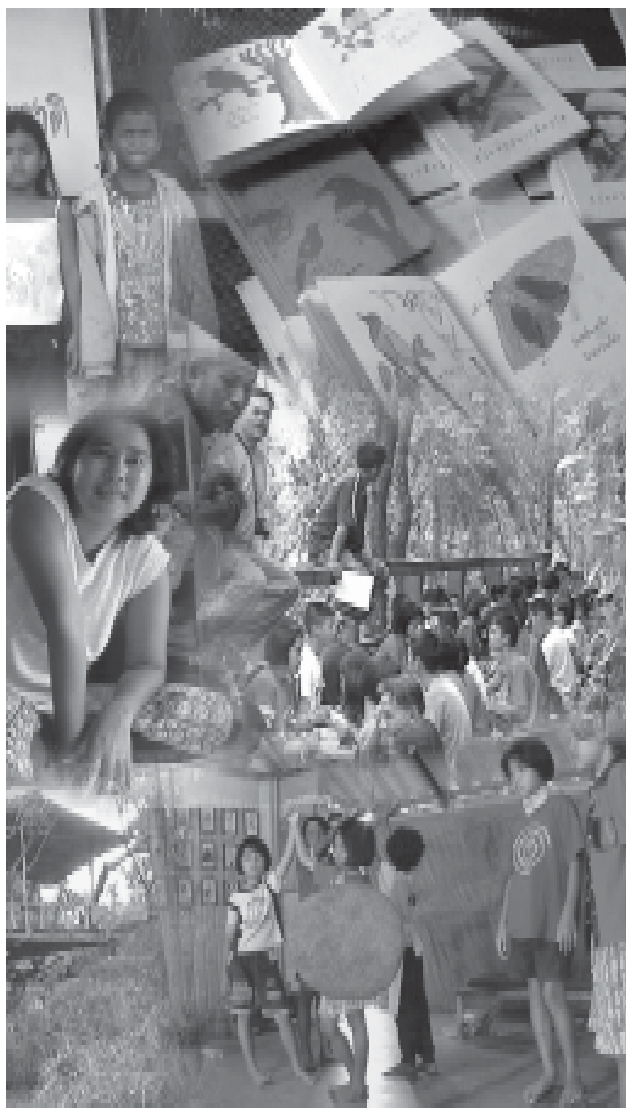
The way of thinking and the local wisdom of Poo Phai are actually the extreme health innovations. It can be said that they are the powerful energy hidden in the community, and there still are various different kinds of energies being covered up in the rural

communities, and many of them are waiting to be discovered. If there was no crisis of Poo Phai, the inventions of local wisdom or of other local intellectuals might not be discovered. The weaving webs of love, the mission holding in the arms and the spiritual feelings of Poo Phai, all support the achievements in life of Nong Por today.

Poo Phai and Nong Por are tied together with love and relationships. The first day going to school Poo Phai had to carry Nong Por in his arms; later he creatively invented a diversity of toys with the intention that in someday Nong Por can be physically raised up by those toys; and at last the boy can be mentally stronger, patient and able to struggle against all obstacles, for living normally in society. Then Poo Phai's dream and hard working for Nong Por come true. Not only Poo Phai is happy, but also Yaa (Grandma) Sorn, Poo Phai's wife, Boonlom and Dum, parents of Nong Por, Thongsuk and Boonlorm, elder sisters of Nong Por are very happy too. All of them, side by side, tried to assist and gave Nong Por moral support. Nong Por of those days was born defected; his limbs were contracted and distorted; the drooling saliva soaked,

his chest damped, wet and festered. He could not help himself in any way. He stuttered and be pitiable to the seers.

Nong Por of today or Mr. Suriya Somseela, a young man approaching twenty years of age, is almost finishing his education in computer business, at the level of cert. of advanced vocation. His physical and mental capabilities are normal. He is dynamic, has a bright future and will be helpful to the nation. He has been nurtured by Poo Phai and all people of Ban Sai Moon, Sai Thong Sub-district, Si Bun Rueang District, Nong Bua Lam Phu Province.



"Khanaeng" Art Interacted with Dream and Share of Love: Dekrakpha School (Kids Love Forest School)

Synthesized and composed by Boonyong Ketthet

Teacher Chued of the kids or Teacher Khemthong Morat heartily cooperated with Teacher Noy or Ariya Morat, his soulmate and shoulder-to-shoulder-co-performer, in establishing Dekrakpha School (Kids Love Forest School) at Koom Pha Yao, Salangpun Community. In 1988, Dekrakpha group was set up, and then it became "Dekrakpha School."

Teacher Chued and Teacher Noy have concretely

planted the sprouts of goodness in kids' hearts. The art of performance, play, music and writing poetry are used to compose the experiences in every Saturday and Sunday for the underprivileged kids in the northeastern part of Thailand. Dekrakpha School is intended to be an alternative schooling, art activities are used to motivate kids to love and understand nature. The colourful nature is drawn to crystallize in their brains before it started to elaborately send to their little hands for making independently and boundlessly colourful and exposing art works and writings.

Dekrakpha School, the institute of creative thinking or the informal school, is established in the area of 16 rais or so, surrounded with community forests up to 100 rais, as its natural capital. It is the learning source at Ban Pha Yao, Sam Rong Sub-district, Mueang District, Surin Province.

The young sprouts are nurtured to think about, write down and act as they love. The moral supports and faiths are given to the underprivileged kids by various groups of people to decorate their lives, so they can use their potentials as they dream. Those groups of people are of Sarnsaeng-aroon Foundation; Tung

Sang Tawan; Katikala Co.Ltd.; Green World Foundation; Payai Creation Co. Ltd.; Dinsorse Creative Group; the Group of Artists, Writers, Poets, Music; Makhampom Foundation; the Group of Artists for Life of Young Generation; the NGO Group, and etc. All of them come to synergy for "Dekrakpha" Camp or Dekrakpha School going through the obstacles to achieve its goal. Eight groups of the youths, about one hundred, have in each group already nurtured by Dekrakpha School.

The way of living of local people followed trustfully and confidently the traditional wisdoms. From trekkings the kids fully learned the sustainable use of forests and medicinal herbs. Each of them has a diary to write down the information all the times. The gurus, the elderly, the local intellectuals join to suggest and explain the "how to" technique so they can thoroughly understand the whole process, i.e., the procedures of dyeing with natural dyes by boiling and fermenting. The grown cotton fabrics are washed in water, and then tied or folded into a wide variety of designs such as circle, starlike and stripe, etc., before dipping the bundles of them in the dyebath for natural dyes.

The natural classroom under shadows of trees

and tree cabins in the area of Dekrakpha School are also used as learning places and lodgings with cool and pleasant atmosphere. The kids can find out the fact that.-

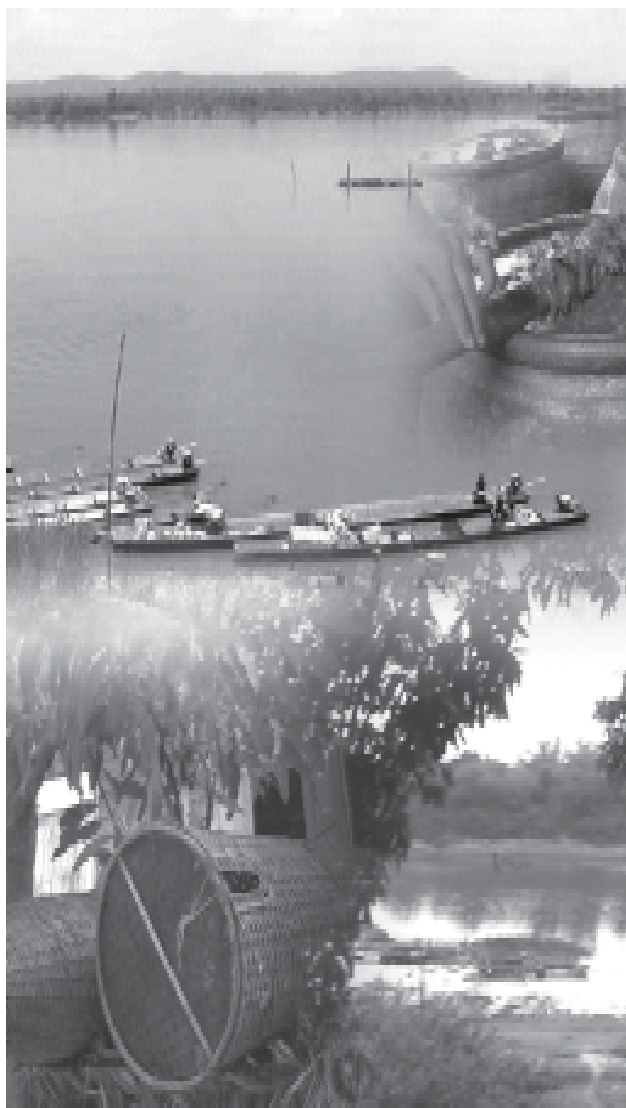
They can touch the nature; the nature is the teacher who teaches them to be sensitive, to see the colourful beauty of nature, to have fun, to have good memory, to be conscious and to support each other ... they help each other to work on the plays, to write scripts and dialogues, and to design puppets. They plan about and work together, so the harmony could be built up among friends of the same class and those of different ages... they can acknowledge the way of living interacted with the nature and can create the idea and the imagination. They are trained to be observant until they become habitually diligent to create their own works. The feeling of art and the language of independent thinking could pour out delightedly. The more the art works can be sold, the more inspiration continually occurred, i.e. in drawing lines and colours on batik clothes. Some pieces were sold at 500 Baht, while the young drawer can receive the share 100 Baht. The more they produce the more money they collect.

All the times they must have diaries, pencils or pens to note about the people they talked to or whatever eye-catching or impressive. The notes will be shared and commented by the teacher. Their imagination can be observed in many of their writings.

Some of writings are creatively developed into the puppet plays or stage performance, such as the puppet play entitled "A buffalos who does not eat grass", and a play entitled "Toomka." Whenever the kids touch the pure nature, each day experiences can be different. Teacher Chued gives comments, or keeps them informed with information, and gets them to understand what they see. They are fostered that we can learn a lot from the nature; the relationships of animals, birds, plants and trees are raised to exemplify and compare them with family caring. They can learn that the villains in the society of plants and animals are the same as those in human society. Some outside values can destroy the kinship system, local wisdom and structure of warm family system.

Furthermore, they learn about the harmony of music; the rhythm and the sound of music are used to adjust the mood and feelings of relaxation, so they can

open their hearts to absorb art's aesthetics, nature and writing with independent imagination.



Songkhram River Inherited for Adjustment

Synthesized and composed by Boonyong Kethet

During the great flood of November and December, Isaan (northeastern) people of all localities, especially the ones whose households settled along both riverbanks of Songkhram River, will enjoy to catch the aquatic animals. Over 180 different species of fishes and other aquatic animals come to play joyfully with water. A diversity of fishes in Songkhram River includes Pla kow (Leucistics), Pla kra di *Trichogaster trichopterus*, Common Silver Barb *Puntius gonionotus*, Pla mor *Anabas testudineus*, Pla sew kaew *Clupeichthys*

goniognathus, Pla kra mang *Puntioplites proctozysron*, Pla kae, Pla seua *Toxotes chatareus* , Pla khaw (Great Sheatfish), Pla kot *Mystus micracanthus* , Pla kob, Pla nang (Sheat Fish) *Kryptopterus spp.*, Pla peek kai (*Kryptopterus spp.*), Pla tong (*Notopterus*), Pla yon (*Laides hexanema*), Pla laad (Armed Spiny Eel) *Mastocembelus armatus*, Pla joke (Thorn-eye loach) *Acanthopsis choirorhyclus*, Pla moo (Ornate Emperor) *L.ornatus*, *Pla cheum*, Pla koon (Vaillant) *Wallagonia miostoma*, Pla kerng (Irrawadoy Mystus) *Mystus microphthalmus* and many more.

After being caught, the fishes are cooked in many ways - boil, mince, make a curry, mingle, toast, grill or fry; yet a lot of them left, people consequently use their wisdom to preserve or process them for keeping as food for years.

The popular ways to preserve fish are to dry, smoke over the stove, or ferment with boiled salt (purchased from Ban Tha Sa-ard which is the salt pond in the middle of Songkhram River). Such preserved fish is called "Pla Dag" or "Pla Raa". It can be made into Plaa Som (sour fermented fish) and Pla Pan, as well as fermented and boiled to make Nam Pla (fish

sauce).

Pla Raa or Pla Dag is well known as the most important food of Isaan people. If there is no other food in the house, but Pla Raa or Pla Dag in the jar or cistern, it indicates that nobody will be starved because they can scooped out Pla Raa and cook for various kinds of food. It can also be used as an ingredient in different kinds of curry, stew and toast.

Songkhram River is the mainstream of Sakon Nakhon Basin which has its source from the confluence of many tributaries. It meanders through the National Reserved Forest of Pha Dong Panna-Pha Dong Pra Chow, Phu Pha Lek-Phu Pha Hak National Park and Phu Pha Ploen in Song Dao District, and flows along the west of Tad Phu Vong in the area of Lower Phu Phan Mountain Range. Eighty tributaries of 731 kilometres length are consequently formed before they flow into Songkhram River, i.e. Yam River, Pla Haang Brook, Hong Ian Stream, Node Brook, Sam Yod Brook, Dong Brook, He Brook, Sim Swamp, Yom River, Oon River, Moa River, Saang River and etc.

The length of Songkhram River is 420 kilometres covering the entire locale of 25 districts and

3 sub-districts in 4 provinces. It flows through the districts of Nong Han, Thung Fon, Wang Sam Mo, Chai Wan, Ban Dung, totally 21 sub-districts in Udon Thani Province. It flows through the districts of Ban Muang, Song Dao, Sawang Daen Din, Charoen Sin, Kham Ta Kla, Akat Amnuai, totally 21 sub-districts in Sakon Nakhon Province. It also flows through the districts of Phon Charoen, Seka, Bueng Kan, So Phisai, totally many sub-districts in Nong Khai Province. Then it flows through Si Songkhram District, and sub-districts of Sam Pong, Tha Bo, Si Songkhram, Na Due, and merges with Mekong River at Ban Tan, Chai Buri Sub-district, Tha Uthen District, totally many sub-districts. Songkhram River has a catchment area of 12,700 square kilometers. Over one thousand communities settled along both riverbanks because it is the fertile area. In the past there were a lot of indigo trees that it became dong or song (forest); so it is called after its ecoregion.

If you look at both riverbanks of Songkhram River in the great flood period during November and December, you can see the watercourse overflowing 3 - 5 metres over the land, and many species of fishes

swim from Mekong River into "Chai Buri river mouth" which is the end of Songkhram River in Tha Uthen District, Nakhon Phanom Province. Mass of fishes swim up-river to spawn in both riverbanks of Songkhram River. Such riverbanks are the wetland areas, with different species of exotic-aquatic plants, such as Seaw, Hoo Ling, Tom (Kra Toom), Krasin, Krabow, Kratan Nam, Hae, Kra Done nam, including Kra Sa Bamboo. These plants grow overcrowded into mass areas up to 300,000 rais. Furthermore, there are various kinds of animals living there : turtles, monitor lizards, squirrels, jungle fowls, teals and different kinds of wild birds.

Those wetlands are safe and sound for aquatic animals to spawn. Their new borns are cultured during the end of winter and the beginning of dry season. When rainy season comes and water begins to overflow, the strong-grown aquatic animals will leave for the mainstream. In the meantime, as the traditional circle of their lives, the new mass of fishes alternately rotate to enter in those areas. Each time the flood comes over the banks of Songkhram River, it means the rotation of fertility in those areas. The people's way of life has to be once again adjusted and circulated

along.

The traditional ways of catch for the aquatic animals are entirely changed into more businesslike by many groups of people who live under the conditions of Songkhram River. The tools for fishing on efficient-living basis, or on traditional purchasing-exchanging one as "Nai Hoy Pla Dag (the master or the leader of fish catchers), have changed as destructive catch with the kinds of tools as stationary trawl nets and modern machineries. Fishes should sprawn in their traditional ways of breeding, but unfortunately, they prematurely ended their lives by greedy and selfish merchants, capitalists and fishermen.

As days go by, the plentiful aquatic animals in Songkhram River have frighteningly decreased in quantity. Some of them become extinct. After the dam was constructed, the wetlands with great flood that used to represent fertility have been changing. Kra Sa bamboo, the plants and food relevant to the people of Songkhram River will also extinct. The inhabitants' way of life relates with and depends on the forage crops from Songkhram River, but now such crops are severely degraded.

The relationship between the community's way of life and the river will be changed and it can count on the disaster of all species of aquatic animals and the inhabitants. Songkhram River which was great and fertile will soon become only a legend.



Thinking Process for Creative Wisdom of Bansakhon

Synthesized and composed by Boonyong Kethhet

Por (Father) Pai Soysaklang is the one of not many local people of the Northeast who is concretely successful in the integrated agriculture. The teachings of his ancestors have been stocked up by Por Pai since he was young and had a hardship in the field all over. He was ordained in Buddhism for ten years at Wat Chaisri, Bansakhon. The traditional belief of the people at that time was that, when they brought their children to be ordained, they had to plant some trees in the temple; that's why Por Pai planted coconut trees

and banana trees in that temple.

After leaving Buddhist monkhood in 1965, the people of Bansakhon requested unanimously him to be Pooyaiban (village headman). He launched to organize the administrative system in Sakhon Village as a small country. In this country there are 18 kooms (groups of houses); each koom has its own headman; each headman has an absolute authority in making decision of various topics. In 1982 there was a serious drought. The villagers left home for working in Bangkok. Firstly, Por Pai then tried to build up vocations for his villagers by using public land. Such land in the area of 2,800 rais was the forest for animal breeding. Por Pai jointly discussed with his villagers to request 485 rais of such land for planting mulberry trees and cultivating silkworms. It was the first vocational group for the people of Bansakhon.

Por Pai thought that the appropriate development should start from developing the quality of life. Every family was consequently suggested to utilize the land of 1 rai. Such land has been used for the diversified farm-fish pond, chicken breeding, fruit and vegetable growing for consuming in the family. Por Pai acted as

the instructors by demonstrating and exemplifying such activities in his own land. All families were emphasized to grow the crops that they themselves can determine the price. Every family was also suggested to breed six generations of chickens in each year and to grow the crops just enough for eating in the family.

Por Pai always seeks for knowledge and extends the results of the body of knowledge from outside. He is a practical researcher whose various theories are of great contributions to many localities. He integrates the old and new in practice. Many groups of people interested in agriculture were set up in Por Pai's locality and the nearby ones. Later, those groups became networks and the School of Northeastern Community or "Maha Vitchalai Choomchon Isaan".was established.

As Por Pai extremely worships H.M. the King, he has been the leader in practicing the Royal Concepts of integrated agriculture. The groups in his network are finally successful. Through his concept on "think it out, inform the others, practice well," the network groups of various vocational groups are set up, i.e. silkworms cultivating, weaving, herbal physician, Thai traditional

massage, fermented fertilizer production, village fund, and etc.

The concept of Por Pai is to encourage the villagers and the community to know how to develop for sustainable self-reliance. The cooperation for savings of properties, water, soil, animals, plants and money is made among them. The process of releasing debts and reducing the expenses are used by bringing the items from their households to exchange among the villagers. In each month there will be three meetings to exchange different products from each house.. All of things are recorded in the account books. Some of them bring chickens, salt, chillies, eggplants, rice, fishes, several kinds of squashes, cucumbers, mangoes, jackfruits, pla jom (pickled fish), pla dag (fermented fish), bananas, canes, sugar, and etc., including cultured plants in their households, to portion out, share and exchange for plantation, consumption and use.

Por Pai always said that "we are so much in debt of the land that we can never finish all up paying back." So we must hurriedly build up "the interest of virtue". It means that the youths as future of our nation must be virtuous and be nurtured, in order that they

will grow up as qualified adults to support our country onwards.

Furthermore, he resuscitates the forgotten local customs, traditions and cultures back to the community. Especially the language, the oral history of communities and their old way of living which should not become a legend, but should be put into action concretely.

The body of knowledge is also transferred to interrelate with the schools, colleges and universities. The teachers and the students are persuaded to learn how to breed the cattles and domestic fowls, to grow crops and to produce fermented fertilizer. This idea is disseminated to the villagers of Bansakhon, Banpakkadya and other nearby localities. The people of different sub-districts, different districts or different provinces who are interested in the learning process of integrated agriculture can come to join the activities. They will know such learning process which facilitate the self-reliance according to the usual way of life of rural Isaan people. The new generations are welcome for their internship in "graduate-returnee program," in line with the self-reliant agriculture or the efficient

economy. Eleven missions are intended to work out to go through the crisis. The learning centres are set up to disseminate the local wisdoms on vocational development, Truth-in-Savings Group, maintenance of ecosystem, agriculture pilot on diversified farm, exchanging of learning and etc.

Por Pai has jointly appointed the group of eleven local intellectuals as the leaders of the communities. They are Por Maha Yoo, Por Chantee, Por Prakong, Por Sudhinan, Por Kham Dueang, Por Thong Lor, Por Siang, Por Charlie, Por Tut, Por Boon Tem and Por Pong. Another four of local intellectuals are regarded as four elements of which components interrelated into the body organs. They are Por Pai as Earth, Por Tat as Water, Por Noo Yen as Air and Por Bua Sri as Fire. The Thai-Isaan Support Club will intently set up to continue to drive ahead the empowerment from those four elements.

Por Pai's missions are to devote all of his mind-body spirit for the innovative network and to continue the extension of results. He intends to revive the way of living of Isaan people who have been misguided, so they can adjust themselves into the way

of self-reliance, with the right direction appropriate to the ecoregion of their localities and ancestral wisdoms. When the days come, the people's health and well-being of body and mind will be extended over the region.



Treasure of "Dong Yai", Free Way of Life, Local Way of Life

Synthesized and composed by Boonyong Ketthet

The area of "Dong Yai" forest, approximately 25,000 rais is rich with the bio-diversity. Lam Nam Sebai runs through it to support many natural swamps: Nong Han, Nong Jig, Nong Tor, Nong Khun and Nong Sam Kha, including three tributaries: Kha Non Yang, Kha Kham Kwang and Kha Huay Siew. These three tributaries also run down to Lam Nam Sebai. In the territory of Srang Tor Noi, there are thirteen villages, representing more than 1,500 families. Up to 80,000 inhabitants

settled down their communities scattering around Dong Yai forest. Each of them shares the missions and responsibilities to protect the forests in concrete action.

"In fact "Srang Tor Noi" is the "Saang" (pond), as people believes, the hole where Thow Pha Dang's fireballs were fallen down in the fields. The water has continually oozed out from these deep holes. The villagers use the water from these Saang or ponds for drinking , and for all activities, including agriculture. It is remarkable that the water has never dried up since the past until nowadays ..."

"At any time if these Saang were covered with the thick grass and the farmers do not clear the area completely, the family members will get sick or pass away. Whenever these Saang are well vilified, the sick will soon get recovered.

Pooyai Adisak Thettham, the Assistant Pooyai baan (assistant village headman) of Ban Srang Thor Nai and Por Yai Thong Dam Sidhikhun of 78 years of age, of Ban Srang Thor Nok, told its historical background that.

The transformation of the word "Saang" into "Srang" was caused by misunderstanding of Amnat

Charoen's ruler at that time. He came from another province and was appointed to work here, therefore, he did not know the historical background of this area and did not sense the meaning of the dialect. He misunderstood and gave the new name of "Srang Thor Noi". Fortunately, the word "Thor" still exists. It means the mark as if "gored with" a wooden spear.

Many platforms of "people's public hearing" are provided for the diverse dimensions of thoughts which foster the body of knowledge. The community strategic plans are also provided to search for the value, potentials, structural data, economic and social situation and new options. The information on community health, productions, resources and wisdoms, as well as the economic data and household data, and etc., are thoroughly compiled. The people are required to express their actual information, value and worth of fertilized national resources in Dong Yai Forest. Even though the villagers of thirteen villages share their responsibility to take care of the forest, but they turn to regretfully overlook the importance and relationship of all resource factors.

If the community business is jointly based, this can actually facilitate the acknowledgement of the worth

of resources close to them. They start to think and assemble to learn and to make sustainable use from the forest heritage, cultural capital and natural resources.

The thought-and-action process can be represented by various kinds of groups in community: housewives groups, savings groups, Tambon Administrative member groups, herbal physicians groups, business agriculture groups, community small factory groups, and etc. Such groups express their standpoints and images to expose the apparent information, to be honest and virtuous for benefits of the groups. But there are the shortages of authentic learning factors, efficient management systems, basic data collection of time dimension. The value of imitation, which is the materialism swooping down to attack the community in every minute, might weaken the community. The people's strong state of mind will be degraded, if they are not ethical and virtuous in consumption, according to the community's traditional way. The unplanned resource use, which puts the focus more on the value than the worth, will eventually impact against the damage of the forest.

Today, people of Ban Srang Thor Noi, Ban Srang

Thor Nok, Ban Srang Thor Nai and other communities scattered around the forest, are cooperating in concrete action for their wealthy and sustainable livelihood, with the harmony of Dong Yai Forest which is the heritage capital given by their ancestors.

Savings Group of Nong Ya Ma: Savings for Welfare and Community Bank

*Synthesized and composed by Tuang Unthachai /
Paibul In-ngarm / Yongbhund Bhunddongyang*

In the past, Nong Ya Ma Community was Ban Nong Ya Ma. This community was the place where the cavalries used for providing food and grooming horses. So it is known as Ban Nong Ya Ma (Nong - pond, Ya - grass, Ma - horse), especially the one in Moo 1, Rob Mueang Sub-district, Mueang District, Roi Et Province.

In 1962, the 40% rice whisky distillery was built

in the area of State Property. The announcement was made by the Roi Et City Municipality to extend its municipal boundary line, in order that the radius of municipal area could extend and cover the Roi Et distillery; therefore the factory tax could be collected.

In 1997, the village was split into three Moos (communes): Moo 1, Moo 17 and Nong Ya Ma Municipal Community. At present, Ban Nong Ya Ma Community is split into 2 parts: Ban Nong Ya Ma Community affiliated to Roi Et City Municipality and the villages of Ban Nong Ya Ma Moo 1 and Moo 17, Rob Mueang Sub-district, Mueang District, Roi Et Province.

The starting point of community development for Ban Nong Ya Ma was the organization of the demonstration shop of Nong Ya Ma Development Fund. The shares of 100 Baht/ share were launched. At the first start, the benefits were shared among the shareholders once every six months. The committee meeting was monthly arranged. The working always suffered many setbacks and was not successful as intended. In 1995-1996, the community could solve their problems or found out the actual options in harmony with the community's way of life. Its members

are permanently employed for selling things, while 20% of profits are shared for them. This method works out for the fund management of community shop thus everything goes smoothly.

The experience of the community is that the activities of the community shop have been organized for almost ten years, but the monthly or yearly gross profits do not increase. Not much profits can be gained, thus not inviting the members to take part in the activities. The number of the members has consequently been unchanging..

The main problem is that Teacher Panom and the community's leaders have to find out the kind of activities that could gather all of the villagers to join their hands, to own and to share the benefits, and to cooperate in developing their own villages. By this way the rich and the poor will become equally happy. Some problems have been found in the fund raising activities for the development of Ban Nong Ya Ma. They are:- the villagers lack fund for vocations and for daily survival. People of moderate economic status can help themselves, but a majority of them have low income, lack of funding to support, cannot help them-

selves, have no credit with the bank and not be trusted by the wealthy people.

The relevant question is how to persuade those with all economic status in the community to help each other. The wealthy, then, could gain benefits from deposits while the poor could make a loan of the savings money or such deposits.

The first of November, 1998, was the D-Day. All villagers, at the first start, put 50 Baht/month, or not more than 50,000 Baht/person to join in saving. There were 256 starting members who, in that day elected the Executive Committee of Savings Group. Teacher Panom Chachiyo was elected by the meeting to act as the Chairman of the Savings Group.

The management of the Savings Group must agree to abide by and be bound by the regulations on savings group for the development of Koom Nong Ya Ma. Such regulations, with 7 chapters and 21 articles, were the agreements of which all sectors must respect and hold to in making decision. They shall likely be the norms in managing such community funds.

The funds for activities management were divided into 3 categories: the monthly contributions or

the 50 Baht/month savings to be received not later than the 5th day of each month; the deposits not exceeding 50,000 Baht/person; and the non-interest loans from other institutions. The interest rate of the deposits was stipulated by the resolutions of the General Meeting, or the resolutions of the Organizing Committee, in order to facilitate the management and the fund raising.

The interest of not more than 15% of deposits, according to the deposit account, must be distributed to the members as their average refunds in the total amount of loan interest. Such loan interest was paid by the members to the group during the year. There was a restriction for the members who default to pay for the principal of a loan, or default to pay for the interest longer than 3 months. They would have no right to receive the average refunds. Such refunds were consequently become the income of the group. It was allocated for the reserved capital and the public capital not more than 20% of net profit, as well as spent for the bonus of the committee members not more than 20% of net profit. The remaining of such income was divided for the dividend. After two years they found that the revolving money was too small and not

efficient for the needs of its members who made a long queue of requests. The amount of loan requested was also higher than the savings money and deposits of each month. The Organizing Committee discussed to find out how and where to launch the capital efficient for them. The principles of Welfare for Cooperative Savings of Roi Et Teachers Ltd. were applied to launch the donation capital for the funds. The interest will be returned to the members, whenever the members, spouses, children or parents pass away. Such principles are as follows.-

1. the members who are willing to join the program for their own welfare, spouses, children or parents, must donate the money of 2,500 Baht/person for the Group. This amount will never be reimbursed in any case whatever.

2. in the case of passing away prior to 180 days, the Group will give 2,500 Baht for the funeral welfare.

3. in the case of passing away due to 180 days, the Group will give 50,000 Baht, but 25% of such money will be deducted.

These principles have been unexpectedly successful. There were 400 applicants applying to the

first program and the revolving money was 1,132,500.- Baht.

The important turning point was that the Group could solve the problem of insufficient revolving money. After that the second program was launched, and could gain the revolving money of 1,000,000.- Baht. The third program followed in due course and could get the capital of 1,000,000.- Baht approximately.

The capital of 9,000,000.- Baht is now rotated in the village. The members take on loan for their vocational and personal expenditures. When the payment date comes, the members could pay only the interest, or pay the interest with the principal of a loan, or pay both amounts together. The amount of 9,000,000.- Baht is therefore being revolved in the village, from the hands of Mae Yai Boon Mee, to the hands of Por Yai See, to the hands of Por Yai Chanta, and then to the community shop. The dividend is on average repaid. Some of it is provided for the members' welfare when they pass away, and for loan release to the members. The cycle of revolving money can apparently be seen.

From 1986 up to now, it has been found that

the working with money savings mainly needs the faith and trust to the leaders. The leaders or the backbones must be the model of persons with quality, dedication, transparent virtue, and be honest both in concepts and behaviours. The unity which is the heart of working out on savings should be exemplified among them. Since this kind of work cannot be done by one person, it needs a lot of people, members and committees. All sectors should be qualified, virtuous, dedicated and strongly aim at the benefits of the village. The Committee must be good example of the members, in order to build confidence, faith and honesty in taking on loan and repayment. The members then have self-respect and respect for their own organizations and learn how to manage the loan, how to share for the repayment of interest, and when the capital should be returned. The social process is used as controller, such as the platforms of annual general meetings, village loudspeaker, and etc.



Budget Management as an Integrated Project At Mueang Plueay Tambon Administrative Organization

*Synthesized and composed by Tuang Unthachai /
Paibul In-ngarm / Yongbhund Bhunddongyang*

In Mueang Plueay Tambon Administrative Organization (TAO), there are six in number of government officials, local authorities and employees. Eight villages are in the service area. There are 2,306 inhabitants in 620 households, as indentified in census records. The budget of 2002 annual income was 4,766,395.07 Baht. The inhabitants earn their livelihood

by farming and working as employee in general.

The transportation in the village is in bad condition as the stony and non-asphalt road is bumpy and mean. The agricultural crops are difficultly transported into the town markets. Each year the TAO tried unsuccessfully to improve the roads due to the restriction of less budget, as the budget for road construction was not approved by the official authorities. The allocation of annual budget for construction and development was split by dividing equally for each village, thus such problems could not be solved. In Isaan dialect, such sharing is called "bang pood khan" (sharing equally).

The budget divided by the number of villages could not solve the problem of the far away roads. Such problem has continually occurred for a long time, therefore, Mrs. Khemthit Srirabkwa, the Deputy Chief of Mueang Plueay TAO, encouraged to innovate the budget management. The platforms of village communities have been used as tools for such alteration. Each village opened its platforms to find out their own problems and needs. The output was that every village needs roads as the first priority.

The researchers considers that the participation

in every aspect by every sector: i.e. TAO Council, concerned authorities, administrators and villagers especially the village communities, can help accomplishment of budget management. All sectors used village platforms for sharing their ideas on finding problems, setting the priority of such problems and searching for resolutions. The Tambon principles in budget payment, the participatory assessment among members of TAO Council, TAO administrators and village communities are also made in process. They have to jointly consider whether and how the roads are constructed.

Secondly, as any problem occurred, the Deputy Chief of Mueang Plueay TAO, Ms. Lin, and her party will make a "lobby" prior to making the decision or requesting for resolution of the TAO Council. Working with transparency and accountability are also the main factors to create the confidence and trust for all sectors' cooperation.

Thirdly, the power of villagers or village communities is the main core to drive for the successful construction of asphalt roads. None of individuals, groups of individuals or organizations can obstruct such

power. The villagers donated to foster the road construction engineers enthusiastically and dedicatedly. Everybody then participated in such construction.

The last problem that the villagers in service area of Mueang Plueay Sub-district encountered was quite heavy and serious. They suffered alone from all kinds of difficulties and inconvenience. The method in solving the problem was submitted appropriately and rationally to the Roi Et Province Administrative Organization, and this authority coincidentally had such kind of project at the right moment. So this project no longer waited for the big budget. The road thus could be constructed by the budget in hand.

The "pun plaa (sharing fish)" or "bit of money" budget management could not solve the problems which were serious, complicated, costly and interrelated with every sector. Now the "platforms of village civil society" could change and lead to the "integrated project" budget management. The serious problems could be solved appropriately and concretely by the admirable talents of Mueang Plueay TAO.

As the villagers are allowed to participate in the budget management process, beginning from thinking,

organizing, evaluating and appreciating in their works,
the budget management become successful.



Family Relationship with Bai Chanode Network, UdonThani Province

Synthesized and composed by

Atchara Khamchiangta / Krissana Supsirisopa /

Sirirut Srisuttiaphunporn

The 1997 economic crisis seriously affected Samakkhi Village. The price of agriculture crops decreased. The villagers who sold their labours in big cities were released. The incomes were not enough for the expenditures; the debts increased; their families broke up and various problems followed, especially the ones on narcotic drugs. When the problems were more serious,

the villagers consequently gathered together into small groups, and tried to find ways to solve the problems. The support was given by the officials of health centre, so many discussion platforms were opened and the villagers traveled to learn from other communities. They found that the fight against the crisis should begin with the family institutions, so the concept of the networks was that.-

"The strength of families is as ideology; the local cultures and local wisdoms are the factors to elevate the members; the public spirit is the heart of teamwork; wealth, rank and admiration are sacrificed; relationship creates the power; the link between the past and the present leads to the future; the networks are extended according to the communities' needs and the base of development is the family members."

The Bai Chanode Network was eventually set up and could extend its network. The name "Empowered Community Network of Bai Chanode Group" was officially given in May 10th, 2001. Huay Lang Centre, the community learning centre, was established at Samakkhi Village, and Por Chaiyaphruk acted as Chairman.

The purpose of Bai Chanode Network is to improve the human's potentials, emphasizing on the family institutions. Bai Chanode Network has been extended by the leaders' team, consisting of the Chairman of the Committee and the community's leaders. They have been progressing to the nearby villages, coordinating with the communities' leaders of various villages for the extension of cooperation and joint ideology. The supportive budget is given to the teamwork by the State, private and NGO sectors. Furthermore the assistances are given among members in promoting the integrated agriculture project, reforestation, herb plantation, domestic doctors, and exchange of learning in vocational aspects. The vocational groups are set up, in order to strengthen the learning for new vocations which can facilitate the members' livelihood.

The major process used as the strategy for project implementation is to improve the strength of the village communities. The emphasis is put on the joint learning and participation. The outputs of such development process result in the healthy community of Bai Chanode villagers. In the past, each of them earned the living separately and independently, now

they take good care of each other physically, mentally and socially. The power of community is used in organizing activities, building relationship between families, and nurturing culture stream as the wisdom for solving problems, as well as leading to the health promotion for the people in the community.



Cabinet of Ban Nong Nong Villagers

*Synthesized and composed by Tuang Unthachai /
Paibul In-ngarm / Yongbhund Bhunddongyang*

Ban Nong Nong is situated in E-ngong Sub-district, Chaturaphak Phiman District, Roi Et Province. There are two villages: Moo 5 of 227 inhabitants and Moo 9 of 297 inhabitants. The soil condition is salty and lack of water. The water cannot be used for drinking nor domestic use. The villages are in remote area and uncivilized.

The slogan of the village is that: monk leader as the heart of development, cooperation among villagers,

hopeful economics, advanced democracy, tradition-culture preservation and actions in line with the Royal Concept.

The community has the capitals and important bases of one temple, Wat Sawang Aa-rom, Ban Nong Nong; one school; seven roads in the village; one public swamp; one community forest and five kooms (residences). The villagers abide by the Heet 12 and Kong 14 as the traditional ways of life. Heet 12 are the customs and traditions in 12 months of a year and Kong 14 are 14 Do's which common people and administrative authorities should follow for the benefits of living together peacefully and orderly.

Before being developed, the villagers suffered from drought and lack of water for domestic use and agriculture. The soil was salty and the farming depended only on the rainfall. The need of water became more serious, that is why the villagers had moved out into Ban Nong Nong. That village was far from the district and the province. The non-asphalt and muddy road was difficult to travel. The school of the village was so small that it would be merged with the school of Ban E-ngong. The villagers were informed by the official

authorities that they must restraint their minds. The villagers were poor in general.

Luang Por (the Venerable Monk) told his inspiration and strong intention that "It imprinted in my mind all the times I preached, since in the past up to now. I always think how to help the villagers of Ban Nong Nong escaping from suffers and poverty. I hope they can have the efficient livelihood and turn Ban Nong Nong into Dharma Land-Golden Land. Dharma Land means happiness and peace, while Golden Land means efficient livelihood

In 1999, the Venerable Monk considered that to celebrate the auspicious occasion of H.M. the King's 6th Cycle Birthday Anniversary, Ban Nong Nong should be improved as the village of "efficient economics" in line with the Royal Concept, and as the pilot village of 8 main ministries of the Government.

The small school which was to be merged according to the Government's policy, has been improved and raised its status as the school or the learning centre of sub-district. This learning centre can also extend the opportunities of the villagers in Ban E-ngong. The Health Volunteers Group and the health

centre were established as the primary aids centre. Furthermore, Luang Por puts the emphasis on physical development of the village. The zoo, roads, vocational groups and human development activities were established. There are various vocational groups. The management system of the village was set up as the Cabinet; and the overall perspective of each ministry in the village and of the whole village can be seen clearly. This system can facilitate the management, solution, budget allocation, and direction of administration of the village.

Por Preecha Treepop, the expert of social community sector and the Chairman of Roi Et Council for Community Organizations, considered that the villagers' faith for Phra Thamthitiyarn is the main factor for development, because the villagers have dedicated all of their physical and spiritual strength. They are encouraged to improve their village by themselves. This development process starts from the intellectual development, not from materials. The development starts from the resources and capital available. The action is to follow the old wisdom. Luang Por always said that "preserve the old and increase the new."

The attitude of researchers was that the Dharma principles are used by Luang Por to lead the development. It is integrated with Bot Paya Isaan which is the instructions and traditional short stories for teaching the villagers. This can strengthen the continual power for development. The admiration and appreciation for the value of their community are promoted in the aspects of history, land for livelihood, households and existed soil resources. There is no need to wait for or request for assistance outside.

The development in Ban Nong Nong starts from the available resources and capital of the villagers, i.e. school, savings group, and diversified farms; so the village has been quickly improved. There is less imported goods from outside the community. The main strategy of the development is to increase the resources and the capital of the village.

Furthermore, the unity of the villagers - the olds, adolescents and the kids - who dedicate to their village, occurred from their faiths for Luang Por. He acts as an advisor and an umbrella to protect the village. The main factor in the development is faith, for what they are doing, then the confidence follows

after. The strong leader of the community acts as the winning post that the village depends on and fights for success.



School, Community's Rice Mill, Rice Growers of Mekong Basin

Synthesized and composed by Kanjana Tongtua

The network of rice growers initiated from a small group of women's organization called Ban Muead Air Women Group." Such Group was established in Kham Pom Sub-district, Khemarat District, UbonRatchathani Province. Ban Muead Air is the medium-scale village, with 135 families. The women gather together to produce the handmade barbed wire, shampoo, dishwashing liquid and herbal products for domestic use and distribution. The working of the Group is acknowledged by the people both inside and outside the community.

Various different organization groups comes for the study visits. The discussions and exchanges of knowledge are always made in the village.

Acharn Thong Suan Sodapak, the advisor of the Group, gave the concept for networking of various groups, in order to create the vocations, to increase more income and power of unity. The Women's Network of Mekong Basin has consequently set up. The discussion and exchange of knowledge can expose the farmers' problems, i.e. products, debts, price insurance injustice, and etc. The conclusions derived by various platforms was that "the problems of farmers must be resolved by the farmers." Such idea leads to link the organizations of the same concept. The groups, both male and female, join into "the Rice Growers' Networks of Mekong Basin". Those groups were established in the Districts of Khemarat, Na Tan and Pho Sai. These areas are the border districts. The groups are abide by the principle of "efficient economics," and their target stresses on the community's rice mill.

At the beginning, the launch of the capital was made from the members' paddies, 25 kilograms/each member. The whole amount of paddies were sold to

the middleman merchants. The first sum of capital was up to 40,000.- Baht. In the second year, the launch was increasingly made into 80,000.- Baht. The first sum of capital was invested for the community's oil station., toilet and office. The project proposal was written for the approval of the State Insurance Fund (SIF). As the activities were yearly planned, therefore the community's rice mill, with the scale of 20 kwian (measure to paddy, 1 kwian equals to 16 piculs) was approved, with the financial amount of 4,598,700.- Baht.

The organization of the community's rice mill, at the first stage, was a kind of trial and error, as well as the learning process of the community. The workers both laughed and cried. They had to be patient and struggled against all kinds of obstacles. The unity, understanding and dedication of all people in the group, especially the women's group in cluster, could assist them to go through the difficulties. The community's rice mill could be compared with their second house, as all workers become brothers and sisters. The job description, the role and duty were clearly described, yet all of them - the headmaster, the teachers and the janitors - would join their hands.

Besides the community's rice mill, the activities of the network also include the Agriculture Cooperatives and the Women's Unity of Mekong Basin. Their duties are the launching source, savings bank, marketing, selling rice with the agencies, organic fertilizer factory, Farmer Field School (FFS), community's oil station, youth network, and community radio. Each kind of activities will be independently carried out and then intertwined to support each other.

The network's capital payback is made in the form of cash and wisdom. The village becomes the study visit site and training centre on organic agriculture for all groups. The 0.25 Baht income from every one kilogram of rice selling will be deducted for education fund. After selling the paddy, the members of organic farming will receive the paddy husk from rice milling. Such paddy husk can be the mixture of organic fertilizer, of which the cost of its production can be reduced.

The ultimate goal of network is to train the people to be aware of the efficiency, to change their thinking process, to learn how to economize and to be patient.

The life must go on, so as the network of rice

growers, of which activities carried out with the wisdom and modern technology. The most important things are the dedication, love and unity of all people in the network.



Love with Breastfeeding: Network of Mother and Child

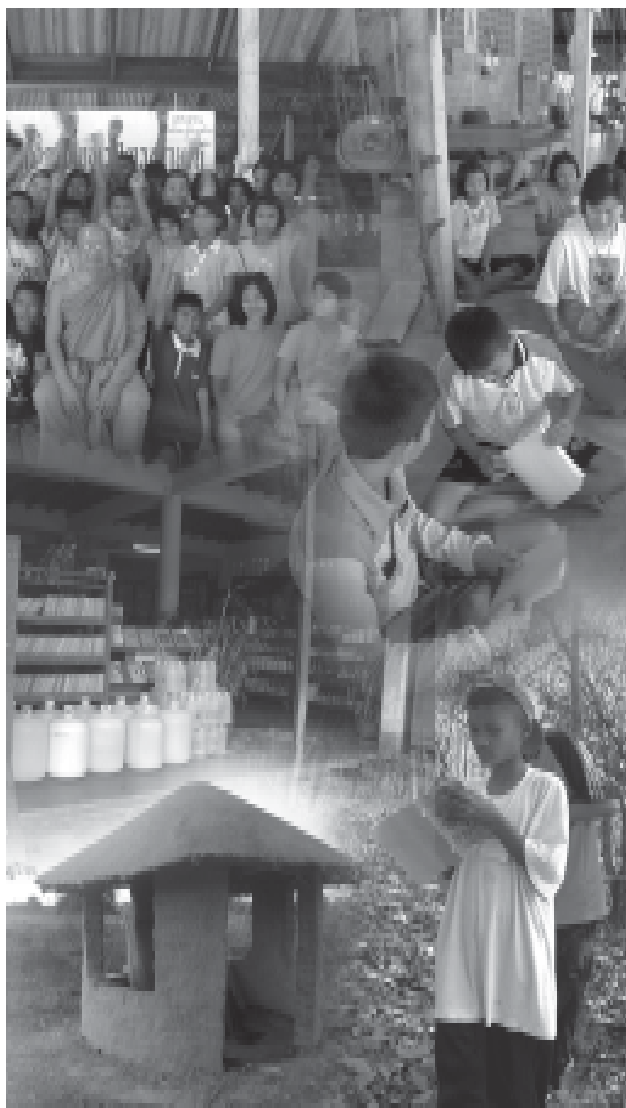
*Synthesized and composed by Prapoj Phuthongkam
Suchada Phuthongkam / Supannika Eimsansuk*

"Love with Breastfeeding" is a slogan indicating the love and close relationship between mother and child. The social trend in breastfeeding is made to the mothers that the breastfeeding is practicable and not difficult. This is to change the value of urban mothers not to be shy, and to understand that they should do because breastfeeding is useful for mother, child and family. This is the heart of "the Breastfeeding Group" which publicly appears in trend since 2003.

The format of activities of the Breastfeeding Group was given information to the mothers by the experts. The emphasis puts on the exchange of experiences among mothers, i.e. monthly discussion, discussion tour, training and seminar on breastfeeding, quarterly pamphlet on "Love Stream" and "Buddy's Mother" project. These activities can help the mothers who encounter the problem of breastfeeding to understand that they have friends. The counseling and the suggestions are made for them, so they can be successful in breastfeeding. The community of "Mother to Mother" was established to encourage and to exchange knowledge and experiences of success and failure in breastfeeding for the pregnant and the breastfeeding mothers. The community can help all mothers to breastfeed as long as they want, or at least four months. One of the distinctive strategies is that the mothers, children and family members, i.e. fathers and grandmothers, are invited to join the activities, since those people are most powerful in child feeding and breastfeeding. The project of "Breastfeeding Corner" is practically submitted, in order to facilitate the mothers to have proper places for breastfeeding.

The mothers can squeeze milk and keep it properly for their children. In the past, when the mothers have to go out, they have to breastfeed or squeeze the milk in the washroom. This project can increase more public places for mothers.

The success in publicizing and creating the widespread allies of the Breastfeeding Group is to integrate the academic concepts with the linkage of networks. The academic concepts are easily expressed in the form of appropriate, regularly and approachable activities. The linkage of networks is made among the agencies, official and private organizations. More information on breastfeeding is disseminated from the small group of urban people into the provinces, thus the breastfeeding is increasingly promoted to Thai people. This is entirely beneficial to the body, mind and society. The Breastfeeding Group is something like the health innovation in increasing the well-being promotion for Thai people.



Small World of Khao Chamao Conservation Group

Synthesized and composed by Pornvilai Carr

Khao Chamao Conservation Group, the youth group, started in 1994. Ms. Bubpathip Chaemnil, the former learning camp organizer, of Ramkhamhaeng University, at the age of 30, is the leader of the Group.

. The native of Ms. Bubpathip or "Pi Fab," as called by the kids, was Ban Khao Din, Thung Kwai Kin Sub-district, Klaeng District, Rayong Province. She runs a rental bookshop named "Nam Jai" in a small corner of her mother's drugstore. It is the first bookshop in Ban Khao Din. Those books include cartoons,

fictions, non-fictions and children's literature. Moom Nam Jai (Goodwill Corner) has become the centre for kids of different ages. Reading a variety of books can create the exchange of thoughts and different matters in community. Their chat-ups lead to the first activity outside the bookshop. The forest trekking and birdwatching were arranged at Khao Chamao-Khao Wong National Park, 17 kilometres far from Ban Khao Din. Khao Chamao-Khao Wong National Park is the most fertile forest in Rayong Province, and is the border forest of five provinces in the East: Sa Kaeo, Chachoengsao, Chon Buri, Rayong and Chanthaburi.

The gathering in small group can facilitate the regular meeting, fun and advantage of forest trekking activity. It also results in many other activities and increases the number of members. All of them unanimously agree that the group should be set up. They help each other to draft three simple objectives in the style of small thinker, as follows.-

- 1) to educate the youths in protecting the environments and to foster the awareness of living together with nature;

- 2) to take part in decreasing the pollution in

Khao Chamao forest; and

3) to act as media to enhance the awareness of value and usefulness of Khao Chamao forest.

With these objectives, the natural trekking has become the charitable activity: garbage collection in tourism locations, tree plantation and cleaning the caves where the tourists always write mean words. The mud from the cave bottom is used in rubbing out the marks.

In 1995, the Group started to extend the activity from one-day trekking trip into youth camp for environment education. Such nature tour is "Dream Camp... Beautiful Forest." The members were brought for charitable activities in the National Park. Other activities were as follows : i.e. cultural preservation camp "Old Stories at Homeland", joint learning for the preservation of cultures, traditions and local wisdom. The campaign was also arranged for publicizing the problematic conditions, in the form of drama and in the name of "Dramatic Media ... Mobile for Dream." This activity was performed both inside and outside the community. The members wrote the scripts and also performed. The pamphlet "Non Kraton (Atlas Moth)" was published. The

learning platform was provided for the members. The project of "Return the Land to Build up Food Sources for Elephants" was the activity for solving the problem in depth on natural resources and environments. "The Development Project for Youth's Network of Klaeng District" was the activity linked with the networks at different levels, for the cooperation with other youth organizations. The learning centre and the activity of "School as Playhouse" were also provided.

A variety of activities has been appropriately designed for the members depending on their age group. This is the distinctive point of Khao Chamao Conservation Group, other than utilizing Dharma principles as the context of the Group to open the viewpoints of the members to approach nature and truth.

Today, Khao Chamao Conservation Group is ten years old. It is the time to think as the grown ups. The "Dharma Army" is going to be set up. This is to extend the allies of members by using the marketing strategy for the healthy community.

The last ten years was the time for "nurturing the kids," but the next ten years will be the time for

linkage to community. It is the time for building up "the combatants" of Dharma Army.



Local Fishermen's Club to Revive Phang-Nga Bay's Crisis

Synthesized and composed by Parinya Panchaona

Koh Yao Noi Island is situated in the middle of Phang-Nga Bay, in Andaman. The area covers the territorial waters, mangrove forest, and islands in three provinces: Phang-Nga, Krabi and Phuket. Such area is rich in the sea natural resources. So the people migrate to settle down here. Groups of Thai-Muslim people established their own community and have earned their livelihood by the seashore fisheries up to now. The islanders' distinguished way of life is to follow the doctrines of Allah, their Mighty God. They have the

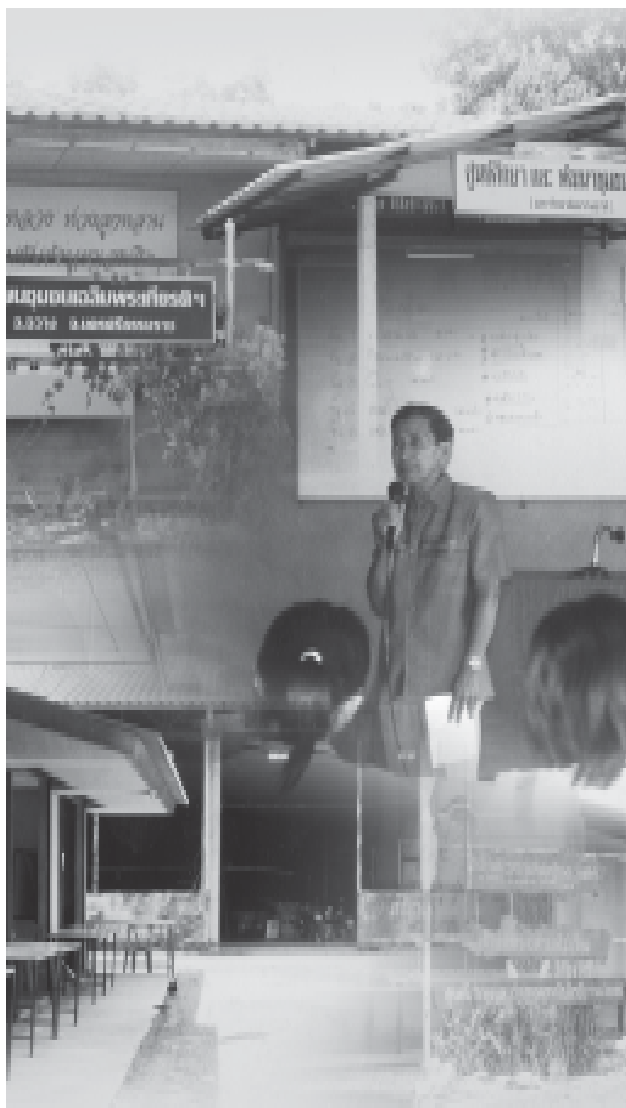
strict and constant principles of doctrines. They fastened to 6 faiths and 5 practices. Imam is the important religious leader.

The fertility of natural resources strengthens the people of different localities to migrate and seize the land for livelihood. The community has been extended and the number of inhabitants has been increasing. The socioeconomic system in capitalism has come to take an important role. The resources were destructed for transforming the value into cash. The loans and debts were consequently occurred among the islanders. Their quality of life degrades, especially when the Government wanted to develop the country, with the emphasis on the structural growth. The fisheries products was the issue of which the State puts in the First National Economic and Social Development Plan. The productivity was supported for domestic consumption and exportation.

The seize and exploitation from the natural resources in Phang-Nga Bay have become seriously increasing. Destructive fisheries have become a problematic condition. The deterioration of natural resources and environments become the community's crisis. As the community was aware of such problem,

the people realized that the pattern of living must be adjusted. They turned to cooperate, protect, and revive the coastal resources, as well as to restore their traditional vocations. The Local Fishermen's Club of Koh Yao Noi was established in 1994.

At the first stage, it was quite difficult to manage the revival and conservation of natural resources. The activity heavily affected the relationship among the community's members, commercial fisheries group vs. local fisheries group; and their conflicts passed on to the younger generation. Later, Imam, the important religious leader and the respectable person, came for a joint discussion in Muslim way, therefore the conflicts started to lessen. All of them are aware of the necessity for cooperation in revival the sea's crisis for its fertile condition. The activities for the revival and conservation of the coastal resources are as follows.- coastal survey, savings, fund raising and women and youth groups. Those activities could increase the quality of life of Koh Yao Noi villagers. They join their hands in keeping their truth not to destruct the sea, the breadbasket of Koh Yao Noi Community.



Mai Riang Community: Self-Reliant Management

Synthesized and composed by Chuan Petkaew

Mai Riang is the name of a sub-district in Chawang District. The area of this Community is mountainous plain with the Tapee River runs through. The inhabitants of this sub-district are the mixture of the natives and the Chinese-Thai people who migrated into this area in the reign of King Rama V. All of them are Buddhists. The important natural resources are minerals, forest, wild animals and forest products. The people earn their livelihood mainly by agriculture. The villagers settled down their households in groups of kinship. Most of

them favourably support each other. They stick to the religious worships, ceremonies in traditional beliefs and the traditional way of living. Even Mai Rieng Community is rich in natural resources and cultures as its main capital, but the villagers have to cope with poverty. The modern development process has changed the pattern of good relationship in the Community and its cultures. The natural resources are damaged. Some outside factors become powerful in making decision, way of thinking, way of life and way of production. The relationship system in Community and the natural diversities are entirely damaged by the agriculture system which emphasizes on the single crops plantation. The advanced communication moves the new cultures from outside into the Community so quickly that the people hardly prepare for the defensive action. The natural disasters; i.e. storm and drought, also pushed the Community into poverty and less self-reliance.

Prayong Ronnarong is the important leader of Mai Rieng Community. He collected knowledge from his family and society, and collected the direct experience from his own life, working, data, information and the exchange of experiences with the others. Such

collection of knowledge made him realize that Mai Rieng Community had to solve the poverty problem. The Community must rely on themselves, otherwise they cannot solve the problem. He therefore utilized Mai Rieng Community as the learning platform. The information was completely collected at the levels of family, group and community. The community's information was rotated to the members through the group's activities. By this way, the information was also moved to the Community, so the villagers could select relevant and useful information. From such information they could see the dynamics of their community, and in the meantime such information could actually be used for the community development.

It can be seen from the experiences that the main factors of self-reliance of Mai Rieng Community consist of the leader, information and the rotation of information. The community leader must concretely direct the way of thinking, collect information in all aspects about the community and rotate them through the learning platforms and practical performance. The villagers can eventually build up the body of knowledge from such information which could be the power for

living through the joint learning process. Mai Rieng Centre for Education and Community Development, which Prayong Ronnarong and the community help to establish has become the community's learning centre, the development centre for livelihood and vocations, as well as the community's health centre. All kinds of activities put the emphasis on freeing the resources and environments from all toxicity.



"Khon Yu - Pa Yung Project" at Phato

Synthesized and composed by

Chuan Petkaew / Srisuda Rattana

Phato Watershed Conservation and Management Station is situated at Pak Song Sub-district, Phato District, Chumphon Province. In the past, it was called Phato Watershed Improvement Station, later changed into Phato Watershed Management Station, and finally into Phato Watershed Conservation and Management Station orderly.

Phato Watershed Conservation and Management Station has the duty to manage the works

concerning the basin of river and the watershed area, in line with the community forestry. Under the "Khon Yu - Pa Yung Project", many activities are arranged: i.e. reviving the ecosystem, establishing watershed check dams, promoting vetiver grass growing and training services, etc. Those activities are based on the concept that the Phato Head Watershed Forest is a fertile forest, with many communities are located in the mid forest. Those villages have a tendency to continually encroach and destroy more forest areas. The Project therefore emphasizes on the community's participation, by forming a Project Committee whose duty is to work with various aspects in the community. Each village in the Project will set its own community covenants which are used as an implementation framework of the Committee. The villagers' platforms are provided for the performance of various activities by the villagers' organization. The officers of Phato Watershed Conservation and Management Station act as advisors on community forestry. The community forestry is the Royal Concept of H.M. the Queen, that people can live peacefully and friendly with nature. It is the important philosophy of the project implementation.

Various kinds of activities have been carried out since its beginning up to now. The reforestation and the revival of damaged watershed ecosystem are made to revive the damaged forest condition. The area of 6,000 rais was reforested. Furthermore, the demonstration sites are implemented to manage in the forest living areas. The villagers' platforms are opened, in order that the villagers can gather together to solve their own problems, prior to accepting other venues of administration. At the demonstration site the Station or the working unit has carried out the agriculture with 4-storey plantation to manage the living areas in the forest, and to preserve as if the natural forest. The agriculture with 4-storey plantation are carried as follows.- at the top storey, there are stink beam, betel nut, coconut, durian and tall tree for use; at the second storey, there are mangosteen, lansium domesticum, longkong and champaka; at the third storey, there are robusta coffee, Bago gnetum gnemon and other kinds of vegetables; and at the lowest storey, there are chilly, eggplant, herbal plant and other kinds of crops, including rhizome crops. One of the important activities is the forest management for conservation. The forest areas

are divided into 3 categories: conservation forest, use forest and living forest. To manage the conservation forest, the fertile forest area is determined. Some parts are categorized as the deteriorated forest on the highland highly steep and slope, on the mountain, and on the juncture area of mountain and plain. The community's members jointly plan to set the rules and to determine how to practice. Such rules hold in the aspects of the area altitude distribution, and the boundary line of fertile forest. The execution is made against violators. The reforestation is increasingly carried out; and the patrol unit is set up in the area for the whole year. Tourism is also promoted. Another important activity which is also carried out is to move the villagers on watershed areas to voluntarily resettle down in the low land. The Committee on Khon Yu - Pa Yung Project allocates the living area to compensate their former place. The reforestation and the revival of ecosystem are also carried out in the deteriorated forest. The rattan forest plantation is another activity actively done by the Station, because, in the past, the rattan cutting was one of the vocations of Phato villagers. Many other activities in Khon Yu - Pa Yung Project are

the digging of fish ponds in line with the New Theory Agriculture, the education promotion for the watershed pupils, the establishment of watershed check dams, the growing of vetiver grass, the improvement of public utility systems, the use and preservation of herb forest, the eco-tourism promotion, the setting up of watershed savings group, and etc. All activities have been smoothly performed on the basis of Khon Yu-Pa Yung Project.

Pongsa Chunam is the important leader in carrying out Khon Yu-Pa Yung Project by Phato Watershed Conservation and Management Station, He is the real leader of thoughts and practice. He tries to follow the principles, to adjust and apply the performance according to the situation. He could not let the society lose its advantage, so his principles and practices depend on the civil society's participation with the understanding of the principles, the practices and the results. Therefore, his working leads to success.



From Capitalization to Wisdom: Value of the Krabi Elderly

Synthesized and composed by Suwat Kongpan

The Krabi Elderly Organization was established by the elderly representatives from 8 districts and from different organizations. They are the representatives of the Community Organizations Network; the Group of Art, Culture and Local Wisdom: Likay Paa, Manohra and Nangtalung (Shadow Play); the Basketry Group and the Group of Retired Government Officials. The Elderly Committee at a provincial level was formed with the elderly representatives from 8 districts, 2 from each

district, 4 representatives from the working group of Krabi Community Organizations Network, and 2 representatives from the relevant official agencies in locality: i.e. Health Organization, Provincial Welfare, Tambon Administrative Organization, and etc. The totally is 22 representatives.

In 2001, the budget was supported by the Community Organizations Development Institute (Public Organization) to the elderly of different provinces, in the amount of 1,000,000.- Baht/ province. The elderly could use this money as a tool in development process for the elderly in the province. The Krabi Community Organizations Network divided the fund into 3 parts. The first part, 850,000.- Baht was the revolving fund for buying the palm garden. The second part, 100,000.- Baht was the welfare for the poor elderly. The third part, 50,000.- Baht was the management cost. The elderly decided to buy the palm garden according to the way of life, the nature of the area and the livelihood of people in Krabi Province. They were familiar with and skilled in gardening.

Besides the one-million fund was used as a tool to link the elderly in the whole province for joint

working, another important objective was to endure the sustainable fund management. To spend 850,000.- Baht for the palm garden was a way to maintain and sustain the fund. The income from the palm garden, after the cost of management be deducted, is divided into 4 parts; 30% for welfare of poor elderly, 30% for maintenance, 20% be added to the fund (1-million fund) and 20 % for management service.

At present, the money from the palm fruits has been given to the Elderly Fund, so it can be used to help the elderly every year. Furthermore, the Krabi Community Organizations Network is well known and widely acknowledged by many organizations. In the future there will be the empowerment project in various aspects: i.e. the development for the welfare institutions and the learning centre for the elderly by using the area in the palm garden as a meeting place and building houses for the elderly who cannot survive by themselves.

Since 2003, the Network has unanimously agreed to settle up the project of one district one garden, in order that the elderly in every district could receive services from their gardens. The palm gardens

have been developed as learning source with hydroponics gardens and various kinds of plants.

The welfare for the elderly of Krabi is the network development for the elderly. As the elderly is the core of the network, they are widely acknowledged and becomes the main mechanism in the province. They can link all groups of elderly to join hands in developing the process for the elderly, and increasingly interrelate the agencies to work together. The elderly will jointly have the power in determination of the direction they need from the agencies. They can change the image from the persons who need assistances into the intellectuals, and increase the importance and dignity of the elderly as the gurus and the respected persons.