CULTURE CHANGE: THE PROBLEM OF INTRODUCTION
OF LAND CO-OPERATIVE INTO THAILAND

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THESIS

ABSTRACT

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This thesis centers on the study of problems of "cultural borrowing," one of the most significant forms of culture change. The hypothesis is that the introducing culture, with different values from those of the existing one, produces resistance from the local culture. The more the differences, the more the resistances. The case study of the introduction of the land co-operative organization into Thailand is investigated as an evidence supporting this hypothesis. This thesis shows the origin, purpose, organization, and results of the operation of the land co-operative program in Thailand. It also describes the social organization of rural Thailand. The differences between the new system and the existing organizations are discussed and analyzed within the framework of cultural anthropology. The tentative conclusion of this thesis is that the co-operative principles and methods are in contradiction with the structure of Thai society; therefore, it cannot integrate and articulate well with other elements of the existing culture. Instead, co-operative organizations must change in many aspects in order to survive within the framework of Thai culture.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis an attempt is made to study culture change in rural Thailand by describing and analyzing the operation of land co-operatives among Thai peasants. The main purpose of this thesis is to illustrate the case of an innovation which does not seem to fit the local cultural setting and, therefore, produces only a weak reception. In order to make an innovation more acceptable, it must have characteristics which correspond to the institutions and general patterns of behavior of the people in the local culture.

The methodology and concept of this thesis are those of cultural anthropology. Due to the writer's inability to do direct field research on this problem, library research is used as the base of this thesis. This will include a review of the pertinent literature on culture change and development. Nevertheless, the writer's experience as a land co-operative officer in Thailand, for about ten years, will also be drawn upon as a source of knowledge. The main source of data concerning the land co-operative program is the Department of Land Co-operatives of Thailand. In addition, anthropological material about

Thailand in general, and rural Thailand in particular, will also serve as a major source of knowledge in describing social organization and peasants' behavior within the cultural setting of Thailand.

The nature of this thesis will be both descriptive and analytical. An attempt is made in Chapter II to show the origin and function of land co-operatives among farm people in rural Thailand. This will include the reason for the introduction, under the auspices of the government, of land co-operatives to Thailand and, also, the operation of co-operatives within the framework of Thai culture. Chapter III will deal with the social organization of rural Thailand including the political, economic, kinship, and religious systems. In Chapter IV, the analytical part of the thesis, the correlation or contradiction in adjusting the new system to the existing systems of the culture will be shown. The acceptance, resistance and/or syncretism which are the result of the contact of two cultures will be analyzed.

This thesis is concerned with the second type of the socio-cultural segments or subcultural groups of individuals according to Julian Steward's concept of "levels of socio-cultural integration." The group of prime concern is occupational. By occupation they are called farmers. By attitude, value, or world view they are classified as "peasants." Their locality is various parts of rural Thailand. The attempt is made here to study only those who

are members of land co-operative organization and the problems of the introduction of land co-operatives into Thailand. Co-operative principles and organization are products of European origin. Co-operative principles are mainly democratic, for example, the idea of "one man, one vote." Co-operatives rest on procedures, for example, the election of officers and committees to run the business of the co-operative organization. The Thai government, by good intention, saw the merit in this system, "borrowed" this particular aspect of European culture, and placed it within the framework of Thai culture which has different value system, institutional pattern, etc.

Thailand, at present, does not have a real democratic system of government according to the Western viewpoint. Since the 13th century, political organization has traditionally emphasized strong central government, with kings as head of state and head of government. There was a change from absolute monarchy to constitutional government in 1932, but, by and large, political power has been in the possession of a minority elite with the support of the military forces. Thai peasants, who compose about 85 per cent of the total population, take very little part in the process of the government. Their way of life is "traditional" and has continued with little change from generation to generation. At the village level, there appears to be only limited participation in group action and most of this is temporary in nature. The forming of a

"permanent" organization, such as a co-operative, is
contradictory to the "basic personality" of Thai culture.
It seems, therefore, worthwhile to investigate the pro-
blem of "borrowing" an institution, like the co-operative
organization, which operates well in a democratic country,
in order to see how it works when brought into operation
in a different cultural framework in which voting and the
electoral system are not clearly understood.

Although the major concern of this thesis is the
community level, the national level must be included
because, in the operation of land co-operatives, the Thai
government has set up a national level of administration.
This administration holds the highest responsibility and
decision-making powers in regard to the lower levels—
regions, districts, and villages. Nevertheless, reference
to the national level will be brief and relevant to the
point of understanding the problem at the community level
only.

Review of the Literature

In dealing with change in developing countries
which are relatively modern-complex societies, one must
be aware of the levels of interrelation between various
parts of the culture within a nation. Julian Steward calls
this the "levels of socio-cultural integration." By this
he means:

> . . . a total national culture is divisible into
> two general kinds of features: first, those that

function and must be studied on the national level;
second, those that pertain to socio-cultural segments
or subgroups of population. The former include the
suprapersonal and more or less structured—and often
formally institutionalized—features, such as the form
of government, legal system, economic institutions,
religious organizations, educational system, law
enforcement, military organization, and others. . . .
The socio-cultural segments or subcultural groups
of individuals are amenable to the methods of direct
observation used by ethnology. There are several
categories of such groups in modern states and nations.
First, there are localized groups, which may result
from differentiation that has occurred during national
development—for example, subcultures arising from
local specialization in production or cultural ecolo-
gical adaptations—or which may consist of ethnic
minorities. . . . Second, there are "horizontal"
groups, such as castes, classes, occupational
divisions, and other segments, which hold status
positions in an hierarchical arrangement and usually
crosscut localities to some extent. (Steward 1963:
47-48)

In the study of culture, the problem of culture
change is one of vital importance and has been attracting
the attention of "behavioral scientists," especially
cultural anthropologists, to a larger extent since the end
of World War II. Anthropologists have long recognized that
culture is subject to change; and, therefore, no societies,
however isolated, are really static. The problem of culture
change has received more attention recently because of the
emergence of newly developed countries into world affairs.
These countries which are classified as "poor" need rapid
economic development in order to share the prosperity of
the so-called "advanced" countries. Economic development
is quite a complicated process. First, it is necessary to
learn or imitate Western techniques, ideas, and institutions.
This means borrowing or the "taking in" of many aspects of

modernization. Second, it seems necessary to change the traditional way of life to some degree when adopting new techniques, ideas, or institutions from "outside." This, however, does not appear to be easy and smooth, because cultures do have a resistance to change, and economic development is not only concerned with technological change and does not involve only economic theories and economists. This is because the economic system is only one aspect of a culture which includes and involves more than material products. It is, therefore, not possible to bring technological change to a society without considering other aspects of that particular culture. This viewpoint at the present time is gaining more acceptance from economists and other "behavioral scientists" than before.

For example, Hirschman writes:

when it was increasingly realized that economic backwardness cannot be explained in terms of any outright absence or scarcity of this or that human type or factor of production, attention turned to the attitudes and value systems that may favor or inhibit the emergence of the required activities and personalities. (Hirschman 1962:4)

And again Hagen (1962:8) admits that economic theory has rather little to offer toward an explanation of economic growth and that broader social and psychological considerations are pertinent.

These statements are supported by George M. Foster when he says:

Technological development is a complex process, imperfectly understood even by specialists. The

expression itself is misleading for, strictly speaking, there can be no such thing as technological development in isolation. Perhaps the use of the term socio-technological development would clarify our thinking, for development is much more than the overt acceptance of material or technical improvements. It is a cultural, social, and psychological process as well. (Foster 1962:2)

Anthropologically speaking, culture change is a well-accepted concept but rates of change and resistance to change may differ from one society to another. Cultural anthropologists who were interested in the dynamic aspect of culture, such as Malinowski, Leslie White, Herskovits, Ralph Linton, Julian Steward, and others, had formulated some hypotheses of culture change ranging from pure deduction to empirical studies in various primitive and, to some extent, in peasant or folk societies in the hope of finding the "universal law" for culture change. So far, though a great deal has been learned, such as White's generalization (1949:374-75) that "the degree of cultural development varies directly as the efficiency of the tools employed, other factors remaining constant," and Julian Steward's concepts and methods of "cultural ecology" and "cultural core" (Steward 1963: chap. 2), which show some progress in the way of thinking and may be used as a tool for study of culture change, scientifically speaking, they are still far from the so-called "universal law." Nevertheless, the problem of culture change is a significant one in our time and it needs the attention of all social scientists.

George M. Foster (1962:25) writes: "The major force in culture change is borrowing." And Murdock (1960a:253) also says: "Of all forms of innovation, cultural borrowing is by far the most common and important." This thesis is a study of problems of "cultural borrowing" as we have discussed. "Borrowing" causes more problems than "invention" which is a change from within. Invention may have the problem of rejection or acceptance. If the society accepts, it remains to be part of that particular culture. If not, it will disappear sooner or later. But the process of borrowing is more complicated than that. It involves series of barriers which are composed of the cultural, social, and psychological aspects of the receiving culture. This, however, does not imply that invention is not concerned with these barriers. It is but to a lesser degree.

Acculturation which is "the process that occurs when two or more previously separated cultures come into contact with each other to a degree sufficient to produce significant changes in either or both" (Foster 1962:25) stimulates more borrowing. Without acculturation, there will be less borrowing or none. When a culture borrows some aspects of culture from another, it is not necessary to take in all characteristics of those aspects because each particular culture has its own "value system" which differs from that of another culture. Very often, the receiving culture reinterprets or "syncretizes" the borrowed institution according to its own value system.

George M. Foster (1962:130) writes:

> In every society, people learn the behavior that is appropriate to them and that they may expect from others, in an infinite number of situations in which they find themselves. Differing perceptions of role behavior frequently cause difficulties in intercultural settings, because the members of each group are faced with behavior which they do not expect or do not believe to be appropriate to the setting, and in turn they are unsure as to what may be expected from them.

In the same book, he also writes:

> Different perception and faulty communication may be barriers in situation in which change agent and the recipient have different expectations of the proper role behavior of the other. (Foster 1962:121)

Murdock (1960a:255) stresses the importance of

similarities of elements in cultures when he writes:

> The presence in a receiving society of some of the habit elements involved in a new trait greatly facilitates borrowing. It is for this reason that diffusion occurs most readily among people of similar culture, who already share many elements of habit.

Raymond Firth (1959:157) writes:

> One generalization of importance which emerges from studies of social and cultural change is that on the whole the people of a community tend to respond most easily to stimuli which have some continuity with, or analogy with, their traditional values and forms of organization. Even if they are seeking something quite new, they often tend to interpret the resulting organization in terms of structures and principles with which they are familiar.

Finally, it seems expedient to mention two

statements by Foster (1962:144,162):

> Motivation for a general change may be strong, but unless the innovation fits local cultural, social, and ideological values, it will have a weak reception.

And

> . . . in all societies, traditional institutions have recognized roles; if new forms can be integrated or

associated with these traditional roles, they have a better chance of being accepted than if there is nothing to tie to.

In the study of culture change, it is assumed that all aspects of culture are functionally interdependent upon one another. Changes in one aspect of culture, therefore, will have an effect on other aspects of culture as well. On the contrary, if all other aspects of a culture remain "traditional," change in one aspect of that particular culture is not likely to occur. This is the "holistic" approach to analyzing a society according to the contemporary cultural anthropological concept.

Conclusion

It is the tentative conclusion of this thesis that co-operative principles and methods which are strange to Thai culture do not integrate well with other elements of the culture. Therefore, the borrowed institution fails to produce sufficient change in the patterns of relationship among individuals and between individuals and institutions. Unless and until there is a change in other elements of the social organization, such as the political, economic, kinship, and religious, to a sufficient extent and in a direction favoring co-operative ideas, the co-operative movement in Thailand cannot claim success to the same degree as the co-operative movement in European countries does.

The significance of this study for anthropology is that it may contribute to the better understanding of the

problems of change and development in relatively modern-complex societies like those of newly developing countries. At least, the findings of this thesis confirm the principles or theories on culture change which have been discussed in anthropological literature. In this sense, it helps to strengthen the anthropological concept of change and development. It also shows that this concept cannot be ignored if change agents want their work to be done effectively. This will be fully discussed and analyzed in the next three chapters.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF INTRODUCTION OF LAND CO-OPERATIVES

In this chapter, the origin and purpose of the introduction of land co-operatives into Thailand will be discussed. It will also include the organization and operation of the program, how the program functions, and the reactions of peasants and other people concerning this program.

The co-operative movement in Thailand was the result of one of several government efforts to improve the economic situation of the country which relied mostly on agricultural products, rice being the main crop. The changing socio-economic condition of rice farmers was characterized by their growing dependency on middlemen and private money-lenders who, because of their broader image of the society resulting from the continuing contact with urban centers, took advantage of the peasants' ignorance of marketing conditions and credit operations. The situation was more serious at the end of the last century when Thailand began to enter a new phase of trade with other countries. Peasants who used to grow rice for their own consumption turned to commercialization. Lack of capital induced them to borrow money from private

money-lenders. Lack of certainty in agricultural production because of dependency on nature, in many cases, and scarcity of loans available, causing the high rates of interest on loans, contributed to their indebtedness, later causing the loss of land and other properties. Such a deterioration of economic conditions among the farmers warranted the introduction of co-operative credit associations to act as an effective means of remedying this undesirable situation as well as a basis for the future development of co-operatives of other types.

Thus, the co-operative movement in Thailand was launched in the year 1916 when the first co-operative society along Raiffeisen lines was organized among a group of farmers in Pitsanuloke Province for the purpose mainly of helping them in the elimination of their indebtedness and in the promotion of thrift, mutual help, and self-help. (The Raiffeisen type of co-operative credit society is a rural small organization of about 10-20 members who reside in the same or near villages and know each other quite well because they have to share all costs incurred by their co-operative society without limitation in case of loss according to the principle of "unlimited liability" of this type of co-operative.)

Since 1916 the co-operative movement has gradually spread to other areas of the country until the present time there exist several types of co-operative societies in Thailand, both producers' and consumers', agricultural as

well as industrial. However, the rural credit associations still predominate.

The land co-operative movement in Thailand was originated and carried out by the government. The reasons for the introduction of land co-operatives were many.

The population of Thailand, according to the 1954 census, was about 20.1 million. The highest population density was in the Delta area around Bangkok (250 persons per square mile) and the lowest (50 persons per square mile) was found in the western mountain zone of central Thailand. The North and Northeast had population densities ranging somewhere between 50 and 100 persons per square mile. In many cases, it should be remembered that these figures give us only a rough idea of concentration since most of the rural population is crowded along the roads, waterways, and in the fertile river valleys. The number of persons per cultivated land would be much higher in the other parts of the country than in the Central Plain where the land has been extensively cultivated for a long time.

Since 1954, there has been a consistent increase in the total population of Thailand, at an estimated rate of about 2.0 per cent per annum. As population increases, more land in the upper reaches of the rivers has been brought into cultivation. The production of rice and other crops has also increased, but the rice yield per rai (1 rai is equal to 0.4 acre) has continued to decrease.

For example, a rai of land in 1957 could produce only
728 kilograms of rice while 50 years ago it could produce
as many as 300 kilograms. The basic fact has been that
major agricultural land of Thailand does not normally have
a sufficient supply of rainfall. The water for the fields
is obtained mainly from the natural floodings of the
rivers, and only a small fraction of the total cultivated
land areas possess controlled-irrigation facilities. The
lack of knowledge in using improved farm practices is also
a dominant factor affecting the decreasing yield of rice.

As population increases, Thailand has been able to
maintain her ratio of man to land by the expansion of
cultivated areas because many free spaces are still
available. Nonetheless, there are many farmers who do not
own the land they farm. In 1950, according to the census,
only 82.7 per cent of all farms in Thailand were owner-
operated, either in full or in part. The proportion of
tenancy was highest in the fertile Central Plain and in
the North where 34 per cent and 23 per cent of all the
farms in the areas respectively were cultivated by the
tenants.

To let the rural people settle as they please is
generally undesirable because the pattern of settlement
would tend to be in disorder. Furthermore, each individual
farm family would meet with many difficulties in making a
living and in clearing the lands or the forests. Therefore,
in order to help the landless people settle and own the

farms they operate, it becomes necessary for the government to undertake "settlement projects." In order to solve some problems of the existing tenancy system, the government has also launched the so-called "land hire-purchase and land tenant co-operative programs."

A second problem is that various improvements in the uses of farm land are desirable if Thailand is to increase agricultural production for economic development in the future. Although the installation of irrigation facilities by the government is highly desirable, the secret of land improvement lies in the uses of improved farm practices and utilization of water resources by individual farmers. The movement for land improvement on the co-operative basis stems primarily from this basic insight.

Thus, the introduction of land co-operatives in Thailand is mainly for the economic benefits of three types of farmers: (1) those who are landless or small landowners; (2) those who are tenant farmers concentrated in the Central Plain; and (3) those who own farm land which needs to be improved. Land settlement co-operatives fulfill many of the needs of farmers in category one, while land hire-purchase and land tenant co-operatives serve farmers in category two, and land improvement co-operatives render services to those of category three. These associations, at present, are the major types of land co-operatives in Thailand.

Land Settlement Co-operatives

According to the Ministry of Co-operatives
(Co-operation in Thailand 1961:24-30), the land settlement
co-operative project was first introduced into Chiengmai
Province in 1938 when the government established a number
of agricultural settlement co-operative societies on the
land set aside by the provisions of the Land Conservation
Act of 1935. At present, the law for such a settlement
project is the Land Accommodation Act of 1942 which pro-
vides for the promulgation of a Royal Decree whenever and
wherever a land settlement co-operative will be organized.

The basic objectives of developing land settlement
co-operatives are: to help the landless farmers as well
as those who possess small land holdings to become land-
owners by settling them on the arable but undeveloped
lands; to help the settled farmers help themselves to
improve their resource and income; and to help increase
the national income by opening up the abundant new lands
left unutilized in different parts of the country for
agricultural production.

Project Operation

A preliminary survey of a selected area for
settlement, covering the physical and climatic conditions,
is made before the land settlement co-operatives are
organized. If, on the basis of this survey, the organi-
zation of a land settlement co-operative is feasible, then

the government survey officials go to the area to study and prepare a blueprint of the project. The selection of farmers then is made. In general, each member of any land settlement co-operative must possess adequate farming experiences, "good health and behavior."

Every member is allotted a plot of land considered to be economically appropriate to the size of his family and the type of farming to be practiced. The government grants loans to the co-operatives through the Bank for Co-operatives for financing its members in clearing the lands, installing small irrigation and drainage facilities, constructing houses, purchasing livestock, draft animals, and farm equipment. In addition, the government helps foster the welfare of the "settlement community" by providing it with schools, health centers, roads, markets, a monetary and other necessary facilities. Members' liabilities to the co-operative are unlimited. As soon as the lands allotted to all members are fully utilized, the long term loans advanced to them are fully repaid with interest, parts of the money invested by the government in the project are fully recovered, and if the Registrar of Co-operatives is satisfied with the progress of the co-operative, the government will grant the titles of allotted lands to every farmer-member of the land settlement co-operatives.

Until the end of 1959, 84,223 rai of land had been settled on by about 3,000 family-members of 169 land

settlement co-operative societies. Of these, 17 societies of 230 families were organized to utilize 7,300 rai of land for salt production along the seashore of Samutsakorn and Dhonburi Provinces (south of Bangkok), and 6 societies of 70 families were organized to utilize 7,000 rai of land for fisheries.

Land Hire-purchase and Land Tenant Co-operatives

A large number of Thai farmers still have no farms of their own. A high proportion of tenancy is found in the fertile area of the Central Plain where population pressure and land value are relatively high. Commercial types of farming and easy access to the Bangkok markets may also contribute to the large number of tenant culti-vated farms. In any case, whenever tenancy exists, high rents, insecurity of tenure, one year verbal contracts, and lack of assurance of compensation for unexhausted improvements or maintenance of lands are the most common conditions of the system. The tenant also furnishes his own draft animals, farm equipment, lodging facilities, and family labor while the landlord provides only the land and the taxes associated with it. The rental rate, paid in kind, is approximately one-half of the total crops harvested—mostly rice or paddy.

It is evident that the tenancy system in Thailand does not tend to create incentives for the tenants to improve the land or to use new farming techniques. Much of the rent exacted by the landlord leaves the tenant

with a bare subsistence and with no margin for investment. In any bad year, a crop failure may put the tenant in debt and is likely to make the existing debt more enormous. Thus, the tenant is not likely to increase production. The tenant system may even increase the dangers of over-cropping and soil erosion. This point is of particular importance since in 1953 only 87 per cent of the total cultivated land in the country was owned by farmers (Thailand Farm Economic Survey 1953). Therefore, 13 per cent of all agricultural land or around 6 million rai may be subject to such danger.

In order to correct the unhealthy conditions associated with the existing system of tenancy, the Government of Thailand initiated the land hire-purchase and the land tenant co-operative programs.

The main objectives of the land hire-purchase co-operative program include: first, to help the tenants or landless farmers acquire ownership of the lands they farm by purchasing such lands on installment basis; and, secondly, to help the farmer-members improve their farm production and family incomes by providing them with capital and knowledge necessary for better use of their resources.

The land hire-purchase societies, based on the principles of unlimited liability, are organized among qualified tenants in certain areas. These societies, with the necessary funds furnished by the government without

interest, buy large tracts of land from big landowners
to be purchased by members on a hire-purchase plan. The
plan calls for each member to pay for his lot by annual
installments within the period of 15 years. Since the
co-operative society is based on unlimited liability, the
title-deeds to these lands will not be turned over to
members until all the lots in the society are entirely
paid for. The members of the land hire-purchase societies
also have the privilege of borrowing funds at interest
from their societies for any productive and provident
purposes.

At the end of 1959, there were 52 land hire-purchase
co-operative societies consisting of 994 membering families
which utilize about 37,600 rai of land in many parts of
the country.

The Thai government also initiated the development
of land tenant co-operatives. They were organized along
the same line as the land hire-purchase co-operatives with
the exception that the tenant-members do not have an
opportunity to acquire ownership of the land they farm.
The main purpose of this program is to improve the uses of
land and to lower the rental rates by giving the tenants
more security of tenure. In practice, each land tenant
society leases the land from the owners on behalf of its
members for a period of not less than 20 years. It then
relets separated lots to members at the rates prescribed
in the bylaws of the society. This type of land co-operative

was first organized in 1955 in Nakorn Nayok and Patum
Dhani Provinces in the Central Plain where a high pro-
portion of tenant-operated farms exist. In 1959, 14,250
rai of land and 20 land tenant co-operatives were organized
among 318 tenant families in the Central Plain.

Land Improvement Co-operatives

The lack of adequate water supply is still a major
problem facing Thailand's agricultural industry. Only a
minor portion of the agricultural land has modern
controlled-irrigation facilities. The rest of the crop
lands are still dependent upon water from rainfall.

Development of land improvement co-operatives is
purported to help farmers help themselves in effectively
securing water for their farms by means of group action in
the regulation of waterflow, in the installation of water
pumps, in building small ditches needed for distribution
of water from the irrigation canals, and so forth. It is
purported also to utilize the co-operatives as a means of
encouraging farmers to develop scientific farming practices.

Land improvement co-operatives were first organized
in 1938 on the Central Plain between the main rivers where
the level of water is usually low at the beginning of the
rice growing season and where, when the rain comes, the
paddy fields are flooded. The crop yields in these areas
are limited by the excessive floods toward the end of the
growing season. The land improvement societies organized
in these areas are primarily for the purpose of regulating
the water supply.

The lack of water is a more serious problem in the Northeast. In order to help the farm people in this region, the government through the Department of Royal Irrigation has constructed many reservoirs, and in connection with this development the government has also organized a number of land improvement co-operatives. The main purpose of these societies is to have members control and operate the water reservoirs for their benefit. Thus, small ditches needed for the distribution of water to the members' farms are also constructed. At the end of 1959, 39 land improvement co-operatives were organized among 2,323 farm families which cultivate about 68,500 rai of land in the Northeastern provinces.

In Thailand up to the end of 1959, 54 land improvement co-operative associations had been organized among 4,567 farm families which cultivate about 132,200 rai of land.

As for the development of the central organ for supervision of co-operatives in Thailand, the Thai government first established the Department of Co-operatives within the Ministry of Agriculture in 1920. Later, in 1952, the Department of Co-operatives was promoted to the position of Ministry of Co-operatives composed of the Department of Land Co-operatives, the Department of Credit Co-operatives, the Department of Producers' and Consumers' Co-operatives, the Department of Co-operatives Auditing, and the Office of the Under-secretary. In 1963, the

Ministry of Co-operatives was dissolved and the

Department of Land Co-operatives and others were placed

under the new Ministry of National Development. All

co-operative societies in Thailand operate under the

Co-operative Societies Act B.E. 2471 (A.D. 1928).

The Organization of the Program

The Department of Land Co-operatives is divided

into four divisions; i.e., the Division of Organizing and

Inspecting Land Co-operatives, the Division of Controlling

and Promoting Land Co-operatives, the Division of Land

Management, and the Engineering Division. In addition,

there is the Office of the Secretary to the Department

responsible for the general administrative work which does

not fall within the jurisdiction of other divisions.

The Division of Organizing and Inspecting Land

Co-operatives is responsible for the work of organizing

and inspecting various types of land co-operatives. There

are many co-operative officials who were trained specially

for the technique of organizing and inspecting the land

co-operative societies. These officials periodically

travel to the area in which the work of organizing or

inspecting land co-operatives has to be done. They

usually turn in their reports and recommendations for the

consideration of higher officials after their return from

rural areas. The Division of Controlling and Promoting

Land Co-operatives has area-offices under it. The area-

office usually locates on or near the locality of the land

co-operative society in order to supervise, recommend, and be consulted on matters of operation. Within the jurisdiction of a particular area-office, the chief area-officer holds the highest responsibility and power. He normally has from three to eight junior officials under him, depending on the scope of his work. The area-office is the most important link between the Department of Land Co-operatives and the co-operative society. The Division of Land Management is concerned with the condition of soil and the allotment of land for the purpose of organizing land co-operatives and for developing higher crop yields per unit of land. The Engineering Division is divided into three main sections; that is, the Mechanical Engineering Section, the Civil Engineering Section, and the Surveying Section. The engineering work is concerned mainly with farm equipment such as tractors, power-generators, irrigation pumps, construction of area-offices, and land surveys.

In organizing a land settlement co-operative society, after having conserved the land for this purpose, the Department of Land Co-operatives sends one or two senior officials to the district or area-office to select qualified farmers to be members of this type of land co-operative. A committee for the selection of people to be members of the land settlement co-operative is composed of three members. The provincial governor or the district officer of the area, one senior official from the Department

of Land Co-operatives, and the land co-operative
area-chief normally are appointed to be the committee.

Members of land settlement co-operatives must have
the following qualifications:

1) Thai nationality;

2) 20 years or more and a family of their own;

3) not physically or mentally handicapped;

4) have had experiences in farming;

5) do not own farm land, or own only small piece of
   farm land not large enough to earn a living;

6) indicate good behavior and show industriousness
   in occupation; and

7) not be members of other "unlimited liability"
   co-operative societies.

In the meantime, the Department of Land
Co-operatives proceeds with land surveys, land clearing,
building roads, and allotting plots of land for the
settlement of selected farmers. The expenditure for this
is to be repaid by members of land settlement co-operative
societies after they can produce incomes from the land.
Usually the repayment begins in the fifth year of the
settlement. The rate of repayment per year and the total
cost are fixed by the co-operative bylaws to correspond
with the regulations of the Department of Land Co-operatives.
In fact, the total cost fixed by the co-operative bylaws is
considerably lower than the real expenditure the government
invests. Before settling on the allotted land, members of

land settlement co-operative associations are briefed of the principles and methods of land co-operatives including the role of government in helping them with technical and financial problems. After the co-operatives have been organized, the area-officials will continue to advise, supervise, and promote better understanding between the co-operative members and the Department of Land Co-operatives. It is notable that everytime the Department of Land Co-operatives announces the selection of new members for new land settlement projects, an increasing number of people come to be selected. The main attraction of the program is not the principles and methods of co-operatives but the tangible evidences of having land for farming, loans with low interest rates, and other facilities such as roads and medical treatment associated with the program.

Qualifications for membership in land hire-purchase and land tenant co-operatives are similar to those of land settlement. Members of land improvement co-operatives must be farmers within the area for which the improvement plan is set.

The principles and methods of land co-operatives are quite complicated, at least for the illiterate peasants of rural Thailand. The main principles and methods of land co-operatives are as follows:

1) The underlying concept of permanent co-operation is "self help and mutual help" by the organization of a group of people with similar economic needs.

The idea is to utilize individual strength and group effort to improve economic conditions and to share the benefits that occur according to participation with the organization. In short, the basic principle of co-operatives emphasizes group effort and group prosperity.

2) Democratic methods are stressed. The principle of "one man, one vote" regardless of how much the investment in labor and capital in the organization makes co-operatives different from other kinds of business organizations. The co-operative method emphasizes the full participation of members in the association's affairs, for example, general meetings of its members in case of important matters, electing management committee, exclusion of unqualified members, and so on. As for land co-operatives, the management committee is composed of six elected members, including a president, a secretary, and a treasurer. As a rule, the business of a co-operative organization is decided by a majority vote. In cases of very important matters provided by the organization's bylaws, the vote of two-thirds may be applied.

3) The principle of "unlimited liability" along Raiffeisen's concept is applied to every type of land co-operative except one or two land improvement societies. "Unlimited liability" means that

members must face full responsibility for the
business of their organization in case of loss
and its properties do not meet the demand of
creditors. The creditors may demand the payment
from any member they deem appropriate to pay their
debts. With this principle, farmers with some
properties are reluctant to join land co-operative
associations, if they really understand it. In
addition, members with some properties may feel
uncomfortable about their future if they find
their co-operative society is not in a sound
financial condition.

4) The basic fact which cannot be overlooked is that
a land co-operative society belongs to its members.
The government role in technical and financial
assistance does not mean that co-operative
organization is a government organization.
Nevertheless, close supervision and yearly
auditing by government officials obscure this
fact to some degree.

Operation of the Program: Some Acceptance

Generally speaking, land co-operatives, especially
land settlement, land hire-purchase, and land tenant,
gained acceptance from farmers. Evidence for this is that
everytime the Department of Land Co-operatives announced
the selection of farmers to be members of these types of
land co-operatives, more farmers volunteered than there

was land available for them. Many of them came from
different districts or provinces. This does not mean,
however, that farmers understand principles and methods of
land co-operatives as a means of improving their economic
situation. The obvious fact of their acceptance is
related to the tangible evidences of having farm land to
work and loans with low interest rates from the government.
The method of selecting land settlement co-operative
members also supports this statement. Before becoming a
land co-operative member, farmers normally do not have any
knowledge of co-operative principles and methods. In later
stages, an orientation program may help them to have
clearer ideas of the project, but this does not mean that
farmers accept land co-operative principles and methods
wholeheartedly. They may agree with the explanation; they
may even doubt or not accept the idea at all. The facts of
having land to farm, having a source of credit, and having
the protection from the government in carrying on their
business are more than enough for the landless farmers to
become members of land settlement co-operatives. This is
also true in the case of tenant farmers who live at the
mercy of landlords and private money-lenders in such places
as the Rangsit area of the Central Plain. As mentioned
before, these tenant farmers were insecure with regard to
the length of time they could farm on the land because,
usually, there was no formal contract between them and the
landlord. The traditional period of one harvesting year

is verbally agreed upon in most cases. The high interest rates of loans (in many cases reported to be more than 50 per cent per annum) which could not easily be obtained from private money-lenders, many of whom were also landlords, made their lives more miserable and uncertain. When the land co-operative officials called the meeting among these tenant farmers and told them the outlines of land hire-purchase or land tenant co-operatives, as the case may be, these peasants saw the advantages of the program quite easily. Though their understanding of the principles and methods of the co-operatives is doubtful, the possibility to own land seemed as clear in the case of the land hire-purchase society as did the possibility of settling on the same land for a considerable period of time. The access to loans with low interest rates and a longer period for repayment seemed advantages as did the fact that the co-operative personnel were government officials whom they trusted more than ordinary landlords and private money-lenders.

With regard to land improvement co-operatives, the degree of acceptance is somehow less than in the case of land settlement, land hire-purchase, and land tenant co-operatives. It is not possible to produce concrete evidence for this phenomenon in this thesis because this would take a careful field study of each individual community, but there are some basic facts which may explain this statement. First of all, land improvement co-operatives are organized among farmers most of whom own

their farm land. Their economic status is considerably better than those of the first three types. The need for land improvement also differs from one farm to another. The problem of access to water, which is needed badly during the growing season, is also different. Farm land located near canals or rivers has easier access to water. Besides, if farmers agree to join a land improvement co-operative, they have to share the costs of such projects as the digging of ditches to have water flow to remote farms; they have to sacrifice some part of their land for this purpose. In some cases members have to donate their labor to dig canals and other such work. Land co-operative officials in many circumstances had to take pain explaining the concept of group effort and group prosperity to them before they could organize this type of land co-operative. Advantages were mentioned about getting aid from the government in the form of loans and technical equipment like irrigation pumps. Though in most cases land co-operative officials succeeded in having the land improvement co-operative organized, it could not be said that members of this type of land co-operative accept this method of improving their farm land voluntarily.

In the Northeastern part of the country where the problem of water is more severe, the government set up a policy of organizing land improvement co-operatives in areas which could benefit from reservoirs constructed by the Department of Royal Irrigation. Here the problem of

acceptance is harder to judge. The mixed role of land co-operative officials contributes to the difficulty of this problem to some extent. As a government official, he is supposed to take orders from, and take care of the interests of, the government. As a development worker or change agent, he is supposed to bring progress to his clientele who, in this case, are farmers. In order to do this, he has to change farmers' images at least enough to make them see the value of co-operative principles and methods. As a husband and father, he has to take responsibility in providing income for his family. In the case of conflict of the first two roles, a land co-operative official usually inclines to playing the role of government official at the expense of the other one. This is logical because the government pays his salary and has power to reward or punish.

In a study conducted by Gordon R. Sitton, Chaiyong Chuchart, and Suphan Tosunthorn (1962:138) about co-operative land settlement projects in Thailand, when asked to explain the differences between co-operative and privately owned organizations, about 21 per cent of the members of land co-operative settlements interviewed in five different projects did not know of differences. With the same question, 33 per cent of land co-operative settlement members interviewed in nine projects did not give any explanation at all. In addition, there were some members who answered this question in a way which indicated that

their image of co-operative organization was something beyond their real understanding. There is no other reliable study of this type on other land co-operative projects which can be cited at the present time.

The vague and unclear image which land co-operative members have had toward their organization raises the question of acceptance of the principles and methods of the co-operatives. Nevertheless, one thing to be clear from various observations and studies is that the acceptance is based primarily on economic advantages of the program. In the case of land co-operatives, economic advantages to its members is foreseeable and realistic. For example, in 1959 alone, the Department of Land Co-operatives granted loans to 297 land co-operative societies amounting to 1,243,745 baht (20 baht is equal to one dollar), and the total amount of loans outstanding in the same year was more than eight million baht (Ministry of Co-operatives, Co-operation in Thailand 1961:34). Therefore, even with the vague image of its principles and methods, they accept the program without much questioning.

Resistance and Reinterpretation

Resistance to the land co-operative program primarily came from groups of people who did not benefit from this program. They were landlords and private money-lenders who used to lease land and lend money to land co-operative members. Resistance took various forms: false information such as spreading the news that the land

co-operative program was a government plan to impose the corvee on peasants by having the peasants work on the government land; it was rumored that the government would take most of the agricultural products produced, if not all; there was also overt violence by hired hoodlums to scare and hurt land co-operative officials in some areas. False propaganda or false information spread by landlords and private money-lenders created a complex situation during the organization period. Fortunately, the relatively high status of government officials in Thailand helped reduce the difficulties to some degree. Normally, land co-operative officials ask help from district officers, chief village headmen, and village headmen in assembling farmers for explanation of the land co-operatives. After having been organized, resistance from "outside" usually declined, and, later, when the land co-operative organization was firmly established, the belief in false information normally disappeared.

Resistance from "within," i.e., from members themselves, also occurred in various forms: apathy which manifests itself in the form of negligence to observe rules and regulations of the organization, absence from meetings, and non-participation in the business of the organization are the most significant form of resistance from within; resignation and leaving the place permanently without paying debts also occurred in some types of land co-operative. However, the percentage of members who

resign and leave societies without paying debts is small, and it is not difficult to replace them, except in the case of the land improvement co-operatives which need members who own land within the improvement area.

Reinterpretation occurs because of the mixing roles of land co-operative officials as government representatives and as change agents. The tradition of high status of government officials and the fact that a land co-operative is organized, supervised, and promoted by the government obscures the basic fact that a land co-operative society belongs to its members. Land co-operative area-officials, who are the closest personnel to land co-operative members, play the most significant role in changing the members' images and plans for development. If the area-official plays the role of a strict government official most of the time and gives orders instead of giving advice or guiding them, the social distance between him and land co-operative members is relatively far. In such a case, members incline to believe that the land co-operative organization is of and for the government. In fact, members of the land co-operative usually call the land co-operative official "chaonai" which means "boss." The emphasis on the role of "boss" by practicing it is tantamount to encouraging misconceptions of the program.

The government assistance in technical and financial aspects in running land co-operatives, including

the yearly auditing by government officials of all
co-operative societies; loans of different periods of
repayment with considerably low interest rates granted by
a government controlled Bank for Co-operatives; help from
other government officials, such as district officers and
provincial governors, in organizing land co-operative
societies, all contribute to the reinterpretation of the
program according to the traditional values of the Thai
peasants.

The question raised in the first chapter on the
introduction of co-operative principles which are mainly
democratic into a country with a long history of absolute
monarchy presents a series of complex consequences. The
mixed reactions of the Thai peasants because of the intro-
duction of a new concept which basically contradicts their
traditional values has already been created. Their
behavior may point in new directions or retreat to the
same traditional orientation, probably much depending on
the guidance of change agents who in this case are land
co-operative officials. Therefore, the role of land
co-operative official as a change agent is no doubt an
important factor in changing the "modal personality" of
Thai peasants within his area of responsibility.
Unfortunately, the nature of this study prevents getting
into many details which, if obtained, would help clarify
the problem better.

From this writer's observation of the role of land co-operative officials in the past, it was evident that they were not properly trained to be change agents. Many of them do not have a real understanding of the principles and methods of land co-operatives. Those who do understand them lack the knowledge of how to effectively work as change agents. They received only limited training on how to transfer their knowledge to peasants with a relatively low level of education. No training in anthropological concepts of culture and culture change has been offered to them. The problem of communication or information flow, therefore, is one of the main obstacles preventing the program from a higher level of achievement. In addition, it is not probable to evaluate the success or failure of the program by this type of study without jumping into conclusions which, usually, lead to errors. A field study of this program is recommended as a better way to apprehend facts and theorize about them. At the present stage, it should be only appropriate to hypothesize that the introduction of a land co-operative program and the ways of practicing it up to the present time have not affected enough change in farmers' behavior to produce a great change in their "modal personality." Instead, the peasants tend to reinterpret the program according to their traditional values formed by various elements of Thai rural social organization which will be mentioned in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE OF RURAL THAILAND

In this chapter, the writer will discuss the concept of social organization and social structure according to the anthropological theory and then proceed further to describe the social organization and structure of rural Thailand. This will include the general description and village pattern as well as the political, economic, kinship, and religious systems. In the end, the writer will tie these things together in the form of peasants' world view in order to show their ways of seeing the world through the blind of the social and cultural setting of Thailand.

Social Organization vs. Social Structure

The words "social organization" seem to have something connecting or relating to the words "social structure." And the latter seem to be very arguable among cultural anthropologists and to a lesser extent among other social scientists, too. Nevertheless, at present there seem to be two major, different opinions on the words "social structure." One is primarily of the British social anthropologists who, more or less, agree that social structure covers a broader area of social relations and

includes political, economic, and religious in addition
to kinship. On the other hand, many American cultural
anthropologists seem to be satisfied with the narrow
viewpoint of the term "social structure." To them, social
structure is only one aspect of culture, not the whole
culture, and refers to only those relationships among kins
or social relations pertaining to the kinship system (Fred
Eggan 1954a:745-47). The long and fruitful discussion of
the term "social structure" has been presented by Claude
Levi-Strauss (1953) in his paper named "Social Structure."
It is, however, not the intention of this thesis to discuss
"social structure" and "social organization" in detail but
only to show the complexity of the terminologies which
exist in the field of social sciences like sociology and
anthropology at the time being. For the purpose of this
thesis, this writer is satisfied with Raymond Firth's
discussion and definition of the two terms as follows:

> Social organization has usually been taken as a
> synonym for social structure. In my [Firth's] view it
> is time to distinguish between them. The more one
> thinks of the structure of a society in abstract
> terms, as of group relations or of ideal patterns, the
> more necessary it is to think separately of social
> organization in terms of concrete activity. Generally,
> the idea of organization is that of people getting
> things done by planned action. This is a social pro-
> cess, the arrangement of action in sequences in con-
> formity with selected social ends. These ends must
> have some elements of common significance for the set
> of persons concerned in the action. The significance
> need not be identical, or even similar, for all the
> persons; it may be opposed as between some of them.
> The processes of social organization may consist in
> part in the resolution of such opposition by action
> which allows one or other element to come to final
> expression. Social organization implies some degree

of unification, a putting together of diverse elements
into common relation.

To do this, advantage may be taken of existing
structural principles, or variant procedure may be
adopted. This involves the exercise of choice, the
making of decision. As such, this rests on personal
evaluations, which are the translation of general
ends or values of group range into terms which are
significant for the individual. In the sense that all
organization involves allocation of resources, it
implies within the scheme of value judgments a concept
of efficiency. This infers a notion of the relative
contributions which means of different amount and
quality can make to given ends. The sphere of allo-
cation of resources is one in which economic studies
are pre-eminent. . . . But of necessity economics has
been restricted primarily to the field of exchange
relations, especially those which are measurable in
monetary terms. In the social field beyond this the
processes resulting from the possibilities of choice
and the exercise of decision are also of major
importance. (Firth 1956:35-36)

Finally, Firth links the concept of social

organization to the study of social change, when he writes:

The concept of social organization is important
also for the understanding of social change. There
are structural elements running through the whole of
social behavior, and they provide what has been the
metaphorically termed social anatomy, the form of a
society. But what is this form? It consists really
in the persistence or repetition of behavior; it is
the element of continuity in social life. . . .
Continuity is expressed in the social structure, the
sets of relations which make for firmness of expec-
tation, for validation of past experience in terms of
similar experience in future. Members of a society
look for a reliable guide to action, and the structure
of the society gives this—through its family and
kinship system, class relations, occupational distri-
bution, and so on. At the same time there must be
room for variance and for the explanation of variance.
This is found in the social organization, the
systematic ordering of social relations by acts of
choice and decision. (Firth 1956:39-40)

So much for "social organization" and "social

structure"; nevertheless, it is the writer's intention to

use the terms social organization and social structure in

the broader sense, more or less, along with Firth's
discussion and definition of the terms. The word "system"
is also used interchangeably with the word "organization"
in many occasions. It is now the time to describe the
social organization and structure of rural Thailand; we
will begin with the description of the village patterns
and the general characteristics of rural Thailand.

Village Patterns and General Description

A village in Thailand, formally, is the smallest
unit for the purpose of the "territorial administration"
of the country. The largest unit of the territorial
administration is the province (changwat), of which there
are 71, ranging in population from some 20,000 to over one
million. The administration of the province is under the
control of a governor (phuwarachakarn) appointed by the
Minister of Interior. Attached to each province office
(sala klang), and subordinated to the governor, are
official representatives from nearly all central government
agencies.

Each province is subdivided for administrative
purposes into districts (amphur) ranging in number some-
where between 8 and 13, with a district officer (nai amphur)
as the chief official directly responsible to the pro-
vincial governor for the character of district administration.
Each district also has a staff of civil servants assigned
to the field offices of central government agencies with
functions at this level. There are 448 districts in

Thailand at present, as well as 50 subdistricts with
smaller staffs.

> Below the district level there are no government
> offices or civil servants. The central government,
> however, recognizes further subdivisions of territory,
> and accords the quasi-traditional leadership of these
> units some official status. Within each district a
> group of villages is called a commune (tambol) and the
> individual village (muban) comprises the basic admini-
> strative unit. Formal leadership at the village level
> is achieved by a mixed process of election in the
> villages and confirmation in office by the governor,
> and is vested in village headmen (phuyaiban) who choose
> one of their number as the chief headmen (kamnan) of
> the commune. There are 4,700 of these latter units,
> composed of a varying number of villages as population
> and geography dictate, but containing about twenty
> villages on the average. Altogether, there are some
> 49,832 villages in Thailand which meet the minimum
> requirement of at least five households in a single
> cluster and ideally have a population of 200 persons.
> (Horrigan 1962a:47)

Thailand is truly a rural country. The vast
majority of Thai people, perhaps about 85 per cent of the
population, live in communities ranging in size from 200
to 3,000 individuals. The most striking feature of these
communities is their similarity and integral homogeneity.
A Thai peasant, no matter what his geographical or family
background, could move to a distant village and find that
the general pattern of its social life was completely
familiar. Despite some minor and inevitable local
differences in practice and the development of new ideas
and wants where urban influences have penetrated, all of
rural Thailand seems to have a single basic pattern:

> Rural society is characterized by the absence of
> a hierarchical class structure and by a relative lack
> of elaboration, complexity, and institutionalization
> in the social forms. There are only a limited number

of social groupings to which the individual can
belong or with which he can be identified, and most
of these are organized informally, and there are only
few social statuses he can occupy, with even clearly
defined roles. (Blanchard 1958:399)

However, John DeYoung (1955:399-400) writes about

patterns of village settlement in rural Thailand as follows:

Villages in Thailand commonly fall into two main
types: a group of houses strung along a waterway or
road, or a cluster of houses set along fruit trees,
coconut palms, and rice fields. Along a wide river,
houses of the latter type of village are built on
only one bank, but along a narrow river, a canal, or
a road, houses may be located on both sides; the
village may extend from one to several kilometers,
houses often being only one deep along the road and
rice fields starting at the rear of the house compounds.
Villages of the other sort, the cluster type, are
set some distance (one-quarter of a kilometer to a
kilometer) from main thoroughfare—a river, a navigable
canal, a railroad line, a branch road, or a main
highway. A cart road or cart track leads from these
villages to the thoroughfare; these tracks are built
and maintained by the villagers and, although
impassable during the rainy season, can be used for
at least eight months of the year.

Generally speaking, Thai culture has been a

culture of wet-rice cultivation for a long time. Except

for the minority of Westernized Thai who live mostly in

urban areas, the vast majority of Thai people still live

in some 49,832 villages scattered all over the country,

which has the total area of 200,000 square miles, and

still engage in agriculture, primarily wet-rice cultivation.

The basic theme of traditional Thai culture, therefore,

evolves around this occupation.

The major patterns of social relations within a

village are based primarily upon kinship, physical proxi-

mity, and membership in the few groups that exist beyond

the family. Relationships also depend on certain status factors, such as the differentiation between Buddhist monks and laymen, headmen and other villagers, the old and the young, male and female, and other personal qualities such as moral and religious character or proficiency in farming, medicine, astrology, music, story-telling, and the like.

John Embree (1950a:185,188) also observes the similar characteristics of Thai villages when he writes:

> In Thailand the hamlet also has its own identity and the members also have rights and duties, but they are less clearly defined and less strictly enforced. Exchange systems are less clear cut. Thus in Thailand, with its mobility of population and lack of emphasis on long term obligations, we do not find the financial associations (Ko) which extend over twenty years or so. . . . At the local group level, where the people live by wet rice agriculture, there seems to be a less closely woven pattern of cooperative organization for accomplishing agricultural labor as compared with, say, Japanese society.

Because of the lack of group action and formal organization among Thai peasants, leadership in rural Thailand is vested mostly on the success or status of individuals according to traditional values of what is considered to be the "good" things to achieve. In the village level, it is generally agreed that village head-men, Buddhist monks, and school teachers are the potential leaders of the community. Out of these, Buddhist monks probably hold higher status and prestige largely because being a monk means observing more strict rules of life than ordinary people. But as Blanchard (1958:403-404) says:

The role of monks in village society is difficult to characterize. In both city and village the priesthood is supposed to be outside the secular affairs of the community, but in villages, since the line between sacred and secular activities is usually not very clear, the monks tend to be involved in community affairs. The local Buddhist temple is not only the religious but also the social center as well. It is at the local temple that people come together and experience a sense of village membership. The village religious rituals held there are nearly always accompanied by social activities: the people picnic, feast, have fun, and are entertained. It is to the temple monks, the most respected men in the village and specialists at counselling, that people bring their problems; in time of crisis a monk is often the first person sought out for counsel and encouragement.

Within this type of social relations many monks obviously find it difficult to maintain the ideal state of scholarly seclusion and other-worldliness. Much depends, of course, upon the character of the abbot. If he is a particularly dynamic individual, the wat's (Buddhist temple) involvement with the village may be large; if he is a retiring, meditative person, the other monks may follow his way of seclusiveness and not involve much with the community affairs. Whether active or passive participants in village life, all monks are at the top of the village respect-prestige pattern, and their potential power to instigate or guide social action and change is considerable.

As for village headmen, their role as community leaders is not very well accepted everywhere, though formally they are supposed to be. DeYoung (1955:28) writes:

Generally, the village headman is at the top of the village social structure, a landowner of some status and a man who has demonstrated leadership

qualities. From the standpoint of social prestige
and importance, the abbot of the village <u>wat</u> will
outrank the headman, . . .

Wendell Blanchard (1958:404-405) also confirms

by writing:

> The nominal village leaders are the headmen of
> the hamlets which make up the community. . . .
> Respected farmers, often substantial landowners who
> have lived in the village or its adjacent hamlets
> for sometime and who have shown some ability to act
> as village spokesmen, are usually chosen as headmen.
> Holding public office gives them a measure of
> prestige and honor; translating that prestige into
> authority, however, is quite another matter. In the
> village of Bang Chan, for example, observers dis-
> covered that in several cases headmanship was merely
> an honorary position. Three of the seven persons who
> held the official title were clearly recognized as
> village leaders; the other four had a goodly measure
> of prestige but little or no real power, and one of
> these was clearly incompetent, managing to stay in
> office simply because his fellow villagers did not
> want to hurt his feelings by demanding an election.
> In this village the head monk and one of the village
> school teachers seem to have as much authority as
> any of the seven headmen the government relied on for
> community leadership. In the North and Northeast,
> however, the headmen tend to be quite strong, their
> authority commensurate with their prestige, so that
> they are the active leaders of their community. . . .

The village school teacher also has an important

status within a rural community because of his authority

deriving from his position as a teacher, his education,

and his outside connections. He and the local abbot are

often the actual leaders in the village.

Political System

In order to understand the political system of the

Thai village, it is necessary to mention some higher levels

of the organization. For the purpose of this thesis, it

is considered to be appropriate and inevitable to discuss

the authority and prestige of the district officer or nai

amphur who is probably the most important man in rural

Thailand. According to Frederick Horrigan (1962a:52):

> The district officer or nai amphur is the single most
> important link of the government with the people. Each
> of the 448 districts of the territorial administration
> is under the control of a district officer appointed
> by the Department of Interior and directly responsible
> to the governor. This officer is the ubiquitous agent
> of the central government in the daily administration
> of domestic affairs. . . . Before the advent of modern
> communications and the reforms of the constitutional
> regime, the district officer exercised an almost
> absolute rule within his jurisdiction, and so long as
> the district was undisturbed by major crime, satis-
> factory revenues were collected and remitted, and
> periodic reports were filed with the government, he
> was allowed to function undisturbed.

The district officer has a great deal of power and

many duties which include the following: (1) To administer

in accordance with the law and regulations. If the

execution of law within his area of responsibility has not

been assigned to any particular official, it is the duty

of the nai amphur to carry it out. (2) To administer in

accordance with the orders and advice of the changwat or

province governor and other inspectors empowered by the

changwat governor and central government within the amphur.

Indeed, the district officer has for decades been

a man of many duties. The law assigns the district officers

such diverse tasks as taking measures against outbreaks of

disease, protecting of forests, protecting breeding grounds

for fish, and establishing educational facilities. The

scarcity of technical specialists in the past made the

district officer a general administrator in the classical

sense; he was, and still is, often referred to as the "royal garbage can" in recognition of the many responsibilities imposed upon him by the government. In recent years, as technical personnel have appeared in increasing numbers at the district level to take care of many programs in agriculture, fisheries, health, and education, the job of the district officer has lost scope but not prestige or responsibility.

In his role as the "link" between the government and the people, the district officer has a regular pattern of communication with each. At least once a month he reports to the provincial office for a formal conference with the governor and provincial board, and some few days later he calls the village headmen together at his office to discuss district affairs. It has been observed that communication at the district meeting is apt to be unilateral, with the district officer doing most of the talking and the assembled headmen assuming passive roles. Of course, the conduct of the meeting may vary according to the nature of the relationship which the individual district officer seeks to establish with the headmen, but the tradition of one-way communication and the small value which Thai culture places on "speak up" condition the communication in a unilateral pattern.

John DeYoung (1955:14,16) writes of relationships between district officers and villagers as follows:

    To the villager, the district officer is known as the nai amphur, which might be translated "boss of the

district"; he is for them the closest and the most real of all contacts with the central government. He may be called in to settle disputes between villagers concerning boundary lines of their rice fields; he judges disputes between landlord and tenant and sees that villagers obey government regulations. . . . In addition to the regular monthly meeting, district officers frequently call special meetings of headmen; these may be occasioned by the visit of a central government official to inspect the amphur, or to explain a government program, as, for example, a new drive for credit cooperative membership.

In addition, John K. King (1954a:171) writes:

Four characteristics of the Thai administrative system of special significance are a heritage from the days of the absolute monarchy. They are: (1) the territorial organization of the administrative system; (2) the "habit of obedience" within the bureaucracy and between the bureaucracy and the public; (3) the tradition of prestige associated with civil servants; and (4) the concentration of decision making authority.

Before the change from absolute to constitutional monarchy in 1932, the Kings of Thailand were autocratic rulers. The power of the King, through his agents and officials, reached into the smallest village. Under the absolute monarchy the habit of obedience to authority was firmly ingrained in the Thai people.

Within the administrative service, the higher ranking officials were usually the higher ranking members of the Royal Family. Obedience not only was a matter of civil regulation but also was a manifestation of respect for loyalty to the King. The monarchical institution, veneration and loyalty to the King were, as they are today, essential ingredients of Thai culture.

Closely connected with the habit of obedience is the prestige traditionally attached to the Thai bureaucracy.

It serves both to attract men to the service of the King and to lend greater authority to their administrative regulation. Public servants of Thailand are called Ka-raj-karn, meaning "those who serve the King's business" or the "King's men." Within the royalist framework of Thai society, this title carries great prestige.

Royal policy strengthened prestige of the public servants within the hierarchy of the bureaucracy as well as between the bureaucracy and the public by the practice of granting titles to members of the public service. Such titles are highly prized as personal marks of Royal appreciation, and titled public servants were shown the greatest deference by those of lower rank and the general public. The system served to maintain discipline within the bureaucracy, to tie the bureaucracy closer to the monarchy, and to insure the highest respect for the bureaucracy by the ordinary citizen of the country.

After 1932, the new government discontinued the practice of granting titles to members of the bureaucracy, but the tradition of prestige of the public servant, and even of the leftover titles, remains.

This is also confirmed by Herbert Phillips (1958a:39) who writes:

> The hold that this autocratic tradition has upon the thinking of most Thai peasants should not be underestimated. Many government officials still retain the aura of power and prestige formally associated with agents of the King. In their own minds and in the minds of the governed, these men rule rural areas; they do not represent them. This is

the attitude toward both government civil servants
and most elected public officials.

In regard to the concentration of decision-making
power, it is also the result of a long and uninterrupted
tradition of absolute power. King (1954a:172) says:

> The Kings of Siam, prior to the 1932 coup,
> traditionally ruled by Royal Decree and retained a
> great deal of the decision-making authority for
> themselves. Advisers and cabinet ministers were intro-
> duced at the early date but, as King Chulalongkorn
> recorded in his diaries, the King seldom found his
> advisers or ministers holding opinions different from
> his own.
> Within a limited area of responsibility the
> cabinet ministers tended to become the focal points
> for decision-making. Under the monarchy and under the
> constitutional regime since 1932, the tendency of all
> but the highest ranking public servants to avoid the
> responsibility of decision-making has continued. Many
> questions of detail of minor importance find their way
> up through the chain of command for decision by
> ministry chiefs or by the cabinet. The emphasis on
> decision from above and the obedience from below has
> created a "vertically minded" bureaucratic tradition
> that has remained strong. Only the center of highest
> authority has shifted, from the King and his advisers
> to the Prime Minister and his Council of Ministers.

Because of the great tradition of politics in
Thailand as mentioned above, Thai peasants always look for
help from the central government in various ways. They
usually bring their complaints to local leaders who may
be the abbot of the local wat, village headman, or school
teacher; these men will contact the district officer who,
in turn, if he thinks the matter is appropriate to conti-
nue, will bring the matter up to the province governor,
and so on. The "habit of obedience" and the high prestige
of government officials plus a relatively economic self-
sufficiency permit Thai peasants to manage to stay away

from any political uprising. On the contrary, they tend to obey orders from the government and regard government officials with high respect. As Herbert Phillips (1958a:39) writes:

> The peasant attitude towards government officials was perhaps best summed up by a villager who said he was voting for the Prime Minister and his party "because he is our master. He has been very good and kind to us. He is like our father, and we are like his children."

Economic Organization

The economy of Thailand is not only predominantly agricultural but is primarily a "rice economy." Rice production has been the main economic activity of the people from time immemorial, and for more than a century agriculture has accounted for well over half the national income. Agriculture, including forestry and fishing, provides employment for about 85 per cent of the population; agricultural products accounted for most of the country's foreign exchange earnings and a large share of its revenue—in 1956 about 46 per cent of the gross national product.

For many centuries the plains, valleys, and parts of the hills of Thailand have been devoted to the culti-vation of rice. The farmers of today plow, plant, and harvest in much the same manner—and often with the same kind of implements—as did their ancestors. Rice pro-foundly influences Thailand's commerce, politics, and social conditions. It constitutes the principal food of

everyone from the highest nobleman to the lowliest
commoner; horses, cattle, and all other domestic animals,
including cats and dogs, live on it. It is used for making
beer and liquors. Religious and superstitious observances
frequent occasions for holidays and festivals. Buying or
lending on rice or rice fields is a recognized means of
investing money. Records in the law courts show dealings
in rice and ownership of rice lands as the principal
causes for civil litigation. Rice forms the cargoes of
the thousands of boats passing up and down the great Chao
Phraya River, the freight of the trains to Bangkok from
the interior, and the loads of the ocean-going steamers
which load in the port of Bangkok. Rice husk is used to
stoke the furnaces of the mills of Bangkok and of many
provincial towns. Finally, rice provides the government
with a significant part of its revenue.

Besides rice, other agricultural and mineral
products, including rubber, teak, tin, and salt, combine
to be exported commodities for Thailand; but, by and large,
they are less significant than rice in almost every aspect
of consideration.

The two important characteristics of rice economy
in rural Thailand are the marketing system and credit
operation.

Carle C. Zimmerman (1931:175-76) describes the
rice marketing system in rural Thailand as follows:

The marketing system of Siamese rice consists of
four parts--the peasant, the dealer, the transportation

method, and the miller at Bangkok. As a rule the peasants do not sell padi direct to the rice millers. In fact, the business of transporting the grain from the field to mills has never been seriously undertaken either by the millers or by farmers. Consequently, there has grown up a number of middlemen, who buy from the latter and sell to the former.

One other important fact of Thai economy worth mentioning here is the role of the Chinese in economic activities in this country. There are approximately three million Chinese or Chinese descendents among the total 28 million of Thailand's population. Most of the Chinese are able merchants and businessmen, and they live in urban centers as well as in rural areas. Because most of the Thai are farmers, therefore, the middlemen are Chinese.

> The middlemen go into the country, buy paddy directly from the grower, and ship it to Bangkok for sale to the millers. Until well in the twentieth century nearly all rice for export came from the Central Plain. Middlemen went out on canals and rivers to the rural villages, bought the paddy, and brought it to Bangkok in river boats. Rarely did the growers themselves bring their paddy to the mills or the millers send their own buyers into the country. Sometimes, when competition was usually keen among the millers, they sent their buyers up the rivers and canals to meet the paddy boats, but they bought for delivery in Bangkok and ordinarily did not undertake to transport the paddy themselves. (James Ingram 1955:71)

Certainly, many of the agricultural problems of Thailand are tied up with the system and methods of middlemen. These men not only buy and sell paddy; they also lend money, advance supplies, own and rent land, sell merchandise, and transport goods in both directions. The various functions are so mixed together that it is too difficult to estimate the cost of any single function.

The problem is further complicated by the seasonal variations in the price of paddy, the cost of storing it to take advantage of off-season prices, and the varying standards of quality and volume used in selling it.

The peasant's lack of knowledge of prices and markets, together with his lack of liquid assets, have made him peculiarly dependent on the middlemen. This is particularly true of tenant farmers, who frequently do not have much security to offer against loans but who are compelled to sell their crops at harvest time when prices are low in order to repay advances made at high rates of interest. However, middlemen account for only a small part of the loans at high interest rates. The basic problems are risk and scarcity of loans comparing with the demand for credit.

> Thus the Thai have participated in the rice trade only as growers, and their lack of knowledge and experience in markets, prices, and business methods, plus their lack of cash reserves, have meant that a rather large share of the export proceeds of rice has been taken by the various middlemen. (Ingram 1955:73)

Besides being middlemen and money-lenders, the Chinese in rural Thailand still have many economic roles. As DeYoung (1955:106-107) writes:

> To the peasant, the Chinese, whether peddler, miller, shop-keeper, or rice broker, is an essential link to the larger economic pattern of the country and a means of providing necessary and beneficial services. As aliens, as businessmen, and as townmen, the Chinese of course come in for the inevitable garrulous depreciation of their rural clientele; the Thai peasant calls all Chinese peddlers chek, a somewhat derogatory Thai word for "Chinese," and the villager describes the peddler, when he is not present, as a sharp dealer

who will try to cheat the village buyer whenever possible. But little of this is seen in face-to-face dealings with the peddler; in isolated villages, he is a welcome visitor, for he brings not only necessary goods but news and gossip from the market towns and from other villages. In larger villages where Chinese shop-keepers or mill owners live, they are likely to have married local Thai women, and their children are considered Thai by the villagers. Pretty girls of poor families often aspire to marry Chinese shop-keepers or rice-mill workers, for by the village standards they are prosperous and can assure her and her family of economic support.

To sum up, the economic activities in rural Thailand can be characterized by the Thai working on the farm producing agricultural products while the Chinese buy and sell as well as lend money. Therefore, it is not exaggerative to say that the Chinese are economically powerful in rural Thailand and Thai peasants are dependent on them in many economic activities.

Kinship System

In Thailand, the basic socio-economic unit is the simple nuclear family, ideally consisting of a father, a mother, and their offsprings. In many cases, there are some older relatives such as grandparents living with them. Nevertheless, at times the rural household may become a small extended family, including a son or daughter with his or her spouse and children, or a widowed mother and her children. Ordinarily only one daughter or, if there is no daughter, only one son remains in the family household and inherits the house and the equipment.

The kin relationship is primarily that of husband and wife, and this determines the domestic grouping or

household. A newly married couple prefer to establish their own household; other arrangements are usually temporary. Customarily, in large families all the married children except the youngest son or daughter establish households elsewhere. Since the youngest will inherit the family house and equipment, he or she and spouse usually live with the parents. A young couple may also live with the wife's parents until the birth of the first child, and then establish themselves independently or sometimes with the husband's family. No fixed rule determines the residence of the young couple; economic considerations are probably of principal importance in each individual case.

In rural Thailand, there appears to be no rigid rule of inheritance. Formally, all sons and daughters inherit equal shares of the family land and other property, but since this has apparently not resulted in fragmentation of landholdings, compensating factors probably exist. The impressive expansion of farming acreage, indicating a constant movement into new land, is one explanation. After having lived for a time on the parental farm, each family tries to acquire its own farm. After death or retirement of the parent owner, the family house, compound, and a share of the land normally pass to the youngest married daughter or son who probably reunites some of the family holdings through private arrangement with the other heirs.

The relationships between parents and children
are, more or less, flexible in the sense that there is no
strict discipline concerning child rearing, toilet
training, or other social interactions. The process of
socialization, therefore, moves along individual charac-
teristics more than rigid sets of rules. Except for the
major concepts that are emphasized, i.e., the recognition
of parents' position as the most respected persons, the
grateful attitude toward one's own teacher, and the
acknowledgment of the higher status of the aged, other
patterns of relations are left to the individual's judgment.

It is perhaps logical to conclude this part of the
chapter with Blanchard's words (1958:438-39) as follows:

> For the broad peasant base of Thai society, the
> family is a microcosm of the society at large. The
> family is one of the few permanent groups whereby the
> rural Thai can occupy a status in which his role is
> formalized to some extent and in which his relation-
> ships are firmly channeled. As in his religion, where
> the salvation is a wholly personal matter which the
> individual must attain singly and by his own effort,
> the rural Thai is largely left to work out his own
> adjustment to society. In establishing a pattern for
> his social relationships, he is originally supported
> only by his immediate family or close kin. Under
> these circumstances, respect relationships taught
> between generations—taught to the child within the
> family group—traditionally form the basis of the
> organization of Thai society and, even today, exert a
> pervasive influence on the individual Thai in his
> social adjustments.
> Outside the immediate family, the general lack of
> groups and associations with clearly defined status
> positions permits the transfer of the respect rela-
> tionship existing at home between family and child to
> the larger national community. In this context the
> king or the government fills the role of the father,
> and behavior pattern learned in childhood forms the
> basis of the Thai's patriotism, loyalty, and respect
> for his country. The king or government is thought

of as a "second parent," to whom one owes respect and obedience.

Religious Organization

Thailand is a country in which Buddhism is the predominant religion. It is estimated that more than 80 per cent of the population are Buddhist. Buddhism in Thailand is of the Hinayana form. It is the state religion, and the King is the defender of the Buddhist faith.

In rural Thailand, excepting the family, the wat or Buddhist monastery is the most important institution in the community. The social life as well as religious affairs of the community still revolve around the temple compound.

> Besides the obvious religious activities, a wat may carry out any of the following functions: community chest, recreation center, hospital, dispensary, school, community center, public utility system, place of safe deposit, community warehouse and equipment rental, home for the psychotic and aged, employment agency, news agency, social work and welfare agency, village clock, hotel, and information center. (Blanchard 1958:111)

It is not possible to deal with the principles or philosophy of Buddhism in detail here because to do so would be too long for the size of this thesis. Therefore, it is necessary to cut short and discuss only some of the very important aspects which concern a peasant's life and his attitude toward the world in general. Also, it should be noted that Buddhism in Thailand as well as in other countries cannot be described clearly and easily because its spirit of tolerance has permitted the absorption of

many beliefs and practices from other sources which have served to supplement or expand its concepts or to fill gaps. Buddha taught that life is pain and sorrow, which the wise man must escape. Deliverance from the chain of existence is to be attained by suppressing every passionate act that entails a consequence, for this suppression will allow the individual to break the chain and achieve a perfect state of rest or nothingness. The basic Buddhist tenets said nothing about the existence of supernatural beings and very little about the nature of the universe; such concepts and others were added later.

Because of the fact that traditional Thai culture was largely influenced by the Indian culture which had prevailed in the area before, it is, therefore, natural that Buddhism and Brahmanism have become so closely interwoven as to be indistinguishable to the ordinary Thai worshipper. The animistic or spirit worship which is very important in the peasant's daily life has infiltrated into the Buddhist practice. As a means of storing up merit for life in the next world, the villager turns to Buddhism; but for protection in his present world, in addition to Buddhism, the peasant always looks to the host of good and evil spirits that, according to his belief, affect his every undertaking.

Wendell Blanchard (1958:91,96) writes of Thai's concept of cosmology and supernatural beings as follows:

> The basic concept of Thai cosmology, and also of the Buddhist doctrine, is that of change, consequence,

or <u>Karma</u> (called <u>Kam</u> by the Thai). The action of
karma causes the continual creation and dissolution of
worlds, individuals, and angels. All space is believed
to be occupied by an infinite number of cosmic groups,
each containing a world of men with heavens and hells.
From time to time many of these groups are annihilated
by fire, water, or wind, leaving only a void filled
with perfect disembodied Brahman angels. Eventually
desire manifests itself in some of the angels; tangible
dwelling places, food, and material things come again
into existence. . . . Forms of life appear and go
through their cycles of existence until finally,
billions of years later, the cosmic groups are again
annihilated.

   Thai beliefs concerning supernatural beings, . . .
derive from non-Buddhist sources and are completely
integrated into the religious system. Theoretically,
the Thai do not sharply distinguish between earthly
beings and those which could be called supernatural.
. . . The attributes to each being—form, wealth,
prosperity, misfortune, or supernatural power—are
"gifts" or "punishments" resulting from merit or
demerit, from the action of karma. An official's
wealth or position, for example, is the result of his
past actions, and no pious poorer individual can
resent it.

Phya Anuman Rajadhon (1961:65), a famous Thai

scholar, writes about Buddhism in Thailand as follows:

   Buddhism in essence is a religion of ethics and
philosophy rather than a religion in the strict sense
of the word. In Buddhism "man is as he has made him-
self; man will be as he makes himself"; the indivi-
dual has to strive by himself to be pure of heart and
deed for his own salvation without the intervention of
God or any other divine being.

Nevertheless, in practice, most of the Thai do not

mind adding to their own beliefs the prevailing Brahmanism

and animism of gods and spirits. According to the writer's

observation, the rural Thai incline to practice the

"ritual" part of the religion more than upholding the

basic philosophy of Buddhism. For example, building a wat

is regarded as highly meritorious and as a praiseworthy

sacrifice of time, labor, and wealth; and a male Thai whose

parents are Buddhist should, on reaching twenty years of age, become a monk for a period of time.

> A son who becomes a novice or a monk is in popular belief a mysterious agent for helping save his parents from hell when they die. . . . Thus parents are desirous of having at least one of their sons become a novice, or better still, a monk. If possible, the son-candidate ought to be an unmarried man; if he has been married, all the merit thus gained will go to the wife instead of to the parents, . . . (Anuman Rajadhon 1961:66)

The relationship between Buddhist monks and villagers is characterized as the monks play the role of spiritual leaders as well as counsellors in secular affairs. Generally speaking, most villagers consider that monks, especially those who practice meditation, are in a position to know more about the world than themselves, because monks can learn and practice Buddhist method and philosophy which are considered to be meritorious.

Again, Phya Anuman Rajadhon (1961:82-83) writes:

> An abbot of the village wat, if he is a man of age, full of lore and wisdom, is a highly respected person in the village. He is called luang phoe or "great father" by the villagers. His counsel is eagerly sought in case of difficulties and differences. The villagers seek his advice and decision even in a serious case rather than refer the case, if they can, to the official authority for decision. A decision by the authority or the legal court will take days, and also a certain amount of money has to be paid out in fees and other expenses. But not so with the venerable abbot, their spiritual father. The abbot in his spare time will make a round of afternoon visits to the villagers, giving advice or distributing the home-made medicine or other things as needed.

To sum up, the religious organization of rural Thailand is composed of three major components. They are: the wat or Buddhist monastery, the Buddhist monk, and the

villager. The wat serves as the center of the community
for religious affairs as well as for social activities.
The monk serves as the spiritual leader of the community;
the villager provides food and repairs the wat. In
return, he receives advice and blessing from the monk.
Brahman rituals and spirit worship also prevail and are
practiced by Thai peasants in addition to the Buddhist
philosophy.

Thai Peasant's View of the World

From our discussion of social relations of rural
Thailand by looking into the political, economic, kinship,
and religious systems which govern the relationships among
peasants, and between peasants and other kinds of people,
we can see that these relationships tend to form simila-
rities and differences by one way or another; and we can,
by systematic observation, classify and categorize them
into patterns or groups of patterns to show the related
whole of the community. In the same manner, we can draw
out the main principles or structures of the community.

It is, therefore, the writer's intention in the
last part of this chapter to tie together the major
patterns of the Thai peasant's behavior described in the
former parts in order to show patterns of relationship and
the ways a peasant looks at the world or a peasant's world
view—what is "good" and what is "not so good" for him
according to his point of view.

Robert Redfield (1961:63-64) makes three generalizations of peasants' attitudes or world views as follows:

> Among peasants of nineteenth century England, present day Yucatan, and ancient Bocotia, I seemed to find a cluster of three closely related attitudes or values: an intimate and reverent attitude toward the land; the idea that agricultural work is good and commerce not so good; and an emphasis on productive industry as a prime virtue.

From the writer's observation of the peasant's life in the Central Plains of Thailand, these three generalizations seem to hold true. Thai peasants also view land as a major source to earn their living; therefore, land is very important and dear to them. They also value agricultural work as "honest"; and, therefore, it is good. Commerce is not so honest; therefore, it is not so good. These attitudes certainly bring along the third generalization: the emphasis on productive industry as a prime virtue, because, one reason among others, it is an "honest" work. The attitude that commerce is not so good was formed when the economic situation of the country changed from subsistent to commercialized economy; it left the Thai working on the farm and gave the Chinese a chance to come in as merchants and money-lenders, upon whom they have to depend heavily. Many Thai, especially those who were in the Central Plains, lost their land because of indebtedness and ignorance of trading and credit systems. These situations increased the unfavorable attitude toward merchants and Chinese. Yet, at the same time, the Thai

cannot stay away from them; they must come to them to sell their agricultural products, to buy other commodities, to mill their rice, and to borrow money.

Herbert Phillips (1963a:106) in his study of relationships between personality and social structure in a Thai village writes:

> There are essentially only five social units—the nuclear family; a loosely defined, laterally oriented kindred; the nation-state; . . . and to a lesser extent, the village temple and school—which demand, and toward which villagers express, some continuing psychological commitment. Otherwise, there are no castes, age-grade societies, occupational groups (other than family), neighborhood groups, or groups expressive of village solidarity (such as councils, governing boards, etc.) which might impose a sense of obligation on the villagers, or to whose norms or functions the villagers might have to conform.

From the kinship system we observed that relationships among kins are loosely structured. There is no other formal organization except the nuclear family with which they are familiar. No rigid rules of inheritance and residence or even strict discipline in child training contribute to the more flexible patterns of the Thai peasant's behavior. In this sense the Thai peasant seems to be left to his own judgment regarding his future—what he wants to do or what he wants to be—depending on what he thinks he ought to do or ought to be. Of course, there are not many alternatives for him to choose except to work on the farm or to be hired as a laborer of some sort. This, however, may be settled with advice from parents or older relatives whom he respects according to tradition taught from generation to generation.

A case study in Bang Chan by Herbert Phillips

(1963a:107) shows that there are superordinate and sub-

ordinate patterns of relationships among Thai peasants:

> . . . the nuclear family and kindred, is
> characterized by an overriding emphasis on super-
> ordination and subordination based upon the relative
> age of each member. This emphasis upon superiority
> and inferiority is perhaps the most important single
> factor in the organization of not only the family,
> but all Thai social groupings, the maintenance of group
> coherence being a function of how well superiors take
> care of those below them in the hierarchy and how well
> inferiors obey those above. . . . Moreover, although
> an individual is expected to be unequivocally obedient
> and deferential to his parents and older siblings,
> his deference is completely voluntary and given only
> as long as he receives benefits from his munificent
> superiors, to whom he in turn provides his service or
> labor. Should such benefits not be forthcoming, or
> should the individual feel dissatisfied, put upon, or
> think he can do better elsewhere, he has complete
> freedom and sanction to break his affiliation and
> either go it alone or change his alliance to someone
> with greater resources (employer, high government
> official, teacher). The greatest benefit a family can
> give its children and which most strongly maintains
> the latter's loyalty is of course the promise of land.

Religious organization also emphasizes the

individualistic ways of achievement either for the next

life or the present life in this world. From this belief

system, the peasant views success as one part deriving

from merit accumulated in the past, one part from what he

is doing at the present, and, perhaps, the other part from

a little help of spirits or supernatural beings that he

believes to exist in the world around him and his family.

Violent death and mental or physical disorder resulting

from accident or from other causes also is believed to be

the result of past actions in the former lives or harmful

acts to spirits in this life. To live long, healthy, and

peaceful with a considerable amount of "wealth" is considered to be a "happy" life which everyone should have. Hard work is valued as "good," but "over-work" is never considered to be appropriate. The Buddhist philosophy of "middle way" is applied to every course of action.

From the political organization, the Thai peasant views bureaucrats or government officials as persons who have power over him; yet they are benevolent to some degree. They are "chaonai" or "boss," but, at the same time, they are considered to be like his parents from whom he can expect help in cases of misfortune or distress. Therefore, the peasant has duties to obey and be loyal to the government. The great tradition in the political system in Thailand has deeply established this type of image within the peasant's mind long ago, and even today there is only little change in his view.

To sum up, patterns of social relations in rural Thailand can be characterized as personal or "particularistic" more than contractual or "universalistic"; temporary (shifting alliance) more than permanent; and inequality, i.e., superordinate and subordinate rather than equality. The Thai peasant's world view can be described as an "ego-focussed image" (Hirschman 1962:14) which regards self as a central organ for everything. At the same time, to achieve something significant in life, it needs perhaps a little help from spirits, supporting past actions in the former lives in addition to his own

effort. The main themes of a "happy" life are: to live long, to be healthy, to be peaceful, and to have a considerable amount of "wealth."

CHAPTER IV

AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEMS

In this chapter, an attempt is made to analyze the problems of the introduction of co-operative structures into Thailand. This will include the contrasting of images and plans of different groups of people; the contrasting patterns of social relations within the existing framework of cultural settings to the introduced structure of ideas which requires new forms of behavior; and, finally, the general problems of change and development which need to be understood.

Images and Plans

The case of the introduction of land co-operatives into Thailand as we have discussed may be analyzed in terms of the differences of images and plans of two different groups of people. On one side are the intellectual, educated, and well-acquainted with the outside world—the high level government officials who have broader images of space, time, value, affection, etc. On the other side are the peasants with a low level of education and less acquaintance with the outside world. They have a relatively narrow image of space because of less travelling and inability to translate information from various channels

of communication due to little education. Their image of space or spatial image usually is limited to their own community. Connections with district, province, and Bangkok or Thailand may come to their minds only as a blurred picture. Their image of time or temporal image is also different from that of the other side. They may think of seasons, months, and years. The rainy season for growing rice is probably the most concern to all. They may picture the cool season in terms of harvesting time and the dry or hot season in terms of merit-making and funning time for them. They may think of the eighth lunar month of the year as the proper time to have their son ordained to be a Buddhist monk who, according to their belief, can prevent them from going to hell when they die. They may talk about the year of "great snake" or "small snake" with the probable events which may happen according to the astrologer's prediction and so on. By and large, they are less concerned with exactness of hour, minute, and second. They are likely to talk about going out to work in the early morning, coming back late in the afternoon, or something like that. Their image of value is also different from that of the other group. Although hard work is praiseworthy, merit accumulation by giving away wealth to Buddhist monks and to the poor and the unfortunate is not less valuable. "Poor but good, rich but vicious" can be heard among the peasants' expressions in their conversation when referring to someone with such a character.

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On the contrary, high level government officials
have different images from those of the peasants. From
various messages or information, their knowledge about
the deterioration of the peasant's economic condition was
real and quite disturbing to them. They saw the workable
method to improve the peasant's economic condition in
countries of Europe like Germany, Italy, Scandinavia, and
many others, even India. This method is co-operative.
If co-operatives can be workable among peasants of other
countries, why can't they be workable among the peasants
of Thailand?

With these images, plans followed; some high
government officials were sent to study co-operative credit
societies in India. After they had returned and with some
experimentation, co-operative organizations of various
kinds sprang up in many parts of rural Thailand. The
government plan was to improve the economic situations of
peasants by using co-operative methods as a means to achieve
the end.

The peasants' goal in joining land co-operative
programs is also to improve their economic condition, but
their plans are somehow different from those of the
government. Of course, their plans derived from their
images which, in turn, are shaped by various elements of
social organization of rural Thailand. They want to be
co-operative members because, among other things, they
know that co-operative organization is initiated, organized,

and supervised by the government, the institution which appears to them as omnipotent yet benevolent. They also know that they can trust and expect help from the government in many cases. In this case, they plan to get help from the government by being co-operative members; other things beyond this seem to be out of their expectations. Differentiation between the government and peasant's plan in this instance slows down the process of interactions within the co-operative organization to some extent. If the land co-operative program is to succeed, the government plan and the peasant's plan have to come to be one and the same. The government must have a plan to change plans, and this can be done only by changing peasants' images first. Images can be changed by receiving more messages or information. Messages or information cannot be given "raw," because in so doing peasants will interpret or rather reinterpret them according to their limited scope of understanding. The translating of information to suit the peasants' ability of understanding is one of the most important techniques which change agents must learn to be able to do. The understanding of social organization and structure of the community we seek to develop is one of the important keys to help translate the information more meaningfully to people of such a community.

The social organization and structure of rural Thailand as we have discussed emphasize the individualistic ways of achievement. This is in contrast to the co-operative

principles and methods which emphasize group action and group prosperity. The goal of Thai peasants and of Thai government is the same, that is, economic improvement. Religious organization, though, encourages merit-making; it does not discourage working hard and getting rich. But the plans are different: the peasants' plan is to achieve economic improvement individually; the government plans for them to help each other among themselves for group prosperity. If the government does not have an effective plan to change the peasants' plan, co-operative organizations in Thailand will be as they have been, i.e., members still do not actively participate in the business of their organization. One of the "basic" or "modal personalities" of Thai culture is the individualistic behavior. The lack of formal group action increases this character. The introduction of land co-operatives may cause a change in this aspect but unless and until this has been changed, the land co-operative programs cannot be claimed as successful as they should have been.

Particularism vs. Universalism

In a "traditional" society like Thailand which lacks formal group action and group affiliation, patterns of behavior of individuals incline to be "particularistic" more than "universalistic," to use Talcott Parsons' terminologies. The two types of behavior have a different expectation and obligation which sometime come into conflict with each other.

A particularistic obligation is limited to
persons who stand in some special relationship to one
(for example, the obligation to help a relative or a
close friend or neighbor). Diffuseness of particu-
laristic obligations provides flexibility in the
definition of these roles. That is, the content of
an individual's particularistic obligations (toward a
friend, a brother, a grandchild) depends in part on
the intimacy of the relationship itself. The greater
the affection, the greater the sense of obligation.
(Stouffer and Toby 1952a:482)

On the contrary,

a universalistic obligation is applicable to dealings
with anybody (for example, obligation to fulfill a
contract); . . . Universalistic obligations are defined
more rigidly, for they regulate behavior toward all
human beings—regardless of affective involvement.
(Stouffer and Toby 1952a:482)

Patterns of relationship within a land co-operative

organization which has fixed rules and bylaws usually are

classified as "universalism." Ideally speaking, univer-

salism is not concerned with personal ties such as friend-

ship or kinship. Any individual who comes under the same

categories will receive the same quantity and quality of

services. The strong "particularistic" patterns of

behavior among Thai peasants and to a lesser degree among

Thai bureaucrats create many practical problems within an

organization like co-operatives. In many cases, they

ignore rules or regulations in favor of personal affection

such as friendship and kinship. Within a land co-operative

organization, the decisions in favor of friends or kin may

involve such matters as granting a loan, accepting to be a

member, extending the period of repayment of loans,

interest, and so on. The area-officer also can utilize

his particularistic obligation for friends or kin in the

matters which he has power to decide, supervise, and
control.

Religious and political organizations of Thailand
which emphasize individualistic behavior and "parents and
children" type of relationships also increase the practice
of particularistic expectation and obligation. Within an
organization of all kinds, the problem of particularism
vs. universalism is one of vital importance in a country
which has social organization similar to that of Thailand.
At the time being, it is clear that particularistic
expectation and obligation are stronger than the univer-
salistic ones. How this type of behavior can be changed
in favor of the other side is, of course, quite a compli-
cated problem. It needs the change in the relationships
of various systems of the society to furnish the change in
the behavior of the population. The introduction of land
co-operatives into Thailand can be justified in this
matter as an "innovation" with an attempt to increase the
"habit" of group participation and group affiliation among
the Thai peasants. At least, they had a chance to practice
the universalistic expectation and obligation. The result
at this stage may be very little, because it contradicts
the basic patterns of relationship which exist within the
social organization of the country; but a gradual change
in other elements of the social system is also expected
and, if this really occurs for some period of time, the
universalistic expectation and obligation may increase

themselves to the level that group participation and group affiliation are the general acceptance among peasants as well as townsmen. The key role to help increase the rate of change is, of course, that of change agents who, if they understand what they are doing, will contribute more to the changing situation of the community. Land co-operative officers, both in the department and in the local levels, therefore, should realize the importance of their roles as proper change agents. Much of the success or failure of land co-operative work depends on their skills and understanding of the work they are supposed to do.

Problems of Change and Development

Within the framework of social organization of rural Thailand as we have discussed, there seem to be few obstacles to change and development. The case study of Bang Chan may be quoted to support this statement, in addition to other references which have been cited.

> The people of Bang Chan continue to rely on their own traditional values. Particularly important are those of their pervasive southern Buddhist religion, which are connected with nationalism and the strong position of the local Buddhist wat. These values encourage hard work, thrift, honesty, and benevolence, which are viewed as paying off in this life as well as in future lives. The prevailing values do not seem to be inimical to technological change. The few individuals who introduce useful technological innovations are esteemed highly for these services and rewarded with prestige. The literate or educated person is also valued as such. . . . (Sharp, Lauriston 1950a: 160)

Nevertheless, the "ego-focussed image of change," which is one main characteristic of Thai society because

of the lack of group affiliation and identification, somehow obstructs the economic development to some degree. To quote from Hirschman (1962:16) as follows:

> The reasons why the ego-focussed image of change is inimical to economic development are several. In the first place, success is conceived not as a result of the systematic application of effort and creative energy, combined perhaps with a "little bit of luck," but as due either to sheer luck or to the outwitting of others through careful scheming. The immense popularity of lotteries in the Latin American countries and the desperate intensity of the political struggle testify to the strength of the belief in, and desire for, change through sheer luck or through scheming, respectively.
> These attempts to reach success through various shortcuts obviously diminish the flow of energies into activities that will stimulate economic development.

The introduction of land co-operatives into Thailand, though their basic principles and methods did not correspond to the distinctive elements of Thai culture, i.e., the individualistic ways of achievement, did not meet any serious resistance because the values of hard work, thrift, and betterment also prevail in Thai society, in addition to the desire for quick steps to success by luck or scheming. However, many problems regarding change and development must be solved in order to quicken the rate of change. The small amount of resistance shown does not mean that the program receives more acceptance. A reinterpretation of the program according to traditional values always occurs. In the case of land co-operatives, farmer-members are inclined to think that the government or chaonai (boss) wants them to have a better life and that the government officials

decided to have land co-operative organizations which, according to their image, can help farmers, whom they regard as their children, improve their economic conditions. Therefore, farmers join the organization and get assistance from the government. They join the organization mainly because they can get help from the government and not because they appreciate the principles and methods of co-operatives. The traditional patterns of relationship between the government and the people of Thailand contribute to this reinterpretation.

> . . . the role of government in the daily life of the Thai people is striking in its extent. The entire educational system is controlled by the central government; even college professors are civil servants. All utilities are government owned. Almost all technical assistance from abroad, UN, US, and private, goes through Thai government agencies. Many private organizations—for example, one of the press associations—are government sponsored and financed. The government has a direct hand in the religious life of the people. Through its Department of Religious Affairs, . . . the government is the legal owner of all temple lands. It frequently gives money for the construction or maintenance of temples and mosques, and publishes books on Buddhism for the general public as well as text-books for monks. With the exception of a few missionary clinics in northern Thailand, all rural health and veterinary programs are run by the central government.
> In view of this situation it is not surprising that the farmer looks to the government for many of the things he wants. (Phillips, Herbert 1958a:39-40)

As for economic improvement, which is the main thought of the introduction of co-operatives into Thailand, it is also hard to appraise because of the difficulty in calculation of government expenditures for administration and support of the co-operative movement.

When co-operative societies enjoy substantial government support, their economic performance cannot be rationally assessed. This applies even if the amount of direct and indirect government assistance can be measured, for a most important advantage of a policy of official support is the knowledge that more help can be expected from the familiar source, and that the government will not be in a position to refuse help in case of need, even if it might wish to refrain from helping. A policy of large-scale government support of co-operative societies in general, or of certain societies in particular, creates for government a contingent liability to continue the support, and to come to the aid of those societies which run into financial difficulties. This liability is particularly onerous when government support has been directed in favour of particular societies which have acquired large number of members as a result of this support. A large proportion of the inhabitants of a particular area may become largely dependent upon a particular society, and the ability of the government to stand aloof from its difficulties is impaired.

It is often suggested that co-operative enterprises should not be judged solely or mainly on the basis of their achievements as business enterprises. It may be urged that co-operation is socially and politically desirable because it encourages producers, for example, to be self-reliant, thrifty and ready to submerge individual interests for greater good of a community of producers. It may also be said that participation in co-operation is economically desirable because it acquaints producers with the problems of markets and of business organization, and so enables them to see their problems as producers more intelligently in the larger setting of economic life; it also may widen the range of alternatives open to them.

There is some validity in these views, and this may justify government assistance in the form of providing an advisory service and technical assistance; thus it could maintain a corps of auditors to serve as a safeguard against abuse in the early stages of development. But these considerations are irrelevent when government assistance assumes such proportions and forms that it is better described as government participation. Co-operation then ceases to be a spontaneous outgrowth of a community of interests or of a desire for independence. Government assistance, and the promise and expectation of further assistance, undermine the self-reliance of the co-operators. Membership of a society comes to be prized largely because the society enjoys privileges and support which can only be shared by joining it. . . . Substantial

official support does not generally promote the qualities which are so highly regarded in the literature of the co-operative movement and in its philosophy. (Bauer and Yamey 1963:225-26)

The co-operative movement in Thailand is, more or less, like what has been described above. The degree of government involvement in the process of the movement is tremendously complex and very difficult to measure. The fact that the government originates, organizes, supervises, and helps the co-operative movement in various ways reduces the true "co-operative spirit" of its members a great deal. The hope to create the qualities of "self help and mutual help" among co-operative members is still far from reality, because the role of the government in the daily life of Thai people increases the expectation of "outside" aid for farmers. According to the peasants' image, the joining of land co-operative organizations is not for the principles of "self help and mutual help" but mainly to gain economic support from the government and secure for themselves government protection as co-operative members. If the area-officer wants them to come to the meeting, they come. In case they have problems, they also come to seek advice from area-officers. They regard an area-officer as a "boss" or "parent" upon whom they can depend in case of need. To change the pattern of relationship between co-operative officers and farmer-members is rather difficult within the setting of the present social organization which also recognizes this type of relationship in various fields from the national level down to the community level.

If the pattern of relationships cannot be changed, the acceptance of the basic principles and methods of co-operatives is more spurious than genuine. In such a case, it raises the question of the introduction of co-operative principles and methods into a country which has social organization and structure like those of Thailand. Whether or not co-operatives can be an effective means for economic development is the problem of major concern.

Social Organization and Social Structure: A Final Review

At the beginning of Chapter III, we discussed the concepts of social organization and social structure. It seems to this writer that the introduction of land co-operative methods and principles concerns and involves more the social organization of the community than the social structure, if we agree as to Raymond Firth's definition of the two terminologies. Firth said that members of a society look for a reliable guide for action, and the structure of the society gave this. And to him, social structure is "the sets of relations which make for firmness of expectation, for validation of past experience in terms of similar experience in future." These sets of relations, therefore, are products of behavior in the past which continue through time and remain within a society to become the guide of action for the new generation. It is something like an ideal pattern which members of a society

aim for. For example, the social structure of rural Thailand regarding religious affairs can be drawn from patterns of relationship between monks and villagers. The accepted value that monks are respectable, knowledgeable, and can be dependable either on religious or secular matters is the product of relationships between a layman and a monk in the past. This type of relationship must have been carried on for quite a long time until it established value for the validity of its existing and continuing. Within a "traditional" society, members of the society usually have rather fixed roles and patterns of relationships, because it is likely that the social structure of such a society is firm and easily known to them. These sets of relations or values were taught from generation to generation without much change. On the other hand, role differentiation in traditional society is not too complex compared to that of the so-called "affluent society." Therefore, it seems to be that within a traditional society everybody has his place to stay and knows his obligations: peasants, monks, village headmen, and bureaucrats know what they should do and expect from others.

Where can we observe the social structure of a society? The answer may be that we can find social structure within the social organization of the society. And, according to Firth again, social organization is "the systematic ordering of social relations by acts of

choice and decision." Certainly, social organization must have the same meaning with the words "social system." It is a system because it is organized, which implies planning and ordering of events—the social relations. Social organization may be big, small, segmented, or cover the whole society, depending on what kind of interactions we are looking for; but, whatever it is, it involves the similar patterns of relationships, that is, systematic or organized concerning choice and decision, aiming at selected end or ends. Within a society, we can expect to find social organization in many forms according to their functional relationships. These are kinship, economic, political, educational, religious, organization for health, and so on. And within each particular subsystem we may find other kinds of social organization like business corporations or athletic clubs, for example. It is assumed that the more complex the society, the more diverse and varied the social organization. On the contrary, if the society is more or less "static," types and forms of social organization may not be very diversified. With technological improvement, many forms of specialization increase; the result is an increase in types and forms of social organization. If this trend continues for quite some time, it will virtually bring a change to the structure of the society as a whole. It is, nevertheless, the writer's belief that social organization is easier to observe than the social structure of a society. This is

because social organization is more real in the sense that we can see and observe directly from social actions or relations which happen everyday in various matters. But social structure is rather abstract, and we can know only by drawing from various elements of interaction which occur within the framework of each type of social organization.

The introduction of co-operative principles and methods into Thailand is tantamount to bringing into the society new elements of social structure. It is a structure because it has been abstracted from the real behavior of groups of people who had tested its validity for economic improvement. As mentioned in Chapter I, co-operative ideas were originated by groups of people of the Western world who, generally, had already absorbed the value of discussion and group participation. This abstracted pattern of relationship is the result of common experience of economic hardship within a particular social condition at a particular time and of a particular culture. When this pattern of social relations was brought into a society which has a rather different structure which guides social interactions to various ends, it certainly must have an effect on the existing patterns of relationship of the society. And from our analysis, we have observed that it did not integrate well with other elements of the existing structure, because they were basically contradictory to each other. The result, therefore, is

that the co-operatives did not function well according to their own principles and methods. Instead, in order to survive, other forces from various elements of existing social organization made it change its forms of relationship to suit the existing structure until it is hardly recognizable from its original form. This is natural, because without the change in other elements of the existing social organization to furnish the change in the structure of the society, it is hard to expect the new element, which has a rather different value, to survive without changing itself. Taking this viewpoint, therefore, we can conclude that co-operative associations in Thailand failed to change patterns of social relations which still organize along the existing structure of the society, and, therefore, cannot and will not function well according to their own principles and methods within the present elements of social organization, unless there is a major change in the elements of social organization in the direction which favors the ideas of "self help and mutual help" and the methods of "one man, one vote" and so on.

The failure of the co-operative movement in Thailand, therefore, was the result of bringing into the society a structure which was foreign to the existing values or guides to actions of the people. The real behavior or social relations of co-operative members within their co-operative organizations, certainly, could not reach the goals set by co-operative principles because

they were not familiar with these structures, and they could not find similar structures within their community to lead them to accept the new value.

Because of the limited nature of the study, this thesis cannot provide conclusive evidences which may lead to constructing a new hypothesis or theory. The conclusion of this thesis, which has been mentioned, is only the affirmation of what many anthropologists, such as Murdock and Foster, have concluded from their previous studies. The contribution of this thesis is, in part, the hope that it may help in understanding the problems of change and development in newly developing countries which have different images, plans, recognized role-statuses, and other patterns of relationship among various elements of their culture. In many cases, these countries need models for development of their own, not just copies from countries which have different cultural backgrounds and value systems. The case of the introduction of land co-operatives into Thailand was illustrated as an example of the conflicting of these things. The more the differences between the introducing "innovation" and the existing culture, the more confusion and resistance will result. This thesis is just like a preliminary study of the problem. A more conclusive type of study by field research, perhaps, may contribute more to the knowledge in the field of culture change.

Hypotheses for Further Research

This final part of the thesis is an attempt to propose some "working hypotheses" for further research concerning the co-operative prospect and future in Thailand. These hypotheses, however, are not necessarily right or always workable, but at least they can be considered as methods of selective practice for further development of co-operatives in Thailand.

First of all, from our critical analysis of the problem of co-operatives in Thailand, we might come to an agreement that, at the present stage of development, there seems to be two alternatives for further development of co-operatives in this country. These two alternatives are based on the following assumptions:

1) Let us assume that Thailand needs co-operative ideas and methods to act as a channel for changing the "basic personality" of Thai peasants from individualistic to group minded behavior in order to furnish other changes in the social and political conditions of the country. In this case, we are not as concerned with the effectiveness of co-operatives as a means for rapid economic development, and we regard it only as a secondary purpose for bringing co-operative methods into this country. To be an effective channel for changing the "basic personality" of the Thai peasant from individualistic mind to group mind, which is the

major concept of co-operatives, we need the
following prerequisites:

a) Adequate trained personnel who have
    adequate knowledge of "culture" and
    "culture change," methods of information
    flow, and personality psychology, in
    addition to principles and methods of
    co-operatives.

b) In order to furnish prerequisite (a), the
    co-operative movement in Thailand must
    have qualified personnel in the fields of
    cultural anthropology, sociology, and
    personality psychology, in addition to
    those who are qualified in the fields of
    co-operation and economics. These per-
    sonnel will work together organizing an
    elaborate training program to produce
    adequate qualified change agents to work
    in the field with farmers.

c) In addition to establishing a training
    program as mentioned in (b), the personnel
    above have to carry on further research
    projects in the field of culture and per-
    sonality in order to develop more effective
    ways of dealing with problems of change
    and development of this field in general.
    This research project will involve a

considerable amount of money, and the result may not be very constructive at the present stage of our knowledge in these fields.

d) Information flow seems to be the most important key to success in this program. Therefore, concepts and techniques of information flow must be explored in detail, and it must be remembered that in practice it is much harder than getting the concept or idea from the training program.

It seems to be that the assumption of having co-operatives act as a channel for changing "basic personality" of peasants is rather an uphill task in practice. It will involve an expansion of spending resources either in man-power or in finance and the final result is still doubtful. In addition, within the present stage of development, Thailand still lacks adequate qualified personnel in the field of cultural anthropology, sociology, and personality psychology to furnish an effective training program for this purpose. Therefore, let us turn to the more logical assumption of the problem.

2) The assumption that Thailand needs rapid economic development and wants to reconsider whether a

co-operative model is an effective means for rapid economic development or not. If it is, what kinds of improvement do we need; if it is not, what model or models for development should be applicable to Thailand? We will now consider these problems in detail.

According to what we have discussed in the earlier parts of this thesis, we have some evidences that the role of land co-operatives as an effective means for economic development is rather ambiguous. On the contrary, the government has to provide a considerable proportion of the national budget to support the program in various ways. It is the writer's opinion that without financial and technical support from the government, only a few co-operative societies will survive in Thailand in spite of the fact that the program was started in 1916. The contribution which the co-operative movement as a whole has made toward economic development of the country in general seems to be very limited—concentrating on only a small percentage of farmers in some areas and only on some aspects of economic activity. The most predominant one is credit facilities, which generally are not considered to be adequate even for expanding a farmer's production in many cases.

From the very limited contribution the co-operative movement in Thailand is making toward economic development of the country as a whole, the writer is inclined to believe that the co-operative movement or the co-operative

model is not the effective means for rapid economic
development which is needed in Thailand at the present
time. The further expansion of the organization which
controls or supervises the co-operative movement is,
according to the writer's view, not going to contribute
more toward economic development in the same proportion
as expenditure which is going to be involved in the
program. No doubt, Thailand needs models for economic
development which suit its cultural background and social
conditions at the present time. The major characteristics
of any model for economic development in Thailand will be
composed of the following ingredients:

1) Ingredient of individualistic orientation. It
   may be individually owned property, individual
   responsibility, individual reward or achievement,
   individual recognition, and so on.

2) Ingredient of "patronage system." The role of the
   government as leaders, father, and "boss" is
   essential in bringing change and development to
   Thai peasants, at least within the foreseeable
   future.

3) Methods of information flow are also the key to
   increase the rate of change. The greater the
   effectiveness of the method of information flow,
   the higher the rate of change will be.

   For example, one model to facilitate credit for
farmers in rural areas can be built up in the process of

"agricultural banks" by the government setting up units of the banking system in various districts to serve as a channel to facilitate credit to farmers in rural areas. These agricultural banks will provide credit in short, medium, and long terms to farmers with some income and initiativeness who need further capital to expand and improve their production. Of course, this type of banking system cannot help poor farmers without securities but can give loans to only those who can provide property guarantee. But we must not forget that these farmers are the real potential power for economic develpment of the country as a whole because of their ability to compete and change their situation according to the new social condition which demands new kinds of social relations. In every society, there seems to be groups of people who, probably because of their interest or keen observation, expose themselves to various kinds of information and get benefits from it. These people usually are small in number compared to the population as a whole, but they are very important considered from the economic development viewpoint. These people normally can get information which the vast majority cf people ignore or overlook. In every occupation, there are those who seem to have a greater advantage than others because of their alertness to grasp and benefit from new techniques and knowledge. This is also true in the case of farm people.

Techniques of information flow cannot be discussed here in detail, but they will involve these questions: What kind of information do we need to let flow? How much or how little information should be carried out at a time, and at what frequency should the information be loaded? To what channel or channels should the information be flown?

The effectiveness of the techniques of information flow will show by the interest of the receivers of the information. This is to say that the receivers understand the meaning of it and know that it is useful to them, to their occupation, and to their welfare in general.

Though co-operative model is not suitable for rapid economic development, it does not mean that co-operatives are worthless in improving the economic conditions of some groups of people. In fact, co-operative organization is an ideal type of economic operation and should be encouraged if it shows propensity to progress. But to assume that co-operatives will work in every social condition is, as we have seen, tantamount to ignorance of the importance of the influence of culture.

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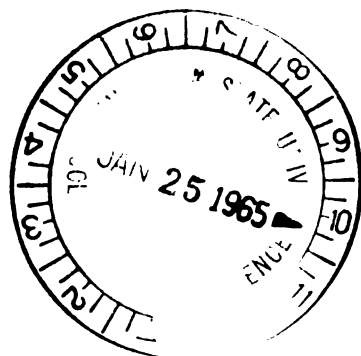
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