THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

RURAL TRANSFORMATION AND LOCAL POLITICS IN A CENTRAL THAI DISTRICT

Being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosphy

in the University of Hull

by

Daniel Arghiros, B.Soc.Sci.(Hons.)

August 1993

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of socio-economic change and local electoral politics in a Central Thai district and is based on ethnographic research carried out between 1989 and 1990. Local electoral politics has received little attention in Thai studies in recent years. This thesis aims to fill this gap with detailed case studies of instances of elections for subdistrict head and provincial councillor positions. The cases reveal the practical and ideological strategies pursued by candidates and the means by which they mobilise the rural electorate and enlist the support of political patrons. The study describes candidates' use of local 'vote brokers', 'vote-buying' and political patronage. The parts played by members of a district-wide manufacturers' association, by national politicians and by religious leaders are also examined. The case studies serve to expose the contradictions between the rhetoric and practice of Thai local-level democracy.

The strategies and structures of local politics are set within the context of a rapidly changing rural political economy. Two aspects of this, household economic differentiation and rural industry, are examined in detail. Economic differences between households are extreme and new relations of production are emerging. After surveying economic and social differences between households, the study focuses on a recently established brickmaking industry in 'Banglen' district. The industry is highly differentiated and relations of production are correspondingly complex. It is argued that owners of larger enterprises use patronage in their efforts to solve their problems with labour. The study describes an industry association that larger manufacturers have set up. The association promotes the interests of producers in several ways, not least by supporting members' attempts to win local office.

Comparison of politicians' electoral strategies and employers' strategies with regard to labour reveals that there exists between them an underlying similarity. Both politicians and employers attempt to achieve their ends by drawing on the ideology of patronage and obligating the other in the relationship. Both use capital to construct obligations with moral connotations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Professor V.T. King for his supervision of this research project, and for his consistently swift and helpful feedback. I am grateful to Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute for granting me affiliated status and to Dr. Watthana Wongsekirttirat for his invaluable assistance, not least for facilitating my residence in 'Ban Thung'. I appreciate the encouragement of Dr. Jacques Amyot and the advice and moral support given by Dr. Harvey Demaine, particularly in the early stages of fieldwork. Fieldwork was conducted with the kind permission of the National Research Council of Thailand, and I am grateful to Professor Somboon Suksamran for sponsoring my application. Research and fieldwork were funded by a special scholarship made available by the University Grants Committee, following the report on Oriental and African languages and area studies by Sir Peter Parker, as well as the Evans Fellowship Fund, the Emslie Horniman Anthopological Scholarship Fund, two Mervyn Jaspan Field Research Awards and the Radcliffe-Brown Memorial Fund for Social Anthropological Research. The School of Social Sciences, University of Sussex, helped with the production of this thesis.

I am grateful to Dr. Mike Parnwell and to Jip Parnwell for generously guiding my first steps in the Thai language and for greatly easing my introduction to Thailand. My thanks go to Colonel and Khun Vichian Chuanchurn for so kindly providing me with a home prior to my fieldwork. My greatest thanks go to the people of 'Ban Thung' and 'Ban Say'. I must thank them anonymously and collectively for their hospitality and patience.

Various people have helped by reading parts or all of this thesis. Carol Davis commented on a draft of Chapter Five and Michael Nelson gave detailed comments on a paper on which the thesis draws. Joanne Moller has been a keen critic and has read draft chapters as well as the entire text. It is my pleasure to express here my appreciation of Dr. Stephen Holland who has contributed in many ways and at many stages to this thesis. His encouragement both during and since fieldwork, and his responses to successive drafts of the thesis have been of immense value to me.

This is an opportunity for me to express my deep thanks to my extended family which includes my Mother, Peter Whitley and Maggie and Leon Cooper-Smith. I thank them all for the care, support and encouragement they have given me over the years. Lastly, I owe my fiancée, Joanne Moller, very special thanks. Joanne has contributed to this project in more ways than I feel able to mention and perhaps in more ways than she realises.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables

List of Figures

Note on Terminology

The system of transliteration used here is based on that of Manas and Smyth (1984) but with a number of alterations. All long vowels are shortened and tones are not indicated. I use 'j' where they use 'c', and I do not distinguish between 'o̲' and 'o'. This system is not used where conventions exist for the transliteration of names and common terms (for example, *rai*). Where the translation from Thai is not straightforward, or where the Thai itself is of interest, I have included it either in the text, footnotes or in Appendix 3.

Where letters are used as abbreviations for kin type notation, the system used is that referred to as 'system A' by Barnard and Good (1984:4). Most abbreviations are self-evident, though 'Z' refers to sister, and 'S' to son. Relative ages are indicated by 'e' for elder and 'y' for younger, and precede the term to which they apply.

Glossary

baht	unit of Thai currency (42 baht = approx £1)
chuay ngan	donate money to host of party
ha siang	campaign, electioneer
hua khano̲n	vote broker, or vote boss; intermediary.
kamnan	subdistrict head
rai	meausure of land (1 *rai* = 0.16 hectare)
sala	temple meeting hall
So Jo	provincial councillor, *samachik sapha jangwat*
thang	volume measure of rice (1 *thang* = 20 litres)
wai	greeting, by placing palms together just below chin and bowing head slightly

Abbreviations

BMA	Brick Manufacturers' Association
CUSRI	Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
NESDB	National Economic and Social Development Board
PAO	Provincial Administrative Organisation
SAP	Social Action Party

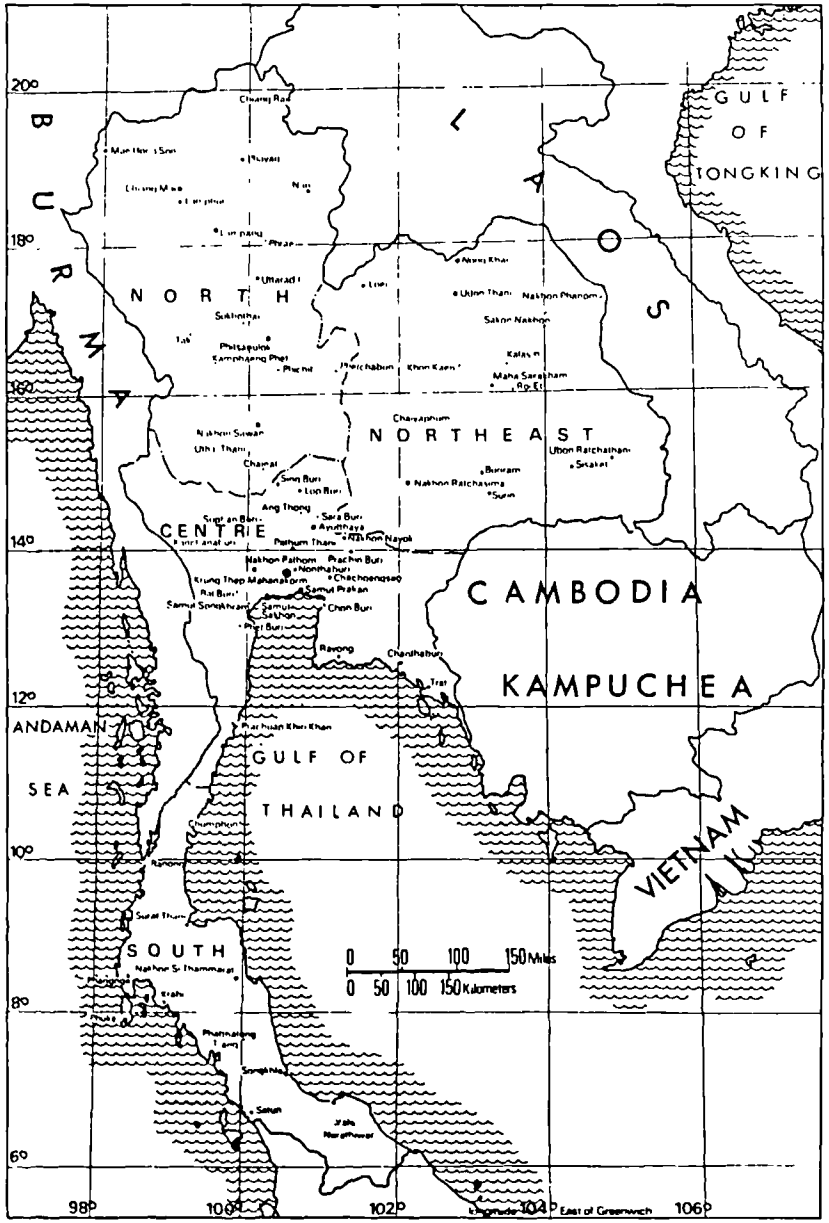


Figure 1.1: Regions of Thailand

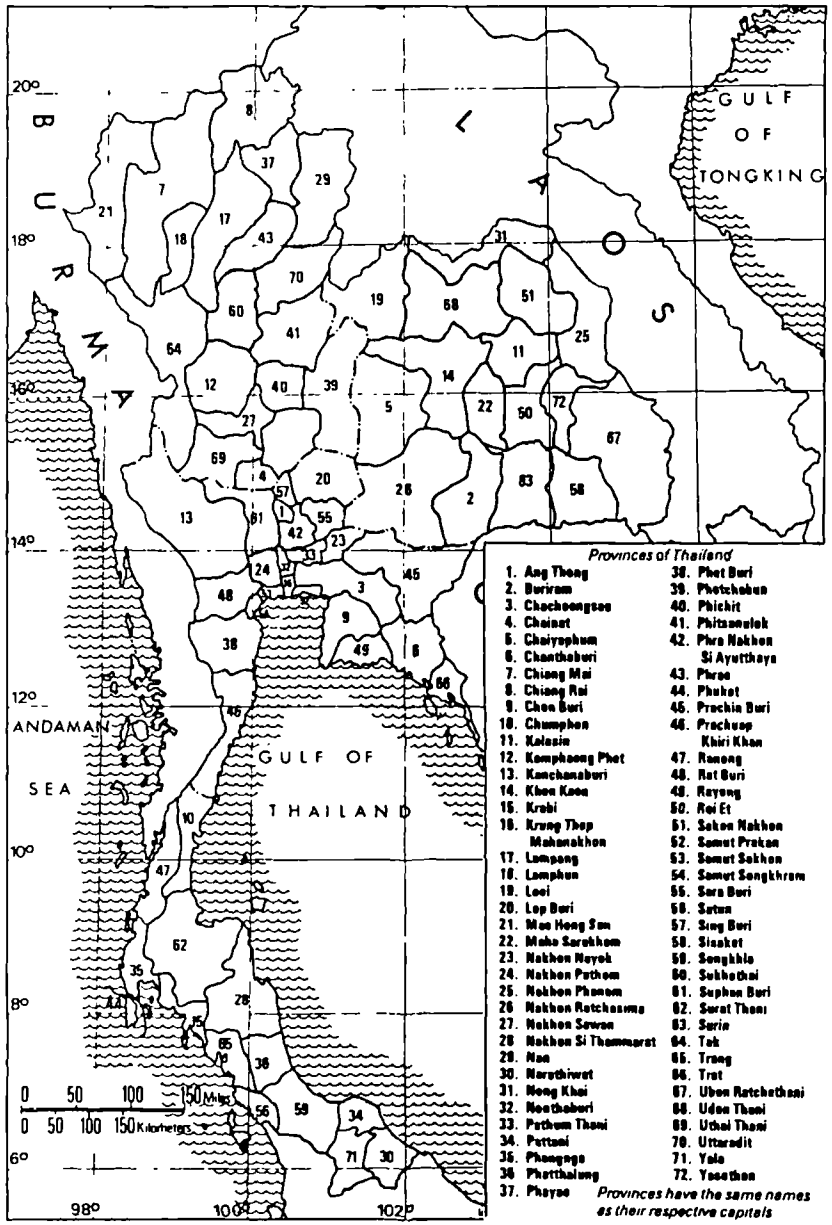


Figure 1.2: Provinces of Thailand

Source: Turton (1987)

Figure 1.3: Banglen District

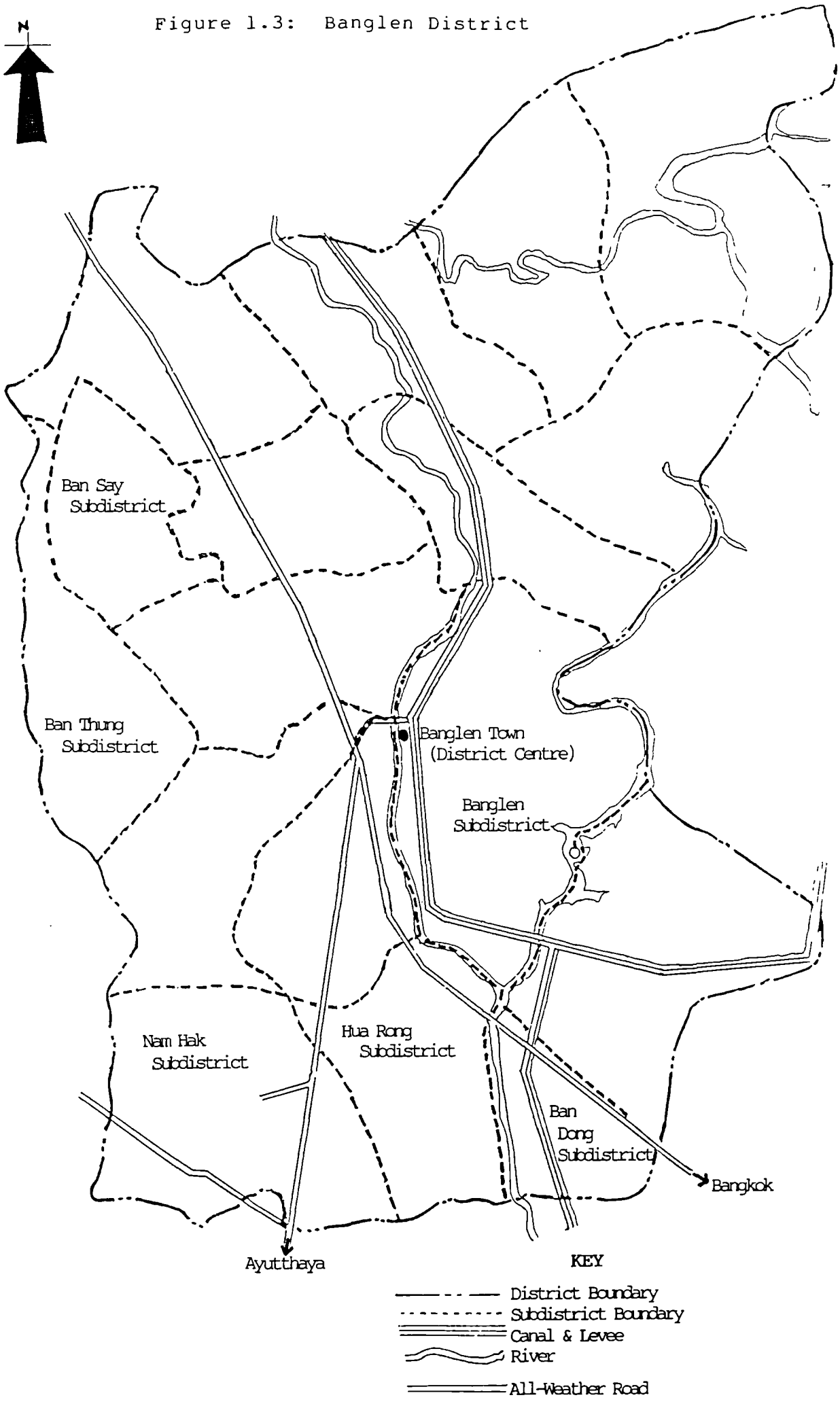
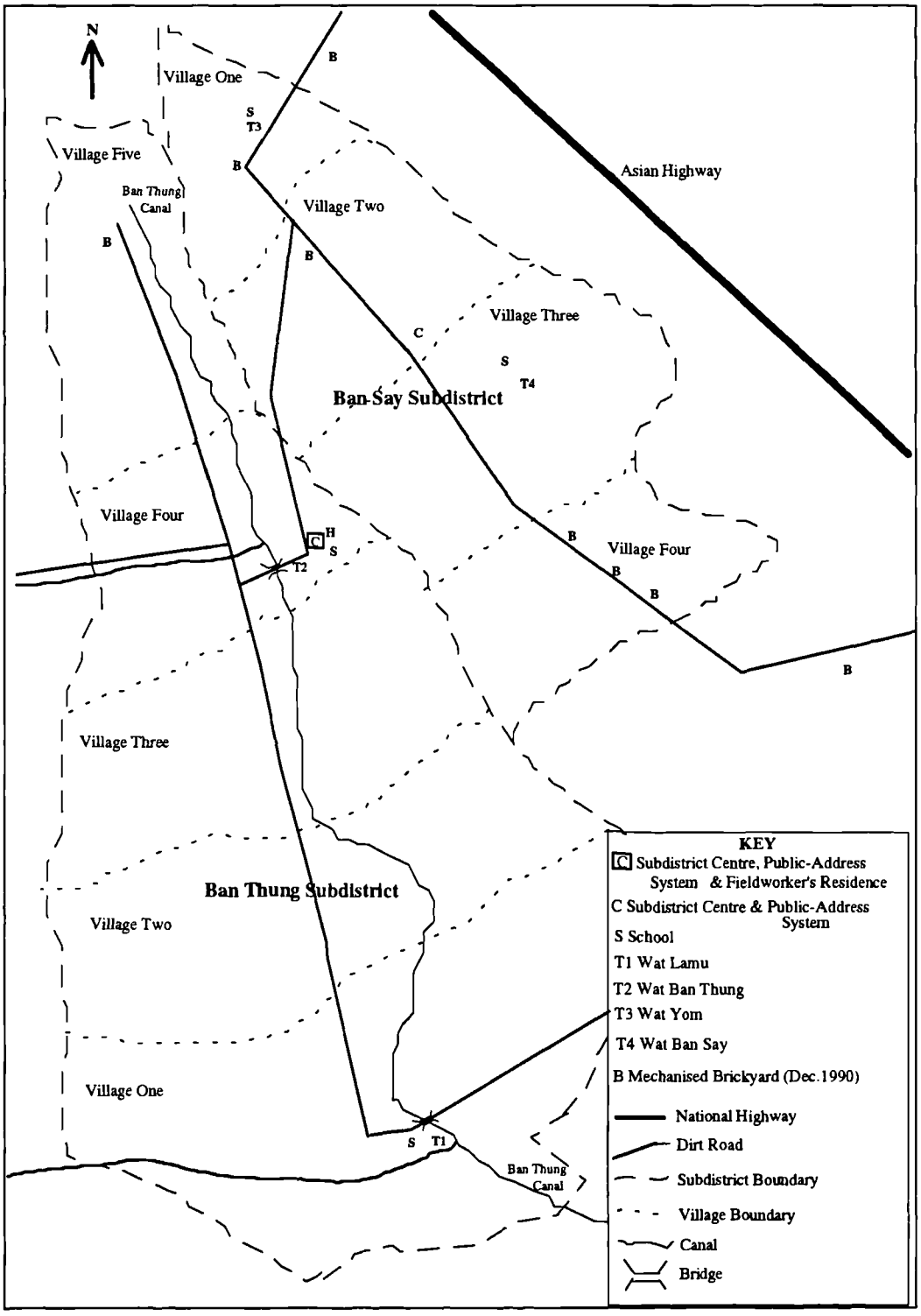


Figure 1.4: Ban Thung and Ban Say Subdistricts (sketch map)



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a study of socio-economic change and local electoral politics in a Central Thai district. It is an ethnography of local politics and its contribution is mainly to this field of study. While I am not concerned directly with a theoretical exposition, I do define and re-work a number of concepts as tools of analysis where appropriate. I base my analysis of local electoral politics on two case studies which comprise the body of Chapters Six and Seven. As Mitchell (1983) has argued, case studies are not necessarily merely illustrative but may serve as a valid foundation for inductive analysis; the case studies are used for this purpose here.

Insofar as this study pursues certain themes it is not a holistic portrayal of a Central Thai community. For example, the ethnography regarding social organisation and religion, is simply not presented. This procedure is appropriate because a number of detailed ethnographies already exist.[1] It should also be noted that I side-step a recent debate concerning the definition of Thai communities. Kemp (1987, 1988) has argued that, particularly in the Central Plains, the 'village' is a construction of the state; it should be acknowledged as such and should not be used uncritically as a unit of analysis. In the following account I capitalise 'village' (as Village) to show that we are talking about a state rather than an indigenous appellation. It is important to realise, however, that residents themselves have to some extent adopted administrative constructs and, significantly, factional conflict is built around them.

The case studies recount competition over two local-level elected positions, subdistrict headman (*kamnan*) and provincial councillor (*samachik sapha jangwat*). The *kamnan* is head of the subdistrict council, which is charged with representing 'development' needs to the local branch of the provincial administration. While the subdistrict council is under the authority of the central bureaucracy, the provincial council is, putatively at least, a decentralised, independent body charged with

---

[1]These include Piker (1983), Tanabe (1978) and Amyot (1976) on Ayutthaya settlements and Tomosugi (1980), Kaufman (1960), Sharp and Hanks (1978) and Kemp (1976) on other Central Plains communities.

representing the interests of individual districts to a provincial forum. Together, these case studies present a detailed picture of how the rhetoric of local-level democracy is contradicted in practice. Recent political turmoil in Thailand and subsequent widespread concern with democratisation give the case study data added relevance. The strategies and structures of local politics are explored within the context of a changing rural political economy. Two aspects of this, household economic differentiation and rural industry, are examined. Economic differences between rural households are extreme and new relations of production are emerging. Reflecting recent national economic growth, a rural brickmaking industry has expanded rapidly in the study district over the last two decades. Enterprises now range from those which utilise only household labour and are without machinery, and those which employ upwards of 100 workers and are capital intensive. Local landless and land poor residents comprise the core of the industry's workforce, and most owners of capitalist enterprises are local village economic elites. One significant and general feature of relations in mechanised brickyards is the employers' use of the idiom of patronage to manage their employees.

Economic differentiation and the predominance of large brick factory owners in the study district influence the conduct of local electoral politics. Firstly, candidates for office compete for the votes of an economically and socially stratified electorate. For the most part, the breach between candidates and the electorate is not mediated by personal relations of patron-clientage. And secondly, several brickyard owners have invested in bids, some successful, some not, to obtain subdistrict-level and district-level office. The correspondence of economic and political power emerging at the local level reflects national trends: an increasing number of businessmen now occupy seats in the national assembly, prompting some analysts to suggest that Thailand is becoming a bourgeois polity. My analysis of the brick industry and electoral politics indicates that some elements of employers' strategies, with regard to their labourers, and of candidates' strategies, with regard to local voters, are similar. To cultivate a loyal and productive work force employers treat labourers paternalistically as personal dependents. In a similar way, candidates seeking office deliver items which can be construed as gifts, either to communities or to individual households, on the understanding that, in return, recipients will give their votes. Thus, both economic and political entrepreneurs use capital in ways which impute reciprocity.

Before describing the approach I have taken in this study, I would like to clarify a matter of terminology. Some time ago Swartz drew a distinction between the autonomous and independent politics of communities and politics in which

outside groups or actors "are vitally and directly involved in the political process of the local group" (1968:1). The former he called 'local' and the latter 'local-level' politics. This semantic distinction is inappropriate to this study, as it would be to any other in contemporary Thailand, because outside actors and institutions are inextricably bound up with 'community politics'. Thus, in this thesis I use the terms 'local-level' and 'local' politics interchangeably.[2]

Recently, Vincent (1990:399-400) has examined trends in the anthropological study of politics evident during the 1980s. She concludes that diverse studies of subaltern classes, peasantries and women all, to use a phrase which encapsulates their underlying analytical unity, 'confront capital'. It may be evident to the reader that a similar concern underpins the present study: the apparent diversity of the topics addressed are laced together by the underlying concern with expanding capitalism. For example, expanding capitalism has contributed to the development of household economic differentiation, that is, to the polarisation of households into wage-labourers and owners of rural industry; and at subdistrict, district and national levels, the conduct of electoral politics makes a 'commoditized' model of politics analytically appropriate (cf. Strathern 1984:68): candidates are investors who hire the electorate to discharge a service, for which a price is to be paid.

In this thesis I consciously address electoral rather than 'everyday politics' (Kerkvliet 1990). Whereas my focus is on the factions, vertical linkages, strategies and ideologies revealed by electoral competition, Kerkvliet's 'everyday politics' consists of "the debates, conflicts, decisions, and cooperation among individuals, groups, and organisations regarding the control, allocation, and use of resources and the values and ideas underlying those activities" (1990:11). While Kerkvliet's approach draws attention to conflict between different class and status groups, a focus on electoral politics tends to highlight the reciprocal nature of such relations. Kerkvliet calls the latter type of study 'conventional', a term which is suitable because political activity is defined as that which is related, whether in cooperation or opposition, to the state (1990:6-9). Conventional studies of Philippine politics have given rise to what Kerkvliet calls the 'factional model' of politics in which:

---

[2]A similar point has been made by Strauch (1981:4-5) with reference to a Chinese village in Malaysia.

> the building blocks of the country's politics are alliances and factions, which cut across and entwine society's two major classes, the poor majority and the wealthy minority. These factions and alliances are based in villages and towns. They connect villagers and other ordinary citizens first to local leaders and brokers and then, in pyramid fashion, to municipal and provincial elites (mayors, council members, governors, and their rivals), and ultimately to national politicians (1990:8).

This model is, with a little modification, as appropriate to contemporary Thailand as it is to the Philippines. Kerkvliet recognises that studies of this kind are necessary and valuable, but he objects strongly to an extrapolation that is frequently made from them. In the light of his own field research he rejects the assertion that because, in electoral politics, conflict is not evident between members of different class and status groups, relations are therefore harmonious (1990:242-244). Relations are, he argues, characterised by both cooperation and conflict. While in this thesis, the focus is on electoral politics, and thus on the mobilisation of economically and socially subordinate groups by superordinate individuals or groups, I do not assume that this rather limited mutuality represents the entire picture. However, I can do little more than acknowledge the fact and thereby pre-empt the sort of criticism Kerkvliet has raised. For a number of reasons, conflict between members of different class and status groups is simply not apparent in electoral competition, thus my silence in this respect is a product of the subject and methodology chosen. In support of my approach I would add that, unlike the Philippines literature, there are remarkably few contemporary Thai studies of the 'factional model' kind. Thus, while one-sided, this study contributes to a poorly researched but important topic.

I.A. Methodology

I lived in the fieldsite for 14 months between October 1989 and December 1990. My original intention to study socio-economic change in a rural Central Plains settlement led me to select one of three subdistricts researched 20 years previously by Amyot (1976). This was done with the assistance of members of Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute (CUSRI). A year's informal tuition and independent study had given me sufficient knowledge of the Thai language to make the use of an interpreter unnecessary. However, I received help with language in the first six weeks of fieldwork from a researcher collecting data on behalf of CUSRI. I gained a good command of Thai during the course of fieldwork.

It soon became apparent that I would greatly restrict the scope of my

research if I slavishly kept to the locale of Amyot's original study in this subdistrict. Although detailing conditions throughout the subdistrict, Amyot (1976) used survey data from only a single administrative village (Village Four) in 'Ban Thung'. To focus solely on Ban Thung subdistrict would eliminate from the research the locally significant brick industry and much local political activity. In addition, to survey only Village Four would produce a rather unrepresentative portrait of conditions in the locality, as will become evident.[3] Effectively, I abandoned my original intention of using Amyot's work on Ban Thung as a baseline for a diachronic study.

I resided near the boundary of administrative villages Three and Four of Ban Thung. The greater part of the detailed data regarding politics and social interaction between status groups was gained from these two 'villages'. I regularly visited other areas of Ban Thung subdistrict, Villages One, Two and Five, and the adjacent subdistrict of Ban Say - the location of a large number of brickyards. Insofar as I also spent a good deal of time in Ban Say subdistrict it was also my fieldsite. I was more mobile during the second half of fieldwork: use of a motorbike enabled me to conduct interviews and visit brickyards elsewhere in the district.

Soon after installing myself in Ban Thung subdistrict I surveyed all households in Villages Three and Four to obtain basic census data. Apart from yielding useful information, this activity enabled me to meet residents and to develop language and social skills. It emerged that wide economic disparities existed between the two administrative units: landholdings were concentrated in one and largely absent in the other. This fact influenced my selection of a population for the subsequent survey administered towards the end of fieldwork - this was devised to yield data on issues that emerged as significant during the course of research (such as material on land sales and the brick industry). The survey is based on a sample taken from households in all nine administrative units in Ban Thung and Ban Say (see Appendix 2 for details).

I chose to live at the Subdistrict Centre rather than within a household or in the temple. The Centre consists of two adjacent buildings built on a raised concrete platform. One building is a large meeting hall and is only used on special occasions. The other, smaller building in which I lived, houses the subdistrict's public-address system and, towards the end of fieldwork, the subdistrict's single public telephone. Residence at the Centre gave me the freedom to associate with

---

[3]This is because the majority of Village Four households cultivate land (87 percent), while those of Village Three do not (12 percent). But see Wathana (1991) for an analysis of results from a Village Four survey which does juxtapose 1969 and 1989 findings.

whom I wanted when I wanted. The Centre is in a central position relative to the subdistricts' main institutions and was frequently the location for events. It faces onto the main road leading into the subdistrict, is adjacent to the school and the subdistrict Health Station, and is opposite Wat Ban Thung and a popular noodle stall. While residence there was undoubtedly beneficial in terms of providing opportunities for participation, the lack of privacy afforded was not without its frustrations.

While my residence at the Centre did not facilitate observation of intra-household life - the nearest households were some 50 metres away - it did give me access to data of a political kind that would probably have been denied me had I lived elsewhere. The Centre was repeatedly used by a subdistrict faction leader to host nocturnal 'insider' (*wong nay*) meetings at which electioneering strategies were debated and decided. My presence at these meetings was soon established as a matter of course, and I slipped easily into the role of host.

Like many researchers before me, I modified my research goals to take advantage of events as they developed. Several months into fieldwork the long-standing subdistrict headman (*kamnan*) retired and elections were held to replace him. Shortly after this, elections were held nationally for provincial councillors (*samachik sapha jangwat, 'so jo'*), again necessitating local polling. Not surprisingly, then, local electoral politics became the focus of much of my research activity.

In a similar way, I had not reckoned on the need to examine rural industry before embarking on fieldwork. However, it soon emerged that the brickmaking industry was of prime importance, both economically and politically. On the one hand, a significant proportion of Ban Thung and Ban Say residents are employed in the industry; on the other, larger manufacturers were obtaining local official positions. Indeed the new *kamnan* of Ban Thung was a brickyard owner. In examining the industry I interviewed the owners of 16 mechanised and seven non-mechanised brickyards situated in six subdistricts (see Appendix 2 for interview schedule). I was a regular visitor to two mechanised and one non-mechanised brickyard throughout fieldwork and frequently worked alongside workers in these and other brickyards. This gave me a measure of insight into their experience as well as an opportunity to observe worker/owner relations. Conversations with employees at their homes helped to give a more rounded picture of the industry.

During the early months of fieldwork I learned of the existence of an association of the largest mechanised brickyard owners. I subsequently began attending the monthly meetings of the Brick Manufacturers' Association (BMA) and was present at seven gatherings in all. In order to gain greater social access to

the BMA and to get to know individual members I accompanied the Association on a weekend 'holiday' to a resort area.

Participant observation and informal conversations yielded much of the data for this study. Residence in the Centre gave me no choice but to participate in or at least be present at activities which took place there (e.g. official visits, King's birthday celebrations and polling). I attended funerary rites, ordination parties, weddings, new house parties and so on, both in Ban Thung and elsewhere in the district and contributed financially in the locally appropriate manner. I consistently participated in religious activities at Wat Ban Thung. During the harvest season I joined wage labourers and landowners harvesting rice and on one occasion went reaping with villagers to a neighbouring district.

Two main means of recording data were used: notes and audio or audio-visual recordings. When researching uncontroversial topics I made notes in view of informants. Where information was potentially sensitive I memorised key points and phrases and waited for opportune moments to make notebook entries. I generally typed up these notes daily.

From the early stages of fieldwork I tape-recorded public meetings - mainly Subdistrict Council and Subdistrict meetings. For three months at the end of the fieldwork period I used a video camera to film meetings and miscellaneous activities and events both within and outside Ban Thung. Transcriptions in the text derive from both these sources. Secondary data are from newspapers, and provincial and district office records.

It is appropriate to note at this point that where the thesis focus is local electoral politics it is largely a male world that is portrayed. Politics were predominantly the domain of men, the majority of my informants on the topic were male and most protagonists were men.

A number of research tensions and problems arose as a result of studying factional politics. Other potential fieldworkers may find mention of these helpful or at least interesting. Almost inevitably I experienced conflict between the desire to obtain data and the need to avoid factional membership. It gradually proved impossible to achieve both. Having entered Ban Thung subdistrict with the permission of the incumbent *kamnan*, I was in the first instance associated with him and his 'group' (*phak phuak*). As the subdistrict became riven by factions in the ensuing election campaign, I was increasingly identified with his faction. However, although I was present at electioneering strategy meetings this was not general knowledge since these were conducted at night.

Association with one faction or candidate circumscribed my ability to obtain first-hand data about the other. This was not such a great problem during

kamnan elections in Ban Thung since friends and informants belonged to both factions, but it was so prior to provincial councillor polling. For example, shortly before polling I wished to interview for a second time the opponent of the provincial councillor candidates with whom I was associated via Ban Thung's *kamnan*. My intuitive decision not to do so, and to forego an explanation of his electioneering strategy, was well taken: I later discovered that one of the candidates with whom I was associated intended to shoot my potential interviewee at this time. Even several weeks after the event I still felt it ill-advised to secure an interview and as such the political context imposed certain limitations on the data I could obtain.

Those active in contemporary Thai rural politics are invariably local elites, the locally dominant and the powerful. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that while they did not feel threatened by my presence they also attempted to use me as a political resource. I was once asked to act as a 'spy' *(nak sup)* by the outgoing *kamnan* and his intended successor. I was requested to use my research activities as a cover for finding out to whom members of different subdistrict neighbourhoods were loyal. The other faction leader made the same request. It took a good deal of verbal adroitness to placate these demands without actually giving any ground.

At times I felt that my informants were attempting to use me as a legitimating symbol. For example, after a speech over the subdistrict public-address system advising villagers to vote for a 'good man' in forthcoming polling, the *kamnan*, in an apparently unconnected vein, announced that I had been around for several months and was well-educated and informed. After switching off the amplifier he turned to me and told me to tell villagers that his political protégé was a 'good person'. In other words, having told villagers that I was worth listening to, he told me to speak well of his candidate to them.

Another request was more direct in its attempt to influence polling. In the final days of provincial councillor electioneering a candidate attempted to use me to facilitate intimidation of the opposition. Thrice he asked me to accompany him on polling day to film the faces of all local polling officials. He explained that they would not dare falsify the results if he had their faces on film. As a close informant noted, he wanted to "threaten" (*khu*) them. He only accepted my refusal after I insisted that I needed and lacked permission from district authorities.

By recounting these incidents I hope to have alerted other potential researchers to some of the problems generated by investigating local Thai politics. Close association with those active in local politics makes it necessary to perform a rather uncomfortable balancing act. Too much acquiescence and one becomes

embroiled in activities which are unethical and partisan. But if one displays signs of disapproval of these activities then one will soon lose access to the field that one is studying.

On account of the sensitive nature of much of the material in this thesis I have taken steps to disguise the location of the fieldsite and the identity of individuals. The reader will realise that I make repeated reference to an earlier published study of one research subdistrict, and may thus consider that my use of pseudonyms for place names is in vain. To find the location of the study site, the reader would only have to consult this text. However, despite this I still consider using pseudonyms worthwhile. The main advantage of doing so is that it will prevent citations from this text revealing the identity of the fieldsite. I realise that this practice may seem unorthodox, but I deem it necessary to protect my informants as well as myself. The reader is asked, when citing from this thesis, to use only the place names given in this text. Pseudonyms have been given to temples, the subdistricts and district in which research was undertaken, and to all individuals except national politicians.

I.B. Synopsis of the Thesis

The following Chapter sketches out the historical, economic and political contexts of this study using secondary sources. Its first section very briefly reviews the historical development of the Thai political economy from 1800 to the present with a view to situating contemporary conditions. The second section examines recent changes in national political life. One assertion made in this thesis is that local electoral politics can no longer be considered in isolation from national political activity. Thus, recent changes and how they might be affecting local political processes are examined. The third section of the Chapter examines various aspects of local politics as represented in the literature: this provides both a background to subsequent Chapters and something of a point of departure.

The third Chapter takes leave of the literature and presents data on the field district and subdistricts, beginning with an examination of recent changes in Ayutthaya province. It then describes various relevant facets of life in the study sites. Among other things, data are presented on infrastructure, religious leaders, land sales and patterns of livelihood.

Chapter Four focuses on the theme of social and economic inequality. Those familiar with Thai studies will recognise that there is already a large literature on this subject. I am not intending to break new theoretical ground; I merely present data on Banglen. The Chapter begins with a brief review of the

theoretical literature and recent Thai case studies. Quantitative and qualitative data on the shape of economic differentiation are presented, followed by an examination of relations between different status groups.

Using the framework for the analysis of differentiation established in the previous Chapter, Chapter Five examines the brickmaking industry of Banglen. The landless and land poor of the district find employment in the industry: many members of the economic elite have become owners of enterprises. However, the importance of the industry is not limited simply to its position in the local economy. A number of owners have used their economic power to obtain positions of local office, and thus state-sanctioned power. The Chapter begins by tracing the industry's development in the district, its organisation and the trajectories of growth pursued by individual enterprises. The account proceeds to examine in more detail the characteristics of workers and employers, and the relations between them. Finally, the Chapter describes the employers' organisation, the Brick Manufacturers' Association (BMA).

Subsequent Chapters are devoted to the description and analysis of local electoral politics. Chapter Six describes in detail the election of a subdistrict headman (*kamnan*) in Ban Thung - the election of a relative outsider who is the owner of a capitalist brickyard and BMA member. Chapter Seven examines district-wide elections for representatives to the provincial council, a body which theoretically represents the interests of individual districts to the provincial administration. Candidates' campaigns in Ban Thung and in the district as a whole are recounted. The narrative focuses on the campaign strategies of three candidates, two merchant/contractors and a brickyard owner/BMA member. A list of *dramatis personae* is presented in Appendix 1 to help the reader place the various actors who figure in the case studies.

Chapter Eight analyses the data of the two case studies and takes up particular issues and themes. These include: the political significance of religious leaders and candidates' ritual oriented campaigning, informal political structures, and the participation of national politicians and local manufacturers in electoral politics. The phenomenon of vote-buying is examined to explain its effectiveness as an electioneering strategy. By comparing and contrasting the case studies a number of generalisations on the characteristics of contemporary Thai electoral local politics are generated. The final Chapter reviews the ground covered by the thesis and indicates areas for further research. The thesis ends with an Epilogue that reviews the national political events which have occurred since I completed field research. I attempt to assess how these events have been experienced in Banglen district.

CHAPTER TWO

THAI NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLITICAL ECONOMY

This Chapter examines three themes which form the backdrop of the study. Firstly, the historical development of the Thai political economy is traced so as to contextualise contemporary rural Thai society. Secondly, changes in national politics are examined in an effort to explain the current involvement of national politicians in local-level politics. Lastly, the characteristics of local-level politics, as represented in the literature, are presented to situate the content of the last three substantive Chapters in this thesis.

II.A. The Changing Thai Political Economy, 1800-1990

While this overview is necessarily schematic, it aims to identify broad political and economic changes and the forces which brought them about. In doing so, it draws heavily on Hewison (1989).

Pre-nineteenth century Thailand is generally viewed as pre-capitalist. Roughly speaking, society comprised two classes: aristocrats and commoners. Aristocrats were awarded land by the king, whose property it remained. Commoners (*phrai*), with whom we can consider 'slaves' (*that*), were linked vertically to either aristocrats or the king (Akin 1969). During this period control over people rather than land enabled aristocrats to extract a surplus (Brummelhuis 1982, Feeny 1982: Chapter Six): commoners performed corvée or paid taxes in kind; slaves were exempt from both. The vast majority of commoners were engaged in agriculture, mainly rice cultivation, and in the manufacture of handicrafts for home use. A market for agricultural products was as yet undeveloped and trade between and within communities was by barter. As yet, land was not a commodity and access was on the basis of usufruct.

The rural economy began to be commercialised in the first half of the nineteenth century. Historians (for example, Vella 1957, Chatthip 1978), until fairly recently, have made no distinction between the pre-1800 and 1800-1850 periods. It was held that the rural economy during this entire period was still essentially uncommercialised and that a definite break occurred only when Thailand

signed a trade treaty with Britain, which incorporated the country into the world economy. More recent writers, basing their analyses on sources such as those above, have tended to reproduce this depiction (e.g. Douglass 1984, Witayakorn 1982). However, this view has been criticised for failing to take account of recently discussed historical sources (see Hong 1984, Chairat 1988, Terwiel 1989). In the first half of the nineteenth century money began to circulate widely and rural dwellers began producing for the market, especially in the Central Region. These changes were, in part, a result of new methods of surplus extraction utilised by Rama II (1809-1824). It became increasingly difficult for the monarch to recruit sufficient corvée labour to complete royal projects, partly because aristocrat-officials were building up their own commoner followings. Hired immigrant Chinese labour was used to fill the gap. Accordingly, demands from the rural populace were transmuted from being in kind to cash in order to generate revenue to meet these new wage bills. In this way rural producers were drawn into the cash economy. There is evidence that the economy in the Central Region during this period was "export-oriented" and "expansive" (Terwiel 1989:235-236).

The 1855 Bowring Treaty and subsequent agreements made with Britain forced open Thailand's markets and removed trade restrictions. As indicated above, by the time the Treaty was imposed a measure of internal trade, production for exchange-value and monetisation of the economy had evolved. The treaty had the effect of fuelling these changes: trade expanded greatly, rice became the predominant commercial crop and cheap imported commodities began to circulate. Again, these changes affected the Central Region most immediately. The granting of land ownership rights after 1855 gave rise to a class of aristocrat-landowners who came to control large tracts of land around Bangkok and beyond. Self-sufficient peasant farmers became petty commodity producers, at least partially dependent on middlemen and the international rice market for their livelihood.

Reforms initiated by Rama IV (1868-1910), accelerated the pace at which rural communities were integrated into the world capitalist economy. From the 1870s 'slavery' was gradually abolished, freeing sections of the population to expand the area of land cultivated, produce for export and contribute taxes. Provincial reforms, begun in 1892, restructured the entire administrative system (Bunnag 1977). The state achieved more effective control of outlying areas and consolidated its influence over rural communities already integrated into the emerging nation-state.

It is undoubtedly true to say that the expanded rice market led to specialisation of production and a decline in self-reliance. The result, as Hewison has noted, has been the "subordination of the peasantry to the international

capitalist system" (1989:90). Furthermore, it is widely recognised that the commoditization of land, labour and other resources prepared the way for the emergence of economic differentiation in communities (Ingram 1971, Johnston 1975, Douglass 1984, Ananya 1985). Other factors, such as population growth and the closing of the land frontier, have also led to the expansion of a landless or land poor sector in rural society (Piker 1975). While production was still mainly for household use, size of landholdings generally corresponded with subsistence needs. But the fact that rice acquired an exchange value as opposed to simply a use value gave producers a stimulus to increase the size of holdings. Often this has been at the expense of producers in a weaker position. Moreover, merchants, not involved in direct production, acquired an interest in landholding, often using moneylending and debt foreclosure as a means to obtain land. These processes, as they relate to Banglen district, are examined in greater detail in Chapter Five.

The development of capitalism in Thailand has been closely tied to the economic interests of the nation's powerholders (Hewison 1989). When the monarchy was overthrown in 1932 (Stowe 1991) the economy was still predominantly pre-capitalist, but a capitalist class, located in Bangkok and highly dependent on the patronage of the aristocrats, was emerging (Hewison 1989: 57ff). Entrepreneurs were predominantly first or second generation Chinese immigrants. From 1938 Thailand's ruler, General Phibun, promoted state-led industrialisation whereby the state invested in and managed industries (Hewison 1989:64-67).

State-led development ended in the late 1950s when the premier, General Sarit, in accordance with the interests and desires of the business community, supported the policy of import-substitution industrialisation. When Sarit was replaced by his deputies, Generals Thanom Kittˌikachorn and Prapas, in 1963, economic policies were again influenced by the interests of industrialists. In the face of limited home markets, the state supported producers' demands for an export-oriented industrialisation policy. This policy has remained dominant to date and is behind Thailand's extraordinary economic growth. It seems likely that at some point in the near future Thailand will achieve the status of a 'Newly Industrialising Country' (NIC) (Rachain 1989, Jansen 1991), a goal dear to the hearts of many technocrats (see, for example, Phisit 1988:199-211).

Hewison has argued convincingly that Thai capitalist development has been fuelled predominantly by domestic capital accumulation, and that, as was intimated above, the state has played a central role in this process (1989).[1] Suehiro's (1985)

---

[1]A similar argument has been made in relation to Taiwan, a NIC which shares with Thailand the apparently paradoxical characteristic that it was a military government which laid

study of the development of Thailand's largest enterprises makes a similar claim. While the inflow of foreign capital has undeniably supported growth, it must be recognised that indigenous capitalists have developed autonomously to a large extent. In other words, capitalist development is the product of both exogenous and endogenous factors (Roxborough 1979:23). The brick industry of Banglen is, in these terms, largely endogenous: capital and entrepreneurs are domestic and local.

Hewison, among others, has described how surplus extracted from the agricultural sector has financed the development of industry in Thailand. Not only is it the case that a number of Sino-Thai industrialists acquired initial capital through rice milling businesses (Suehiro 1985), but government taxation and pricing policies have consistently extracted a surplus from rice producers (see Turton 1989a). According to the World Bank, direct and indirect taxation of agriculture during the 1970s amounted to 43 percent (IBRD 1990, cited in Jazairy 1992:10). In view of this, Douglass has argued that the state has exacerbated "processes of uneven spatial development and rural underdevelopment" in the Central Plains (1984:164, see also 174-181, Girling 1986:200-211, Chulacheeb 1988). Recent state development planning, while purporting to reverse this process, has had little effect.

With the Fifth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1982-1986) the state, at least rhetorically, made an attempt to redistribute the fruits of economic growth more equitably in order to eradicate rural poverty (Demaine 1986). Earlier plans had been primarily concerned with promoting economic development, and as such had focused on the extension of infrastructure. Where resources were allocated to social services, as in the Third Plan (1972-76), investment was motivated either by counter-insurgency needs, or by the notion that investment in 'human resources' establishes a more productive workforce (Demaine 1986:100). The Fifth Plan, while taking a 'basic needs' approach, was radical in that it stressed the participation of those who are 'developed', to use Hirsch's term (1990:25-28), in planning. The Sixth and Seventh Plans (1987-1991, 1992-1996) have pursued similar approaches: the latter is particularly significant in that it proposes greater decentralisation by granting more funds and broader powers to the provincial development administration (NESDB 1991:134). One facet of the Fifth Plan's participatory emphasis was a new 'bottom-up' approach whereby the rural populace design and manage local development projects. One critic has

---

the foundations for economic growth (Amsden 1985). For a penetrating analysis of approaches taken to the study of capitalist growth in South-East Asia, see McVey (1992).

suggested that a combination of the old bureaucratic patrimonial framework and a rural population used to passive dependency on the bureaucracy presents considerable barriers to the policy's success (Demaine 1986:112). Another (Hirsch 1987, 1989), has argued, somewhat more radically, that governmental rural development has, on the one hand, served to incorporate rural producers, to their detriment, into the national and international commodity economy and, on the other, given the state greater access to and control over such communities. Other criticisms could be raised against the implementation of the Fifth Plan, but, if there is one common element, it is that programmes are distorted by existing political and economic relations at both national and local levels.

II.B. National Politics in the 1980s

It is my view that over the last decade or so national electoral politics and national politicians have influenced local electoral politics in ways and to an extent not previously experienced. Firstly, politicians have invested more in controlling rural votes, and as a result have interfered more with local processes. Secondly, campaign strategies developed by national politicians appear to have worked their way down to the local level. For example, vote-buying has become a widespread practice in local-level electoral competition. It is evident, therefore, that if we are to obtain a 'global' view of changes in local politics we must take a step back and ask what forces have brought about changes in national politics.

Earlier studies of rural Thai society paid little, if any, attention to national politics. This is unsurprising since there were few direct links between the political centre and periphery except through the administrative system. For example, Scott was able to write in the mid-1970s that "the vertical integration of patron-client clusters has not gone very far beyond the central institutions of the bureaucracy and armed forces" and that, on the other hand, in rural areas "many patron-client clusters are of purely local significance and are not highly politicized" (1977:141). Since this was written the national assembly has assumed more importance relative to the civil and military elements of the bureaucracy. As one would expect, this has created the need for would-be assembly representatives to establish rural voting bases. And in their efforts they have enlisted the help of local powerholders, both official and unofficial. Local powerholders, for their part, have generally been willing to attach themselves to political patrons, not least in order to gain access to campaign funds. In effect, then, a contemporary study of local politics would be at best partial if national processes were ignored.

This said, however, it soon becomes apparent when examining the literature and keeping recent events in mind, that any attempt to characterise national politics is problematic. Events of 1991 and 1992 have shown that it is unwise to make categorical assertions as to who holds the reins of power at the centre: several analysts have been proved wrong. The literature is also confusing because some scholars have come to contradictory conclusions while drawing from the same data, while others propose the use of entirely different analytical tools. In order to clear the ground, therefore, the section below critically reviews approaches, before attempting to detail actual changes.

As indicated above, the constitutional era of the Thai polity began in 1932 with the dissolution of the absolute monarchy by disgruntled civil and military bureaucrats. Analyses of the political situation as it was prior to 1973 tend to agree that the bureaucracy, in its military and civilian components, controlled the state and its apparatus. This political reality was represented in a model proposing that Thailand's state comprised a 'bureaucratic polity', the polar opposite of a 'democratic polity' (Riggs 1966). In the 'bureaucratic polity' choices of allocation and distribution are made by bureaucrats as opposed to elected politicians. Cabinet members, were generally officials, and were "more responsive to the interests and demands of their bureaucratic subordinates than to the concerns of interest groups, political parties, or legislative bodies outside the state apparatus" (Riggs 1966:312).

Analysts who adhere to a bureaucratic polity-based model tend to focus on how strong extra-bureaucratic forces are in relation to the bureaucracy - the assumption being that it is this variable which indicates change in the polity. Girling, writing in 1981, argued that the Thai state was still largely a bureaucratic polity since power was in the hands of the military; that of the parliamentarians was more apparent than real:

> Both the theory and the practice of parliamentary democracy raise problems. In theory the elected deputies represent the sovereign power of the people - a concept that has no place in traditional Thai values. In practice, parliamentarians are predominantly members of the provincial elite - retired officials, lawyers, and local businessmen for the most part. As a result, not only are they "distanced" from the mass of their village constituents, but they cannot stand up to the power, the prestige, and the authority of the more affluent, educated, sophisticated metropolitan bureaucrats they are supposed to control (Girling 1981:157-8).

The bureaucracy maintained control over the political arena by gaining appointment to the upper house and by the formation and membership of a "government party" (Girling 1981:160). More recently, and in a similar vein

Egedy, reviewing political events and the literature, has argued that "the basic features of this special political model [bureaucratic polity] are still dominant" and considers that "the dominance of bureaucracy is likely to remain a political reality for some time to come" (1988:17). Both these analysts acknowledge the emergence of business interest groups but consider them too weak to pose a threat to established powerholders. It should be noted, at this point, that all the researchers participating in this debate share the view that economic growth has given rise to the very extra-bureaucratic forces which have challenged the bureaucracy's grip on power.

While the analysts mentioned above assert that political reality makes Riggs' model largely applicable, others have argued that the empirical bases for the model have been undermined since 1973 - mainly by the growth of business and other interest groups. Pisan (1988), for example, has argued that extra-bureaucratic forces have eroded the strength of the military. He proposes a 'three-pronged' model to replace the bureaucratic polity model.[2] This polity consists of bureaucracy, monarchy and an amalgamation of various extra-bureaucratic forces. Also discarding Riggs' model, but for a different reason, Anek (1992) has argued that business interests now have such a dominant role in the formation of economic policy that the bureaucratic polity model is inappropriate. Anek's extra-bureaucratic forces comprise business, trade and employers' associations, and chambers of commerce.

Two criticisms have been raised against the kinds of analyses which either retain or modify the bureaucratic polity model. One relates to its theoretical pedigree, the other to the type of interpretation it produces. Hewison (1989) has argued that the model is theoretically grounded in modernisation theory. Implicit in analyses which seek to discover whether the Thai polity is moving from the bureaucratic to the democratic pole is the assumption that mass political participation increases as this shift takes place. Thus, the existence of stronger extra-bureaucratic forces are taken to signify greater political participation. In a state where relations between members of parliament and the electorate are mediated largely by vote-buying, this assumption is manifestly mistaken. Hewison prefers, instead, to analyse the Thai 'social formation' in terms of class, capital and the relations between those with capital and those with power. Insofar as in the Thai context state managers and capitalists are often one and the same, the interests of the state and the interests of capitalists are complementary. Hewison

---

[2]He also argues that the decade-long 'democratic' interlude made it unlikely that the military would again seek power unconstitutionally, a view apparently also formerly held by Girling (1991:460-461). Both were unfortunately proved wrong by events of February 1991.

argues that the Thai state is a capitalist one in the sense that policy creates conditions conducive to the accumulation of capital (1989:213). We could note that his criticism applies also to the analysis of local politics: political participation cannot be assumed to follow on from the devolution of power to locally elected officeholders. There must be a focus on relations between economic and political power.

A second criticism raised against analyses based on the bureaucratic polity model is that they tend to over-formalise Thai politics (Neher and Bidhya 1986). The model predisposes adherents to include in analyses only those actors and institutions which would be considered politically significant from the viewpoint of Western democracy. Resulting accounts, assert Neher and Bidhya, are ethnocentric. Considering the analysis of personal relations central to Thai politics, they propose use of a clientelist framework in conjunction with class analysis. Eschewing formal models, they recommend investigation of "the personal, reciprocal and hierarchical ties that pervade Thai society" (1986:24). Again, such an approach is applicable to local as well as national politics, as we shall see.

From this review of approaches to national politics two points, which are as relevant to local as well as national processes, are clear. First, although we should examine to what degree there has been a shift in power from established to new powerholders, we should not assume that such a move is consistent with greater political participation. Second, we should examine the economic interests of new powerholders.

What changes have occurred at the political centre in the last decade or so? As indicated above, there appears a new willingness among national politicians to involve themselves in local politics. The legislature gained influence relative to the military during the 1980s, prompting individuals who, and interest groups which, had never done so before to seek national political office (Keyes 1989:105, Cohen 1991:102). The re-establishment of elections in the 1980s, and legislation that promoted party politics (Murashima 1987:363), led some elements of the military to compete through elections: "As power slightly shifted in the direction of the parliament, a large number of generals and military leaders resigned and entered politics through the 'front door' rather than by coup d'etat" (Neher 1987:224). Competition for membership of the national assembly increased as it became a new locus of power.

An associated change has been greater involvement of capitalist interests in national electoral politics. While this trend has been evident since 1974, it has been most visible since the early 1980s (Anek 1992: 34-35). Following the 1986 general election, Neher noted that a major change was "the increased importance of Sino-

Thai citizens in political as well as economic affairs and the related rise of big business managers in politics" (1987:220). Chai-Anan and Sukhumbhand have remarked more recently that in the provinces "local businessmen are...actively involved in politics both as candidates and as financial supporters of political parties" (1990:74, see also Chai-Anan 1989). Similarly, Hewison has observed that "the capitalist class" appears determined "to develop a political party which will serve its own interests" (1989:214). The latter certainly seemed the case by 1989: one analyst observed that "the present government has become the spokesman and promoter for big business interests" (Christensen 1990:185, see also Suthy 1991:24-27). More recently still it has been argued that "democratization of the policy process has worked primarily to the advantage of industry" (Christensen 1992:21). Anek, however, has drawn a distinction between informal business groupings, which he says have been involved in parties and electoral politics, and organised business (the type of association mentioned above), which "shuns institutions or procedures that are explicitly political" (1992:116-117). That an increasing proportion of National Assembly representatives are businessmen is born out statistically: in 1983 businessmen comprised 38.3 percent of the Lower House, as compared to 68.1 percent in 1988 (Pisan 1988:38,85). This trend has prompted some commentators, such as Neher (1991:34,37), to speak of Thailand as a 'bourgeois polity' rather than a bureaucratic one. Rather strikingly, Anderson has interpreted a recent rise in the number of assissinations of MPs by professional gunmen as a signal that office has assumed greater importance:

> What all these killings sugest is that in the 1980s the institution of MP has achieved solid market value. In other words, not only does being an MP offer substantial opportunities for gaining wealth and power, *but it promises to do so for the duration.* It may thus be worth one's while to murder one's parliamentary competition - something inconceivable in the 1950s and 1960s, when parliament's power and longevity were very cheaply regarded (1990:46).

One ramification of intensified competition for National Assembly seats, from both military and business representatives, appears to be greater use of vote-buying as an electoral strategy. The practice was common even in the 1970s (Suwannarat 1985), but seems to have become more prevalent and widespread in the mid to late 1980s (Suthy 1991:29, Somkiat 1991:118). As one could expect, vote-buying is a response to an absence of links between candidates and electorate. Vote-buying is "a reflection of a lack of strong party organisations [sic] and political support at the grassroots level" (Chai-Anan and Sukhumbhand 1990:76).

Finally, none of the analyses described so far have taken an interpretive approach to the study of Thai politics (though see Cohen 1991:89-104).

Examining the extent to which Thai democracy approximates to Western practices soon brings one to the conclusion that the fit is less than perfect. This has led Chai-Anan to label the present Thai polity as a "semidemocracy" (1989). While such insights are valuable, it is also important to look at the way political symbols are deployed in political contests - at both the local and national levels. Since the demise of the absolute monarchy in 1932 'democracy' has been an important national symbol, especially for the ruling classes (Wilson 1962:82-83). During the 1980s the notion of 'democracy', *prachathipaday*, was invested with more importance to feature with the triumvirate of symbols which define Thailand and Thai-ness: Bechstedt (1991:295) notes that the recently established National Identity Board, set up under the Prime Minister's Office, has added 'Democracy' as the fourth pillar of Thai identity. Democracy now stands alongside the legitimating symbols of 'Nation, Monarchy and Religion' cultivated by Rama VI (1910-1925) (Murashima 1988, Wyatt 1984:229). During late 1990, before the February 1991 coup, the Thai media conveyed attempts by the Chatchai government to justify its position by reiterating that it was democratically elected. This was in the face of common knowledge that vote-buying and patronage had landed the vast majority of MPs their seats. The self-styled National Peace-Keeping Council (NPKC), for their part, attempted to legitimate their coup on the grounds that the Chatchai government had not been acting like a democratic government. The notion of democracy had become a symbolic weapon - it has assumed the potential to award and detract legitimacy. The term has also gained currency at the local level. Officeholders assumed legitimacy on account of their being elected, regardless of how votes had been obtained.

Let us turn, now, to look at the relationship between national and local electoral politics. To my knowledge there have been few systematic attempts to link recent national political and economic changes to local political structures. A paper by Korff (1989), employing 'strategic group' analysis, is one exception.[3] He argues that MPs are small businessmen and bureaucrats who, unable to participate in large-scale Bangkok-centred business, locate their economic interests in the provinces, mainly in land speculation. They act in cooperation with local powers to facilitate their business transactions and to control electoral bases.

---

[3]Strategic groups are deemed neither to be classes nor cliques. They are smaller and more fluid in composition and formation than classes, but more persistent than mere cliques or entourages (see Evers 1982). A recent fieldwork-based study by James Ockey (1992) appears to treat this theme much more systematically, but while I have seen a paper drawn from the study, the text itself was not available to me at the time of writing.

In more detail, Korff argues that economic expansion fostered by the policies and stability provided by the pre-1973 military regimes gave rise to successful businesses which were formerly dependent on bureaucratic patronage. The brief disappearance of the bureaucratic regime between 1973 and 1977 enabled efficient businesses to consolidate themselves whilst the inefficient collapsed. By the return of bureaucratic rule in 1977 big business had become an independent force to be reckoned with. A coalition between the bureaucracy and the business sector developed, based on mutual interests. Three strategic groups were evident at this juncture: the bureaucratic elite, modern big business and a professional, technocratic middle class.

Rapid economic expansion of the late 1980s gave birth to a fourth strategic group which Korff calls 'rentiers'. This group comprises people who were "once leading political power holders, lesser known business men and former bureaucrats (generals and civil servants)" (1989:22). Members depend predominantly on land speculation. Representatives of this group are said to find it difficult to cope with the political and economic conditions prevailing in Bangkok and consequently try to connect with power structures in rural areas. Through these they are able to gain political influence and profits, and may use their position to acquire rentier profits. Korff continues:

> These 'rentiers' depend on alliances with 'dark influences' (*amnat mut*) - local 'mafia' bosses and strongmen. They are land speculators and profiteers. Because their position depends on liaising with representatives of the local power structure their activity reinforces these same structures, potentially bringing them into opposition with local technocratic forces (1989:22-23).

Korff's portrait is at the same time valuable and problematic. Problematic because, firstly, some but not all MPs are rentiers: some are representatives of big business. Particularly in the late 1980s, the MPs of some parties were representatives of the big businesses which Korff says base their economic interests in Bangkok, and would therefore not be interested in political office (see Nakharin 1991:74-79). Secondly, some MPs are themselves key figures in big business: for example, Narong Kittikachorn would fit perfectly Korff's portrait of a rentier but is, in fact, more accurately categorised as a member of the big business group (Hewison 1989:207-211). In short, Korff attributes uniformity where it is by no means evident. This may be a product of a concern to identify the existence of strategic groups.

This said, however, Korff is right, in my view, to suggest that at least some MPs use their position and influence to extract resources from their constituency. Additionally, he is right to point out that because MPs are obliged to work with

local powerholders their activity tends to reinforce the position of the latter: MPs use (or in many cases are used by), or are themselves, local 'dark influences' (see Suchit 1987:72).

II.C. Local Politics: Issues and Realities

Having looked at changes in national politics, let us now turn to the local political scene. Academic debate and a rapidly changing social reality have refined approaches to the study of rural Thailand, and consequently also to local politics. This section first examines analytical approaches then presents background data pertinent to the following Chapters. Patron-client relations, state-imposed political institutions, factionalism, and local power structures are examined.

Analysts of rural Thailand have been influenced by a succession of models and frameworks. Early studies took their cue from an article that asserted, rather ambiguously, that Thai society is characterised by 'loose structure' (Embree 1950). This has been variously interpreted as implying an absence of social structure (Potter 1976) and a behavioural characteristic of 'loose' adherence to existing structural norms (Phillips 1965). Thoroughly and justifiably criticised, the central place this concept once held in Thai studies was occupied in turn by that of 'patron-clientage'.

Patron-client relations were, for a number of years, seen as the cornerstone of Thai social structure (Hanks 1975, Van Roy 1971). Hanks asserted that society consists of a multitude of interlocking asymmetrical, dyadic relationships. The patron of several clients, together comprising an 'entourage', is in turn the client of a superordinate. Society is thus comprised of a pyramid where entourages are linked vertically with one another. This framework has until relatively recently informed many studies but has been strongly criticised (see Keyes 1978) on at least two counts.

Firstly, over-attention to hierarchical linkages has tended to obscure horizontal cleavages. That is, a clientelist approach tends to obscure the existence and significance of economic classes. Secondly, in the process of giving the concept universal relevance, the notion of patron-clientage has been rendered analytically sterile.

In more detail, Kemp (1982, 1984) argues that if it is to be at all useful the term should define a much narrower range of relationships than has previously been the case. Since by definition all relationships are hierarchical in Thai society, to denote them all as patron-client relations is both imprecise and pointless. Constructively, Kemp recommends viewing social relations as on a "continuum of

personalism" (1984:63) with intimate kinship relations at one end and relations of naked power at the other. The patron-client relation occupies ground between these two extremes and is marked by the fact that its particularism "disguises or moderates the harsh facts of its objective inequalities" (1984:65).

Other analysts have seized on Kemp's criticisms and have argued that "a sense of gratitude and moral obligation must always be present" before a relationship can be identified as clientelist (Neher and Budsayamat 1989:54). However, there is still some confusion because different authors cling to different criteria. Keyes, for example, without mention of affectivity, identifies patron-client relations as based on a "relative hierarchy of power" (1989:136) where,

> Those higher up the hierarchy seek validation of their power from among those below them, and in return those lower down expect tangible benefits from their superiors (1989:136).

As one might expect, use of different definitions has generated different data. Neher and Budsayamat were searching for economic relations imbued with moral values, whereas Keyes refers to relations marked by differential access to power - where power may be economic or state-sanctioned.

A fundamental distinction must be made between patronage of the broad kind to which Kemp, Neher and Keyes refer, and to patronage of a specifically political kind which is the foundation of representative or electoral clientelism (Clapham 1982:22-25). Wolters (1983:228) has reacted to the dominance of an identical model - "a system of vertical dyadic alliances or clientelistic pyramids" - in Philippine studies as has prevailed in Thai studies. His focus on local politics led him to distinguish between what could be called 'traditional' patron-clientage and political patronage. The same distinction must be made in the Thai setting. Drawing attention to the disbursement by politicians of money during election campaigns, Wolters continues

> But this patronage should not be confused with 'patron-client' patronage. That is, the term 'patronage' when applied to political activities by politicians and political scientists refers to the distribution of favours by higher-level politicians, the so-called 'pork-barrel funds'. This type of patronage is capable of being dispensed without recourse to patron-client relationships. Although the characteristics of patron-client relationships might well be discerned in many of the ties which bind higher-level politicians to lower-level ones, or local politicians to a handful of immediate supporters, in general the relationships between politicians and the electorate were short term, impersonal, instrumental and based on a specific transaction (if any) (1983:228-229).

An identical situation exists in Thailand. Relations between politicians and their subordinate political campaigners do not necessarily equate with multifaceted,

dyadic relationships of patron-clientage. But, as Wolters signifies, they sometimes will. We should also recognise, however, that politicians, while not actually forming such relationships may, by their behaviour and utterances, use the idiom of 'traditional' patron-clientage to cultivate support. In the case studies in this thesis, politicians made extensive use of the ideology of patronage in their campaign strategies.

In view of the first of the above criticisms of the prevalence of the patron-client model in Thai studies, Brummelhuis and Kemp (1984) have advised that studies should continue analysing personal relationships, but not within the strict mould of patron-clientage, and not to the exclusion of economic class. Referring to class and clientelist analysis as macro- and micro-analyses, respectively, they insist that "both should be seen as inextricably intertwined in any comprehensive social analysis" (1984:13). Any account which keeps personal relations and their manipulation in view is less likely to portray social reality as determined by economic reality. In other words, an approach which stresses both 'structures' and 'strategies' (Brummelhuis and Kemp 1984) avoids the pitfalls of economic determinism. The present study attempts to take such an approach.

The general observation that new types of patron-client relations emerge and others disappear in changing socio-economic conditions (e.g. Eisenstadt and Roniger 1981:272, also Scott and Kerkvliet 1977) has also been made with reference to Thai society. Piker has suggested that clientelist relations in his Ayutthaya fieldsite represented attempts by a new rural proletariat to adapt to landlessness (1975:318).[4] Kemp has sought to explain why such relations wax and wane in the context of merchant-rural producer relations (1984).[5] More recently still, Neher and Budsayamat have argued that such relations are almost entirely absent in the three Northern Thai villages which they surveyed in the late 1980s. They suggest that:

> the availability of new resources, the adoption of materialist values, the increased importance of the state in the lives of the rural people, the influx of capital, and the consequent move away from an isolated, autonomous economy have together undermined the putative traditional clientelist patterns (1989:66-67).

---

[4]For a detailed and fine-tuned account of patron-client relations between richer and poorer village residents see Piker (1983:98-100).

[5]Patronage relations may emerge between parties when producers are fairly new to the market and need the security which clientage affords. However, patron-client relations may become anathema when, for example, access to raw materials is unrestricted.

This statement is equally relevant to the Banglen study sites where patron-client relations do not feature as significant. Relations between economically differentiated individuals are rarely marked by patron-clientage. However, as Keyes has observed, although many members of rural communities "find salience in a patron-client ideology, an increasing number are beginning to view themselves as members of classes within a stratified social order" (1989:137). Material in this thesis largely substantiates this assertion.

Socio-economic change has led to the emergence of new types of patron. Keyes has noted that whereas typically patrons have been officials whose power is state-derived, more recently "politicians and middlemen" have sought to cultivate links with constituents, producers or customers (1989:136). My own data would confirm these observations with respect to politicians, and, in a more restricted sense, with respect to local entrepreneurs. Some of the relationships between subdistrict officeholders and district and national politicians do approximate to patron-clientage. That is, politicians may cultivate multifaceted relations with individual supporters as well as use the idiom of patronage in their presentation of self to the electorate. A significant feature of the Banglen brick industry is that in the face of labour shortages and general problems of labour productivity in mechanised enterprises, entrepreneurs have tended to cultivate personalistic relations with sections of their labour forces and to pursue the strategy of paternalism. Entrepreneurs' paternalism sometimes takes the form of inviting employees to view them as patrons.

To recapitulate, in the above section I have drawn the distinction between, first, different kinds of vertical relations and, second, between relations and the ideologies used to talk about them. This has been necessary because in the literature definition and use of the concept of patron-clientage have been confused.

II.C.1. Institutional Change

Before the imposition of state-sanctioned leaders, and other changes associated with modernisation, there was an absence of specialised political roles in rural communities. It would be true to say that:

> What counted for the recognition of a man's power was not the accumulation of things but the accumulation of followers, and what gave him prestige was not the display of possessions but of largesse (McVey 1984:114).

Power was, as it were, "personal, impermanent and highly localized" (McVey 1984:114). Leaders took the form of 'big men' and patrons and leadership was

largely a product of personal ability. Although such leaders have occupied official positions, they have become less common as rural areas have been brought under greater state control.

The rural administrative system was extended over 'inner provinces' of Thailand such as Ayutthaya in the 1890s; the model adopted was based on that used by British colonial administrators. The delineation of provinces and their division into districts (*amphur*), subdistricts (communes, *tambon*) and villages (*muban*) represent an attempt by the modernising state to bring the rural population under tighter control (Bunnag 1977). The offices of village headmen (*phuyayban*) and subdistrict headmen (*kamnan*) were created as much to give the authorities access to and control over the rural populace as to promote self-administration (Bunnag 1977). Initially village headmen were elected by the heads of approximately 10 households while *kamnan* were elected by village headmen. Currently headmen are elected by all persons aged over 20 registered as resident in the administrative village, and *kamnan* are elected by all such subdistrict residents. The duties and powers of headmen and *kamnan* were and are substantial. Currently they are expected to attend a monthly district meeting, conduct censuses, collect land tax, adjudicate minor disputes, participate in miscellaneous state development projects and, as part of this, draw up and implement five-year development plans. Officeholders receive a small but significant salary, are permitted to carry firearms and receive miscellaneous benefits associated with public office.

It is perhaps not surprising to discover that, even in 'inner provinces' such as Ayutthaya, there was popular resistance to the imposition of these institutions at this time. Resistance took several forms: headmen resigned to enter the monkhood, villagers elected patently unsuitable individuals, or local officials. In 1898, some Ayutthaya incumbents expressed frustration that officeholding "prevented them from earning their livelihood" and that remuneration was inadequate (Bunnag 1977:189). Currently, in some areas, the demands of office in terms of time and money also make incumbency a liability. In a Southern Thai district McVey reports informants as saying "to be a village head nowadays...is a good way to become poor" (1984:117). More recently still, Holland has reported that the village economic elite in his Central Plain community avoided political office because of the expense involved and the fact that office did not easily translate into economic gain (1990:146-158).

Officeholding has also been unpopular on account of the conflict of interests that the position embodies. Bunnag notes that people may have been antagonistic towards the new position of headman because it "alienated them from

their neighbours for it turned them into quasi-officials of the government" (1977:189). For a similar reason office appears to have been as unpopular in some areas of Northern Thailand in 1960 as it was in Ayutthaya in the 1890s. Moerman states that headmen were unwilling to be elected and served only a short time once in office (1979:267). Incumbents were required to perform a delicate balancing act. As one informant explained to Moerman: "One is neither a villager nor an official. One is in the middle" (1979:267). Villagers viewed officeholders as their representatives to officialdom, while bureaucrats viewed them as subordinate public servants. Viewing officeholders only as 'synaptic leaders' (Moerman 1979, Keyes 1979:213), however, neglects the fact that they may use the position to serve their own interests (Hall 1980).

In relation to this, Turton has noted the existence of two types of headman: those "who are conscious of their obligations to their fellow villagers and of their elected position" and those who use the position to derive economic advantage "from the prestige and potential sanctions" and "access to information and to the potential support of the bureaucracy" afforded by office (1976:283). Reports of abuse of local office abound in the literature (for example Piker 1983, Holland 1990:150, Ananya 1985, Hirsch 1987, Chayan 1984) and my own field data provide evidence that the second type of headman is all too common. However, incumbents need not derive economic advantage only by using office in non-institutionalised ways - appropriating percentages of development grants for instance. The case study in Chapter Six relates the example of a businessman who obtained office largely as a result of vote-buying but then did not appear to use the position in the usual ways. Percentages of development grants and so-forth represent small gains compared with his legitimate brickmaking income. In addition, he seems to value having a generally unsullied reputation. He seems to have used office, rather, to enhance his prestige and credibility as a businessman, to obtain direct access to district and provincial officialdom and to a receptive labour force. We should not, therefore, assume that vote-buying officeholders are motivated solely by the cruder illegal benefits afforded by office.

While, undoubtedly, there are community-minded, principled officeholders, conditions seem to conspire to decrease the likelihood that many more will be elected under current conditions.[6] Scrupulous officeholders would seem to be under pressure to conform to generalised corrupt practices - pressure from the

---

[6]See Cohen (1983) for an example of a community-minded leader who was inspired by Buddhist morality.

bureaucracy and their peer group alike.[7] Moreover, increasing use and acceptance of vote-buying in local elections puts candidates unwilling or unable to use such strategies at an obvious disadvantage.

It should be stressed here that I do not believe that the practice of vote-buying is altogether new to the last ten years or so, but that its incidence has increased in this period. Vote-buying seems to have been a part of local electoral competition in the Central Plain at least since the mid-1950s (Kaufman 1960:76) and was reportedly practised in some areas of Ayutthaya ten years later (Piker 1983:143n31). Notwithstanding the claim made above with regard to the new *kamnan* of Ban Thung, it is probably a rare incumbent who does not, to the detriment of the local electorate, recoup campaign expenditure once in office.

Another factor reducing the likelihood that future officeholders will be of the community-oriented type, is the fact that vote-buying tends to leave incumbents less accountable to the electorate. In the past the political system has been described as a "non-participatory democracy" (Young 1968:882), in the sense that although citizens do not involve themselves in administration they exert a popular check on the behaviour of the leadership. *Kamnan* and headmen occupy their positions for life. If their social and economic links make them independent of the area over which they hold sway, then there is little objective incentive to act for the greater good.

II.C.2. Subdistrict Councils

Kamnan are, by right of position, members of the subdistrict council (*sapha tambon*) and tend effectively to dominate them. This institution is only partially a structure for local government (Likhit 1985:450-456): members are elected and have the authority to administer and implement local development plans, but, insofar as the council is directly under the authority of the provincial government and does not have the authority to pass laws, it is simply an extension of the state.

Subdistrict councils, comprising *kamnan*, abbots and local 'doctors', were created in 1909 with the initial responsibility for educating local boys. Their role and significance have greatly increased since then. Councils were first allocated discretionary funds for local development in 1972. Then, in 1975, the Tambon

---

[7]Chayan writes of a headman who resigned because he could not withstand the pressures of working with a corrupt bureaucracy (1984:395). The *kamnan* of Ban Say subdistrict in Banglen was mocked by some villagers and officials for his scrupulous honesty. Why should he return to the district office the surplus of a grant when officials would just 'eat' (*kin*) it themselves? Why shouldn't he share it out among his headmen?

Development Act institutionalised the decentralisation of decision-making, ostensibly putting control into the hands of villagers and increasing their political participation. Councils were allocated central funds for local development projects (Morell and Chai-anan 1981:123-132), a change which was subsequently extended by the Fifth National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDB 1981). This accorded councils the power to write and implement five-year development plans for their subdistricts. Councils currently comprise the *kamnan*, the headmen and their assistants from each village in the subdistrict, the headmaster and subdistrict health officer (*mo*).

Research has repeatedly shown that development planning rhetoric is contradicted in practice. For example, despite the fact that one of the scheme's aims is to generate local employment, most projects involve the use of local contractors: *kamnan* and council members may receive kickbacks on awarding contracts and can take percentages.[8] Furthermore, powerful *kamnan* can determine the use of development funds in ways other than those decided by the council (Turton 1987:91-92). Holland found that there is frequently a "gap between the rhetoric of participation and the reality of exclusion" (1990:135): it is often the case that council members do not consult villagers, who are completely ignorant of the workings of the council. Chaichana (1990), in a recent study comparing two subdistrict councils, came to a similar conclusion. In one council, in the Northeast, members were subordinated to the dictates of the district office (1990:131); in a second council, in the Central Plains, members were dominated by a *kamnan* whose economic status differentiated him from the majority and who represented the interests of the local bureaucracy. Coming to a similar conclusion to Holland, he suggests that "'grass-roots' democracy' becomes quite different when it is translated into practice" (Chaichana 1990:135). A somewhat more radical appraisal comes from Hirsch who concludes that village and subdistrict councils are "more relevant as tools of state power" at the local level than as "vehicles for articulation of community interests" (1987:364). In my view, this is an extremely important point, but one which should not be applied as a definitive characteristic. Since the potential does exist for subdistrict councils genuinely to articulate community interests (however they are defined), the status of individual councils should be ascertained. Council members and the council itself may act upon their own interests, rather than on those of the people they represent. At the

---

[8]Morell and Chai-anan refer to the 1975 legislation as producing "decentralized corruption" (1981:124). District officials in Banglen were reputed to take percentages of every grant that passed through the office.

same time, councils may either give the state access to local affairs or actually represent the state.

II.C.3. Factions

Village and subdistrict headmen are frequently leaders of factions. In specific contexts, such as electoral competition, they may act as patrons to poorer villagers. The case studies of Chapters Six and Seven describe the emergence and persistence of factions and factionalism in the main study subdistrict. For the most part factions are defined by anthropologists as coalitions of individuals professing loyalty to a single leader and involved in competition with other factions (Boissevain 1986). Factions are not corporate groups and their members are recruited on diverse principles (Nicholas 1977). Factions may (Boissevain 1986) or may not (Lewellen 1983:109) persist after the original competition which generated the conflict has ended. The former is true of the conflict detailed in the case studies.

Factions and factionalism have received relatively little attention in studies of Thai local politics (though see Chartchai 1983). Potter, responding to what he calls "sociological myopia", considers that factions are "an integral part of rural Thai social structure" (1976:203). In an article, originally published in 1970, Keyes has asserted that factions are absent in Central Thai-type communities. This, he argues, is because in this region, administrative boundaries do not correspond with the boundaries of 'natural communities', communities comprising the congregation of a particular temple. In other words, headmen do not have control over a meaningful community (1979:213). While Potter has dismissed this claim by listing evidence of factional conflict from the literature, he has missed an important point. Whether or not an officeholder has power over a sociological community is now an irrelevant precondition for the presence or absence of factionalism. This is because factions compete over access to supra-local resources - typically state-derived ones - not power over people *per se* (see, for example, Neher 1972:204, Chartchai 1983:283). In other words, we should recognise that imposed political units and institutions "are both the conduits of nonlocal resources and the arenas of conflict over them" (Moberg 1991:225, see also Bailey 1969, Sharma 1978). It will be seen that factional conflict in Ban Thung was drawn around administrative units, not temple communities, and largely represented competition for state-sanctioned authority and state-derived resources.

II.C.4. Local Power Structures

As noted above, recent English-language literature on Thai local electoral politics remains sparse. Indeed, Murashima's comment, made in the late 1980s, that it "remains extremely inadequate" (1987:363) is largely applicable today. Detailed descriptions of general elections from the village perspective are rare, but include Phillips (1965) and Neher (1972). A brief description of district provincial assembly elections is found in Preecha (1980:216-219) and a more comprehensive study in Murashima (1987:375-384): Michael Nelson (forthcoming), of the University of Bielefeld, is currently writing up field research on the operation of a Central Plains provincial council and the electoral process and may produce the most comprehensive study to date. Municipal politics are the subject of more attention, and are described by Chakrit (1981), Murashima (1987:364-375) and Blanc Szanton (1982). To my knowledge, the only English-language study treating elections at various levels and from the village perspective is Ananya's excellent study of a Chachoengsao community (1985:371-388). The author did not, however, have the opportunity to observe elections and her comments are based primarily on a reconstruction of events.

The most authoritative recent examination of rural power relations comprises part of a paper by Turton (1989b) which draws on a number of empirical studies of the 1980s. Insofar as the paper contextualises and situates the specific findings of this study, it is worthwhile examining it in detail. At the outset one can note that Turton's description of political realities corresponds well with those encountered in Banglen district.

Turton characterises those who exercise economic and political power at various levels demarcated by the lines of the rural administration (units he acknowledges as somewhat provisional) - that is, from village and subdistrict through to district and provincial levels. He not only examines the composition of these 'local powers', as he calls them, but analyses relations between them. An almost universal feature of village composition, he argues, is the presence of a minority of households which comprise a dominant village stratum. Such households "possess a degree of wealth, control of resources, prestige and power which sets them apart from the majority" and they tend to monopolise the benefits of state patronage, partly by holding local office (1989b:81). They extract a surplus at the village level in the form of rents, loan interest, wages, commodity dealing and so forth. Turton considers it likely that some households within this dominant village stratum represent part of a small capitalist class - large-scale employers, landlords, retailers, wholesale purchasers, for example - although "such

a position does not fully or unambiguously define their social location and identity" (kinship and communal claims on identity may be strong, for example) (1989b:82).

Turton observes that members of such households commonly reinforce their position in directly non-economic ways. They spend vast amounts of money on lavish festivals and other forms of conspicuous consumption. He argues that such spending is geared towards "establishing and reproducing social relations with strategic superiors and subordinates" (1989b:83). Undoubtedly this is often the case, but one should also consider the possibility that rather than holding goals which are economic, individuals are striving for recognition, rank and power as ends in themselves (see Mulder 1990:46).[9] Turton also notes that large sums of money are spent by many such individuals in campaigns for elected or appointed office (1989b:83).

An important debate to which Turton contributes relates to the issue of how to characterise the predominant social and economic division in rural Thailand. Does the major 'fault line' lie between villagers and town-dwellers, or is the village 'upper stratum' to be considered as part of the supra-village stratum? Hall has suggested, in a 1980 publication based on research from the previous decade, that the major divide lies between villagers and town-dwellers. McVey has, more recently, advocated a similar position based on a study of a fairly peripheral district in Southern Thailand: "The great gap, economically, culturally, and politically, is between town and countryside..." (1984:130). However, in response to Hall, Turton argues that intra-village economic differentiation and consolidation of the upper stratum have meant that the latter "cannot be conceptualized as a stratum distinct from much of the local 'supra-village' sector..." (1989b:84). This observation is particularly true with respect to the village-level brickyard entrepreneurs who figure in Chapter Five. Well-established entrepreneurs are socio-economically indistinguishable from large-scale, town-based operators.

Local powers located at the district level include bureaucrats (officials representing various ministry departments) and people with commercial interests similar to those of the village-level upper stratum, but on a larger scale. The latter include "large-scale landowners, merchants, millers, contractors, and owners of machinery and transportation" (1989b:86). Such individuals typically have links 'upwards' at provincial and national levels (suppliers, political patrons), and 'downwards' at subdistrict and village levels (agents, political clients, employees).

---

[9]See Hatch (1989) for a strong argument for the case that status is sought for non-materialist rather than materialist motives.

Turton observes that local powers at the district level can form strongly influential groupings on account of the existence of informal networks of friendship and association (1989b:86). The Banglen Brick Manufacturers' Association (BMA, see Chapter Five) should be seen as one such grouping. Turton notes that these informal networks do not preclude "sometimes intense and violent interpersonal or factional rivalry and conflict" (1989b:86), an observation born out by an examination of the Banglen provincial councillor election.

Finally, in connection with district-level local powers, Turton notes that elected representatives on the provincial assembly are frequently from among bureaucratic and commercial interests. Chapter Seven explores the characteristics of candidates and electoral competition in more detail, but one should note here that typically candidates will mobilise contacts at lower levels (economic agents, employees and so forth) who can act as 'vote brokers'/'vote bosses' (*hua khanan*) (Turton 1989b:96, Preecha 1980: 216-219). As well as maintaining effective canvassing networks, candidates should have the financial means to compete since campaigning may demand upwards of one million baht.

II.D. Concluding Remarks

This Chapter has set the broader political economic context in which this study is embedded. It has sketched out the development of the Thai commodity economy and the position of agriculture within it; it has explained the conditions leading to increased involvement of national politicians in local politics, and it has reviewed the literature on aspects of local politics to which this thesis relates. The following Chapter, while also presenting background information, uses fieldwork data to introduce the study site.

CHAPTER THREE

STUDY CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

This Chapter introduces the study district and subdistricts, and begins with an overview of socio-economic change in Ayutthaya province. Background information regarding Ban Thung and Ban Say subdistricts is followed by a description of aspects of religious life and political leadership in Ban Thung. A subsequent sketch of Ban Thung's economic history leads into a more detailed examination of contemporary economic activities in Ban Thung and Ban Say subdistricts. Finally, the nationally and locally significant phenomenon of land speculation and sales is described.

III.A. Change in Ayutthaya Province

Ayutthaya province is one of 16 Central Plains provinces and consists of 16 districts (*amphur*) of which Banglen is one. The province is situated in the Old Delta of the Chao Phraya basin (Takaya 1987:13) and the provincial town, after which the province is named, is about 70 kilometres due north of Bangkok. The provincial administration as well as various services and markets are located in Ayutthaya town. The province is a broad unforested plain and has alluvial soils well suited for rice cultivation, and, in places, for brick manufacture. Until relatively recently the mainstay of the provincial economy was rice cultivation (Amyot 1976). The province is linked to Bangkok by road, railway and river and is criss-crossed with waterways which were once the main line of transport. Like many provinces in the Central Plain, Ayutthaya's proximity to Bangkok has resulted in a high rate of out-migration (Douglass 1984).

Not unlike other areas of Thailand, socio-economic conditions in the province have changed rapidly in the last decade. Amyot, having written about the province based on research he directed 20 years ago (1976), is particularly well placed to comment on recent change (1990). Using government statistics he makes a series of observations that are as appropriate to Banglen district as to the

province as a whole.[1] A key finding is that "agriculture is rapidly losing its importance and central position for the local population *as a whole*" (Amyot 1990:12) [original emphasis].[2] Amyot found that in contrast to the results of all previous research, the proportion of farming households' income which comes from off-farm activities exceeds that from agriculture. Farming households are deriving more income from non-agricultural activities such as wage-labour and small enterprises by a ratio of seven to five (Amyot 1990:12). Additionally, more than half of all households do not operate land holdings (50.8 percent), and some members of such households do not seek employment in the agricultural sector (Amyot 1990:13). As a result, farmers are experiencing shortages of agricultural labour and are recruiting migrant labourers.

To some extent, a move away from agriculture is to be expected since there is no excess land available for cultivation while population has been increasing. However, other factors appear to have exacerbated this trend. In recent years the productivity of rice cultivation has not increased and has probably declined. Improvements in irrigation made over the last 20 or so years appear to have yielded few results. Currently, although 82 percent of administrative villages in the province officially receive irrigation for a second crop, only 12.9 percent of villages regularly plant one (Amyot 1990:1,5). These figures indicate that irrigation is technically flawed or that farmers choose, for whatever reason, not to make use of it. Additionally, rising costs of agricultural inputs, including wages, have not been offset by stable and buoyant rice prices. Prices vary with national and international markets. Consequently, farmers cannot be sure of covering their costs. As Amyot notes: "income from farming is ridiculously low" (1990:15).

Given the above conditions it is not surprising that many farmers are eager to give up farming. Any predisposition to sell farmland has been fuelled by land speculation and aggressive buying practices (see below). Moreover, the interest earned by capital deposited in bank savings accounts often provides a higher income than that earned from farming (Amyot 1990:13). 'Rural development' in this context is inevitably futile. In Amyot's view farmers "have lost hope in the

---

[1]However, one must treat with caution the 1988 data upon which his comments are based. While comparisons are made with earlier Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute research data, recent data are from an Interior Ministry survey (1988 Village Survey, *Ko So Cho Song Kho 2531*) and were collected by local officeholders. They may not have been assiduous in the unremunerated task of data collection.

[2]This change seems to be occurring throughout Thailand. For example, Trebuil (1993:2) has found that while 10 years ago 70-85 percent of the workforce in four study sites in Central and Southern Thailand were employed in agriculture, currently only 45-60 percent are estimated to be so.

possibility of improving their condition through agriculture" and want to escape it. From the vantage point of many year's research experience in the province, he considers that: "if anything, the situation of Ayutthaya farmers has deteriorated over the years" (1990:15).

III.B. The District

As soon as one reaches Banglen district along the Asian Highway one smells the acrid smoke of the smouldering rice husks which fuel the local brick kilns. The road is lined with brickyards, easily distinguished by their brickearth stockpiles, sun-drying bricks and kiln sheds. Beyond the road, broad rice-fields lie unbroken except by lines of trees which indicate the presence of waterside settlements.

Banglen district covers an area of 121.9 square kilometres and is divided into 17 subdistricts (*tambon*) comprising 94 administrative villages. It has a population of approximately 35,361. Of the registered 5,403 households in the district, 54 percent do not own or rent land.[3] The greater part of the land is given over to rice cultivation (94.3 percent of 76,118 *rai*). The main off-farm activities are home-based peasant hat (*ngop*) production and home- and factory-based brick manufacture. During the fieldwork period two or three small Bangkok-financed factories commenced production and several others were under construction by the time I left the district.

The vast majority of farmers in Banglen cultivate deep-water paddy, or 'floating' rice. Generally, fields in the district flood too deeply for the cultivation of transplanted paddy. Seeds are broadcast and crops are, in the main, unsuitable for mechanised harvesting since stalks fall flat after the floods recede. Ploughing and threshing are mechanised, however. Once sown, floating rice is rainfed until the arrival of annual floods. The success of the crop is heavily dependent on receiving deep and prolonged inundation. Only one crop a year can be grown where there is no effective dry season irrigation.

The district town, from which the district takes its name, is some 90 kilometres north of Bangkok and services many of the surrounding communities. The town is within easy reach of the provincial seat and Bangkok, and is passed by the Asian Highway. A number of services, including the police station, high school, post office, agricultural co-operative and market, are located at Banglen

---

[3]Source: 'Banglen' District Office records and 1988 Village Survey (*kho so cho song kho* 2531).

town. A few small businesses, restaurants, garages and a rice mill, and several well-established retailers are also sited in the district town. The morning market is well attended and local villagers as well as permanent stall-holders sell there. Like most market towns in the area, the majority of established businesses are owned by Sino-Thais. The town is the seat of the district administration and is a sanitation district (*sukhaphiban*). It has a sanitation district committee and is also part of a subdistrict and is therefore administered by headpersons and a *kamnan.*

III.C. Study Subdistricts

As was noted in Chapter One, my most intensive research focused on the community around Wat Ban Thung, that is Villages Three and Four of Ban Thung. However, research was also conducted in the other administrative villages of Ban Thung and throughout the adjacent subdistrict of Ban Say. This bias in research location is reflected in the following section: Ban Thung is described in much more detail than Ban Say. Another reason for which I present more background information regarding Ban Thung is that it is the locus of events described in subsequent case studies. In general, however, processes of economic change have affected residents of both subdistricts in similar ways.

III.C.1. Ban Thung Subdistrict

Ban Thung is one of the 17 subdistricts in Banglen district and is about eight kilometres from Banglen town. It consists of five administrative villages (*muban*) and has approximately 446 households and 2,919 people.[4] The subdistrict is located in a low-lying treeless plain. It is in something of a basin such that flood and rain water from other areas collects there. During the flood season it is inundated more deeply, earlier and for a longer period than neighbouring areas. As Amyot notes: "There is some flooding every year but some years it can reach catastrophic proportions" (1976:15). Most houses line a narrow waterway (*khlong*) which runs from north to south through the subdistrict. The division of this linear settlement into administrative villages is somewhat arbitrary, but does, to a degree, reflect temple membership (see below).

Infrastructure has developed greatly in recent years. There were no roads into the subdistrict when Amyot conducted research in 1969: boats were used in the rainy season and paths over the fields were taken in the dry season. The canal

---

[4]Source: Author's household survey (see Appendix 2).

running through the subdistrict was once the main artery of communication, but is now mostly disused. Many sections are clogged with weeds and it is only widely used when the roads are flooded. The subdistrict is now connected to Banglen town and the Asian Highway by a laterite-surfaced road built in 1975. There are several 'bus' services (*song thɑw*) to and from Banglen town daily, taking residents to the market and to the high school. Electricity came to the subdistrict in 1980. Currently all but the poorest households own a television and a variety of other consumer durables such as electric rice cookers and fans. A single public telephone was installed in the subdistrict in October 1990 and is housed at the Subdistrict Centre.

Subdistrict public facilities include two primary schools, a health centre and the Subdistrict Centre. The two schools are adjacent to the subdistrict's two temples - one at Wat Ban Thung, one at Wat Lamu. The public health centre is located in Village Four as is the Subdistrict Centre. At the time of fieldwork there were four well-stocked stores, and as many noodle-stalls (*ran kwitiaw*): there were also a number of smaller stalls dotted around the subdistrict.

The Subdistrict Centre (*sun anek prasong prajam tambon,* commonly referred to as *sun*, the Centre) was built in 1988 using a combination of state development funds and contributions from residents. It was built as the administrative centre of the subdistrict council and to house state-sponsored events (for example, polling, secular rituals, development competitions and so on) The public-address system comprises an amplifier and a tower supporting four powerful loudspeakers. It can be heard throughout the northern half and some of the southern part of the subdistrict. The public-address system was used by a few, self-selected residents to communicate a variety of information ranging from temple and school announcements to ordinances from the district office.

All local residents would identify themselves as Thai. However, there are two recognisably Sino-Thai households in the north of the subdistrict and residents of Laotian descent in a hamlet in Village Three and in neighbouring Ban Say subdistrict. The latter are said to have migrated to the area from Vientiane around the end of the nineteenth century. Thus, even if the area was ethnically diverse a century ago it is now relatively homogeneous (see Terwiel 1989).

The fieldwork communities are economically closely linked with Bangkok. Migration has long been a strategy for both Ban Thung and Ban Say villagers. The children of the landed and landless alike leave the locality: the former tend to enter stable employment, and the latter to swell the ranks of slum dwellers and sweat-shop workers (see Douglass 1984: 134-151). In the main, cash flows from Bangkok to these rural communities in the form of remittances. Five survey

households depended entirely on remittances. One consequence of the high rate of outmigration and the fact that migrants earn only marginal incomes, is that a large number of children are left to reside with rural grandparents or relatives. A full 30 percent of school children from Villages Three and Four in Ban Thung lived with people other than their parents, a proportion probably representative of other schools in the district. Those who had left the communities returned on important festival days and were only rarely seen. As will become evident in Chapter Six, despite their general absence, their votes could still be mobilised in the event of subdistrict elections.

III.C.2. Ban Say Subdistrict

Ban Say is adjacent to Ban Thung subdistrict and is composed of four administrative villages whose residents attend one of two temples (Wat Yom, also frequented by residents of Village Five of Ban Thung, and Wat Ban Say). The subdistrict consists of approximately 218 households and 1,096 individuals.[5] Ban Say is slightly higher in elevation than Ban Thung, perhaps by only three or four metres, but enough to make the cultivation of flooded rice a precarious enterprise. Because of its higher elevation and proximity to the Asian Highway, a number of brick enterprises have been established there - some which might otherwise have been sited at Ban Thung.

Until 1990, when a local mechanised brickyard owner became headman by buying votes, all Ban Say officeholders were men of modest means and were indistinguishable from the majority of local small-holders. The *kamnan*, although he jointly owns a non-mechanised brickyard (which his wife runs), is - for a local *kamnan* - conspicuously poor. He is reputed to be scrupulously honest, and not to 'eat' public funds. Almost alone among the district's *kamnan,* he does not own a motorcycle let alone a pick-up truck.

The subdistrict has a meeting hall, like Ban Thung, with a powerful public address system. The Subdistrict Development Centre (as it is called here) had been the focus of a province-wide 'development competition' in 1990 and repeatedly received officials to inspect local 'development' institutions.

Villagers engage in a combination of economic activities identical to those pursued by Ban Thung residents (see below). Rice and sweet potato cultivation, cattle rearing, basketry and wage labour are the main activities.

---

[5]Source: Subdistrict records, Ban Say subdistrict.

III.D. Temple and Religious Leaders

All residents are Theravada Buddhist. As is common throughout Thailand and other Theravadin countries, village Buddhism is enmeshed with spirit cults (Tambiah 1970, Tannen baum 1987) - an aspect of religious life which does not concern us here, however.

Particularly in more isolated areas of rural Thailand the temple is the community's social and moral focus. Indeed, a temple congregation is often taken to define a community. Residents of any locality would consider themselves members of a temple congregation and will require the services of monks at one time or another in their lives. Ban Thung residents attend one of three temples: Wat Lamu, in Village One, is attended by residents in this Village and Village Two; residents of Villages Three and Four attend Wat Ban Thung situated in Village Four, and Village Five residents attend Wat Yom in Ban Say subdistrict. The religious motive for most *wat* ritual is to produce 'merit' (*bun*). Monks are continually in demand to perform ritual functions, in particular on behalf of better-off villagers. Most of the monks at Ban Thung temples are local men.

As will become evident in Chapters Six and Seven, abbots may wield considerable influence over political affairs. This has been noted by others. One writer has recently noted that while "in theory abbots and monks are regarded by the people as politically neutral and detached from worldly affairs" in practice "some abbots and monks are politically involved within and outside the village community" (Chaichana 1990:125). Keyes has noted that the congregation of an abbot, who is active in lay affairs, would follow his lead "in preference to that of a local leader or official" (1979:208). Abbots have opportunities to influence local opinion in formal and informal situations. They formally address large audiences at Lenten and festival merit-making ceremonies. The sermons they give sometimes relate to locally relevant secular issues. For example, the abbot of Wat Ban Thung, on one occasion, denounced corruption among local officeholders, and on another, in the face of persistent factionalism, enjoined villagers and leaders to bury their differences and cooperate with one another.

Abbots are also able to influence villagers' views in less formal exchanges. The Wat Ban Thung abbot was daily host to a gathering of mature men outside his living quarters (*kuti*), supplying glasses of Chinese tea. He expressed his views quite forthrightly in this setting. These would be disseminated and often adopted by parishioners who held the abbot in high esteem. Obviously the amount of influence an individual monk or abbot may have depends on his personal qualities. The abbot of Wat Ban Thung was particularly able and respected: before ordaining he had been headteacher of the adjoining primary school. As one elderly informant

asserted, people "trust in/have faith in" (*chu thu*) the abbot. One should note that abbots and monks in general cannot be publicly criticised: it is considered immoral to do so. Although people may privately disagree with the views or actions of a particular monk, they should not make their feelings public.

To my mind the physical temple is, as it were, the public face of the community it serves. The appearance of a temple and the reputation of its monks reflect on the prestige of the community as a whole. A lavishly constructed temple is a source of pride for villagers and abbot alike.[6] Ambitious abbots have much to gain from improving the aesthetic appeal of their temples. This is an important point, since it goes some way to explaining the political behaviour of several religious leaders in the 1990 provincial councillor elections (Chapter Seven). The dynamic abbot of Wat Yom, a Ban Thung Village Four man, was awarded ecclesiastic rank (as *Phra Khru*) after constructing a large and ostentatious temple complex from modest foundations. Ironically perhaps, he was given the award for being a *Phra Nak Phatthana*, a 'development monk'. This attribute is more commonly reserved for monks involved in community and environmental development (See Gosling 1981; Seri 1988) but at least in this case it was used to reward a monk who had 'developed' his temple.[7] Not many months after the rank was ceremonially and elaborately given, this abbot part-financed and managed the construction of a mechanised brickyard employing about 15 parishioners. This gave rise to muted criticism.

Regular attendance of Wat Ban Thung seems to have become the prerogative of better-off villagers. Many poorer members of the congregation from Village Three rarely attend the temple on regular merit-making days (*wan phra*), doing so only on special festivals. Some informants indicated they could not afford to offer to the monks food of appropriate quality on a regular basis. Others could not attend on account of their work as wage labourers outside the subdistrict.

One rite in particular, *kathin*, is of importance to the story of local electioneering presented in Chapters Six and Seven. At the end of Buddhist lent

---

[6]When explaining why they supported the construction of a new temple hall (*sala*) at Wat Ban Thung some villagers explained to me that they were ashamed of the present, rather ramshackle one. When visiting other communities *en masse* villagers were always comparing other temples with their own.

[7]The abbot of Wat Ban Thung played a major role in subdistrict affairs without official recognition, and without identifying himself as a 'development monk'. For example, he managed the public water supply (pump, tank and pipes) which served three Villages and controlled the flow of canal irrigation water - activities contributing directly to the livelihood of his parishioners.

lay-people from elsewhere offer new robes to monks and novices who have lived in the *wat* for the prescribed period (Phaya Anuman 1986:81). Gifts of cash and of a variety of commodities are also made (from soap to sofas). *Kathin* rite sponsors are sought, by some temples at least, for the amount of money they are likely to contribute. The rite is the single greatest opportunity for a temple to accumulate a cash lump sum. Funds are often needed to finance the construction of new and the maintenance of old buildings.

The way the 1990 Wat Ban Thung *kathin* rite was organised further alienated those members of the community who had already become distanced by an inability to participate in regular ceremonies. The 1989 *kathin* ceremony, and reportedly those before it, was the product of unorganised villagers' efforts. Members of the congregation had cooperated independently in order to prepare the temple and the feast with which to greet the hundreds of guests. However, in 1990 the new *kamnan*, by treating the festival mainly as an income-generating opportunity, and by imposing a division of labour, subtly changed the *status quo*. Villagers were expected to submit their names in advance so as to be allocated to work parties which had specific tasks. In response there was a marked drop in villagers' participation between 1989 and 1990. After the event the k*amnan* complained to the audience at the next subdistrict meeting that those locals who had turned up had eaten as guests and had not helped serve. He gave no indication that he suspected his own practices were at least partially responsible for alienating villagers from their own festival.

Lastly, we should note that the village temple is not an autonomous institution but is subject to the authority of both the ecclesiastic (Tambiah 1976) and secular administration. Intervention from above can be experienced as oppressive. For example, on the occasion of the King's birthday in 1990 the abbot received a missive from the district office stipulating which rites would have to be held and in what order. A photograph was requested. The abbot interpreted this as a demand for proof and expressed annoyance that the plans he had autonomously made had to be subordinated to those from the bureaucracy. Apparently, the Interior Ministry wished every temple in the nation to carry out the same rites simultaneously - a prime example of nation-building activity of a symbolic kind.

III.E. Changing Leadership in Ban Thung

Kamnan Chang of Ban Thung retired on 28 March 1990 after 38 years in office. Chapter Six traces events surrounding the election of a new *kamnan*. This

section characterises political life in Ban Thung prior to *Kamnan* Chang's retirement with a view to putting subsequent events into context. I draw on the reminiscences of my informants and on Amyot's report (1976:66-70).

Kamnan Chang became *kamnan* at the young age of 22; he was installed by the district administration after the previous *kamnan*, his father, died. When he first assumed office in 1955 "lawlessness was rampant" in the subdistrict (Amyot 1976:68). It is unlikely that there was any degree of cooperation between members of the different temple communities, which comprised the subdistrict before this time. However, the *kamnan* soon extended control over all areas: apparently with tacit official approval he summarily made examples of a couple of thieves and brigands who refused to stop operating in the area. He effectively pacified the locality. His control was such that for a period all outsiders wishing to stay overnight in the subdistrict had to report to him. He also set up nightly patrols to protect the subdistrict from buffalo raids. Amyot noted that the *kamnan* dealt with all disputes personally (1976:68), not welcoming intrusion from either the district office, or as the *kamnan* told me himself, the police. He held monthly subdistrict meetings, except during the harvest season, at which he expected every household to be represented. At one meeting I observed shortly before his retirement he ordered the numerous unrepresented households to attend a second meeting. The fear and respect he commanded brought compliance.

At least in his earlier years of office, the *kamnan* exerted his authority for the greater good, a fact which, despite having since earned a somewhat tarnished reputation, still evokes considerable genuine respect from many residents, both rich and poor. Under his leadership there was a "pooling of responsibility" for the whole subdistrict (Amyot 1976:67). For example, villagers built a dyke to retain flood water in one part of the subdistrict, and contributed their skills and labour to construct Wat Ban Thung school. The *kamnan's* authority was such that he dominated individual headmen (Amyot 1976:68) and thereby prevented the development of interests based on neighbourhood or Village membership. Amyot notes of this period that "there are no deep divisions or factions in the community" (1976:67). Reportedly, until the 1980s, the entire subdistrict voted in general elections *en bloc* under the guidance of *Kamnan* Chang. The subdistrict's vote went to the Ayutthaya high-school teacher of the *kamnan*, who was a member of the National Assembly for several terms. The latter was seen as having brought to the subdistrict the health centre, road and funds for the construction of the school. Votes were never bought, but were given in exchange for this collective patronage.

Just as the lifting of autocratic regimes tends to give rise to the assertion of ethnic and regional identity at the level of the nation, here *Kamnan* Chang's

retirement gave rise to factionalism based on Village membership (see Chapter Six). Individual headmen asserted ambitions that had been repressed under the former leader. Accordingly, the subdistrict no longer presents a united front to outside political patrons. Headmen became vote brokers (*hua khanan*) of different national politicians and the subdistrict's vote was broken up.

Around the time of his marriage in the mid-1970s, *Kamnan* Chang was said to have ceased to concern himself with the common good of the subdistrict. A number of serious abuses of office were attributed to him following this period. He acquired economic interests in Bangkok and spent less time in Ban Thung, while still exercising a somewhat repressive influence. Some villagers referred to his administration as a "dictatorship" (*phadetkan*) and there was some relief when he retired. As one informant said, *Kamnan* Chang had ruled over the subdistrict with "personal power" (*mi amnat nay tua*), power that only indirectly resulted from his relationship with the state.

The *kamnan* dominated the subdistrict council as well as other headmen in the subdistrict. He called meetings irregularly, about once every three months. I observed two meetings before his retirement: at both he did not invite discussion from council members, but appeared to use the meetings to formalise his own decisions.

Undoubtedly the quality of social relations in the subdistrict has changed in recent years. According to Amyot (1976:66) there was a high degree of cooperation and cohesion in Ban Thung (particularly in relation to his two other study sites in Ayutthaya province). Apart from the strong influence of the incumbent *kamnan,* generally shared hardship and poverty imposed by severe flooding and the subdistrict's relative isolation contributed to the high level of self-sufficiency and interdependence.

III.F. Economic History of Ban Thung

The area now comprising Villages Three and Four of Ban Thung was probably settled towards the middle of the nineteenth century. The oldest residents remembered their grandparents saying that they farmed the amount of land they needed or wanted to claim (*jap jong*), and that previously the area had been marshland. Wat Ban Thung was probably founded around 1857 and the community must have been well-established by 1916 when villagers built a brick prayer hall (*bot*) with their own labour and funds.

According to informants, every household held sufficient land to meet their subsistence needs prior to the 1920s and 1930s. But around this time a number of

households in what is now Village Three lost their land to market traders, reportedly on account of unpaid debts incurred from purchases of newly available commodities like cloth and crockery.[8] According to several informants merchants cheated these farmers, who were illiterate, in a number of ways. Rice surpluses were sold to Chinese merchants who travelled the canal in the rainy season, and residents kept, milled and consumed enough rice for their own needs.

Brigandage and general lawlessness were widespread in the area in the late 1940s and early 1950s. There were frequent raids to steal buffalo, and rice harvests were also at risk. One old man related how he would go and lie among his harvested rice sheaves before dawn to show would-be thieves that he had been guarding his crop all night.

Participation in the market economy brought fundamental changes from the late 1940s onwards. By the late 1950s households had largely ceased to practice reciprocal harvesting (*aw rɑng*) and instead hired members of landless households. Some households began rearing cattle and poultry for sale. By the 1970s the majority of households no longer even consumed the rice they grew, but sold it outright, buying long-grain milled rice instead.[9]

Connection to the Chainat reservoir brought the most deleterious change in 1964. Whereas formerly flooding and drainage were gradual because water was spread over a wide area, connection to Chainat made it more "concentrated and sudden" (Amyot 1976:4). Villagers complained that after 1964 the floods would frequently rise so quickly that the young rice shoots drowned. Chainat undermined agricultural returns in another way. Formerly flood water, after a cross-country journey, was rich in alluvium and effectively deposited a layer of fertiliser each year. Flood water is now directed via irrigation channels and carries few if any natural nutrients. It is ironic that this development has damaged rather than improved agriculture in this area.[10]

---

[8]While the majority of Village Three households are currently landless, having lost their holdings to town-based merchants, the majority of Village Four households are landowners. Having examined various possible explanations for this (the Villages are contiguous and nothing distinguishes them apart from this difference) I conclude that the most plausible one is that neighbours and kinspersons pursued similar consumption patterns at around the same time, thereby becoming indebted to town-based merchants and losing their land contemporaneously.

[9]Short-grain rice grown locally mills badly. Additionally, tastes have changed in favour of long-grain rice which is considered more refined and thus aesthetically superior. One elderly informant told me that, despite his fondness for the taste of short-grain rice, he had felt obliged to start buying the other variety. As other households began putting long-grain rice into the monks' alms bowls he began to feel ashamed because he was giving something 'inferior'.

[10]However, it must be noted that in other areas in this province the project has had a generally beneficial effect (see, for example, Piker 1983:48).

III.G. Livelihood and Production in Ban Thung and Ban Say

My concern in this section is not only to describe economic activities but also to show how local conditions are contributing to processes of differentiation. Political-economic and environmental forces are restricting the opportunities that poorer sections of the study communities have for earning a livelihood outside selling their labour. The brick industry, except as a source of wage labour, is not considered here, since this is the subject of Chapter Five.

III.G.1. Agricultural Production

It would be true to say that in Banglen agriculture is stagnating while rural industry is expanding. Deep-water paddy is highly susceptible to environmental conditions and does not lend itself to intensification. If anything, the position of farmers has deteriorated in recent years.

Rice cultivation is fully commercialised; capital is necessary for every stage of production. Buffalo ceased to be used for ploughing around 1970, and all households either hire or use their own tractors. Paddy is no longer threshed using animal power, but mechanical threshers with teams of labourers are hired. As noted above, rice harvests are sold outright, none is retained for home consumption. The short-grain variety of rice grown locally is exported mainly to India and Arab nations, thus producers are linked into and dependent on the world commodity market. A large proportion of local farmers now market their rice directly to rice mills, cutting out middlemen. Farmers started taking their harvest, using hired transport, to mills around 1987. However, they are disadvantaged by their practice of selling and not consuming their product. Each time producers sell short-grain rice to mills and buy long-grain rice from them, they forego savings of around 19.2 percent that would be made had they consumed their own milled rice.[11]

As noted at the beginning of this Chapter, the conditions of agricultural production make it increasingly difficult for farmers, especially small-holders, to make a profit, or even cover costs of production. Returns are unreliable and insufficient to meet household needs consistently for all but the largest landowners.

---

[11]This figure is based on the following: short-grain paddy yields on average 66 percent of its weight in milled rice. The highest price received in 1990 for short-grain rice was 4,000 baht/tonne, therefore 100 kg of short-grain (milled) rice had a value of 606 baht. The cheapest long-grain milled rice sold by the mill was 750 baht per 100 kg. Thus, farmers paid at least 19.2 percent more than the cash value of their product each time they bought milled long-grain rice rather than consumed their own milled short-grain rice.

Farmers commonly said that before connection to Chainat dam, and recent climatic changes, they would obtain yields of 50 to 60 *thang*. Nowadays farmers consider themselves lucky if they obtain 30 *thang*. Farmers complain about increasingly unpredictable rainfall and a drastic reduction in the quality and regularity of flood water. Harvests were good "before water had owners", and before the proliferation of roads which block the path of the flood water. I frequently heard complaints about the unpredictability of rainfall and flooding, changes no doubt linked to the disappearance of forest cover (see Hirsch 1987:137-141). As one old farmer said, "during the ploughing season the rain doesn't fall, during the harvest season it falls". Another complained about changes in the regularity of floods: "nowadays, when the floods should recede for harvesting, instead they rise!" A common refrain is that no money can be made from rice farming, and that it would be better to sell one's land and make a living some other way. Farmers also deplored the rising amount of capital necessary for production and the fact that returns did not keep pace.

Another common complaint, made by large and small landowners alike, is that harvesters could not be found at the right time and that they were commanding ever higher wages. Several larger Ban Thung farming households hired migrant workers, often landowners themselves, from the Northeast and Lower North, a practice which is, however, not new in the province(Piker 1983:27-28). These migrants hire themselves out to others in the area when their host's fields had been reaped. Because labour was generally in high demand during the harvest season, local wage labourers were not displaced by these outsiders, and I never heard any complaints to this effect.

Undoubtedly, one of the factors encouraging landowners to sell up is the poor return made on small-scale agricultural production. Some of the blame must lie with the state. Indeed, some farmers saw the state's lack of effective support as contributing to their predicament. Various government schemes do not seem to have benefited the majority of cultivators. For example, a rice mortgage scheme, whereby capital-poor farmers can 'mortgage' their harvest, was experienced by locals as too bureaucratic to be practicable.

Land alienation has increased for at least the past 40 years, by what Douglass has called "the logic of the new agricultural economy" where "commercial farmers and landlords...accumulate land at the expense of small and marginal peasants, an opportunity partly seized through credit relations" (Douglass 1984:80,81). Amyot has clearly identified the mechanics of this process in Ayutthaya province. He noticed a process of land concentration, where owners

with more than 15 *rai* tended to accumulate more land, whilst those with less than this amount tended to withdraw from farming:

> There seemed to be what could amount to a law in the agricultural economy of the area as to the minimum size a farm holding must have to be exploited profitably [sic]. The break-off point in this area seemed to be about 15 rai [sic]. If a farmer had less than that, he could not survive economically as a full-time farmer without acquiring additional land. Failing this possibility, if he was an owner he either sold or rented out his land; and if he was a renter he withdrew from farming (Amyot 1976:108).

Land alienation has been accelerated by land speculation in the 1980s (see below). For those households which had retained control of small-holdings it seems a matter of time before they are obliged, due to debt or other pressures, to release them.

This said, however, the position of owner-operators is somewhat anomalous. Production itself brings them returns barely worth their labour, and obliges them to engage in a range of other productive or wage labour activities. Yet, at the same time, those farmers who own more than two or three *rai* are - as a result of rising prices - owners of increasingly large sums of unrealised capital.

All farmers still use their land for an annual crop of 'floating rice' but within the last 10 to 11 years, some farmers with appropriate plots and sufficient capital have taken to growing sweet potato for the market during the dry season. Land needs to be near a source of irrigation and a road. Access to capital is crucial since production involves outlay on fertiliser, pesticides, shoots, irrigation hoses and pumps. Returns are substantial and can be as much as 10times that derived from rice cultivation. Traders come to the side of the field to buy the crop.

III.G.2. Livestock Rearing

The raising of livestock is an important supplement to income for agricultural producers, as well as the landless. Recent changes in patterns of livestock-raising seem to indicate that resource-poor households occupy an ever-shrinking space and may be unable to rely on this form of petty commodity production for much longer. On the other hand resource-rich households are able to take advantage of the expanding market for their commodities.

Pigs are the most common livestock raised by poorer households. Until the last 10 to 15 years, households raised pigs until fully-grown; nowadays because of the high cost of commercial feed only the largest farmers are able to do this. Others raise piglets until they are three months old when they are sold to visiting traders. Some feed is needed to raise piglets and sows, but the bulk of it comes

from canal vegetation which both men and women cut. Piglets are the major repository and source of poorer household's savings.

Cattle are a repository of investment for somewhat wealthier households. Economic differences between households rearing cattle appear to be widening as a result of recent developments.[12] Cattle are of three main types: indigenous, hybrid (Indo-Brazilian) and crosses between hybrid and indigenous cattle (hybrid-indigenous). Local cattle require no capital investment; they are grazed on communal land or harvested fields and left to breed naturally. Recently, expensive hybrid and hybrid-indigenous cattle (*ngua phan*) have become popular. The Bank of Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC) promoted the rearing of the latter two types in the area, encouraging members to take out loans for this purpose. Hybrid, and to a lesser extent hybrid-indigenous cattle, are capital intensive: they are inseminated by studs, fed special foodstuffs, and must be kept under netting at night. Prices range from 10,000 to 90,000 baht a head locally and many households in both Ban Thung and Ban Say have begun raising them.

A combination of commercialisation and environmental changes have had a variegated impact on cattle raisers. Those with capital are able to realise better returns, whilst households without capital are finding it more difficult to continue the activity. Firstly, old limits on the herd size have disappeared for capital-rich households, while capital-poor households are still constrained by pre-existing conditions. Secondly, the mechanisation of agriculture and climatic changes have reduced available grazing areas, disadvantaging owners of indigenous cattle, but not hybrid-indigenous cattle.

Formerly, herd sizes were limited by two factors common to all households regardless of wealth. The size of a herd was restricted by the size of the elevated pen *(khok)*, which keeps cattle above flood season water levels, and the amount of grass a household could gather daily during this season. The size of a pen was restricted to what could be constructed by hand: one hand-made pen would normally hold around four or five head of cattle. A rich household might have two pens. This limitation has disappeared with increased availability and reduced cost of earth-moving machinery, which wealthier households have been hiring to construct extended pens. During the flood season cattle owners use skiffs to cut grass from the young rice plants or from common property areas. One person, working from 5 A.M. until 3 P.M., is able to collect enough grass to feed a maximum of nine or 10 head of cattle for one day. Currently, however, wealthy

---

[12]For some of the following data and insights I am indebted to Somchai Kamchu, who, while seconded from the Agricultural Land Reform Office, spent four weeks researching this topic in Village Five, Ban Thung.

households hire others to cut grass for them, thus by-passing this second restriction on size of herd. The lack of available dry season grazing presents difficulties for owners of indigenous cattle which hybrid and hybrid-indigenous cattle-owners do not face. Because of the rapidity of tractor ploughing and changes in rainfall patterns there is a shortage of grazing grass during the dry season. Richer households, on the other hand, are able to use hay from their own fields, and if this is insufficient, to use their own or hired transport to collect free hay from other local areas.

Perhaps the most important constraint facing poorer households is that in the face of a daily need for cash, they cannot afford to wait until their cattle are mature enough to sell. Younger household members are obliged to take up wage labour, often in the brickyards, to keep the household in cash. But as elderly household members left behind become infirm and unable to collect fodder in the flood season, so the family must give up raising cattle. In contrast, the rich have other sources of income, and can afford to invest in their cattle. In this way some households are in a position to accumulate capital by rearing cattle, whilst others may be obliged to give up this form of petty commodity production.

Changes in poultry farming also point towards the proletarianisation of resource-poor households. Until recently many households in Village Five, Ban Thung, raised 200 to 300 ducks to market their eggs. In 1990 this provided an average 'profit' (without offsetting producers' labour) of about 50 baht a day. However, this return is not assured, since changes in weather or disease can stop ducks laying eggs. Finding that they could earn the same amount without incurring any risk, several Village Five households gave up farming poultry to join local brickyards as wage labourers.

III.G.3. Wage Labour and Own-Account Activities

There is a variety of wage labour available to the landless and others whose independent economic activities do not meet their needs. These are: labour in mechanised brickyards, seasonal agricultural work, work in other local industries,[13] and three main types of piece-rate work. The latter comprises the production of bricks by hand, peasant hats and wallets. Both types of brick work are described in Chapter Five.

---

[13]Only very few opportunities existed in 1989/90, but they may be expanding as industry moves into the area from Bangkok.

Agricultural wage labour is used mainly during the rice harvest. The recent introduction of a dry season sweet potato crop provides some work for another three months of the year. Landless labourers who do not work in the brickyards look to the harvest season as the main annual opportunity to earn money. A skilled worker with stamina can earn around 100 baht a day (at the 1990 rate of 200 baht per harvested *rai*). Many small-holders also hire themselves out, often joining the harvesting teams which work outside the district. Some of the landless continued harvesting throughout the season, day-in, day-out, for a period of up to six weeks. Amphetamines were used by some to retain stamina and suppress the pain of aching muscles.

During the dry season, work is available in the sweet potato fields: labour is required for planting the shoots, weeding, and eventually harvesting. Field owners hire labourers by the day, often timing work and rest periods rigidly. Strict time-keeping is a recent introduction and is perhaps inspired by mechanised brickyard work practices. Other village-based work, like emptying or digging fish ponds, is available only intermittently.

As indicated earlier, farmers complain of labour shortages. In part they blame local brickyards for taking labour away from agriculture. Labourers benefit to a degree in that during the harvest season many brickyard owners increase wages by some five baht a day, obliging farmers to increase harvesting rates in competition as the season progresses. However, brickyard owners promptly reduce the rate after the harvest season.

Some households subsist entirely on home-based piecework. In Ban Thung, farmers' hats (*ngop*) are produced. Market traders organise a putting-out system of production. Households perform only specialised tasks, like stitching, or attaching rims. Market traders deliver, collect and redistribute the partly finished product. This type of labour does not generate any significant surplus. Many producers commented that "you can't do it quick enough to eat". One person working at a reasonable rate could earn between 15 and 20 baht a day. On the whole, women organised this work, and one villager would often act as a local putter-out for her neighbours, thereby earning a small additional percentage.

Another form of piece-rate work, which was once widespread before the arrival of brickyards, is the production of wallets. This was contracted out to villagers by a Bangkok firm. Only two or three households were involved in this kind of work in Ban Thung during my fieldwork.

Households throughout Ban Say and in Village One of Ban Thung engaged in own-account cottage industry. They produce basketry and farmers' hat headpieces respectively, purchasing bamboo poles as the primary raw material.

Although these are petty commodity producers, as opposed to piece-rate producers, many made a similar complaint to the above piece-rate workers: barely enough is earned to live on. Producers complained that once they had taken account of raw materials their income rarely exceeded 20 baht a day. Many brickyard employees formerly engaged in some form of cottage industry. Home production is most convenient for those with responsibilities like caring for children or livestock. Others combined production with fishing for home consumption and sale. Basketry and the manufacture of farmers' hat headpieces are examples of branches of petty commodity production which were becoming non-viable.

Finally, a number of households have a member engaged in petty trading. This ranges from ownership of a small, poorly stocked stall to a large store selling everything from cooking gas cylinders to alcohol.

What is clear from this account of livelihood strategies is that everyone is involved in the commodity economy - no section of the community lives independently of it, producing only for subsistence. However, many households do provide for some of their subsistence needs - working small kitchen gardens, fishing or catching field rats. The important point, however, is that these activities, especially where they are dependent on the environment, are precarious. Natural resource depletion - particularly of fish stocks - has meant that effectively there remain few spaces into which households can withdraw from the commodity economy.

To sum up, poorer farmers are under pressure to sell their labour to supplement their meagre income or to relinquish land or sometimes to do both. Branches of petty commodity production and home-based piece-rate production open to small farmers and the landless alike are so unremunerative that wage labour is preferred. Similarly, those rearing cattle are becoming differentiated, with richer owners increasing the value of their herds, while poorer owners experience difficulties maintaining their own.

III.H. Land Speculation

During the period of my fieldwork there was both local and national alarm concerning the apparent readiness with which farmers were selling land to speculators.[14] Economic growth had led Bangkok-based speculators to buy land in the provinces in the expectation that within a short while it could be sold on to tourist or manufacturing industry interests at a profit. As the phenomenon has

---

[14]See for example Bangkok Post; 20 January; 5 May; 25 June; 30 July, 1990.

developed only recently, at the time of fieldwork there was an absence of adequate statistics or research.[15] My comments below are a sketchy attempt to bring the process and issues to the fore, in particular as they relate to the fieldsite.

During 1990 commentators, alarmed by the rate at which farmers were selling up, complained that the government lacked policies to control or the means to measure land sales. An economist, Jermsak Pinthong, called upon the government to zone land into specific use areas, and to slow down the market by taxing profits (Bangkok Post, 7 October 1990).[16] Concern was also expressed regarding the involvement of overseas capital (Bangkok Post, 16 September 1990).

Any attempt to quantify the scale of the problem is bound to be frustrated by inadequate data. At least until 1990 government statistics did not quantify the actual area that has changed hands; they indicate only the number of transactions and the value of tax collected on sales.[17] Furthermore, because statistics are compiled only by province, it is not possible to ascertain the number of sales in smaller administrative units - in districts or subdistricts. Thus, it was impossible to obtain figures revealing the number of sales in Banglen or either of the two study subdistricts. While Table 3.1 indicates a dramatic rise in the number of transactions and their value in Ayutthaya province, we can probably extrapolate to suggest that they also represent trends in the study district. The Table reveals sharp increases in the value of tax collected between 1987 and 1990, giving an impression, at least, of the real increases in the value of the sales. Tax revenue increased more than 25-fold in the period 1981-1990. The Table also shows that

---

[15]However, some excellent reportage has examined the social impact of land speculation. In a collection of articles, originally published in the Bangkok Post, Sanitsuda (1990:131-151) has looked at the phenomenon in the North of Thailand. She reports that common property woods and grasslands are appropriated by speculators with the help of local government officials, that local-level officeholders (headmen and *kamnan*) provide outsiders not only with the opportunity to buy land but also to cheat locals. Sanitsuda mentions an MP as among those who have appropriated common property land, and recounts the aggressive and intimidating strategies pursued by some land brokers (see also Bangkok Post 7 October 1990:9). From her description it is evident that many of those who are supposed to have cashed in on the boom become landless wage labourers before too long.

[16]The current development plan does address the problem, albeit briefly (NESDB 1992:31) and the NESDB has commissioned research on general land policy issues (see Tongroj 1990).

[17]While the number of transactions is not problematic, the amount of land tax collected tends to underestimate the real sale value. The rate of land tax is based on the pre-boom 1987 land values. Because land prices have spiralled since then, and because vendors are not compelled to disclose the real sale price, the real value of the sale is not necessarily reflected in the land tax paid.

there were more than three times as many sales in 1990 as there were in pre-boom 1986.

Table 3.1 - Number of Land Sales Transactions and Value of Tax Collected, 1981-1990, Ayutthaya Province.

Year	No. transactions	Value of Land Tax (million baht)
1981	3,350	3.9
1982	3,495	4.6
1983	4,114	6.0
1984	3,931	7.6
1985	3,953	10.0
1986	3,427	7.2
1987	4,138	16.6
1988	8,870	44.5
1989	8,394	48.9
1990	10,312	99.0

Source: Ayutthaya Land Registration Office. Records refer to years starting in September.[18]

That land sales were a topical subject in Ayutthaya in 1990 could not fail to impress the most casual observer. The theme of many a conversation I overheard around the province, at noodle stalls, on buses and in the barber's shop, centred on the selling of land. Visits to the Land Registration Office in Ayutthaya town would confirm this impression. On each of my three visits the car park was overflowing and the building teeming. Alongside many villagers waiting attention stood more urbane-looking individuals. The latter were probably land brokers facilitating sales from smallholders.

Let us turn now to look at land sales in the fieldsite. Farmers appear prepared to give up agriculture on account of the dismal fruits it yields. As a farmer who had sold up only two years previously lamented, "it's necessary to sell, one's income doesn't cover one's costs, it's only the rich who can survive, the 'middle households' (*khon klang*) can't survive". Essentially farmers were in

[18]It is worth noting that these data had not been collated by the Land Office prior to my request (16.11.1990). Insofar as officials had no figures at hand which signified that there had been a massive increase in land transfers, the scale of the phenomenon in Ayutthaya province lay buried.

agreement that "you won't be prosperous from farming". The land market explosion hit the district in this context.

I shall now examine the scale and reasons for land sales in the locality, and the identity and work of land sales brokers (*nay na*). Findings from my survey of Ban Thung and Ban Say households indicate the extent to which selling land was a local issue and occurrence. Some 22.7 percent of households (17 of 75) which owned land in the preceding 10 years had sold some or all of it.[19] That land sales have intensified in recent years is evident from looking at when sales took place. Almost half of sales were made in 1990 (eight transactions, 47 percent). Less than a quarter were carried out between 1980 and 1986 (four, 24 percent). In view of recent increases in land prices this acceleration in the market is to be expected.

Table 3.2: Land Prices in Ban Say and Ban Thung Subdistricts (baht per *rai*)

Year	Ban Thung	Ban Say
1970	2,000-3,000	1,300-1,900
1987	8,000-12,000	7,000-10,000
June 1990	60,000-90,000	100,000-170,000
Sept 1990	100,000-120,000	190,000-200,000

Sources: Amyot (1976:97-98); Land Values, 'Banglen' District Office (1987); Reports of sales (field notes).

As well as indicating steep price rises Table 3.2 reveals a shift in the relative value of land in Ban Thung and Ban Say. The shift reflects changing priorities in the national economy. Before 1987 Ban Thung land was always more expensive than Ban Say land; but this trend has subsequently been reversed. Prior to the land boom, the cost of a plot was related to its agricultural worth, whereas now it is dependent on the construction potential of land as well as its proximity to national highways. As indicated earlier in the Chapter, much of Ban Say land floods only shallowly if at all, such that some areas could only support rainfed crops. In contrast, land in Ban Thung, being of lower elevation, was more likely to yield a

[19] In more detail: 17 of the 165 surveyed households (10.3 percent) had sold land in the 10 year period before 1990. Seventy-one households (43 percent) owned land at the time of the survey. Of these 71 households, 13 (18.3 percent) had sold some but not all of their holdings since 1980. An additional four households (2.4 percent) had sold all their land during the same period.

good crop of 'floating rice'. Deep flooding land is more expensive to build on since a greater investment is needed to raise it artificially.

Of landowning households surveyed, including those which had already sold land once, 20 (28.2 percent) said they might or would sell when or if prices rose to a specified level. The price suggested by respondents was a realistic and attainable one. Furthermore, 19 (26.8 percent) landowning households reported that they had been approached by a land sales broker; several reported being asked by more than one.

The economic statuses and motives of people who sold land were varied, as could be expected. For some households selling was a step towards further accumulation, for others it entailed impoverishment. Some sales were voluntary, others more or less imposed. Four reasons for selling land can be discerned. Landowners sold land in order to: reinvest receipts; to live off interest derived from depositing sales receipts; to pre-empt loss of value following adjacent land sales; and to meet debts. These reasons can be complementary, for example some households sold to clear debts and to invest.

Large landowners sold segments of their landholdings to invest in more lucrative enterprises, for example brick manufacturing or large-scale poultry farming. Of the 17 survey households which had sold land between 1980 and 1990 and retained the greater part of their land, five (29 percent) sold specifically in order to reinvest the returns; one in livestock, one in money-lending, two to reinvest in land elsewhere, and one to finance a brickyard. A sixth household sold all of its 10 *rai* to fund money-lending activities.

Some households which sold land were not under financial pressure, but sold to either distribute the receipts among offspring (one household), or to make bank deposits and live off the interest (one household). Owners may be disinclined to farm because of poor returns or because they were physically unable.

As sales intensified during 1990, particularly in Ban Say, some landowners found their land almost surrounded by sold plots. Owners found themselves obliged to sell for fear that when surrounding plots were built on, their own would become unworkable. They could lose access, flood water would be blocked off and field rats would focus on their harvests. Sometimes land-brokers played on such fears to force owners to accept low prices. However, no owners in the survey gave this reason for selling.

Finally, households sold because they were in debt. Of the 17 survey households, seven (41 percent) sold land to clear debts. Two of these sold portions of their holdings to pay off debts accumulated from rice cultivation. Three households sold all of their meagre holdings, all of three *rai,* to pay debts.

Where money is owed to creditors who hold the land ownership document (*chanot*) as surety, ownership is often simply transferred into the creditor's name once the debt equals the value of land. In such cases households retain no capital after the sale. Occasionally land may be sold to buyers other than the creditor, but this demands the goodwill of the latter since the landowner needs the *chanot* to make the sale. The four owners who sold some but not all of their land to clear debts sold between 17 and 56 percent of their holdings. The other two households surveyed, but not mentioned above, reported having sold simply to raise funds for general use.

It is inadvisable to generalise from my small sample. However, a few points can perhaps be safely made. While small-holders are selling up and modestly cashing in on the land boom, those who benefit the most are villagers with large holdings. Such individuals are able to retain control over land while obtaining sufficient capital to invest in more profitable enterprises. It is likely that land price rises are accelerating the rate at which smallholders rescind control over land if, as Douglass claims, the "logic of the new agricultural economy" would have made them landless anyway (1984:80). Another factor in this equation is the activity of land sales brokers.

Land sales are rarely made directly between buyer and seller. Up to four levels of brokers (*nay na*) can be involved before the final buyer is reached. According to several land brokers I interviewed, most buyers were Bangkok-based speculators who purchased large tracts with a view to selling them on to companies wishing to set up factories. Local brokers are thus necessary to organise the purchase of a tract of land from a large number of owners of contiguous plots. Brokers are often local officeholders who have the advantage of having access to local people as well as links with outsiders. During my fieldwork there were eight main brokers resident in Ban Say and Ban Thung subdistricts: two were teachers, two were headmen, one was the wife of the Ban Say *kamnan*, two were very rich landowners and the other combined acting as a broker with fish farming.

Land-brokers work in one of two ways. They are commissioned to buy specified tracts by outsiders or they work on their own account, finding buyers for locals willing to sell. Local and outsider brokers working independently ask village landowners if they are willing to sell, offering to find them a buyer. The headman of Ban Thung, by combining his brokerage with collecting monthly electricity charges, approached every landowner in Ban Thung and Ban Say. Acting autonomously brokers earn five percent commission from the seller.

Commissioned land-brokers, on the other hand, have to persuade numerous plot-owners to sell. They bargain with landowners individually, and bargain hard

since they keep the difference between the sum allowed by the buyer per *rai* and the actual sale price. One local broker I knew acted on behalf of an intermediary broker, who in turn was said to be acting for the then illustrious Communications Minister, Montri Phongphanit. The broker organised the sale of a large number of plots, amounting to a tract of 200 *rai* adjacent to the Asian Highway. This purchase was made some months before the highway was expanded from two to four lanes, making the area more accessible to Bangkok and therefore more suitable for industrial use. As the minister responsible for roads, it is likely that Montri made profitable use of his prior knowledge. He reportedly sold the tract on and did not make use of it himself.

Land and sales brokerage had become the focus of intense and sometimes violent conflict. I was aware of two killings related to land speculation in the district during my residence: one victim was a *kamnan*, the other a Ban Say teacher.

Rather ironically, district officials asked *kamnan* and headmen at two district office monthly meetings to advise villagers not to sell their farmland. This directive came from the Interior Ministry while it was common knowledge that district officials were very active land-brokers.

III.H.1. Commercial Soil Excavation

During the dry season heavy machinery can often be seen digging away at the surface of rice fields throughout the district. Tipper lorries carry off the soil, destined either for construction sites, to raise foundations above flood levels, or brickyards. Some fields are dug to a depth of half a metre, others to three or four metres. Local roads are ruined by these vehicles.

Widespread demand for Banglen topsoil is only a relatively recent phenomenon: before 1987 soil did not have a cash value.[20] When farmers wanted their topsoil removed to bring the land within reach of flood water, they gave it away, even if it was suitable for brick manufacture. Ten (14.1 percent) of the 71 Ban Thung and Ban Say landowning households surveyed reported either giving away or selling topsoil in the past 10 years. Four of these households had sold their topsoil, only one admitted doing so in order to clear debts, others said it was to improve the quality of land. The other five reported giving away topsoil before

---

[20]The going rate in 1990 for earth taken from an area of one *rai* and to a depth of half a metre, was 10,000 to 12,000 baht. The price of topsoil/land fill had risen almost proportionately with land prices: in 1988 soil was free, in 1989, 4,000 to 5,000 baht, and in 1990, as mentioned, 10,000 to 12,000 baht.

it acquired an exchange value. One respondent excavated topsoil for use in his own brickyard. I knew several landowners who appeared to have sold their topsoil in order to generate income rather than to improve their land. That farmers do this is not surprising when one considers that by selling topsoil from one *rai* an owner could make 10,000 baht, at least 20 times the average return from rice cultivation in 1990. Land where top soil had been removed needed at least five years to regain its fertility.

There are several water-logged pits in Ban Say which are economically useless. The owners had sold top soil to such a depth that acidic undersoils were revealed and made fish farming impossible. One wealthy Ban Say resident was said to have intentionally sold topsoil from one plot he owned to such a depth (2.5 metres) that it would gradually fill with the soil of his neighbours' fields.

III.I. Concluding Remarks

This Chapter has covered a wide range of material with a view to situating the reader in the account which follows. We have seen that the general conditions, as encountered in the study site, are shared in the province as a whole, and probably to some extent apply nationally. The description of the pre-1989/1990 political context in Ban Thung is background to the case study in Chapter Six, while details of the role of religious leaders and the importance of the temple are important to both case studies of electoral politics. Data on economic activities presented in this Chapter provide a basis for examining the pattern of household economic differentiation and status differences in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DIFFERENTIATION AND SOCIAL STATUS IN BANGLEN DISTRICT

Households in Ban Thung and Ban Say subdistricts are economically and socially differentiated. This Chapter defines the conceptual tools needed to analyse economic differences between production units, and after examining problems entailed by studying differentiation, depicts the situation in Ban Thung and Ban Say. Survey data and case studies are used to quantify and illustrate differences in household economic status. I then describe some of the ways in which social relations and social identities are informed by economic status in the fieldwork setting.

This Chapter forms both a backdrop to the thesis as a whole, and a substantive contribution to the literature on agrarian transformation in Thailand. Regarding Chapter Five, this discussion of differentiation presents a theoretical framework for understanding the development trajectories of brickyards. Furthermore, the social and economic backgrounds of brickyard workers and owners, the chief participants in the industry, are identified. I also depict the social context of local political conflict, emphasising the fact that candidates are competing for the support of an economically and socially differentiated population.

IV.A. Theoretical Aspects of Differentiation

Early analysts of agrarian change disputed the existence and characteristics of 'differentiation' in peasant societies integrated into capitalist economies. Chayanov (1966) argued that differences in economic status among households was temporary and a function of the domestic cycle. Lenin (1982), on the other hand, emphasised the permanent polarisation of peasant households into classes of rural proletariat and capitalist farmers. White (1989) has recently argued that whilst some differences are attributable to the household demographic cycle, others are permanent and non-cyclical. The latter are often the product of integration into a market capitalist economy, and it is to these differences that the concept 'differentiation' refers. Differentiation:

> ...involves a cumulative and permanent...process of change in the ways in which different groups in rural society - and some outside it - gain access to the products of their own or others' labour, based on their differential control over production resources and often, but not always, on increasing inequalities in access to land (White 1989:20).

Differentiation concerns relations of production, not the existence of differences in household wealth *per se*. It is "about the changing kinds of relations" (White 1989:19). Relations may only be between rural dwellers or may be between them and extra-rural groups. While examination of relations of production reveals how surplus in the rural economy is transferred or extracted, White has argued for an approach that not only examines the positions of the polarised strata of rural society, but also one that examines the persistence or lack of 'middle' households. That is to say, 'middle' households are no less problematic than rural proletariat or rural capitalists. White identifies six aspects of the study of differentiation (1989:25). It is useful to consider the present study in the light of these. The aspects are: the causes of differentiation; the process of differentiation; the mechanisms which generate it; the context in which it occurs; the constraints to it and its indicators or symptoms. The causes of differentiation refer to the penetration or expansion of the commodity economy; explanation is therefore at the macro-level. Population growth and the closing of the land frontier may be contributory factors. The process of differentiation concerns shifts in patterns and forms of production and in the social division of labour. The development of the brick industry is a major force in the process of differentiation in Banglen. Mechanisms of differentiation refer to how it is actually generated - to land dispossession and surplus extraction. Contexts refer to external conditions influencing the speed and nature of differentiation: because the Banglen agricultural economy is stagnating, if not declining, the main manifestation of differentiation is in rural industry rather than agriculture. Constraints refer to the limits to which those with capital can rationalise their economic activity. Symptoms or indicators of differentiation are in the form of measurements of landownership, household sources of income and so forth. Indicators of differentiation in the fieldsite are presented below.

Before exploring the problem of defining the units which undergo differentiation, it is useful to distinguish between types of production units. Units are defined by the way in which they produce, their mode of production. Producers under discussion in this and the next Chapter are 'petty commodity', 'petty capitalist' and 'capitalist' producers. The characteristics of each mode of production are now defined and the means by which enterprises make the transition from one mode to another are outlined.

Cook and Binford have responded to the problem of the contradictions and confusion in the use of the concept 'petty commodity production' by redrawing the parameters around it to create a generic concept. They stipulate four conditions that must apply before the label is applicable:

> 1. The regular and exclusive production of products for market exchange.
> 2. Small-scale private enterprise in which the means of production are privately controlled by direct producers and labour is nonwaged.
> 3. Mutual independence of production units, ruling out, therefore, the exchange of products within a larger enterprise, such as a factory....
> 4. The purpose or result of production may be simple reproduction but *never to the exclusion of capital accumulation or profit*, which may underwrite productivity increases up to the point at which labour must be hired to facilitate further increases (1990:10).

In petty commodity production the direct producer is the owner-operator of the enterprise. The producer uses non-waged rather than waged labour and capital accumulation occurs through the extraction of surplus value from such labour, including that of the owner-operator. This is distinguished from petty capitalist production by labour use. Petty capitalist enterprises use a combination of own and hired labour. A petty capitalist enterprise is "based on the combined employment of the owner's non-remunerated (family or individual) labour and hired labour" (Llambi 1988:354). Cook and Binford, while acknowledging that the point at which petty commodity become petty capitalist producers is debatable, suggest that it occurs when more than half the value of the enterprise's output is created by wage labourers (1990:236).

Petty capitalist and capitalist production are distinguished by both the scale of production and relations of production. Petty capitalist production pertains where there is a combination of owners and workers, while in capitalist production labour relations are exclusively waged. In capitalist enterprises owners take only a managerial role.

Cook (1984a) has examined how households make the transition from petty commodity to petty capitalist production. His explanation refers to intra-household labour relations. The extraction of surplus value from the labour of household members, including the owner-operator, leads to the accumulation of capital. When production is to be expanded beyond levels possible using only family labour, then labour must be hired. Expansion of the enterprise is achieved by exploiting household labour, a process Cook refers to as 'endofamilial accumulation'.

The transition from petty commodity to petty capitalist production is a reversible one. When the market is unfavourable petty capitalists may revert to

using only household labour. However, the transition from petty commodity to petty capitalist production is not possible in some branches of commodity production, namely where returns on production are insufficient for accumulation (Cook and Binford 1990:238). This is true of basketry in Ban Say and own-account production of peasant hats and their headpieces in Ban Thung. Production of bricks, on the other hand, has enabled those producers who entered the market at an opportune time to make the transition from petty commodity to petty capitalist, and then capitalist production, relatively easily.

Cook's and Binford's fourth criterion of petty commodity production is controversial insofar as it denies the salience of a peasant economic rationality which precludes capital accumulation. According to Cook and Binford:

> ...simple material reproduction without capital accumulation is a condition imposed upon Oaxaca Valley [Mexico] petty producers by the wider process of uneven capitalist development....this is not a condition that embodies their expectations, their goals, or their aspirations (1990:237).

This statement could equally be made of agricultural and brickmaking petty commodity producing households in the study subdistricts. It is redundant to ask from whence capitalist producers derive their aspirations since, as Cook and Binford argue, petty capitalist production is already embedded in the orientation of producers (see also Llambi 1988:354). A similar argument has been made regarding Northeastern Thai villagers (Fallon 1983). Given a dominant capitalist market economy, petty commodity and petty capitalist producers share the same logic of production.

Cook's and Binford's assertion is supported in the Thai context by the fact that households share similar capital accumulation strategies regardless of whether they are petty commodity or petty capitalist producers. The strategy can be summarised in terms of the investment and circulation of capital (*long thun, mun wian*). After initial investment in a resource (ranging from livestock to a brickyard) the further investment of labour and capital increases the value of the commodity produced. This is sold when 'mature' and the income is reinvested, often in a resource with a higher rate of return - for example, a household may, if conditions are right, trade up from rearing pigs to cattle.

The fortune of petty commodity producers is dependent on their productivity, the market, and the extent to which they can, through the process of 'endofamilial accumulation', build up capital. Depending on their success, they will either hold their position stable, make the transition to petty capitalist producers, or, when conditions are unfavourable, lose what control over resources they have and join the ranks of the rural proletariat. The fate of middle households is thus

dependent on external conditions as well as household demographics. The trend may ultimately be for poorer petty commodity households to relinquish petty commodity production to become wage labourers - as they find they can earn marginally more as wage labourers without the associated risks of petty commodity production - and for the richer petty commodity producers to become petty capitalists.

A fundamental methodological problem involved in the empirical analysis of differentiation concerns the definition of the unit of analysis. What are the units which are 'differentiated'? Although analyses generally take 'the household' as the unit of production, consumption and accumulation, this assumption should be validated in each case by reference to economic behaviour within the household (White 1980, 1989:22).

One consequence of treating households as "things instead of activities and relationships" or as "black boxes" (Wilk 1989:25) is that processes within the household relevant to differentiation are excluded from analysis. Explanations can refer only to extra-household processes. But, as the utility of Cook's concept of 'endofamilial accumulation' demonstrates, intra-household economic behaviour is fundamental to processes of differentiation. I freely accept that it is a limitation in the present study that, with the exception of brickyard entrepreneurs, intra-household economic behaviour remains within the 'black box'. However, given that my present aim is to give indicators and evidence of differentiation rather than to explain the processes whereby it develops, this omission limits the scope of, but does not invalidate, the account.

In attempting to define the economic unit as 'the household' in the Thai setting, a number of problems emerge. Turton noted some time ago that it is "increasingly inappropriate to generalise" in treating the household as an economic unit: he suggested that household unity is undermined along generational and gender lines (1976:280). More recently Holland has discussed the problem in depth (1990:73-78). Amongst other difficulties, he notes the problem of identifying whether a household has divided or not, the fact that pooling of household resources cannot always be assumed (see also Piker 1983:17), and that informants' manipulation of models of the household for their own purposes further complicates identification. However, having described these problems Holland concludes that "there are sufficient grounds for taking the household as the unit of analysis" provided care is taken in defining the household in each case (1990:83). I follow Holland's lead and the household is taken as the fundamental economic unit in the subsequent analysis. The household is defined as the unit in which members

of a residence pool some resources, work and eat together (see also Hirsch 1987:20-21).

IV.B. Recent Accounts of Thai Agrarian Differentiation

Agrarian differentiation has been a central theme in a number of recent studies (Witayakorn 1983, Douglass 1984, Anan 1984, Hirsch 1987, Turton 1989b, Rigg 1988, Holland 1990). Essentially, these studies all indicate that expanding capitalism is leading to more pronounced agrarian differentiation in Thailand. My concern here is not to review critically earlier approaches and findings, since this has been done recently by Holland (1990:69-83). Rather, it is to briefly contextualise the data which follow within the national setting, frame categories of differentiated households and establish the 'symptoms' of differentiation which I now wish to investigate in more detail.

Small owner-producers throughout Thailand are increasingly unable to reproduce themselves independently of the commodity economy. Effectively, as in provincial Mexico, there exists a "single, complex, regionally and locally segmented commodity economy" (Cook and Binford 1990:239). There is no residual 'peasant economy' characterised by a distinct and autonomous rationality. A recent thorough examination of agrarian differentiation at both the local and national level has been undertaken by Turton (1989a, 1989b). Turton's portrayal of the characteristics of the village economic upper stratum has been mentioned in Chapter Two. At the other end of the scale are the rural poor, among whom, Turton insists, must be counted some small-scale owner-producers, commonly categorised amorphously as 'middle households' or 'peasants'. Such households are either partially dependent on wage labour or are themselves 'wage-labour equivalents' (Turton 1984:34 draws on Bernstein 1979 for this concept). That is to say, producers are so dependent on merchants or capitalist enterprises for inputs that they are not independent producers: their livelihood is to a large degree controlled by the owners of capital. Locked into and dependent upon larger production units, they are clearly not petty commodity producers in Cook's and Binford's sense (1990:10). The term is particularly appropriate to producers for Thai agribusinesses (see Turton 1987:50-56).

Although the broad dividing lines between village-level strata may be apparent, Turton recommends a cautious approach to analysing differentiation. His observations that small-scale producers are becoming almost 'wage-labour equivalents', together with the observation that an individual producer may occupy multiple positions in relation to others, prompts caution: "it may be premature to

attempt to define exclusive categories of classes of rural producers" (1989b:75). This approach is also adopted by Hirsch (1987) and Holland (1990) and informs the following analysis.

IV.C. Differentiation in Ban Thung and Ban Say Subdistricts

Holland (1990:69-72) has used the frameworks of other analysts of Thai agrarian differentiation as a foundation for his model of differences in another Central Plains community, in Kanchanaburi province. The model which he develops fits well, in most respects, with the situation in Banglen. In this section I indicate both the similarities and dissimilarities between the two fieldsites and also aspects of Holland's model which require modification for it to be made appropriate to the present study.

Holland, following White (1989), takes indicators of differentiation from a "cluster of correlated characteristics" (1990:84), as opposed to land ownership alone.[1] These characteristics include such factors as income, production related assets, labour patterns, household assets and so on. Holland constructs three broad categories, rich, middle ranking and poor households, which are then divided into sub-categories. As is the case in Banglen district, he finds that "all households were firmly entrenched in market-oriented production" (1990:103). Holland divides rich households into two sub-categories: the first category "undertook relatively huge investments inside and outside the village" (1990:101) while the households in the second category "invested less, and mainly inside the village" (1990:101). The two household types differ in their relationship to the community: the former are more "socially and culturally 'distant'", whilst households in his second category "adopted a life-style...which was far more recognisably Saentorian"[(village name)] (1990:101-102). The latter type of rich household was more involved in village level economic relationships, as, for example, creditors and landlords. This distinction, highlighting the scale and domain of the economic activities of the rich, applies well to households in Ban Thung and Ban Say.

Middle-ranking households are distinguished from rich households by the fact that they enjoyed "*reduced* dependency on the market, because they consumed a proportion of what they produced" and were "relatively uninvolved in the market for labour" (Holland 1990:103). This contrasts with Ban Thung and Ban Say where households do not consume their staple crop and are therefore entirely

---

[1]See also Rigg (1988:340) who notes of his fieldsite in Northeast Thailand that "the relationship between land and wealth has broken down". He found no correlation between the two sets of figures.

dependent on the market. In Holland's schema both types of rich household had an "inclination and ability to undertake entrepreneurial activity" (1990:106), whilst middle-ranking households "did not maximise their opportunities to extract surplus" (1990:106).

Finally, Holland distinguishes between three types of "poor household", all of which also sold some household labour: those which owned a small area of land, those which were tenants, and those which owned no land and were entirely dependent on selling labour. Because of the apparently broader range of economic activities available to Ban Thung and Ban Say villagers, this distinction needs to be modified if it is to apply. The only salient distinction in my fieldsite is between households which only had their labour to sell, either on a piece rate or daily basis, and households with other sources of income, mainly petty commodity production in the form of livestock rearing.

Rather than enumerate the number and proportion of households in each category, Holland provides case studies of each type. He argues that since some households do not fall clearly into these categories, and since they are distributed on a sliding scale, the exercise is not useful: "It is not the case that all of the households in the village study site can be placed unambiguously in one of the economic categories suggested" (1990:117). Although I agree with Holland that households lie on a continuum rather than in bounded categories, I still think that it is possible and useful to indicate the proportion of households which occupy each position. For example, capitalist brickyard owners and households supplying brickyard workers are easily identified and their respective positions are unequivocal. 'Middle households', which I call 'petty commodity producers', occupy a wide range of positions, and any attempt to categorise and enumerate them should be more tentative. This is because of the essentially unfixed position of these households. Dependent on productivity, the market and household labour, they can be propelled into petty capitalist production or wage labourer status by changes in any of these factors.

Despite being less detailed than Holland's schema, the following categorisation highlights the most salient indicators of differentiation: namely, land ownership and use, access to and control over resources, income sources and labour patterns. The size of operational land holdings is used to distinguish between small, medium and large petty commodity producing households. These farm sizes are based on Amyot's finding that "in Ayutthaya a small farmer may be said to operate less than 15 rai while a big farmer is one who operates more than 44 rai [sic]" (1976:91). The following represents the categories of households identified in Ban Thung and Ban Say:

Capitalist/petty capitalist households. These are households which operate businesses or agricultural holdings and employ wage labourers. Businesses include both mechanised and non-mechanised brickyards. Owners may also own large tracts of land (more than 44 *rai*), and have a subsidiary occupation such as poultry farming, trading in agricultural inputs and commodities or money lending. They may also be land brokers (*nay na*).

Petty commodity producing households: resource-rich. These households cultivate middle-sized to large-sized farms (15 to 44 *rai*). The majority cultivate capital-intensive cash crops, such as sweet potato, alongside rice. They may also rear cattle, often the more expensive hybrid-indigenous type, and be local creditors. Typically, they will own instruments of production, such as a tractor or a thresher, which they hire out. They hire workers seasonally, and may have one or two live-in workers.

Petty commodity producing households: resource-poor. These households own or control resources on a scale smaller than those of the above two categories. They do not possess expensive instruments of production, such as agricultural machinery. They operate smallholdings (less than 15 *rai*) and may be able to finance cultivation of sweet potato. If these households are involved in credit relations, they lend money on a much reduced level, and are often borrowers from the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives or from individuals. Income from the sale of agricultural commodities is often supplemented by the sale of livestock and wage labouring either in brickyards or during the harvest season. The important distinction between these households and landless households is that they can reproduce themselves without permanent recourse to wage labour. Households with fewer resources (cattle, land etc.) are accordingly more dependent on wage labour.

Non-farming households. Some of these households engage in petty commodity production (basketry, own-account peasant hat production, rearing of piglets or indigenous cattle). Others are comprised of only wage labourers. Wage labourers may sell their labour on a daily or a piece rate basis. Most daily wage labourers work in the local brickyards. Piece rate workers either produce handmade bricks, or stitch peasant hats or wallets from home. In most cases, petty commodity production alone, in the forms and scale practised by the landless, cannot satisfy household needs.

Table 4.1: Survey Households by Farm Size

Economic Activity	No.Hhs.	%
Capitalist[a]	6	3.6
Large farms (>44 *rai*)	7	4.2
Medium farms (15 - 44 *rai*)	31	18.8
Small farms (<15 *rai*)	29	17.6
Non-farming	86	52.1
'Dependent'	6	3.6
Total	165	99.9

[a]Farming is a subsidiary occupation for these households.

Table 4.1 shows that more than half the survey households (52.1 percent) derive their income from sources other than farming. This figure corresponds closely with that given in government statistics for the district as a whole figure, cited in Chapter Three: official estimates state that 54 percent of households do not operate farm holdings. Both of these figures betray a significant increase in the proportion of non-farming households as compared with three Ayutthaya villages surveyed by Amyot in 1969. At this time only 41.5 percent of total households did not operate agricultural holdings (1976:Table 6.2).[2] Table 4.2 indicates the proportion of households cultivating small, medium and large sized farms which are full owners, part-tenants and full tenants.

Table 4.2: Farm Size and Tenancy (n=67)

Farm size (*rai*)	Full Owners		Part-tenants		Full tenants	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Small (1-14)	22	32.8	1	1.5	5	7.5
Medium (15-44)	13	19.4	14	20.9	5	7.5
Large (45+)	1	1.5	6	9.0	-	-
Total	36	53.7	21	31.3	10	14.9

[2]This figure, arrived at by Amyot, cannot be treated as definitive, however. Even within the province there is wide variation in patterns of land holdings. For example, research in another Ayutthaya district, Sena, conducted in 1974-75, estimated that only 19 percent of households were not rice cultivators (Tanabe 1981:230).

Table 4.2 shows that more than half of farming households only cultivate their own land, while just under a third are part-tenants. Full tenants are in a minority; only 14.9 percent of farming households rent in all their land. Table 4.3 breaks down income sources and occupations of the survey households. One or more household members are engaged in the activity specified.

Table 4.3: Income Sources and Occupations in Ban Thung and Ban Say

	No. Households	**%**
Capitalist households		
Mechanised brickyard & landowner	3	1.8
Capitalist, non-mechanised brickyard	1	0.6
Contractor/landowner	2	1.2
Total	**6**	**3.6**
Farming households		
Large farm, no wage labour	7	4.2
Large farm & wage labour	0	0
Middle farm, no wage labour	23	13.9
Middle farm & wage labour[a]	8	4.9
Small farm, no wage labour	19	11.5
Small farm & wage labour	10	6.1
Total	**67**	**40.6**
Non-farming households		
Cottage industry only[b]	12	7.3
Agricultural labour only	3	1.8
Agricultural labour & cottage industry	7	4.2
Agricultural labour & other activities[c]	16	9.7
Brickyard only (mechanised or non-mechanised)	15	9.1
Brickyard & cottage industry	10	6.1
Brickyard, cottage industry & ag. labour	4	2.4
Brickyard & other activities[c]	19	11.5
Total	**86**	**52.1**
Non-productive households		
Remittances	5	3.0
Pension & remmittances	1	0.6
Total	**6**	**3.6**
Total	**165**	**100**

[a]Wage labour includes any of the activities listed below in [b] and [c] and includes brickyard employment.
[b]Either piece rate (*ngop,* wallets) or petty commodity production (baskets).
[c]One or more of the following: petty trading, skilled local labour (e.g. house building), small-scale livestock rearing, motor cycle taxi, wage labour in local industry other than brickyards, low-ranking government employee.

The figures in Table 4.3 demonstrate, as we could expect, a negative correlation between farm size and incidence of wage labouring. The larger the size of farm the less the incidence of wage labour among household members (a trend also observed by Romijn 1987:227). The Table also demonstrates the importance of brickyard employment for non-farming households: of the 86 households in this category alone, 48 households (55.8 percent) have one or more members who work in a brickyard. It is worth noting that Ban Thung and Ban Say households engaged in a wide variety of livelihood activities. Forty-one combinations of occupations were exhibited by the 165 survey households.

The above Tables represent the pattern of economic differentiation in Ban Thung but give little indication of the lifestyles and social status of the various types of household. To supplement these quantitative data, the following case studies depict, in brief, the lifestyles and experience of such households.

Poor, non-farming household. Ke, Dang and their eight month old daughter, live in a tilting bamboo hut in a crowded area of Village Three, Ban Thung. Ke's grandmother had owned 35 *rai* but had lost it to a market trader some 55 years previously. Ke's mother had not been a landowner but had once been a tenant. Ke and Dang, however, had never rented or owned land. Dang cares for their daughter and stitches peasant hats during the day, earning piece rate wages. Ke seeks work both inside and outside the locality: he is often away for several weeks at a time. During 1990 he harvested maize in Kanchanaburi province, worked on construction sites in Bangkok, harvested rice elsewhere in Ayutthaya province, and worked in a local brick factory. This is in addition to local seasonal agricultural labouring. Ke refers to himself as a "worker/labourer" and says that his "profession" is "general labouring": "I go wherever there's work". The family subsists hand to mouth: "we look for food in the morning and eat it at dusk" (*ha chaw kin kham*), "we work and eat day-by-day" (*tham wan kin wan*). Ke attempts to supplement their food requirements by fishing in the canal. Despite this they are constantly in debt to the local shop for foodstuffs. They own no consumer durables to speak of and refer to themselves as "the poor" (*khon jon*).

Resource-poor petty commodity producing & wage labouring household. This household is comprised of an extended family, which pools both labour and income. Four generations occupy a solid but ramshackle structure in Village Four, Ban Thung. The great-grandmother had owned 44 *rai* but lost it to a local money-lender in 1965, causing the family to move to its present perennially flooded site on government land adjacent to the canal. Whilst no land is now owned, 17 *rai* is rented for rice cultivation. Income is raised from a variety of sources in addition to agriculture. Kulab raises pigs for their litters, stitches peasant hats, and cares for

her granddaughter during the day, whilst her own daughter works in a local brickyard. Her husband commutes daily to the outskirts of Bangkok where he is a low-ranking soldier. Her daughter's husband fishes and takes local daily employment where and when available. Thus, the household subsists by combining waged and salaried employment with petty commodity production. Members did not identify themselves as 'poor', as Ke's household did, but express their broader resource base and greater economic security as having "enough to eat, enough to use" (*pho kin pho chay*). The household owns a television but little else in the way of consumer durables.

Resource-rich petty commodity producing household. Chalo's and Samruay's household is an example of a rich village-centred one. They started life with 10 *rai* of local land, but now own 60. The household accumulated 50 *rai* of land using a combination of wages, earned by Chalo in Bangkok some 20 years previously, and money-lending. The household consists of Chalo, Samruay, their daughter and son-in-law. The house is a large, solid teak structure with a large compound. The household employs one live-in servant, and hires local and migrant labour at peak periods in the agricultural season. They cultivate 60 *rai* of rice and sweet potatoes on 10 *rai* during the dry season: they own a small tractor and trailer which is not rented out. Household members socialise with their neighbours and are uncomfortable among district elite. In local terms they are considered "rich" (*ruay*) but, when asked, denied this status themselves.

Capitalist household. Han (the subject of the case study in Chapter Six) is Sino-Thai but born in Village Four of Ban Thung. Whilst his parents were landless small-scale traders, Han himself is now a successful capitalist brickyard owner and, as of May 1990 *kamnan* of Ban Thung. Han began accumulating capital by selling fish which he caught from the local canal. He later began trading in pigs, pig feed and paddy between Ban Thung and the market in Ayutthaya town. He married a Village Five woman and used her dowry of 25 *rai* as security on a loan to invest in poultry farming. He and his wife accumulated enough capital to invest in brick manufacturing in 1988. Since then brickmaking has overtaken poultry farming as the main economic activity. He is a major employer of Ban Thung and Ban Say labour, and immediate family members take only a managerial role in the enterprise. He has lived for a long time outside the subdistrict and because he is socially distant from residents, he is not particularly at ease among ordinary villagers. He owns all the tools of production necessary for brick manufacture, and 100 *rai* of Ban Thung rice land. He has an array of symbols of status and modernity: he has a pick-up truck, video and wireless telephone. His sons have received tertiary-level education.

The next section explores how economic status informs social identity and experience. It is argued that household economic status as revealed by lifestyles is increasingly used by residents to define each other's social status.

IV.D. Status Relations and Differentiation

"The poor are bad, the rich are good."
"Khon jon may di, khon ruay di"
Well-off Ban Thung villager.

Steven Piker wrote with some foresight in the 1960s concerning the evolution of social differentiation in an Ayutthaya village. Asserting that, although status distinctions were evident during his fieldwork, landless as well as landed villagers "continue to see themselves pretty much as rice farmers and affirm no class distinctions of any importance between themselves" (1975:318). This, he says, is because the contemporary landless share the lifestyle and skills of their landed neighbours and had worked on the land of their parents. But, he continues,

> ...as memory of landownership with its distinctive way of life fades for these villagers, and especially for their children, they will begin to perceive social distinctions between themselves and their landed neighbours of a wholly unprecedented sort (Piker 1975:319).

The latter is now the case in contemporary Ban Thung and Ban Say. Some households have been landless for two and even three generations and have never experienced landownership or a farming lifestyle. Different lifestyles are a matter of everyday experience. It is to the expression of these differences that we will shortly turn. However, it is first useful to establish the nature of the relationship between economic status and social status

As Holland has noted, there is a tendency in some writing on Thailand to "conflate and confuse economic and social phenomena" (1990:319), under the assumption that social and economic status are coterminous. The latter assumption is erroneous: in each case the social representation and experience of economic stratification need to be elucidated. It is not necessarily the case that economic stratification gives rise to social stratification; what is more the relationship between the two is social and not mechanical.

Evaluations of social status in Banglen are based, it seems, on standard of living. Households are ranked by how well members eat, the size and quality of their houses, what they can buy and what they own: it refers to lifestyle and

consumption.[3] Indigenous status classification identifies three status groups: 'the poor' (*khon jon*), 'the middling' (*ban klang*) and 'the rich' (*khon ruay*) (cf. Holland 1990:225-238). These correspond very broadly with the economic bands in which households can be placed. Those landless households without control of any means of production, and which are dependent upon wage labour, generally consider themselves to be poor and are so labelled by others. Some resource-poor petty commodity producing households are also within this category. The 'middling' status group encompasses those landless households with an assured income source, some resource-poor and a few resource-rich petty commodity producing households. While most resource-rich petty commodity producing households will be considered 'rich' by their neighbours, all capitalist households will be so labelled. It should be noted that these labels are contested by the labelled: some 'rich' households will claim they are not rich, and some 'poor' households will insist they are not poor.

Labelling of status groups in Ban Thung and Ban Say is done in a context of contested moral evaluations, as the epigraph heading this section indicates. In terms of religious ideology, and to some degree popular perception, poverty implies a negative moral state. This is supported by official Thai Buddhism, which holds that the rich and powerful are so on account of merit (*bun*) earned from a previous life (see Hanks 1962). The poor are so on account of a lack of merit, or of the accumulation of demerit (*bap*) from former lives. This rhetoric underpins the opinions of the wealthy. Moral evaluations of status groups are of course contested by subordinate groups. Basham (1989) has disputed the extent to which the 'official culture', as he calls it, following Scott (1985), actually influences people's assessment of their predicament. The poor resist interpretations of their status based on 'official ideology' while the rich and powerful use it to legitimise their position. Although status differences are legitimised and explained by a Buddhist ideology, the labelled are, as Scott (1985:321) puts it "sceptical of a dominant ideology that rationalises their material deprivation and low status" (see also Chayan 1984:462-474).

Religious ideology is reinforced by economic and political factors. Social status derives from the personal embodiment of power as well as lifestyle. Power (*ithiphon*), in turn, can derive from wealth, especially from the possession of money. Mulder has argued that money is not only widely admired but is "the preeminent embodiment of power" (1990:54): it "is seemingly able to buy power,

---

[3] Kerkvliet (1990:61) has made a similar point with regard to Philippine villagers. Essentially this distinction between class and status made here is the same as that made by Weber (1977:193).

and so money is prestige" (1990:96). Money thus influences social status and the moral evaluations which accompany it. The result, then, is that the rich are perceived as 'good' and the poor are perceived as 'bad'.

It seems to me that to be poor does indeed entail a degree of social shame (*khwam ay*), and households that are on the borderlines of such a state will try to defend themselves from such an identity. This is illustrated by the following case. A man who had recently become landless, and whose household survives on wage labour and pig rearing, lives at the upper end of Village Four, near the boundary with Village Five. To buy food he walks to the shop of a Village Four woman, despite the fact that the Village Five shop is much closer. He told me with anger and bitterness that the owner of the Village Four shop had sarcastically asked him why he came so far for his shopping, knowing well that he did so in order to economise. His dignity was bruised because she had drawn attention to his frugality, born of necessity. He was struggling to prevent his family from being labelled poor.

Some of those households long categorised as poor, on the other hand, almost aggressively identified themselves as such. This they did by referring to the way they sought a living, to their economic class. A number of almost stock phrases express the predicament of 'the poor'; some have already been presented. Worker households emphasise the insecurity of their position: "[we] look for money from day to day" (*ha ngɛn pen wan wan*), "eat what we earn as we get it" (*ha pay kin pay*). Some expressed frustration at their inability to earn enough to sustain themselves satisfactorily, "we don't make enough in time".

Finally, we should note that the poor express clearly the conditions underlying their position and the implications of their predicament. One first generation, middle-aged landless man said he was born poor but that his parents had land, money and cattle: "but when I came out, mother had only cattle". Poorer villagers were aware that their offspring would find it difficult to improve their fortunes. While two or three decades ago it was possible for a wage labourer to accumulate enough money to buy land this is no longer the case. As an old couple rhetorically asked: "How are our children going to be better [off] than their parents?" Some of the poor were bitter about how the local rich had accumulated their capital, and perceived that their own impoverishment was linked to the gains made by the rich. One old man, who had lost his land to a local money-lender, declared, "It is the poor who make money for the rich, without doubt".

IV.D.1. Relations Between 'Poor' and 'Rich' at Wat Ban Thung

If 'community' is symbolically constructed (Cohen 1985), and not defined by administrative or geographical boundaries, then it seems that a gradual transformation has occurred whereby some boundaries in Ban Thung have become less salient and others more so. It could be argued that increasing economic differentiation has encouraged this shift. The assertion that there exists a unified community, albeit one created by the efforts of *Kamnan* Chang, which is coterminous with the subdistrict boundaries, has become increasingly hollow. At one time, as late as 1970, the subdistrict was a source of common identity for villagers, regardless of their economic status. Amyot has claimed that "differences between rich and poor do not amount to class distinctions and do not affect social relations because styles of life are very similar" (1976:67). During Amyot's research it seems that when villagers asserted that all residents came from *'ban diaw kan'*, 'the same village', they could do so with an element of truth. Nowadays the assertion is more obviously a rhetorical device. This is particularly true of the ritual community which forms the congregation of *Wat Ban Thung* (i.e. residents of Villages Three and Four). The majority of Village Four households (87 percent) own or rent-in land. This is not true of Village Three where only some 12 percent of households cultivate land. It is mainly this difference which has given rise to the stereotype that Village Four households are 'rich' and Village Three households are 'poor'. Ownership of land, especially in the midst of a land boom, but also traditionally, is both a sign of status and a source of economic security.

Although the boundary between Village Three and Four is not marked by any physical feature, the neighbourhoods are distinct. Wealth differences are indicated by the size and quality of houses. Village Four households, by and large, are solid teak structures, with sizeable compounds. Houses in Village Three are tightly packed and ramshackle.

Stereotypical statements about, and attitudes toward Village Three residents were generally made and widely held by Village Four residents. Village Four residents seemed to distrust residents of Village Three; they immediately suspected Village Three residents whenever a theft occurred in the locality. Throughout fieldwork I was strongly discouraged from visiting residents of Village Three by those of Village Four. I was even warned to defend myself should a Village Three woman try to pretend that I had molested her, with an eye to extorting money from me. This demonstrates the extent to which Village Four members suspect the morality and motives of those of Village Three. The latter were often portrayed as heavy drinkers - one Village Four man was certain that all Village Three members who earned 50 baht would spend 35 baht of it on alcohol.

Village Four members criticised the lack of education and the manners of Village Three youth: parents were condemned as inadequate and their children were disparaged as delinquent (*kere*).

As for the poor, they were aware of and criticised the partisan use of public resources controlled by some Village Four residents. For example, one Village Three landless woman claimed the doctor was "helping his own group", which consisted of 'the rich'. Some Village Three residents complained that members of Village Four treated them condescendingly (*du thuk*) on account of their poverty. In general, residents were acutely aware of the divide between themselves and their richer neighbours. One landless man expressed the division in the following terms: "We hardly get on together - we each go a different way. We and 'those who have' [the rich] don't get on".

The poor and rich gave different accounts of the origins of their economic differences. Several Village Three landless householders explained to me how the previous generation had been cheated out of their land by avaricious traders and cheating local creditors. Some of the so-called rich, on the other hand, attributed the poverty of these households to moral failings, to their past and present profligacy. They said that the latter had drunk and gambled their land away. While some must have disposed of their land in this way, since their offspring said as much, it is significant that the better-off seized on this as a blanket explanation for the impoverishment of their near neighbours.

Several Village Four landowners complained to me about Village Three labourers. One regular complaint around harvest time was the poor would not "keep their word". Before the harvest season some poorer villagers would borrow money from landowner-creditors on the understanding that they would pay off the debt by harvesting their fields. At harvest time some would simply not turn up. This type of behaviour is reminiscent of what Scott calls 'everyday resistance'(1985). The poor, by foot-dragging and lying, strive to limit the extent to which their labour is exploited.

So far I have painted a picture of a community that is divided along economic class and social status lines. This, is, however, only part of the picture, though probably the major part. Status divisions between Villages are not impenetrable and are sometimes dropped in the name of the community. In particular the activities of women sometimes bind together residents of Villages Three and Four. Social relations between households are sustained by women's reciprocal participation in activities such as helping prepare food for temple festivities or parties of individual households. When participating in such activities they represent their households. The following is an example of an occasion when

status boundaries were crossed and the unity of the ritual community was momentarily affirmed:

> A young Village Three woman committed suicide while working in Bangkok. Her family lacked the means to fund and sustain funeral rites, since they were landless and subsist by stitching peasant hats and fishing. A female neighbour organised a collection of foodstuffs and cash (*lia lay*) from households which comprise the ritual community of Wat Ban Thung. She and a group of neighbours went from house to house in Villages Three and Four with a trolley and shoulder baskets. Enough was contributed to enable the hosts to provide a respectable funeral.
>
> During the rites of the final day, a group of about 30 Village Four women arrived and sat at the back of the temple hall. As is customary for local funerals, invitations were not given: "you don't need to tell people, they come themselves". These guests then gave the mother of the deceased an envelope containing cash ranging, according to some women I asked, from 15 to 50 baht. All, or nearly all, Village Four households were represented. Some women unable to attend in person sent a cash gift with a neighbour. Money given at funerals is not necessarily reciprocated, in contrast to practice at most other 'parties' (*ngan*), and these Village Four women could not expect the poorer recipient household to do so. I asked three middle-aged women why they had made gifts: "we are neighbours (*phuan ban*)", they replied.[4]

Women make and sustain relations between households of divergent social and economic status in other ways, notably through their work preparing food for communal religious festivals and assisting with other households' life cycle ceremonies. For example, women from both Villages Three and Four of Ban Thung cooperate spontaneously to produce food for occasional religious festivals. Moreover, women seem symbolically to unify neighbouring temple communities by their sponsoring of, and participation in, religious ceremonies. Women representing three ritual communities (from three temples) in Ban Thung and Ban Say pooled their efforts to make merit at a deserted temple situated between the three temples. By making merit at this site and by feeding monks from their own three temples, they symbolically brought together these communities.

---

[4]Although this somewhat undermines the point I am trying to make, one of these women seemed to have acted with her material interests in mind. Knowing her to be extremely pragmatic I pressed her as to why she had contributed. She replied that her gift "makes it easier to hire them" at harvest time. She expected them to remember her favour, and to respond with gratitude (*bunkhun*). It may be too cynical to suggest that such motives were more generally held.

IV.D.2. Status and the Egalitarian Norm

Differences of social status between villagers can be expressed privately but not publicly. An egalitarian norm inhibits the public definition of residents by their social status. People, of course, privately attach a status to individual households, but to draw attention to these differences is anathema. When this is done, some 'lose face' (*sia na*) and to make others lose face is to contradict the rhetoric of the unitary community (*ban diaw kan*). The following incident illustrates the kind of response given when this norm is flouted.

A woman from Ban Say subdistrict who runs and owns a petty capitalist, non-mechanised brickyard wished to ordain her son in grand style. She, like several other recently established entrepreneurs, had dealings with people in two broad status groups: with her mainly landless neighbours, and with local elites, such as other brickyard owners and local officeholders. She catered for her guests in such a way that they were divided by their wealth and, by implication, their status. This was unprecedented. Two types of table were laid out: one was laid with prestigious caterer-supplied food *(to jin)* the other with home-made dishes. The tables were also distinguished by the type of alcohol offered. Depending on where guests chose or were directed to sit, they were expected to contribute either 40-50 or 100 baht to the hostess. Many of the guests had obviously heard about the arrangement, and some had consequently boycotted the event. Only just over half of the tables were occupied. Although this may be partly explained by the fact that she was not very popular, the low turn-out indicated disapproval of this practice. It is likely that it was mainly the guests earmarked for the '40-50 baht seats' who boycotted the event. Richer guests, although they may have quietly disapproved of the practice, are unlikely to have stayed away on account of it. One informant, who said she felt ashamed for the hostess, explained the error of judgement in the following way: "you can't divide people by their status (*thana*)". She reinforced this by citing an example of 'correct' practice: the wealthy brickyard owner, *Kamnan* Bay, while hosting a lavish and vast New House Party, had seated and fed his poorest employees at indistinguishable tables and with the same food as all but the most illustrious guests. The latter, MPs and ministers, had eaten the same food but sat at a table set apart.

Whilst it is not acceptable to call attention to status differences based on wealth among 'insiders', villagers accept differences between themselves and 'outsiders' more readily. Until recently the only high status outsiders with whom villagers came into contact were government officials. Now, however, owners of capitalist enterprises comprise a new social elite. Members of the Brick Manufacturers' Association (BMA), owners of mainly capitalist, mechanised

brickyards, were perceived by both villagers and by themselves to belong to another social milieu or stratum: they are, as it were, outsiders. This became most clear to me when my fieldwork was coming to an end and both Ban Thung villagers and the BMA planned leaving parties for me. Initially a BMA member proposed that the Association and villagers jointly host a party. Some village friends objected to this arrangement saying they would feel constrained by the presence of the high status people. For his part, the new *kamnan* of Ban Thung, who is also a BMA member, objected because BMA members could not be expected to participate in a modest and potentially bawdy affair. He elaborated by saying that villagers and BMA members "are in a different class to each other" (*yu khon la chan*). This was the first and only time that I had heard status groups referred to as 'classes'. The label is not inappropriate.

IV.E. Concluding Remarks

The first section of this Chapter examined problems entailed by the study of economic differentiation, and described differentiation in the fieldsite. Evidence was presented to demonstrate that households occupy a wide range of economic positions, and that economic inequality between households is extreme.

The second section asked how economic differentiation was manifested in social relations. I suggested that, in contrast to one or two decades ago, the distinctions generated by economic differences are marked. We have seen that in one ritual community in Ban Thung, economic differences have given way to extreme stereotyping of the poor by the rich and relations between the two status groups are mainly restricted to economic ones. However, there still exists an increasingly untenable rhetoric of a unified, egalitarian community which nevertheless sometimes informs social action - particularly ceremonial activity organised by women. At least currently, the act of negating this rhetoric reflects badly on the perpetrator. Action which crosses status group lines does not, however, dissolve them. It momentarily subsumes them.

The next Chapter examines both a product of and a force compounding economic differentiation, the local brick industry. Taking a similar approach as has been adopted in this Chapter, economic relations and status relations in the industry are explored.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BANGLEN BRICKMAKING INDUSTRY

In this chapter I examine the brickmaking industry in relation to changing livelihoods, class and status relations, and local politics. After putting the industry within the context of state policy, I present background data concerning the development of the industry. Production methods, types of enterprise and trajectories of enterprise development are then outlined. These are then illustrated with brief case studies. The account then turns to examine social relations of production after first detailing characteristics of labourers and entrepreneurs respectively. I suggest that entrepreneurs pursue the strategy of paternalism, and use patronage in their attempts to secure a productive and loyal workforce. The Chapter ends, after a brief comment on status differences, with a detailed description of the Banglen District Brick Manufacturers' Association (BMA). In particular, the Association's economic and political significance is assessed.

As indicated in Chapter Four, the brickmaking industry is at one and the same time a product of economic differentiation and a further catalyst for it. Local landless and land poor residents comprise the majority of the industry's workforce, while entrepreneurs are generally part of the local economic elite. Insofar as a number of brickyard entrepreneurs are both individually and collectively assuming an increasingly critical political role, the Chapter relates directly to those succeeding it.

It is worth pointing out that the literature on Thai rural industry is not very extensive (Somsak 1989:85) and that this lack is characteristic of agrarian studies in general (Cook 1984b). Literature on the Thai brick industry is, perhaps understandably, even harder to come by: my main comparative source is a brief report by Joseph *et al* (1990).

V.A. Background

As Parnwell (1990:3) has noted, 'rural industry' has been defined in various ways by different authors and interested agencies. Enterprises are often categorised by the number of workers: for example, Romijn (1987) defines

enterprises which employ less than 10 people as 'cottage industry'; and Pronpilai (1989:10) calls enterprises employing between 10 and 49 people 'small-scale industry'. I do not use these divisions, but prefer to retain the generic term 'rural industry'. As will become clear, in the case of the brick industry, it would be wrong to draw these arbitrary lines and focus on one 'type' of industry only. Markers other than simply the number of employees are more revealing. The promotion of rural industry is often a feature of development strategies because of its potential to generate rural employment opportunities (Romijn 1987, Parnwell 1990, Jazairy 1992:7). Although the promotion of small-scale industries in Thailand has been an element of state policy since the Fourth Social and Economic Development Plan (1979-1981), it is only with the Sixth Plan (1987-1991) that the policy obtained significance (Somsak 1989, NESDB 1987). Within the broader goal of encouraging industrial growth, and with the specific aim of reducing regional and metropolis-hinterland income disparities by generating rural employment, the Sixth Plan contains policies designed to encourage small-scale industries.[1] However, in at least two ways, policy does not appear to have translated into practice. Some analysts note that policy simply has not been implemented on any noticeable scale and that there are no effective supports (Somsak 1989, Naruemol and Oudin 1992). Others have argued that the provisions, designed for small-scale industries, have in fact benefited large-scale enterprises (Parnwell and Surarnat 1990, Pronpilai 1989). The latter have been encouraged to relocate out of Bangkok into nearby provinces in order to qualify for the benefits intended for 'rural industry'. So far as I could ascertain, measures written into the Sixth Plan to support small-scale industry were irrelevant to the Banglen brickmaking industry. None of the 23 entrepreneurs I interviewed reported receiving either advice or loans from the state.

According to recent research there are about 700 mechanised brick manufacturing plants in Thailand, directly employing over 20,000 people. Most of these plants are situated in rural areas and are owned by "successful farmers" (Joseph 1990:11). Brickmaking has long been practised in the Central Region, as attested to by the presence of brick and stucco stupas built in the 6th century. The industry was firmly established in the Central Region in the early nineteenth century with the influx of about 30,000 ethnic Mon fleeing Burmese oppression (Terwiel 1989:110). The Mon, after whom handmade bricks are named (*it mon*), were skilled brickmakers. Most settled between Bangkok and Ayutthaya where one

---

[1]For example, the provision of credit at competitive rates, and the extension of advice to improve product quality. The Seventh Plan (NESDB 1992:135) has reiterated this general goal.

settlement was said to have "a thriving brick-making industry" where bricks were made "partly to pay the inhabitants' tax-in-kind, and partly to sell" (Terwiel 1989:123).

In comparison, the district-wide industry in Banglen is only a very recent, though rapid, development. In 1970 the industry was concentrated in only one subdistrict at the southern end of the district; it was household-based and non-mechanised (Amyot 1976:149,167-169).[2] While data on non-mechanised brickyards are not available because these units are not taxed, the number of registered mechanised brickyards in the district increased from 32 to 55 in one year (December 1989 to December 1990). There are probably three to four times as many non-mechanised brickyards.[3] Expansion of the industry has been rapid and was visible during the fieldwork period. At the end of 1989 there were 32 tax-registered, mechanised brickyards, a year later there were 55, an increase of 72 percent. The former employ between 10 and 120 workers and the latter any number from two to 20 producers.

Brick production in Banglen takes two forms, 'non-mechanised' and 'mechanised'. What defines these production methods is not the use of machinery *per se* but the method of forming bricks. In 'non-mechanised' brickyards (*rong it mu, rong it mon*) bricks are moulded by hand. Machines are sometimes used to mix brickearth, but never for other stages of production. 'Mechanised' brickyards (*rong it khruang*) use machines (technically called 'extruders') to form the bricks. Other machinery is also often used to handle the large extruders' substantial output. The terms 'non-mechanised' and 'mechanised' as defined here are consistently used in the text in order to identify the two types of brickyard.

Whether a brickyard is non-mechanised or mechanised relates to its mode of production. Non-mechanised brickyards can produce using only household labour and can thus be petty commodity-producing enterprises. But where household labour is supplemented or superseded by hired labour the enterprise becomes petty capitalist and capitalist. On the other hand, all mechanised brickyards are petty capitalist or capitalist enterprises and are so necessarily. The output of extruders requires a minimum of around 10 to 14 workers: no household can provide this much labour and therefore enterprises are either petty capitalist or capitalist. In the latter type of enterprise owners take only a supervisory role.

---

[2]These producers may well have been descendants of Mon settlers mentioned above. Terwiel notes that some groups of Mon settled just north of Ayutthaya (1989:151).

[3]These data are from 'Banglen' District Office records. The number of enterprises is probably an underestimate due to tax avoidance. No data are available for non-mechanised enterprises since they are not taxed.

The growth of the brick industry is a direct result of national economic growth in the 1980s. The industry represents a case of "industrialization within industrialization" (Cook 1984b), *a situation where there is expansion of labour-intensive forms of industrial commodity production within a wider economy with a capital-intensive, factory-based sector. General economic growth has boosted the construction industry, which, in turn, has generated demand for bricks.* The Banglen brick industry supplies merchants and building contractors in Bangkok and surrounding provinces.[4]

As Biggs *et al* have noted (1990:41), the cost of transporting inputs give rural areas where raw materials are located a comparative advantage in the production of construction materials, such as bricks. Brickmaking is well-established in a number of Central Region provinces aside from Ayutthaya: these include Ang Thong, Lopburi and, according to one study, Chainat (Sumitr 1981:16). 'Banglen' is the second largest brick-producing district in Ayutthaya after Bangban district (CUSRI 1987:5-21). However, the majority of enterprises in Bangban appear to be non-mechanised, and there is no district-wide organisation paralleling Banglen's BMA. Plants also exist in the Northern and Southern regions of Thailand (Joseph *et al* 1990) and probably also in the Northeast.

The price of bricks and raw materials fluctuates greatly from season to season and from year to year. Brick prices rise regularly during flood seasons and shoot extremely high during years of unusually deep floods. This is because enterprises on lowland without raised foundations are unable to produce during such periods, giving rise to a temporary supply shortage. Brick prices range between 0.15 and 0.5 baht a brick (1989-1990). Handmade and machine-made brick prices remain closely aligned, although the latter are always slightly more expensive than the former. Their quality does not differ greatly: handmade bricks are preferred by some builders on account of the rough exterior, but smoother machine-made bricks are favoured for aesthetic reasons. Since both are baked in the same way, both are of similar strength.

The state's only intervention in the industry is the taxation of mechanised brickyards. Enterprises are taxed on the number of extruders owned. Labour laws concerning minimum wages and the employment of minors are widely if not universally broken, a characteristic shared by most small-scale industries (Naruemol and Oudin 1992:53).

---

[4]Handmade bricks are more popular with Bangkok buyers, while machine-made bricks are favoured by provincial dealers (many of whom are on the Eastern Seaboard). Informants told me that this was because the former, with their rougher surface texture, give more grip to plaster. Subsidence in Bangkok may make this a desirable quality.

V.B. Organisation, and Differentiation in the Brick Industry

V.B.1. Resources for Production

Brickearth is obtained from rice fields with a suitable mix of sandy and clay soils. Producers obtain brickearth from their own fields, by buying it from contractors, or by using their own machinery to extract it from the land of others. The majority of both mechanised and non-mechanised brickyards rely on buying brickearth from contractors, although in the 1970s producers tended to use their own resources (Amyot 1976:167) - as is still the case in Southern Thailand (Joseph *et al* 1990:11). All but one of the major brickearth suppliers in the district are mechanised brickyard owners who are also BMA members. This gives the BMA a potential monopoly over the supply of brickearth (see below).

The ecological effects of brickearth extraction are difficult to evaluate. As mentioned in Chapter Three, farmers considered that if topsoil is not removed beyond a depth of half a metre fertility is regained within five years. Excavation much deeper than this can render the land useless. Although it is impossible to quantify the amount of land used, due to the lack of official statistics, I estimate that the mechanised brick industry annually uses nearly one percent of available agricultural land in the district (if topsoil is dug to a depth of half a metre).[5]

Almost all brickyards in the district use rice husks to fire bricks. These are supplied by merchants, who purchase from local rice mills. Prices fluctuate widely with the national and international rice market, since the supply of husks depends on the amount being milled and therefore on demand for rice.

The capital needs of enterprises range from 10,000 baht for the most basic non-mechanised brickyard, to more than a million baht for mechanised ones. Entrepreneurs may obtain start-up capital by taking out loans, selling or mortgaging their property or reinvesting capital obtained from other enterprises. Loans may be obtained from kinspersons, private moneylenders, banks or a combination of these. Producers rarely derive start-up capital from rice cultivation.

Knowledge is a resource necessary for brick production. Entrepreneurs setting up non-mechanised enterprises may gain the knowledge they need by either working in such units or visiting them. Owners of mechanised yards not only need to know how to manage an enterprise themselves, but also to obtain a core of

---

[5]Based on the number of extruders in use in 1990, and average volume of brickearth used per machine, I estimate that an area of 600 *rai* was used. This is 0.86 of the 70,000 rai of agricultural land (CUSRI 1987) in 'Banglen' district.

semi-skilled workers, if they are to make best use of their investment in machinery. Some members of the BMA sent their workers to the brickyards of fellow members to gain experience. Frequently, however, new owners simply 'poached' workers from other employers by offering cash incentives.

The following point is crucial to understanding entrepreneurs' strategies with regard to labour. There is a general shortage of local workers in Banglen, a situation which is by no means particular to this area. Joseph *et al* (1990) have observed that Southern Thai brickyard owners are constrained by labour shortages and are compelled to hire migrants from the Northeast. Similarly, Naruemol and Oudin, in a study of Bangkok and urban-based provincial small-scale enterprises, found that the owners' main problem was finding sufficient employees. Rapid economic growth has given rise to shortages, despite growth rates in the size of the labour force of four percent (Naruemol and Oudin 1992:37).

Both mechanised and non-mechanised brickyards employ migrant workers, most of whom work periods of between one and three months, before returning home, often for the agricultural season (see Parnwell 1986). It is common practice for operators to repeatedly employ migrants from a single village. Some mechanised brickyard owners experiencing labour shortages would tour areas of the Northeast with a lorry and return with a large proportion of a community's workforce, including entire families.[6] Of the 16 mechanised brickyards surveyed, half used migrant labourers, ranging from a tenth to all of the workforce. Of the seven non-mechanised brickyards surveyed, one used some migrant labour, another used only migrants and the other five used just local labourers.

Members of the BMA occasionally cooperated in procuring migrant labour: if an operator returned from the Northeast with more workers than was needed, he would sometimes offer them to a fellow member. Of the mechanised brickyards which used a combination of migrants and locals, the former were often allocated the most arduous and unskilled tasks. They are housed in simple brick dwellings located on the premises.

A significant proportion of the local labour force is employed in the brickyards. Of the 165 households surveyed in Ban Thung and Ban Say more than a third had one or more members working in either a mechanised or non-mechanised brickyard (60 households). Altogether, almost a quarter of the workforce were employed in brickyards (101 out of 408 workers). The majority worked in mechanised brickyards (84 percent compared with 16 percent in non-

---

[6] I did not encounter any organised system using local labour-recruiters as exists to bring Gujerati villagers to Bombay brickyards (Breman 1974:103-105).

mechanised enterprises). Some 14 percent of those working in the industry had worked in Bangkok immediately prior to brickyard work, a figure which might signify that the industry is encouraging local migrants to return home. The industry may also be stemming the flow of out-migration by providing local employment, while, rather ironically, at the same time attracting migrants from the Northeast. Ban Thung and Ban Say survey data indicate that more women than men work in the industry (55 to 45 percent respectively). Two owners of mechanised brickyards thought that women worked more consistently than men, but probably also found them more amenable because they are more easily supervised.

Non-mechanised brickyards pay workers on a piece rate basis, by the number of kiln-ready bricks produced. Workers are generally paid after each kiln is fired. No contracts are made, and employees control their own day-to-day work pattern. Employees of both types of brickyard are generally allowed to draw on their wages before pay-day.

Mechanised brickyards employ labourers on a daily basis without contracts, and wages are generally paid fortnightly. Only one brickyard surveyed departed from this practice and paid workers at the end of each day. Workers are free to stop and start work at a particular brickyard as and when they desire; they do not need to give their employer any notice. Accordingly there are no paid holidays and individual workers decide when to take breaks since plants operate seven days a week.

V.B.2. Non-mechanised and mechanised production

As mentioned above, there are two techniques of production, non-mechanised and mechanised. The two types of brickyards employing these methods are described below.[7]

Non-mechanised production. The process of manufacturing bricks by hand is obviously labour-intensive. If machinery is used it is only for mixing the brickearth. Brickearth is soaked in water then mixed either by foot or by machine. The mixture is then placed into a wooden frame and moulded. The formed bricks are left to dry in the sun for about two days. Before they are completely dry, the bricks are trimmed and stacked ready for the kiln, which is built entirely of unfired bricks. Rice husks are poured into cavities between the columns of bricks and the

[7]For a more technical description of non-mechanised and mechanised brick production see Keddie and Cleghorn (1980).

kiln is fired for approximately one week. The baked bricks are normally collected by the buyer.

As indicated, individuals or families pooling their labour are responsible for the stages of production from mixing brickearth to stacking the unfired bricks near the kiln. Wages are paid at a piece rate and vary between eight to 12 baht per 100 bricks. One person can produce between 450 and 650 bricks in one day, earning between around 36 and 78 baht depending on their work rate and skill.

Mechanised production. Mechanised factories use extruders to form bricks.[8] Extruders mix the brickearth and push it out in rectangular lines of clay where it is sliced with wire into brick lengths. One machine can be used to make between 10,000 and 15,000 bricks in an eight hour day. Brickyards have from one to 12 such extruders. Towards the end of 1990 some larger brickyards were beginning to replace these with higher-capacity machines; their capacity is between three and five times that of ordinary extruders. Many factories use other machinery to handle the extruder's output, mainly fork-lifts and bulldozers. In factories which do not possess earth-moving machinery, brickearth is moved from the stockpile to concrete ponds in wheelbarrows, and trolleys are used to move unfired bricks. Operation of the extruder is a semi-skilled job: the operator controls the rate of production and, to some extent, the quality of bricks. Newly-formed bricks are placed on wooden trays and transported to an open area where they are dried by the sun for one or two days. When dry, bricks are stacked into kilns identical to but larger than those used in non-mechanised yards. Stacking the kilns is a semi-skilled activity: precision is required to ensure that the kiln stays erect and that burning is even. Where a bulldozer is not used workers carry baskets of rice husks up steep planks onto the kiln. The kiln burns for a week before the bricks are ready for collection by the buyer or intermediary.

It is not practical for mechanised brickyards to employ on a piece rate basis because individual workers cannot lay claim to any quantifiable product. Thus, wages are paid according to time worked. A typical working day extends from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with an hour's lunch break. Wages vary from factory to factory according to age, sex, length of service, task, and in some factories, perceived ability. Wages range from 35 to 75 baht. Several brickyards use buzzers to mark the beginning and end of working time.

Although the production of non-mechanised bricks is arduous and somewhat solitary, work conditions are more agreeable than in mechanised

---

[8]These are not necessarily imported, though some are - many are made in the province using parts from Bangkok, and are driven by large diesel engines.

brickyards. In the latter, the air is polluted with extruder machine exhaust, as well as dust, ash and smoke from the kilns. Noise levels are high. Much of the day is spent under the hot sun, lifting trays of bricks and sometimes turning endless rows of individual bricks. Older workers complain of backache: some use caffeine-based stimulants and pain-killers (e.g. *ya thanjay*). The work is extremely monotonous; there is little variety for those consigned to laying out and collecting trays of bricks for drying. Perhaps more important is the fact that workers in mechanised brickyards are subject to continuous supervision. Where orders are given in an off-hand, condescending manner, workers are left resentful and humiliated. Workers in non-mechanised brickyards have the advantage of being able to choose when they work, and thereby have the opportunity to avoid the hottest times of the day, and are not subject to continual supervision.

The monotony, muscle strain and polluted atmosphere of mechanised brickyards goes some way to explain why workers show little loyalty to the industry if better opportunities come their way. What morale workers do have is largely a result of their own efforts. The drudgery is often broken by light-hearted banter and is made more bearable by the fact that one's workmates are neighbours and kinspersons.

V.B.3. Trajectories of Enterprise Development

Enterprises lie on a continuum, as it were, with pure petty commodity producers at one pole and capitalist producers at the other. The prime variable is the amount of capital investment. In pure petty commodity production an owner-operator uses only family labour and produces bricks by hand. Initial investment can be as low as 10,000 baht to cover the cost of constructing the kiln shelter and buying tools, earth and fuel, and will probably not exceed about 70,000 baht. Brickearth will be mixed manually. Capital is accumulated by using unpaid household labour (Cook's 'endofamilial accumulation', 1984a), but can only result if the market is favourable. If some capital is accumulated and the producer wishes to expand production, additional labour may be hired and an earth-mixer may be bought. Low output levels make it uneconomical to invest in other labour-saving devices. One or two neighbours may be hired on a piece rate basis. Productivity can only be raised further by either hiring more labour or investing in extruders.

Some non-mechanised brickyards produce initially with only household labour, gradually hiring outsiders in order to increase production, and thereby becoming partially petty capitalist enterprises. Owners may completely withdraw from direct production, acting only in a supervisory capacity, such that the

enterprise becomes capitalist.[9] Of the seven such factories surveyed none were run only on household labour; three were partially capitalist (using own and hired labour) and the other four were petty capitalist.

There are two paths to ownership of a capitalist non-mechanised brickyard. As an alternative to 'gradual' development, owners may take the path of 'instant' capitalist production, investing in an enterprise without any prior involvement in the industry (see case study two below).[10] Two of the seven surveyed non-mechanised brickyards were entirely capitalist from the outset.

A further variation in the mode of production of non-mechanised brickyards is a situation where apparently independent petty commodity producers are in fact 'wage-labour equivalents' - where despite apparent control of the means of production the enterprise is dependent on a larger enterprise. A number of non-mechanised brickyards in neighbouring Pamok district of Ang Thong province - where the industry is smaller but more established - are supplied with raw materials by, and must sell their product to, specific mechanised enterprises. Effectively, the former are piece rate producers. Three of the largest Banglen mechanised brickyards surveyed had similar arrangements with 'satellite' non-mechanised brickyards. It may be the case that as the industry develops, smaller non-mechanised units are increasingly brought under the control of larger units.

Production becomes necessarily petty capitalist or capitalist when an extruder is purchased. These cost at least 75,000 baht and installation requires the construction of a sizeable concrete tank for prepared brickearth. As mentioned above, an extruder machine requires at least 10 to 14 workers to handle its optimum output. Since no single family can provide such a large workforce the only option is to hire labour. In this way ownership of an extruder machine determines that relations of production are capitalist, or at least partially capitalist.

Production is further increased by use of more extruders. When three or more extruders were in use owners tended to invest in labour-saving devices to increase productive capacity. Increased output seemed to make further capital expenditure in labour-saving devices worthwhile. The number of employees in mechanised enterprises in the sample of 17 brickyards ranges from 14 to 130.

---

[9]As indicated in Chapter Four, Cook and Binford measure the point at which an enterprise becomes petty capitalist as when more than half of output is produced by hired labour (1990:236).

[10]While returns from mechanised production may be higher, ownership of a non-mechanised brickyard requires much less supervision than the former. Thus, ownership can be combined with a salaried position, for example. This, as well as the fact that non-mechanised enterprises are cheaper to set up, explains why some entrepreneurs choose to invest in this type of production.

With further capital outlay the entrepreneur can achieve a degree of vertical and lateral integration. Larger brickyard owners also ran brickearth supply businesses, and some controlled large tracts of land ready for excavation. While a few brickyards controlled non-mechanised brickyards, none, to my knowledge, had branched upwards. Although most supplied builders' merchants, and a few sold direct to construction sites, none had interests in the wholesale or construction industries.

A significant factor influencing the ability of an entrepreneur to expand an enterprise is the moment at which production begins. When brick prices are high and inputs are relatively cheap, the entrepreneur has the opportunity to pay off loans and purchase machinery to increase profits. It seems that latterly, as more people are entering the industry, costs have increased, making it more difficult for the resource-poor to move up the ladder: it is probably true to assert, as Cook and Binford (1990:237-238) have done, that "the development of petty capitalism itself tends to create obstacles blocking further transition from petty commodity production to capitalism". Also, as the profitability of mechanised production has been widely demonstrated, it is increasingly common for entrepreneurs to launch straight into this rather than the non-mechanised form of production.

V.B.3.a) Case Studies

1. A petty commodity, non-mechanised brickyard. This unit, in Ban Say subdistrict, was established in early 1989 and is owned by a couple, Nom and Hang, who use the labour of four of their six children and two hired neighbours. The family owns one *rai* which surrounds their house, and on which they mould and dry the bricks. Prior to producing bricks Hang worked as a casual labourer on local building projects, while Nom worked in a local non-mechanised brickyard; this gave her the necessary experience to start up her own enterprise. Start-up capital of 50,000 baht was obtained by a private loan secured on the house, and an interest-free loan from relatives. These were supplemented by obtaining the first load of brickearth on credit. No status differences are evident between employers and employees since they are neighbours and friends. I interviewed Nom twice: on the first occasion she was concerned that low brick prices were not allowing her to repay her debts and would force her to sell her only cow. However, some five months later, when prices were high due to widespread flooding, the woman had taken on two extra workers and remarked that she had paid off most of her debts.

2. A capitalist, non-mechanised brickyard. The owners of this brickyard launched straight into capitalist, non-mechanised production. This unit, which is owned by Suriya, wife of the public health worker (*mo*) of Ban Thung, and the *mo* himself,

uses only waged labour. Established in 1987 the four *rai* production site is rented. Start-up capital of 150,000 baht derived from the owners' own savings (some of which derive from their activity as local creditors). Five Ban Say families, consisting of eight individuals, produce bricks on a piece wage and reside at the brickyard. Most day-to-day management of the enterprise is undertaken by Suriya.

3. From petty commodity non-mechanised to petty capitalist mechanised production. Before making bricks Jip and Headman Warit produced salt-preserved fish (*plara*) with family labour and fish bought from local fishermen. One-time residents of Ban Thung, they moved to the 'high land' in Ban Say to produce bricks. They began hand-making bricks in 1981 using only household labour, then in 1983 invested in a single extruder. At this point the six household workers were supplemented with four hired hands. By 1990 the family had four extruders in operation and employed around 35 local residents. In late 1989 no other machinery was employed, but by the end of 1990 two fork-lift trucks and one front-loader were owned. One of the fork-lifts was financed by a BMA *len sha* loan (see below). Unusually, Jip's and Warit's children work alongside hired workers: they earn wages which are only slightly higher than those of others. This is noticeable because family members of other owners of brickyards this size take only a supervisory role. Of all the mechanised brickyards I visited status differences between owners and employees were least in evidence here. Headman Warit and Jip are BMA members: Warit gained office in 1990 with the support of the BMA. On account of Jip's predominant role in managing the enterprise, the brickyard is known locally as *Pa Jip's*, 'Auntie Jip's', rather than Headman Warit's.

4. 'Immediate' capitalist mechanised brick production. Ot launched straight into mechanised brick production, without any prior involvement in the industry, in 1980 when he invested in one extruder and employed ten people. Ot is Sino-Thai; his parents were small Banglen market traders. He accumulated capital from a variety of economic activities before turning to brick production: he first worked in a goldsmith's in Bangkok, subsequently raised ducks locally, ran a pick-up truck bus service, a minibus service to Bangkok, then sold pork in Banglen market at the same time as finally branching into brick production. He expanded his enterprise in 1982 with another three extruders, taking out a bank loan to finance them. He benefited greatly from high prices during a deep flood in 1983. Around this time he obtained two tipper lorries from a bankrupt debtor. With these he started working as a contractor supplying brickearth and 'land-filling' (*thom din*). When I interviewed him in 1990 'land-filling' was his major enterprise, superseding, but not replacing, brickmaking. He had replaced two of his regular capacity extruders with a high capacity one and was also in the process of replacing his remaining

machines. He employs about 30 local people and estimated his assets at 20 million baht, owning among other resources, 10 new tipper lorries.

5: From petty commodity to large capitalist brickyard. The owners of this enterprise began as petty commodity producers and now own the largest capacity brickyard in the district. *Kamnan* Bay and Somkhiat started as typical agrarian petty commodity producers. They were involved in petty-trading, selling sweets locally, and farmed 20 *rai* of their own rice-land. The household began hand-producing bricks using just family labour, and branched into mechanised production by first being hired as managers of an enterprise belonging to a Sino-Thai entrepreneur. They bought this enterprise in 1979 on favourable terms and also benefited by producing in 1983 when most of the local brick industry was wiped out by floods. The owners recently replaced their 12 regular-capacity extruders for four high-capacity ones. The brickyard occupies 39 *rai* of land and employs between 90 and 130 workers, some 40 of whom are migrants. *Kamnan* Bay is vice-chairman of the BMA, and obtained office in 1988 with the BMA's assistance. Somkhiat appears to be most responsible for the daily management of the enterprise.

A few general points can be made about entrepreneurs from my survey of brickyard operators. The majority of brickyard owners are local people (all but two of mechanised and all non-mechanised enterprise owners). Some, but not all entrepreneurs are representative of the village outwardly oriented 'upper stratum' (Holland 1990:101). While initial capital was accumulated from a wide variety of economic activities, no entrepreneur claimed to have obtained their surplus from agricultural production. Four of the 16 mechanised brickyard owners are Sino-Thai whilst three others had earlier worked for Chinese or Sino-Thai businessmen. It is possible that they had acquired business experience from these contacts, as two of them claimed.

Of the mechanised brickyard owners three had previously made bricks by hand using only household labour (this does not exclude other economic activities however). Two others had previously owned capitalist non-mechanised brickyards.

It would be easy to underplay the importance of women entrepreneurs in the industry. This is because men tend to publicly represent the enterprise, both to outsiders such as myself and in forums such as BMA meetings. However, as Amara has noted (1988:2) women are often entrepreneurs in their own right, or, as I found, play a dominant part in the day-to-day running of an enterprise. Where married couples jointly own an enterprise, there may be differences between the

partners' economic strategies: two women I spoke to said they attempted to stop their husbands expanding the enterprise, because they considered it better to first consolidate their position (by paying off existing loans before taking on new ones). To some extent men, particularly BMA members, associate factory size with prestige and were thus motivated to expand production for reasons that were not entirely economic.

V.C. Social Relations of Production

This section examines relations of production in mechanised and non-mechanised enterprises, while focusing more strongly on the former. I suggest that owners of these enterprises use norms of reciprocity and patron-client ideology in their attempts to solve their problems with labour. The section begins by examining the position of labourers.

V.C.1. Labour

The different wage regimes in mechanised and non-mechanised enterprises predicate different labour and employer goals. While owners of mechanised enterprises must manage the work time of employees, owners of non-mechanised enterprises do not. As indicated above, their employees are largely self-motivated. Workers in non-mechanised brickyards need to protect and enhance the piece rate wage they receive, while workers in mechanised brickyards face their employers over both 'time-wages' and the use of their labour.

Workers in non-mechanised brickyards expressed preference for this kind of work on account of the freedom it affords. Several producers said approvingly that they were 'free' (*isara*) to work at their own pace, and that they had no one forcing (*bangkhap*) them to work in contrast to practice in mechanised brickyards: as informants said "if you make a lot [of bricks], you earn a lot". Another attraction of working in non-mechanised yards is that it is also possible to sustain other economic activities (basketry, raising livestock) and to fulfil household responsibilities. What is more, families can use the labour of elderly and younger household members - people mechanised brickyards were unwilling to employ. Work in mechanised factories precludes other economic activities which require daily attention. However, since workers in these yards are not contracted beyond a single working day they can take up other opportunities, such as harvesting or construction work, when they arise.

Although workers in non-mechanised brickyards are generally free to control their own work rates, owners do try to ensure a high level of production in some circumstances. It is normal practice to allow workers to draw on their wages in advance. Owners whose workers were heavily indebted sometimes pressurised them to increase production. I knew of one local man who had been 'bought' (this word was used) by one brickyard owner from another (his debt had been paid off by the former). The new 'owner' obviously expected a 'return' on his investment in the form of a high level of productivity.

One can take one of two broad positions towards the brick industry and rural industry in general. Either it is to be deplored because it represents another step in the complete proletarianisation of the peasantry,[11] or it is to be hailed for alleviating poverty by providing valuable employment. Employees in the industry tended towards the latter view. When asked, a large number of workers said they saw the development of the industry as a positive one, and could not think of any damaging consequences (*phon sia*). In their responses, workers emphasised the fact that money is earned daily and contrasted this with the fact that rice cultivation yields only an uncertain income once a year. One informant implied that brickyard work is preferable to cultivating rice as a tenant because it entails less risk: "It's better to hire oneself out in the brickyards; you don't have to make any investment (*long thun*), you just use your labour". Several workers explained that they had taken up wage labour because it provided them with more income than they had earned rearing ducks or making baskets (see Chapter Three). Other employees expressed appreciation of the industry because it had enabled them to live and work near home rather than in Bangkok.[12]

While we can note that many employees greatly appreciate the development of the brick industry, and that it is more rewarding than several branches of petty commodity production, we should not lose sight of the fact that this employment does not make for economic independence. Since wages provide for little more than subsistence needs it is highly unlikely that any employee will accumulate the capital necessary to launch themselves into a more rewarding form of petty commodity production. Some workers seem to acknowledge that brickyard work represents the mainstay of their livelihood. Young women often referred to themselves as 'brick factory girls' (*saw rong it*).

---

[11]For a macro-level analysis of the part rural industrialization plays in generating class differences in rural Bangladesh see Feldman (1991).

[12]Villagers working in the putting-out gem-cutting industry in the Northeast expressed similar views about the arrival of rural industry in their locality (Parnwell and Suranart 1990:15).

Relations between workers and owners of mechanised brickyards were never, to my knowledge, confrontational. Workers tended to tell me that their employers were 'kind' (*jay di*) and 'good' (*di*): it was rare to hear any direct criticism of employers. It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which informants were filtering their views for me or genuinely held such opinions. I consider, for reasons that will soon become apparent, that in many cases employees do regard their employers in a positive light. However, this is not to say that workers did not criticise certain practices. For example, employees of a factory which used a public-address system to direct them complained to me that the owner "calls out your name if you take too long having a drink of water!" An employee in another brickyard said resignedly "they play with our labour" when the work buzzer rang some 10 minutes before the end of the allotted lunch break. When I suggested she complain, she shook it off, as if to say it was not worth the trouble. Two young women from *Kamnan* Bay's brickyard told me that the *Kamnan* himself was 'kind' but his supervisor "tramples (*yiap*) on us". Villagers appeared to accept a degree of discomfort, since they were in relatively powerless positions, but, when conditions exceeded what they were prepared to tolerate, they simply left, often to work in another brickyard.[13]

There were no labour unions, and no signs of any latent organisation in the district. Apart from leaving for higher wages, workers would leave if wages were repeatedly paid late, or if they themselves were publicly criticised or scolded. In effect labourers' mobility limited the degree to which employers could impose harsh work conditions. However, workers' mobility is to some degree constrained by employers' links with each other through, as well as independently of, the BMA (see below). For example, two young female brickyard workers told me that they would have to hide the fact that they were *Kamnan* Bay's employees when they applied for work at a new local artificial flower factory, which was then recruiting. They feared the prospective employer would be reluctant to take them on if he knew, because by doing so he would be crossing *Kamnan* Bay. This said, however, in 1990 at least, employers' links with each other did not limit workers' mobility to any noticeable degree.

The mechanised and non-mechanised brick industry have introduced working experiences that are new to the majority of villagers. This becomes evident when one looks at production in the two types of enterprise in terms of

---

[13]This is essentially the same tactic used by workers (*mileros*) in Mexican non-mechanised brickyards: "*Mileros* employ the threat of changing brickyards...as an ultimate bargaining tactic in their efforts to maintain their share of the industry's earnings" (Cook 1984a:145).

producers' relationships with their product and with each other. Using Carrier's (1992) definition of alienation in the sense of separation,[14] one could say that participation in mechanised production substantially alienates workers from their productive activity though not so much from their social networks. Workers have little control over their labour time since the use of powered machinery has "reduced producers' ability to regulate the intensity of their work" (Carrier 1992:547). The product is not in any way linked with producers and is a product of the factory rather than their own labour. Even so, alienation in most brickyards is not as extreme as in modern assembly factories: people often work in groups comprised of kinspersons, neighbours and friends, and workers may in addition be related to the owner. Producers of handmade bricks have control over their work time and, most commonly, produce as family units. This involves more alienation than home petty commodity production, but less than work in mechanised enterprises.

Finally, one could note that participation in the brick industry may generate tension between social obligations and work. One landless man who stopped work in a mechanised brickyard for four days to help organise a nephew's ordination spoke resentfully of the wages he had foregone as a 'loss' (*khat*). In other words, he measured the time spent meeting the obligation to his kinspersons in terms of money. Although on this occasion the morality of kinship prevailed - after expressing his chagrin, this informant exclaimed "you can't not help" - it is conceivable that as households become more dependent on brickyard income and less on kinspersons, social obligations will take second place.

V.C.2. Employers' Views and Strategies

As we have seen, owners of mechanised brickyards are faced with the dual 'problem' of ensuring a sufficient labour force and imposing a work discipline which ensures high productivity. Mechanised brickyards were constantly threatened by shortages of local labour.[15] Competition for local labour came from several quarters including new multinational and national large industries established in the province, as well as newly-established brickyards.

---

[14]"A thing is alienated from a person when it is seen as separate from that person; a person is alienated when seen as separate from surrounding people or things" (Carrier 1992:540).

[15]A rather black anecdotal joke told by a BMA member at a meeting illustrates this anxiety: the speaker had come across a group of young male employees sniffing glue as he was patrolling his brickyard. His first angry response was to kick them out, he said. But after a moment's reflection he thought to go and buy them another tin of glue.

Recourse to migrant labour was often made but not preferred. Reliance on migrants often left brickyards with periodic labour shortages, since such workers seldom stayed beyond three months. Moreover, migrants were generally seen as unreliable: four employers complained of experiences where groups of migrants who had received advance wages disappeared in the night. This prompted one employer to lock the gates at night and employ a night-watchman.[16]

Reliance on local labour also has its drawbacks for employers. Since employees of a brickyard often live in the same neighbourhood a large festival or party (*ngan*) in which kinspersons and neighbours are involved can bring production to a virtual standstill for two or three days at a time.[17] Several owners expressed frustration at this, especially when such events coincided with periods of high brick prices. Also, if employees come from the owner's own community, as they often do, then it can be difficult for employers to treat them consistently in ways that are economically rather than morally desirable. Two employers told me that when too many workers turn up for work they cannot tell the 'surplus' people to go home because that would be "detestable" (*na kliat*). Some owners, at least, were sufficiently concerned with their reputations to accept uneconomic practices.

Owners of mechanised brickyards were critical of labourers on several counts. Criticisms frequently centred on the behaviour and 'character' of employees. Several brickyard owners complained to me that their workers were "*kere*", 'scivers', delinquent. A related complaint was that workers "lack a sense of personal responsibility" (*khat khwam rapphitchop nay tua*) - they were not able to accept responsibility for any but the simplest aspect of production. According to one owner this problem stems from "the mind" (*yu thi jitjay*). Owners complained specifically that their employees "*u*", "play for time". When their backs were turned, they said, workers slow down or stop working altogether: "they need to be watched all the time" was a common refrain. The speed at which extruder operators work is particularly crucial: it is chiefly these people who determine the rate of the entire production process and thus output. One owner (Ot, case study 4) attempted to solve this problem by building the living room of his new home adjacent to his high-capacity extruder and installing one-way glass into the large

---

[16]A rather telling complaint was made by another owner: his Northeastern workers, he said, did not appear to want commodities which his local workers aspired towards obtaining (e.g. rice cookers, motorbikes). He seemed to wish that they did so because this would bind them more securely to employment with him. Northeasterners were generally denigrated by employers and were spoken about in ways that verge on the racist.

[17]In a similar way, early factory owners in England were particularly frustrated by the traditional holidays of their essentially rural workers (Gillis 1983:163, 167)

window of the wall facing onto the extruder. He and his wife could thus see the workers, as well as hear the speed at which they operated the extruder, but workers would not know whether or not they were being watched.

Owners of mechanised brickyards evolved three discernible strategies to cope with their perceived problems with labour. They tried changing work regimes; they tried to reduce their reliance on labour by developing and substituting machinery; and they attempted to increase productivity by developing reciprocal social relations with sections of the labour force. The first strategy met with little success, the second is practised only piecemeal, while the third, insofar as it is fairly widespread, is apparently effective.

Two manufacturers who introduced a variant of piece wage abandoned the experiments soon after their inception. One complained that his workers began to produce shoddy bricks. The other's attempt to divide his workforce into groups, which were rewarded according to productivity, was thwarted by workers' passive opposition: dissatisfied workers simply stayed away from work for a few days. Consequently, production targets were dropped but workers were still organised into groups. Still wishing to use some incentive system, the owner adjusted workers' wages according to how hard he perceived them to work. It may be that this practice did not meet such widespread opposition because it entails a private not public judgement of workers.

Some employers attempted to reduce their dependence on labour by introducing new technology.[18] The new high-capacity extruders make the rate of production independent of the speed and skill of individual extruder operators. Operators do not need to be particularly skilled since they do not physically handle the newly formed bricks and the rate of production is more of a mechanical operation than a skilled one. Three of the brickyards surveyed were changing to these extruders in 1990.

An innovation devised by a local entrepreneur in early 1990 did away with the need for skilled operators of regular-capacity extruders. Although the attachment makes it unnecessary for an extruder operator to handle the bricks as they are formed, only a few brickyards had introduced this innovation by the end of my fieldwork period, partly because the bricks produced were of a lower quality. Whatever innovations were made no brickyard could be totally independent of unsupervised labour. Bricks still have to be laid out in the sun, turned and collected, and kilns have to be built (although some brickyards had introduced

---

[18]One owner, after condemning his workers as lazy and irresponsible, asked me to send him information about technology in Britain: he assumed that it would allow him to do away with all his employees.

piece rate wage regimes for this task). Thus workers could slow down production at every stage. Only constant supervision, impossible in an enterprise spread over several *rai*, could stop workers 'playing for time'.

The third strategy employers used was most widely practised, and was evident in a number of forms. Employers attempted to bind workers to themselves through reciprocal social relationships which are essentially paternalistic and evocative of patron-client relations. Owners attempted to encourage the workforce to identify their interests with those of the employer. Given that neither scolding nor surveillance are practical strategies for ensuring high productivity, owners want their labourers to be self-motivated and self-regulating. Because the locus of the employer/employee relations is restricted to the workplace, if employees are to reciprocate for favours received, they can only do so within the context of work. Gratitude is expressed by identifying with the owners' interests by working conscientiously and foregoing the opportunity to take up employment elsewhere.

Employers' patronage strategies aimed to obligate individual workers, households, and sometimes entire temple communities. The latter was a target of the patronage of individual employers and the BMA as a group (see below). For example, one BMA member donated a large sum of money to the temple of his Northeastern migrant workers.[19] The owner was said to have employed the majority of the community's workers for several consecutive years. Three other BMA members sponsored *kathin* ceremonies in Banglen temples in the locality of their brickyards during the 1990 Buddhist Lent, and the BMA was one of several hosts at the *kathin* rite in Ban Thung the same year. Whenever a BMA member sponsored a rite he collected donations from other BMA members; the congregations at recipient temples would be informed that the gift had been made by the BMA.

The patronage of individual employees is more direct than this rather diffuse form - but here too the effects of patronage can ripple beyond the original recipient as the following case attests:

---

[19]He was host of *thot pha pa*, a rite similar to *thot kathin*, but often on a smaller scale (see Phya Anuman 1986:81-82). Patronage of religious institutions is a potent means of acquiring legitimacy and support (see Chapters Six and Seven below).

> The 30 or so residents from Ban Thung who *Kamnan* Bay employs form the dependable core of his workforce (see case study 6), the others being mainly migrants. His Ban Thung employees live in a single neighbourhood (Village Three), and many are kinspersons. One of these employees, the male head of a landless household, was ordaining his son at *Wat Ban Thung* and invited his employer to the rite. Three household members, including the ordinand were long-standing employees of *Kamnan* Bay. The rather drunken ordination procession was circling the prayer hall (*bot*) when the *kamnan's* glistening, emerald BMW drew up. Observers at the noodle stall, with whom I sat, expressed surprise at the arrival of such an illustrious person. The *kamnan* and his wife were promptly *wai-ed* deeply by the ordinand's father. The *kamnan* pushed an envelope containing 1,000 baht into the man's hands and stood in the dust watching the procession for an appropriate length of time. The visitors had obviously dressed up for the occasion.[20] The restraint that had drifted over the celebrations dissolved when the guests left. As a participant commented to me later, the employers' presence had lent the occasion prestige (*hay kiat*). Shortly after the event, without a hint of irony, one of the host's sons told me that *Kamnan* Bay was "good in every way".

What are the ramifications of this act? *Kamnan* Bay and the host have widely divergent social statuses. If they were of roughly equal status, fellow BMA members for example, then *Kamnan* Bay would expect his gift to be returned (with an increment) when he hosted an event; the debt would be transferred back to *Kamnan* Bay and relations between them would be forged and reproduced by a cycle of gift exchange. However, given the host's subordinate social and economic status, it would be inappropriate as well as impractical for him to reciprocate in this manner. Notwithstanding the fact that he could not afford to reciprocate in kind, to do so would imply that he belonged to the same social circle as the *kamnan*. But, given that no gift is made without expectation of a return, how can the host reciprocate? The only outlet is through his labour. *Kamnan* Bay will expect the host and his family to work diligently and stay in his employment, in the short term at least. Guests one step removed from the immediate family may feel a similar though weaker sense of obligation.

This case is not an isolated one: *Kamnan* Bay repeatedly acted as patron of his Ban Thung workforce. On another occasion I observed him contribute a wreath and cash gift to an employee whose father had died. Furthermore, by a coincidence of interests, he acted as his Ban Thung workers' political patron, supporting the electoral campaign of the headman of their Village (see Chapter Six). Use of terms of address further demonstrate that the relationship was

---

[20]The fact that the *kamnan* and his wife had dressed up should not be read as an attempt to shame the poorer celebrants. If they had come in their workaday cloths they would have signified that their host and the party were not worthy of respect.

mutually construed as more than a pure employer-employee relationship, and one indicative of patron-clientage. *Kamnan* Bay often referred to his workers, for example at BMA meetings, as his *'luk nong'*, his 'clients'. Many of these workers addressed him and spoke of him as *'na'* (mother's younger sibling), the most affectionate kin term for referring to a member of the parental generation.[21] The *kamnan's* behaviour was, I feel sure, strategic rather than heartfelt. In private conversation with me he spoke scathingly of his Ban Thung workforce: he criticised what he saw as their absolute lack of entrepreneurial aspirations, and for their apparent contentment with their poverty.

Some employers were more explicit about their aims and strategies than others. Santi, the BMA compère and owner of a brickyard with four extruders and about 40 workers, told me he used 'psychology' (*jitwiththaya*) to manage his workers. He claimed to manage his workers "with benevolence" (*pokkhrong duay phrakhun*). Every year for the last 10 years he has hosted an annual merit-making festival at his brickyard. Monks are brought in to charge brickyard and workers with auspiciousness. After the religious ritual Santi distributes gifts to all his employees. He began by giving rather modest items like work shirts, but latterly started donating more valuable commodities like electric fans and electric rice pots; his gift-giving culminated in 1990 with the presentation of large wooden wardrobes. He also sponsored the ordination of three of his workers in 1990, paying all expenses and feasting their kinspersons.

He explained to me that he considered his investment "worthwhile" (*khum kha kan*). For four months his workers are "easy to supervise" (*bokkhrong ngay*), he said: they work harder during the two months preceding the event, in anticipation of the gifts they will receive, and during the two subsequent months, because they are grateful. They receive, he said, a "boost to their morale" (*day kamlangjay*). He also claimed the gifts work to bind his workers to him. He said he thought his gifts would encourage recipients and their families to think: "If I work in *Khun* [Mr.] Santi's brickyard I get a fan/rice pot/wardrobe, but if I work elsewhere for a year I come out with nothing". Proudly, he told me that 1990's gift will be in constant view of every household member and therefore a constant reminder of the fruits of working for him.

There are numerous other ways in which employers act paternalistically toward their workers. One employer claimed to take any worker that was feeling

---

[21]The terms of address used by sections of Han's workforce demonstrate three degrees of closeness. Firstly, workers with whom Han had no established relations called him 'boss' (*taw ka*). Secondly, workers in the close core referred to him as 'uncle' (*na*) and, lastly, his foreman and foreman's assistant addressed him as 'father' (*tia*, the Chinese term).

unwell to the doctor and to pay their fees. Another factory enables its employees to purchase consumer durables by payment in instalments, without interest. Every brickyard hosts an end of year party at which there is often a reversal of roles: brickyard owners serve food to their workers.

In interviews, a number of employers played down the status differences between themselves and their employees. While undoubtedly some of what they said was designed to convey the impression that they enjoyed excellent relations with their workers, and was thus rhetorical, it is also true that this was a consciously pursued strategy. Typically, owners expressed the employment relationship as one of mutual assistance and dependence. Some claimed that they related to their workers as kinspersons, others represented a more paternalistic relationship. For example, some employers said that they "*lot tua*", "bring themselves down" when relating with employees, and that they and their employees "help one another" (*chuay kan*). By way of saying he put on no airs, one very wealthy owner claimed to live in 'rural society' (*sangkhom chonabot*) when at his brickyard. He ate the same food and dressed the same way as his employees. Ot (case study 4) said he treats his workers like family members (*bạp phi bạp nong*). He added: "I put their heart in my heart" (*say jay khaw nay jay raw*), a way of saying he acts with their interests in mind. Note the implicit expectation that workers will do the same. This is resonant of statements made by capitalist non-mechanised brickyard owners in Oaxaca, Mexico. They too experience labourer shortages but, since a piece-work wage regime operates, they do not 'need' to intensify productivity. Oaxacan employers thought they "should interact with them [labourers] in an egalitarian way" and, like Banglen mechanised and non-mechanised brickyard owners, pursued a policy of paternalism. Cook considers the latter to be a "main strategy for assuring continuity and loyalty in the labour force" (1984a:148).

It is important to realise that any sense of obligation workers may feel is a product of repeated acts of patronage. Moreover, we could note that this quality of production relations is contingent on specific conditions. For example, if labour became more abundant it is likely that paternalistic strategies would be redundant in the eyes of employers. Workers would probably put up with an intensified work burden, given their lack of prospects elsewhere. Again, this assumes that, as was suggested above, employers' patronage-style behaviour is conscious and strategic and not simply a reflex predicated by cultural norms.

In addition, one should note that not all employees will cultivate such relationships with any or all of their workforce. Where status differentials between employers and employees are not wide - where they are neighbours and kin - the

employer can depend on employees' sense of obligation (*krengjay*), without it being necessary to cultivate even more personalistic relations. For a different reason, owners are generally unlikely to invest much effort in cultivating relations with migrant workers: these relationships are mostly temporary. Also, owners of large factories, employing upwards of 30 or 40 workers, may cultivate relations with only a core of employees. Relations with other workers may be impersonal and purely contractual while those with 'core' workers may be personal and imbued with familial morality. One example is in Han's brickyard (see Chapters Four and Six) where workers could be categorised into groups consisting of those who identified their interests with those of the owner and those who did not. Of the former several are affines or one-time neighbours of Han. They tended to work conscientiously. As one such woman - a smallholder - said:

> We work as though we are working for ourselves, we don't distinguish between our work and this, we work just as hard in both whereas others work as though for a daily wage.

On another occasion this and another woman pointed out the second group, telling me to notice how they "play for time" (*u*) and were lazy (*khi khiat*). The second group comprised younger workers who did not have any relationship with Han other than through employment; they did appear to drag their feet at every opportunity.

Workers are sometimes prepared to identify their interests publicly with those of their employer. For example, during a visit to Han's brickyard in the midst of his campaign to be Ban Thung's *kamnan* (see Chapter Six) a group of his female employees from Village Five of Ban Thung (representative of my first 'group'), only partly in jest told me to electioneer (*ha siang*) for their employer. After his election victory these women 'paid off' a 'debt' (*kā bon*) entailed by Han to a locally powerful Buddha image which he had supplicated, by dancing 16 rounds in the temple.

Workers may resist an employers' interpretation that they are morally obligated by receipt of services over and above their wages. A group of local workers who had taken up free lodging at Han's brickyard, which included free electricity and water supply, angered Han because they consistently worked only when they wanted and did not make themselves available for evening overtime work. At his brickyard New Year's party, given in mid-December 1990, Han, with great solemnity, announced that he did not like "ungrateful" workers.

As should be evident by now, there are generally substantial status differences between capitalist non-mechanised and mechanised brickyard owners and their employees. The former are representatives of 'the rich' (*khon ruay, radap*

ruay), while the latter may be 'middling' (*ban klang*) or 'poor' (*khon jon*) (see Chapter Four). Differences between owners of the largest brickyards and their employees are most obvious. In such enterprises owners may not make any attempts to *lot tua*, bring themselves down to their workers level, as owners of most other brickyards find it necessary to do. Such owners are undifferentiated from the district elite. Owners of smaller units tread in two quite distinct social circles - those of village society and of the district elite. When in BMA meetings or in contact with officialdom, for example, such owners adopt the manners of the urban middle-class.[22] Status differences are especially muted in brickyards which are newly-established in the entrepreneurs' home community.

Brickyard owners tend to make claim to an elevated social status in socially recognised acts of consumption and with commodities that are best seen as status symbols. They may hold lavish parties to celebrate marriages, the building of a new house, or an ordination. To some extent the rank of BMA members can be read from their consumption patterns: the chairman occupies a large town house in the centre of Ayutthaya; the vice-chairman lives in a mansion built in 'Spanish style' (*song sapan*) overlooking his brickyard and the Asian Highway on an artificial hill. Accordingly, the chairman drives a Mercedes-Benz, the vice-chairman owns a BMW.

It seems that presently, at least, differences between the social values of villagers and of brickyard owners are a matter of form rather than content. Brickyard operators simply use their wealth to distinguish themselves from their labourers and one-time fellow villagers. The essential lack of difference between cultural values was brought home to me after experiencing holiday trips with both sets. On the bus journey to a Kanchanaburi riverside resort with the BMA, leading male members swayed at the back of the bus, singing popular Thai country songs (*phleng luk thung*) while swigging imported whiskey at 500 baht a bottle. Later on during fieldwork I went on a weekend trip with villagers in a hired bus. The songs, jokes and stops at temples were strikingly similar to my earlier expedition, the only real difference being that villagers were drinking indigenous and rather vitriolic alcohol at 30 baht a bottle. Differences hinge on wealth rather than values.

More anecdotal evidence could be presented to back up this assertion that status currently finds expression not in a middle-class culture but in the trappings of wealth. This said, however, I would expect the division to become one of

---

[22]The social spheres of the workforce/brickyard and the BMA/officialdom are distinguished by lexical differences. In BMA meetings 'polite' (urban, middle-class) language forms are used. For example, members use the word '*than*' for eat instead of the usual '*kin*', and they address one another using terms equivalent to 'sir' and 'madam' (*khrap, kha*).

content and not just form in the next generation. Future brickyard owners are likely to have received a tertiary education and to have gained something of an urban-oriented, middle-class culture. The offspring of contemporary labourers, on the other hand, will gain only the bare minimum of education and will take into the brick factories a refraction of peasant culture. Such a division is nascent in Han's brickyard. Two of his sons, one of whom manages the brickyard with his father, have received university level education. The latter son once told me that he envied the simplicity and peace of his workers' rural homes - a romantic view that could only arise from the existence of considerable social distance.

V.D. The Brick Manufacturers' Association

The Brick Manufacturers' Association (*Chomrom Rong It Khrŭang Amphę Banglen*, BMA) is an incipient interest group comprising the wealthiest mechanised brickyard owners in the district. Founded by producers in 1987 to address problems caused by competition between brickyards, its contemporary significance extends beyond this original goal. I have encountered only one passing reference to other formal business associations at the district level (Murashima 1987:382). Whether this signifies that associations are uncommon at this level or simply that they have not been the subject of study I am not sure. However, an informal grouping of big poultry farmers in Chachoengsao, described by Ananya (1985:286-288) shares many of the attributes of the BMA: producers set generally agreed prices and socialised together.[23] But the BMA differs from this and other such groupings in that members have cultivated a corporate image and profess solidarity. Research has been undertaken into provincial and national producers' and manufacturers' associations. Anek (1992:94-102) has argued that within the last few years provincial business associations, mainly chambers of commerce, have become autonomous and effective interest groups, able to lobby provincial and central government with regard to policy, economic infrastructure, and so on. While Anek seems keen to identify these groups as a new political force, I would suggest that more research needs to be conducted into their composition and internal functioning before an accurate assessment of their political and economic significance is possible. Most of Anek's data concerning provincial chambers of commerce appear to derive from a postal survey, and thus he can tell us little about the internal dynamics of such groups. I would suggest that while the BMA is

---

[23]Individual representatives of this grouping also shared characteristics remarkably similar to those of BMA members: they acted as ritual sponsors, and maintained "useful and friendly" relations with government officials at district and provincial levels (Ananya 1985:288).

indeed a nascent interest group, its non-industry related activities are at least as important as its industry-related activities.

Shortly before 1987, as several new mechanised brickyards sprang up in response to soaring demand, conflict arose between owners as they competed for markets and labour. In response to *Kamnan* Bay's suggestion, *Kamnan* Damrong called together owners of mechanised brickyards with an eye to diffusing tension. This first informal gathering led to the formation of the Brick Manufacturers' Association. Meetings have since been held monthly.[24] The Association has an elected chairman (*Kamnan* Damrong), vice-chairman (*Kamnan* Bay) and secretary (Headman Chalong). Meetings are as much social occasions as business meetings; agenda are made and minutes are taken, however. Although every mechanised brickyard owner is eligible to attend meetings (the majority of the 50 or more brickyards in the district are said to be formal members), in 1990 only 24 brickyards were regularly represented. The male owners of six of these enterprises are officeholders: there are three *kamnan* and three headmen. No other producers' or retailers' groups in the district have representative organisations.

At least three questions arise when considering the BMA. To what extent is the Association a cohesive political and economic interest group? To what degree is the BMA able to represent the interests of the mechanised brick manufacturing industry, and to whom? What are the costs and benefits of BMA membership and what are the paths along which the BMA is likely to develop?[25]

The main features of the Association can be summarised as follows. Members promote the image of the BMA as a strongly cohesive organisation. They act in concert when dealing with strategically significant others, such as bureaucrats, and when the interests of the industry as a whole are concerned. The leadership attempts to ensure solidarity in other situations, but this is negotiated rather than assured. Although members assert that relations within the Association are marked by unity and harmony, in fact it is riven with rivalries and interpersonal conflicts. The BMA leadership appears to consider that the Association's influence rests, in part, on the public profile it can achieve.

Despite the fact that the chairman tends to dominate meetings and to have the last say where decisions are split, it would be a mistake to say that the Association is simply his entourage. The group is comprised of individuals of

---

[24]Meetings are held in a booked room in air-conditioned restaurants. The venue is rotated so as to reduce the possibility of a robbery: members handle large sums of money for *len sha* (see below).

[25]For a more detailed examination of these questions, and in particular the first, see Arghiros (1993).

roughly equal status, and the Association is not a facade for representing the chairman's particularistic interests, nor are other members controlled with clientelist ties (cf. Anek 1992:104). That this is so will be demonstrated by the fact that members ignored the chairman's requests for them to support particular candidates in the elections described in Chapters Six and Seven.

As mentioned above, although members extol the cohesion between BMA members, the reality is somewhat different. Members frequently told me that "there is cooperation/unity between us" (*mi khwam samakhi kan*); the vice-chairman went further in asserting that there was "secure and intimate love" (*khwam rak thi nan, thi sanit*) between members. Amity is encouraged by a high degree of reciprocal socialising between members: they attend each other's parties (weddings, ordinations, new house parties and so on) and inevitably make cash contributions that will in turn be returned to them (*chuay ngan*). Relations between members were expressed by the use of fictive kinship terms: members address each other as *phi*, elder sibling, and address the chairman as *lung*, paternal uncle (FeB). The BMA provides a forum where owners can transcend the conflicts endemic in their position as rival owners of brickyards: to some extent relations have "become overlaid with social content that carries strong expectations of trust and abstention from opportunism" (Granovetter 1985:490).

Nevertheless, disputes born of business or personal conflicts existed between some members. Furthermore, rivalry was not far below the surface of almost all relationships within the Association, or so it seemed. During the course of interviewing eight male core members I was puzzled by the contradictory messages I was being given by almost every one of them. Interviewees would first extol the unity that existed within the BMA, but then go on to condemn the practices and character of other members. They were accused of producing shoddy bricks and thereby spoiling the market for all members, of undercutting selling prices, of corrupt practices where they were brickearth merchants, of 'bad' business practices, of treating their labourers badly, and so on. Each male owner attempted to represent himself as a larger and better producer than his co-BMA members.

Much collective BMA action was devoted to creating and disseminating an image of the Association as firstly a cohesive and secondly a philanthropic organisation. It seemed that, at least in the view of the leadership, the influence of the Association derived from its reputation. Members spoke of the Association as gaining *chu siang*, fame, by its collective patronage of high profile events. Such activity was represented by members as '*chuay sangkhom*', 'helping society'. As mentioned above, the Association as a unit was patron of *thot kathin* in one temple

in 1990 and made sizeable contributions to other *kathin* rites. Members were also patrons of *thot kathin* in their own right,[26] and gathered contributions from members, which were then presented in the name of the Association. After the vice-chairman's 'new house party' which was attended by 1,000 people, including prominent national politicians, the BMA chairman announced to members that the Association "is in a position of respect" (*mi na mi ta*). Members were repeatedly encouraged to attend important parties in the district as a group, to 'display' (*ok na ok ta*) the Association.

In many cases recipients of the BMA's generosity were members of the local bureaucracy. The BMA consistently and strategically contributed to collections made by representatives of the District Office, for which it received recognition in local officeholders' meetings. Instances I observed in 1990 include the giving of leaving gifts to two outgoing district officials, a contribution to the District Office's *thot kathin* collection, and the presentation to the district police station of an electric grass trimmer (a 'Fly-mo'). The act of donating this latter gift was photographed by and appeared in what is probably Thailand's most popular national newspaper (*Thai Rath*, 2 July 1990).[27] Also, as a matter of course the BMA invites all district office and police personnel to their annual New Year party. In contrast to all other guests, officials and police do not make financial contributions to the hosts. The leadership appeared to resent but accept this situation, given that these were, in the chairman's words, "*phu mi amnat*", "people with power".[28]

The BMA has symbolised its identity in a uniform that members were asked to wear whenever they appeared together in the name of the Association. Towards the end of 1990 a great deal of meeting time was spent defining the features of this uniform - its colour, the fabric, the cut, and the creation of a badge.[29] Not without reason the uniforms were cut in the style of bureaucrats; the fabric is of a similar

---

[26]Ananya (1985:287-288) notes that big poultry farmers in her Chachoengsao field site had adopted the role of ritual sponsor, thereby obtaining prestige and replacing, to some extent, the relatives of well-to-do villagers who had formerly adopted this role.

[27]Keyes (1989:193) cites *Thai Rath* as the most widely read newspaper in 1984.

[28]Tamada (1991:459) notes that "giving to bureaucrats helps businessmen build a close relationship (*sensai*) with them" - wealth gives people or organisations what Tamada calls "economic *itthiphon*", economic power.

[29]The orange, supposedly brick-colour, logo portrays two hands clasped in a hand-shake set above a machine-produced brick (two holes through the brick indicate that the brick is extruder and not hand produced). The Association's name is embroidered around the circumference of the badge.

shade to the uniforms of officials from the Ministry of Health. It is as if members wished to identify themselves as government officials. As Cohen (1985) has argued, the ingenuity of symbolic boundary markers is that they hide differences within a group and give the appearance of unity to the outside world. This is effectively what the uniform does for the BMA.

What are the chief benefits of BMA membership? The Association is not and could not comprise a monopoly, nor does it act as a cooperative. The Association provides members with information, acts for them in certain specific areas, and provides a financial service in the form of a 'rotating bank' (*len shq*). Membership strengthens members' positions relative to buyers and raw material suppliers. Meetings are an opportunity for members to share information about the market such that individual traders found it more difficult to play one producer off against another.

In the view of several members, the Association has not been able to overcome the business conflicts that led to its establishment. Some privately complained that other members still undercut brick selling prices, particularly during periods of over-supply. Some voiced annoyance that other members still 'poach' labourers, but it is likely that this practice has been curtailed, at least among core Association members. Several members identified social interaction and friendship as the chief benefits of membership. Core members maintained a high level of contact, by telephone and by visiting each other.

The BMA represents members' interests in a number of arenas. The chairman organises 'protection' from district police on behalf of members. Lorries laden over a certain weight are prohibited from using national highways and local roads. Local police use this as an excuse to extort payment from drivers on a regular basis. The BMA pays the police a monthly sum to exempt the trucks of members and those with whom they do business from extortion.

In addition, the BMA represents the mechanised brick industry's interests to those who make legal demands on its profits. The leadership claimed to have negotiated with officials to keep taxes substantially below those applying to similar sized industries (between five and 10 percent of profits rather than the standard 20 percent). This lobbying role of the BMA will probably expand as brickyards take on the characteristics of large industries and become taxed as such. In late 1990 there were signs that the leadership was preparing the Association to act as a special-interest group. Around this time a group of BMA representatives attended a provincial-level conference introducing the national insurance scheme to business people. A little later it sent representatives to attend a 'seminar' where provincial officials introduced value-added tax to local officeholders.

Although members discussed setting up a producers' cooperative and attempted to keep the price of their bricks high, the BMA is not a cartel. The organisation cannot easily influence non-mechanised brickyards in the district, nor, in any way, producers outside the district. Neither are there any mechanisms enabling the leadership to force BMA members to sell at a fixed price. Members who are known to be selling at a price lower than the majority of producers can only be upbraided in meetings. Nevertheless, it seems that the leadership would like to monopolise the brick market, at least within the district. The vice-chairman once reportedly voiced a proposal to force Banglen non-mechanised brickyards out of business.[30] All the district's brickearth suppliers, bar one, are BMA members. The vice-chairman requested them to hike the price of brickearth sold to non-mechanised enterprises in order to undermine their profitability. Although members did not act on this request, the potential for such action does exist.

The BMA provides a financial service to brickyards in the form of a 'rotating bank' (*len sha*). Each participant contributes a fixed sum each month and bids to borrow the sum (normally around 200,000 baht). The participant who proposes to pay the highest rate of interest receives the money. Members claimed that the fund was not significant in terms of initial capital, but that it was useful to fund the purchase of extra machinery or to solve cash flow problems.

At least some members of the BMA wish to use the Association to control labour. One member told me that one of the BMA's goals was to take away workers' freedom of movement in the industry. The vice-chairman once asked members, in a meeting I attended, not to accept workers who had left other brickyards as a result of disputes with their employers. Not all members supported this, however: I overheard one member murmur that workers should be left to work wherever they wanted.[31] On a separate occasion the chairman asked members not to accept workers who left brickyards voluntarily.

There are two elements to the political significance of the BMA. The BMA gives campaign assistance to those members who wish to obtain positions of local office. Secondly, its members are also approached individually, in their capacity as vote brokers, by local and national politicians. As indicated above, a quarter of core BMA male members are officeholders. Members are encouraged to gain office so as to enhance the reputation and influence of the Association. Between

---

[30]As noted above, non-mechanised brickyards have a virtual monopoly over the Bangkok market: the BMA vice-chairman was trying to penetrate this market.

[31]The speaker was Santi, who, in 1990, gave his employees a wardrobe each as an incentive. He had no need for the kinds of strategies the vice-chairman was suggesting.

1988 and 1990 the BMA was instrumental in the successful campaigns of three members (see Chapter Six for one example).[32] A fourth member did not achieve office (see Chapter Seven). Assistance was given in various ways: advice on successful electioneering strategies, providing transport on polling day, 'giving' the votes of employees, petitioning district and provincial officials, and contributing to electioneering funds.[33] The influence that the BMA can wield over the district and provincial administration is likely to be enhanced as more members become officeholders.

Being employers of relatively large workforces, BMA members were sought by the vote brokers of national politicians and sometimes by national politicians themselves. Some BMA members were established vote brokers for local politicians.

There are 'costs' of BMA membership. Members devote a lot of time meeting social obligations, both to other members and in the name of the Association. There are also direct financial costs, which, although they may be insignificant to larger owners, may become tiresome for others. Members are constantly being asked to contribute to funds of one sort or another and are normally asked to give 100 baht on each occasion.

In which direction will the Association develop? All the signs are that the Association will consolidate its identity and strengthen its position as the only district interest group. If more members obtain office and the leadership can maintain solidarity in matters concerning the mechanised industry as a whole, then its position can only be consolidated. It is a matter of speculation whether the organisation will want to or will have the ability to extend more effective control over labour, or push out non-mechanised producers. The degree of unity within the Association should not be overestimated, however. On the other hand, neither should the influence it wields, potentially and actually, be underestimated.

---

[32]*Kamnan* Bay was helped into office by the Association in 1988. The other member, apart from the subject of Chapter Six, was a man who became headman of a Village in Ban Say in 1990. According to an informant, he received advice on campaign strategy from BMA members: he simply bought the votes of every resident in the administrative unit, while his competitors were not prepared to follow suit. This gave rise to a good deal of resentment, especially when he showed that he was more interested in the running of his brickyard than in affairs of office.

[33]Wealthier members wield a good deal of influence over officials. As one informant noted: BMA members are "very close to the administration".

V.E. Concluding Remarks

This Chapter has examined the organisation and significance of the Banglen brick industry. The two distinct forms of production and different labour relations in each type were described. It was shown that enterprises range from petty commodity to capitalist units and that some entrepreneurs make the transition from one mode to the other, while others are capitalist producers at the outset.

Migrants, the landless and the land poor of Banglen comprise the industry's workforce. Data suggest that in their efforts to offset labour shortages and increase labour productivity, employers cultivate clientelist relations with sections of their workforce. It was argued that the employers' organisation, the BMA, is oriented toward and capable of representing members' interests to relevant others, mainly representatives of the state, and has the potential for acting against labourers as a class. Some larger capitalist brickyard owners, it was asserted, use their wealth and contacts to obtain positions of local office. This last point is graphically illustrated in the next Chapter. This traces the campaign of one such brickyard owner who mobilised relations with co-members of the BMA and with brickyard employees in his successful bid to become *kamnan* of Ban Thung subdistrict.

CHAPTER SIX SUBDISTRICT ELECTORAL POLITICS: THE ELECTION OF A *KAMNAN*

This Chapter comprises a narrative, tracing events in largely chronological order, concerning the election of a new *kamnan* in Ban Thung subdistrict in 1990. The narrative begins with the retirement of the incumbent *kamnan* [1] and the poll to elect a headman of the administrative village (Village Four) over which the former *kamnan* had also presided. Since a *kamnan* is elected from existing headmen, he or she has responsibility for one of the villages which comprise the subdistrict as well as the subdistrict as a whole. Before a replacement can be elected, all offices of headman must be filled. The account thus firstly describes campaigning within this single village and then subsequent subdistrict-wide campaigning. The role of brickyard owners and national politicians are examined, and attention is given to the experience of the poor as well as to the public and private strategies pursued by the candidates. The Chapter concludes by briefly tracing the record of the new incumbent *kamnan* and examining his motives for contesting office. Particular themes are treated in detail and comparatively in Chapter Eight.

Men and women aged 20 and upwards have the right to vote. In order to vote a villager must be in possession of a valid identity card, and be registered as resident in the village on district records.

VI.A. Election of a Village Four Headman

The *kamnan* of Ban Thung retired on 28 March 1990 after 38 years in office. On 11 April a new headman of Village Four was elected. Seven weeks later, on 20 May, polling was held to elect a new *kamnan* of Ban Thung.

The outgoing *kamnan* was determined to install a successor of his choice. He did not want any of the existing headmen to replace him, believing them to be unsuitable. Consequently, he brought in a candidate who was effectively an outsider: he invited a successful Sino-Thai brick manufacturer, Han, who was a

---

[1] Readers should refer back to Chapter Three for an overview of politics and administration in Ban Thung prior to this period.

native of Village Four, Ban Thung to stand. The relationship between the two men was long-standing but not intimate.[2] Particularly in the early stages of his campaign Han received advice and assistance from the former *kamnan*. He also obtained the support and loyalty of one of *Kamnan* Chang's two deputies (*sarawat kamnan*) and his two assistants (*phu chuay*).[3]

Han had left Ban Thung 18 years prior to these events to trade in Banglen town. By 1990 he owned a prosperous brickyard and poultry farm located in the adjacent subdistrict of Ban Say as well as a town shop-house. He employed some 30 Village Five Ban Thung residents and about 12 residents of a Village Three hamlet. His wife is the daughter of a wealthy Village Five farmer and he has two consanguines elsewhere in the subdistrict: his mother's younger brother had married a Village Four woman and his elder brother had married a Village Three woman. Both had households in these Villages.

Han's candidacy had been planned some time in advance of *Kamnan* Chang's retirement. Being without extensive links with Ban Thung residents, Han began taking a leading role in a number of local events, particularly in relation to Village Four. Firstly, he was the major donor and ritual patron (*jaw phap*) of the October 1989 *kathin* ceremony at Wat Ban Thung. He led a cavalcade of donors - mainly Sino-Thai merchants - in pick-ups from the district town to Wat Ban Thung and was himself the most generous donor. The abbot ratified Han's status as a patron of the community by later publicly presenting him with a Buddha image sanctified by the temple's own monks. Secondly, in December 1989, on the occasion of the King's birthday, Han organised 'development' work in Villages Three and Four, providing refreshments for those who participated. Thirdly, in January 1990 he was instrumental in replacing the broken water pump which serviced the northern half of the subdistrict. By these acts Han appeared to attempt to cast himself as a generous patron and effective leader. Preparations were of a strategic as well as legitimating kind. To be an eligible candidate Han registered a change of address at the district office, moving his name from his market town home onto the household register (*thabian ban*) of his Village Four maternal uncle.

---

[2]Formerly, Han's family had been dependants of *Kamnan* Chang's father: Han's Chinese father and Sino-Thai mother had been given a plot of land on which to reside within the compound of the *kamnan's* father. Han expressed respect for the former *kamnan* by addressing him, without regard to genealogy or relative age since only five years lie between them, as *lung*, paternal uncle.

[3]In keeping with Thai practice I will continue to refer to Chang as *Kamnan* Chang despite his retirement. Officeholders are widely addressed by their old titles even after they no longer apply.

Three incumbent headmen were opposed to the outgoing *kamnan's* choice. One, Headman Chayan of Village Five, laid claim to the post, asserting that he deserved it because - in his words - he had been *Kamnan* Chang's 'lackey' (*khi thaw*) for several years. However, not before publicly vilifying him, but probably after evaluating his meagre chances, he soon openly affiliated himself with Han. He and Han made use of an obscure kinship link and began to call themselves cousins (*phi nong*).[4] Two other headmen and a third retired headman, opposed Han collectively. Headman Tim of Village One wanted the office for his son-in-law, Headman Nakun of Village Three. Headman Nakun's father, once head of Village Three and still known as Headman Pramoth, was said to be pushing his son from behind. Headman Pramoth's own ambition to be *kamnan* had been thwarted by *Kamnan* Chang many years earlier.

Thus, two factions emerged. At this stage they consisted of key followers only, since the majority of villagers became involved when campaigning was subdistrict wide. Han's active core group consisted of one of the former *kamnan's* deputies, his two assistants, the former *kamnan* himself, two nephews and a man who can only be described as Han's client.[5] The latter is resident in Village Four and the son-in-law of the *kamnan's* deputy mentioned above. This group was referred to by members as the "inner circle" (*wong nay*). Headman Nakun's campaign was led by himself, his father-in-law and his father. Although the latter two were probably more dominant leaders than Nakun, in the text I refer to the faction by his name. To my knowledge, Headman Nakun was helped by his and his father-in-law's headman assistants, and a number of kinspersons.

---

[4]Headman Chayan is Han's wife's mother's younger sister's daughter's husband (WMyZDH).

[5]This is the only relationship relevant to the elections which I would unequivocally identify as patron-clientage of the sort Kemp (1982) defines. This man had followed in his father's footsteps and served Han for several years: he referred to Han, who had sponsored his marriage, as 'father' and demonstrated a high degree of loyalty.

Figure 6.1: Lines of Support in Ban Thung Headman and *Kamnan* Elections

Status	Supported Headman Nakun	Supported Han
MPs	Bunphan MP	Narong MP
Core BMA members & brickyard owners	K. Bay (BMA Vice-chairman) Ray	K. Damrong (BMA Ch.) H. Chalong (BMA Sec.)
Ban Thung Officeholders (existing & retired)	H. Tim (V.1) H. Pramoth (ret., V.3) H. Khwang (V.2)	H. Chayan (V.5) K. Chang (ret.)

VI.A.1. *Headman Office in Village Four Contested*

Han needed to become headman of Village Four in order to be an eligible candidate in the poll for a subdistrict *kamnan.*[6] Headman Nakun's faction, to prevent Han gaining this foothold, attempted to fill this post with a man of their choosing. In this way Headman Nakun would meet no competition in subsequent polling. Thus, Headman Pramoth attempted to persuade an affinal kinsperson, resident in Village Four, to stand against Han in the headman election. He asked his daughter's sister-in-law's husband (DHZH),[7] the son of a large and respected Village Four household, hoping that he would take with him the votes of his agnates and affines. The man was put under considerable pressure from both sides - from Headman Pramoth and *Kamnan* Chang - but in the event did not stand for election. He was shy and uninterested in public affairs and it was obvious to observers that an attempt was being made to use him. One of his affines resident in Village Four expressed the fear that if he did stand for election his neighbours' and kinspersons' loyalties would be fundamentally split. When this man's reluctance to stand was evident, it was rumoured that Headman Pramoth had approached and offered a cash incentive to another similarly related man. However, since the latter did not have any kin in the locality, the same fear did not arise.

Kamnan Chang canvassed on Han's behalf in Village Four. Undoubtedly his backing gave Han credibility, for Han had minimal relations, except in an economic capacity, with villagers since moving away from the subdistrict. Several

---

[6]Han was not interested in merely being headman of Village Four and he told his assistants that he would resign if he did not become *kamnan.* It seems that the prestige granted by headman office did not satisfy Han's aspirations.

[7]He could not ask his daughter's Village Four husband because he had left the Village.

informants noted, somewhat sarcastically, how recent Han's interest in affairs of the Village was. He was seen and spoken of as an 'outsider' (*khon nok*).

Quite aside from pressure exerted by the former *kamnan,* villagers also lent Han their support for reasons related to their collective self-interest. As one elderly Village Four resident said, the *kamnan* 'had always' lived in Village Four and therefore always should do. Although this statement distorts the historical record somewhat, it betrays a fear that if the office went to another Village benefits would also follow. The *kamnan* had tended to favour Village Four when it came to locating 'development' projects. As an elderly male villager from the other end of the subdistrict commented "It's the same as a major and a minor wife - the major wife gets more". Village Four residents feared becoming a minor wife.

Two days prior to polling *Kamnan* Chang intimidated other potential candidates to prevent competition. Because candidacy papers are not filed before headman elections, candidates need not declare themselves until polling day itself. Thus, it was not apparent to *Kamnan* Chang whether Headman Pramoth's strategy would bear fruit or not. Additionally, an independent villager let it be known that he intended to stand. *Kamnan* Chang angrily addressed villagers over the public-address system. After saying that people 'from outside' were trying to break up the Village, he warned residents of Village Four not to facilitate their efforts. Contesting the election, he said, would break the unity of the Village, and this he would not countenance. Informants, otherwise outwardly respectful of the *kamnan,* criticised this outburst behind his back.[8] After polling, the wife of the 'independent' villager mentioned above alluded to the *kamnan's* speech: before it, she said, there were people who intended to stand, but after it "they didn't dare to" (*may kla*).

Another problem soon presented itself to Han and *Kamnan* Chang. Six days before polling Headman Chayan, who had promised his villagers' votes, unexpectedly resigned from his post in Village Five.[9] Whatever the outcome of polling to fill his vacant post, his resignation promised to erode Han's support base in this Village. A replacement headman of Village Five would have to be elected before a *kamnan* for the whole subdistrict could be appointed. Han feared that

---

[8]An informant, a monk, commented to me that "people in positions of respect should be impartial" (*phu mi kiat khong wang tua pen klang*). The *kamnan* gave offence, I think, not only by making public his partisan involvement, but by being threatening and patronising.

[9]His real motive for resigning was not self-evident. He had once extravagantly announced that he would resign when *Kamnan* Chang retired, but this had not been taken particularly seriously. To me he said, just after tendering his resignation, that he was "fed up" (*bua*) with the job and was too "poor" to meet his unofficial obligations. To my mind, however, Headman Chayan was attempting to demonstrate his political value to Han.

Headman Nakun's faction would interpose their own candidate as was attempted in Village Four. Even if Headman Nakun did not intervene, it was likely that the election would be contested, and contestation could not but leave a disaffected candidate. Han feared that the defeated candidate would go over to Headman Nakun's side, if they were not already on it, taking their support network with them. An election in Village Five could only divide residents' loyalties and it was thus imperative, in Han's view, that polling in Village Five did not occur.

The problem was largely solved by the intervention of the BMA chairman, *Kamnan* Damrong. In order to take effect, Headman Chayan's resignation had to be ratified by both the District Officer and the Provincial Governor. By the time Han and *Kamnan* Damrong learned of Headman Chayan's action, the letter had already passed the District Officer and was on its way to the Provincial Governor. *Kamnan* Damrong used his contacts there to prevent it being acted upon, leaving it to Han to have the resignation rescinded at the District Office.

It was not until after Han was elected headman of Village Four that Headman Chayan was reinstated. About a hundred residents of Village Five went to the District Office to petition the District Officer. The appeal, which was successful, was clearly staged by Headman Chayan and Han, who provided transport, refreshments and alcohol. Not every resident was happy with Headman Chayan's reinstatement. An informant in Village Five said that several families had felt obliged rather than willing to send someone with the cavalcade: they felt that their absence would have been noted.[10]

Kamnan Damrong's offer to help Han's campaign was made at a BMA meeting on April 5, which I attended. About 40 BMA members had gathered at the vice-chairman's mansion. Among the guests was the district police chief's wife. *Kamnan* Damrong announced that Han was making a bid to be headman and then *kamnan* of Ban Thung. He asked members to "cheer" (*chia*, from the English) Han on 11 April, when polling took place. He then appealed to the assembly of brickyard owners to assist Han's *kamnan* campaign: "If you have any means to help 'Boss' Han, then help him". He reminded members that several of them employed Ban Thung residents who could be influenced to support Han. The BMA compère, Santi, made a similar appeal: "help" and "support" (*sanap sanun*) Han, he enjoined. "Prosperity (*khwam jarœn*) is brought to any subdistrict over which a

---

[10]My impression was that Headman Chayan was tolerated rather than liked. Despite his own liberal indulgence in alcohol and gambling he was wont to broadcast over a small public-address system late into the night about such virtues as hard work. Some younger villagers dubbed him "Headman Microphone" (*phu yay mai[k]*). Before his reinstatement an elderly, male informant told me that Headman Chayan would "have to improve his behaviour (*tong prap tua hay di khun*) if he is to be headman [again]".

brickyard owner presides", he declared - citing the BMA chairman's and vice-chairman's subdistricts as examples.[11] Intervention on Han's behalf was thus presented as a service to villagers. In response, Han thanked the speakers.

Headman Pramoth had prepared for the eventuality that his son would have to contest the *kamnan* election with Han. He sought to enlist support by way of a household merit-making party (*tham bun ban*), inviting relatives, neighbours, friends and residents from all Villages. While it is customary for guests to contribute cash to the host at such events, Headman Pramoth announced that nobody need "help" because he was feasting (*liang*) them. However, his declaration came toward the end of the party and was seen by my informant as rather mean since most people had by then contributed. Nevertheless, by saying this he was trying to make a normally reciprocal relationship asymmetrical. By feasting his guests Headman Pramoth was attempting to obligate them: the reason for which was readily apparent. Before the party broke up Headman Pramoth declared, according to my informant:

> I am putting my son in your hands. I'm going to have him be a candidate for *kamnan*. If you see good in him then choose him; if you see bad, then you needn't.

VI.A.1.a) Polling Day

Polling took place at the Centre meeting hall. At around 9 A.M. the District Officer, two deputies and several other Interior Ministry officials arrived together with three armed policemen. An official beckoned villagers to come to vote using the public-address system. Slowly people started to arrive but neither of the two men whom Headman Pramoth had approached attended. When the hall was full, and everyone intending to come appeared to be present, the deputy district officer asked villagers which method of polling they wanted. They were given a choice of voting by a show of hands or a secret ballot.[12] This initial choice was to be made

---

[11]In common usage *khwam jarœn* implies, like *phatthana* (development), the development of urban infrastructure - good roads, bridges, and water-supply. In these terms the compère's assertion is accurate: the two *kamnan* had brought 'prosperity'. The district civil engineer once complained to me that these men had their requests for provincial development funds approved every year whereas other subdistricts were frequently passed over. Their influence and standing made it possible for them to appear as exemplary *kamnan*.

[12]This choice is only available for headman elections. *Kamnan* elections are always by secret ballot.

by a display of hands. One of *Kamnan* Chang's assistants immediately voted for 'open' polling. Other villagers followed his example.[13]

When the official asked villagers to propose candidates only Han was put forward. His candidacy was proposed by an old man, and seconded by a middle-aged woman and the same *kamnan's* assistant mentioned above. In the absence of any other candidates the official declared Han Headman of Village Four, counting 87 villagers present.

'Headman Han', as he now was, gave a brief speech of thanks. He said that he intended to 'develop' the Village, despite not having lived there for 18 years, because it was his natal village (*ban kɛt*).[14] An impromptu merit-making ceremony was held at the temple to ritually welcome Han into office. Resident monks were fed and Han was blessed by the abbot. Government officials and villagers, including members of other Villages, were feasted. Eleven BMA members plus some friends from the district town arrived to congratulate and eat with Han.

I later asked the abbot whether he was happy with the result. Although aware that potential opposition had been suppressed, he approved of the result: "Would the losers be prepared to cooperate with the winner?" he asked, somewhat rhetorically. In his view it was right that the democratic process had been compromised in the name of unity within the 'community'.

VI.B. The *Kamnan* Election

After Han was installed as headman of Village Four the arena of competition expanded to the whole subdistrict and the support of enfranchised residents in all five Villages was sought. *Kamnan* Chang left Han to manage much of his campaign himself. The date for the election was not yet known, and candidacy papers did not have to be filed until 7 May.

---

[13]He later explained to me that he had quickly elected for open balloting because he knew nobody would dare publicly oppose Han. An informant, a monk, with whom I had observed the proceedings, commented that "there were some who were willing and some who felt obliged" to put up their hand (*mi temjay mi krengjay*).

[14]On the same day he funded the repair of a broken irrigation pipe in Village Four that was causing problems for farmers. His assistant, who organised the repair, told me that it would show Han was 'serious' about development.

Village One, with 219 resident voters,[15] was seen by both sides as safely in the hands of Headman Nakun whose father-in-law exerted a strong influence in the Village. Han expected to gain a handful of votes, however, because some families were known to be disaffected with Headman Tim's leadership, and others were affines of Village Four residents.

The 346 votes of resident Village Two residents were more keenly contested. Headman Khwang was initially not aligned and appeared prepared to sell his loyalty to the highest bidder. At first Han's strategy was to split the vote of this Village in order to diminish Headman Nakun's support base. Villagers were seen to be ambivalent, but on balance more likely to vote for Headman Nakun than Han since they were sandwiched between two Villages 'controlled' by his faction. Han initially intended to hire Headman Khwang to stand for election, based on the assumption that he would take with him the majority of votes in his Village. Headman Khwang's candidacy would, of course, have to appear genuine. However, Han and his advisers reappraised the strategy and estimated that Headman Khwang would not be able to influence a substantial number of voters: "He has no significance" (*may mi khwam may*) said one of Han's aides. Subsequently Han intended to use Headman Khwang simply as a 'vote broker' (*hua khanan).* But when Han refused to meet Headman Khwang's demand for 10,000 baht to perform this service, Khwang went over to Headman Nakun, reportedly for 7,000 baht. Without the support of the Village's headman, Han and his strategists canvassed household heads directly. New road surfacing was offered to residents and votes were bought just prior to polling.[16] One of Han's aides declared, after talking to a group of poorer Village Two residents, that "They don't care who gets to be *kamnan*, it makes no difference to them, they would not gain either way. They said they'd vote for whoever gave them money first". Han had links with a number of richer households in the village through supporters in Village Four.

Village Three's 199 votes were similarly contested. Han recognised that Nakun, being headman, had an advantage over him. However, a number of households were disinclined to support Headman Nakun. Some had suffered as a result of his alleged corruption whilst in office. Others despised Nakun's father-in-

---

[15]This and the following figures refer to the number of physically resident eligible voters rather than those listed on official registers. In some cases, district records listed fully twice the number of resident eligible voters, bearing the names of deceased people and men who had long been monks. The figures given here for Villages Three and Four derive from my first household census. The figures of the other three Villages were compiled in the course of my second survey covering Ban Thung and Ban Say.

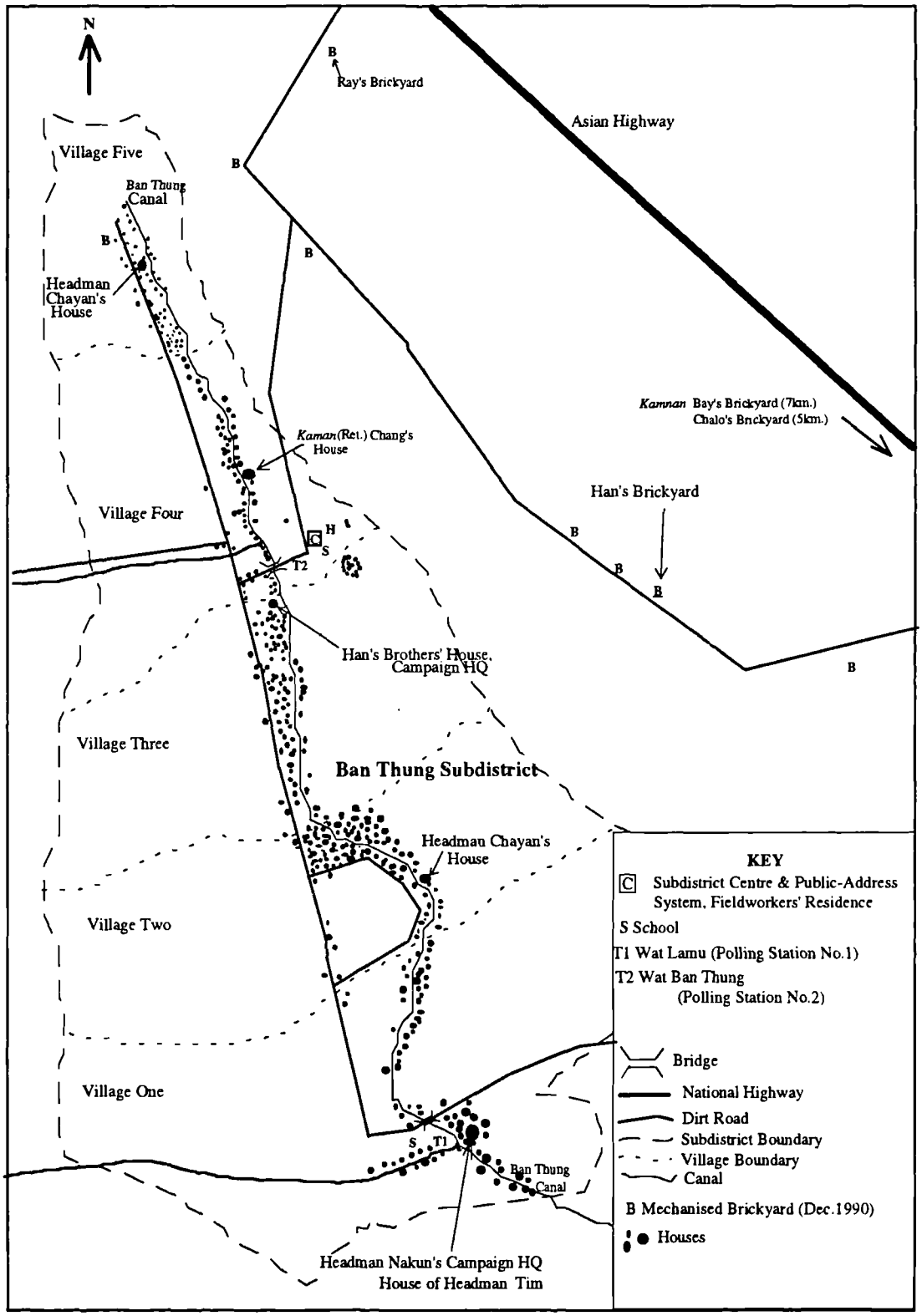
[16]Road surfacing came from provincial development funds and was arranged by Han's friend, Provincial Councillor Sanit.

law, Headman Tim, because - it was alleged - he had forced himself sexually on a female resident. Han also had about 12 employees among residents. Headman Nakun, however, expressed confidence that he would gain the vast majority of votes in the Village. He explained to me why the Village was 'his' with the words "I watch over it" (*khum yu*) - implying coercive, surveillance-type 'watching over' rather than paternalistic concern.

As one could expect, the 181 eligible voters of Village Four were firmly in support of Han. Even those who resented having Han forced upon them appeared to prefer Han to Nakun, probably because they feared the prospect of the *kamnan* office leaving the Village.

Village Five's 159 eligible voters were also seen to back Han. His support derived from three sources. He was a major employer of Village Five labour, his wife was the daughter of a family with kinspersons throughout the Village, and, as mentioned above, Headman Chayan actively supported him. Shortly after Headman Chayan was successfully reinstated, villagers symbolically demonstrated their support for Han, albeit with prompting. In late April, Han sponsored a party to welcome Headman Chayan back into office, supplying alcohol and food. Villagers poured water over their headman's hands (*rot nam*; see Phya Anuman 1986:193) as a sign of respect. In contrast to what would be normal practice, Headman Chayan then encouraged them to do the same to Han. By pouring water over Han's hands they were treating him as a respected leader (*phu nam*) when, as yet, he had no formal relationship with them.

Figure 6.2: Ban Thung and the *Kamnan* Election (sketch map)



VI.B.1. Brickyard Owners and the Election

Apart from headmen, brickyard owners who employed Ban Thung residents were perceived to be in control of bloc votes, and as such their support was sought by the opposing candidates. At the time there were four main employers, and their employees tended to live in discrete neighbourhoods. These brickyards are all some distance from Ban Thung so that if employees were to vote they would either have to stay home or be ferried to the polling station by their employer on polling day.

Around 30 Village Two residents worked for Chalo, an elderly BMA member disposed towards Han. The BMA vice-chairman, *Kamnan* Bay, employed around 30 workers from the southern end of Village Three. Ray, not an active member of the BMA, employed about 20 people from the northern end of Village Three. Han himself, as indicated above, employed some 30 Village Five and about 12 Village Three residents.

Although Chalo promised Han his support, it turned out to be ineffective. Han perceived that Chalo's workers were more strongly in favour of Headman Nakun than himself. Consequently, he asked Chalo to 'buy' his workers' identity cards in advance of polling to prevent them voting. Apparently, after asking his employees to bring their identity cards into work, Chalo received a threatening, unsigned letter - probably from Headman Nakun. This appeared to frighten Chalo into inaction: his subsequent efforts to influence his employees were half-hearted. His employees did not give up their identity cards and on polling day they did not meet the pick-up truck sent, as was usual, to take them to the brickyard.

Han also asked *Kamnan* Bay for the votes of his Ban Thung labourers and offered to provide transport to the polling station from Bay's brickyard. Although *Kamnan* Bay was non-committal Han seemed to assume that he would receive the *kamnan's* support. However, he did not, as he discovered to his dismay on the eve of polling. Personal antagonism born of a business conflict, a complex obligation and his own employees' allegiance appear to have influenced *Kamnan* Bay's decision.[17] Rather than support Han's campaign the BMA vice-chairman actively assisted that of Headman Nakun.

---

[17]Apparently *Kamnan* Bay felt that Han had 'poached' some of his Village Three workers. He was also said to resent Han for not supporting him against a Ban Say villager in a dispute over a cow run down by his son. Thirdly, *Kamnan* Bay was said to have obligated himself heavily to Bunphan Kawathana MP such that when approached by him, *Kamnan* Bay could not but agree to help Nakun. The obligation was entailed when Bunphan MP brought his co-member of the Social Action Party, Montri Phongphanit, to *Kamnan* Bay's 'new house party' in March 1990. Montri's celebrity status gave the event renown throughout the province, reflecting glory on *Kamnan* Bay.

Han was unable to obtain the support of Ray, with whom his elder brother was in dispute. It seems that this smouldering disagreement, as well as the fact that many of Ray's employees were kindred of Headman Nakun, led him to oppose Han. Indeed, Ray was one of Headman Nakun's vote brokers.

A small number of votes came from other brickyard owners sympathetic to Han. After the election *Kamnan* Damrong told me he had 'given' Han two of his workers' votes, both of whom came from Village Three. Although one had already been approached by Headman Nakun, *Kamnan* Damrong gave them both 100 baht and persuaded them to vote for Han. He commented to me that he "could have forced them [to vote without payment] but that would not be good" (*bip bangkhap khaw day tɑ̀ may di*). The BMA secretary, on the other hand, claimed to have "forced" (*bangkhap*) two of his five Village Three employees to vote for Han. The other three did not have voting rights.

The above shows that *Kamnan* Damrong's appeal to BMA members to assist Han was not altogether successful. It would be a misrepresentation to say that Han's success was due to the unanimous support of a group sharing his class interests. One BMA member was unable to make his support effective, another opposed Han for a combination of reasons. The third, who was not an active BMA member, was also in conflict with Han. Personal animosities and conflicting loyalties undermined any unity among brickyard owners. However, this does not negate the fact that the BMA leader did ask members collectively to assist a fellow-member gain office. *Kamnan* Damrong's rationale was to increase the standing and influence of the Association as a whole.

VI.B.2. Candidates' Links with National Politicians

Headman Han and Headman Nakun cultivated links with the two MPs representing constituency No.2 in Ayutthaya Province. Colonel (retired) Narong Kittikachorn MP was Han's political patron and Bunphan Kawatthana MP was Nakun's (see Appendix 1). Neither seemed to espouse any ideology, thus their political clients were not expected to hold any particular position either. Vying for the same voting base, these MPs attempted to obtain the local officeholders' support who, in turn, could influence the local electorate. National politicians expect any services they may give to be reciprocated in the form of the votes of the villagers whom their political clients can influence.

Kamnan Chang had, in the 1986 and 1988 General Elections, been Colonel Narong's *hua khanɑ̀n* in Ban Thung. Han perpetuated this relationship. He claimed that Narong offered him electioneering funds (to finance vote-buying), but

that he refused the offer. He said he did not want to be obligated to Narong. Han also had ample funds from his business. He did, however, request Narong to influence polling arrangements to his advantage. Narong apparently promised to try to see that only one polling station was used and that this was sited in Village Four. Han thought that fewer residents from the southern end of the subdistrict would bother to vote if the polling station was some four kilometres from their homes. This would be to his benefit because the majority of villagers in the southern end of the subdistrict supported Nakun. Narong's putative intervention was unsuccessful: regulations stipulated the use of two polling stations in this case. Nevertheless Han said that Narong's support gave him "moral support" (*kamlangjay*).

Headman Nakun and Headman Tim had been Bunphan's vote brokers in the 1988 General Election and now requested his help through a cousin of Tim, who had been Bunphan's chauffeur. Relations with Bunphan had been sustained since 1988: Headman Tim had recently received funds from him to construct a new crematorium (*men*) and temple (*bot*). Han was disturbed to learn of Bunphan's disposition towards Headman Nakun. He feared it would mean that Nakun would have unlimited vote-buying funds and Han therefore asked a third party to appeal to Bunphan not to take sides. This man, the largest local landowner and owner of the district's only rice mill, was a major investor in Bunphan's bank. Apparently Bunphan MP gave the third party his assurance that he would not involve himself. Han was reassured by this, although, as it turned out, mistakenly.[18] According to my sources Headman Nakun received between 25,000 and 35,000 baht from Bunphan, a substantial proportion of the total 80,000 to 100,000 baht he was reputed to have spent.

VI.B.3. Dirty Tricks

In early May both factions pursued strategies to discredit and emasculate the opposition. Han's faction arranged for Headman Nakun to be arrested while hosting an illegal gambling session in Village Three. The district police had been paid to ignore the session. When Han's faction caught wind of the event, word was sent to a policeman in the Criminal Investigation Division in Ayutthaya town. The latter, a faction member's nephew, arranged for the session to be raided by

---

[18]Somewhat prematurely, Han thought that even if Bunphan MP still intended to help Headman Nakun he would be dissuaded once information came his way that Nakun was unpopular and unlikely to win. Bunphan MP was known to obtain data on villagers' political affiliation from officials in his pay at the town agricultural cooperative office and warehouse.

provincial police. Headman Nakun was arrested but escaped being officially charged by paying a hefty bribe. Despite vigorous efforts to keep the event secret, Nakun's arrest became common knowledge and - as Han had hoped - stimulated speculation about Nakun's suitability for public office. Candidacy papers had not yet been filed and villagers speculated that Headman Tim might stand instead of his discredited son-in-law.

Around the same time, Headman Nakun's faction attempted to disqualify Han from submitting his candidacy by instigating an official investigation into how he became headman. Separate letters were sent to the District Officer and the Provincial Governor on the 30th April and 4th May respectively. Although both were signed "From the people of Village Four, Ban Thung", Han's supporters ascertained their origin as within Nakun's faction. The letter to the Governor complained that Han did not reside in the Village and asked the Governor to force him to do so. More seriously and accurately, it stated that others had wanted to stand for election but the former *kamnan* had used *itthiphon* (connoting coercive rather than officially sanctioned power) to dissuade them. Erroneously, it claimed that Han was paying the former *kamnan* to install him in office, and that even local monks were intimidated into silence by the *kamnan*. The letter to the District Officer contained much the same message, but made less exaggerated allegations. For some reason there was no official response to these letters until after polling took place. A few days after winning the election a district office contact informally gave Han photocopies of the letters and told him that officials would be coming to 'investigate' the allegations in a few days. The 'investigation' proved simply a formality and the whole matter was dropped. Thus Headman Nakun's strategy failed.

VI.B.4. Headman Han's Claim to Status

Exactly a month before polling day Han hosted a retirement party in honour of *Kamnan* Chang. The event seemed at least partly intended to demonstrate Han's suitability to be *kamnan* - it would give evidence of his organisational flair, wealth and ability to attract powerful outsiders. The party, to be held near the Village Four Centre, required considerable preparation: catering was organised to feed 700 guests, a band was hired and a stage built. Invitations were issued to all of the district's 16 *kamnan* as well as BMA members and other local dignitaries.

On the morning of the party Headman Chayan tried to dismiss a pervasive view, announcing over the public-address system that "Headman Han is not organising the party to electioneer (*ha siang*) but to give honour to *Kamnan* Chang

(*hay kiat*)". Whether or not the party was political in intent, it was taken as such. Nobody from Headman Nakun's faction attended, nor did more than a handful of residents in 'their' Villages.

Several important figures attended the party. These included Colonel Narong Kittikachorn MP, who came tagged by five bodyguards, the local large landowner/rice-mill owner who petitioned Bunphan MP for Han (see above), the Police Chief and *Kamnan* Bay (representing the BMA). The evening was something of a failure, however. Twenty of the 70 tables remained unoccupied, partly as a result of the factional conflict, but also partly because villagers could not afford the 100 baht 'help' they were expected to give. The evening ended before speeches had finished when rain began to fall. Contributions from guests did not cover Han's costs and he was obliged to foot a large bill.

VI.B.5. Propaganda, Policies and Lies

Both Headman Nakun and Headman Han produced photocopied campaign posters. These were displayed around the subdistrict and distributed by vote brokers. These posters carried candidates' appeals for support and claims to legitimacy. Headman Nakun produced two posters, one declared:

> Kinspersons of Ban Thung, choose a person close to yourselves (*klay tua*). It's the same as choosing a member of your own family.[19]

Whilst the other read:

> Please choose Headman Nakun, candidate No.1, to be *kamnan*...Level of Knowledge: Teacher Training Certificate from Ayutthaya Teacher Training College. Bold enough to think. Bold enough to act. Bold enough to speak. He is his own man, and is a genuine son and grandson of Ban Thung people.[20]

In the first poster Headman Nakun claims to be close to the electorate. This signifies three qualities of 'closeness', all of which, it is implied, Han lacked. Nakun resided in the subdistrict, among voters, Han did not. Nakun had many kinspersons among villagers, Han had but a handful. Lastly, he implies he shares the same social status as villagers in contradistinction to Han. Headman Nakun's mention of his qualification in the second poster is a claim to status and respect -

---

[19]*Phi nong chaw thap nam, luak khon klay tua muan luak khon nay khrop khrua khong than.*

[20]*Prot luak phu yay Nakun be nung...khwam ru po ko so jak witayalaykhru Ayutthaya. Kla khit, kla tham, kla phut. Pen tua khong tua eng le pen luk lan chaw Ban Thung doy tha jing.*

Han lacked any formal qualifications. His claim to be 'his own man' was intended to contrast with common views about Han who was seen as *Kamnan* Chang's 'man'. As one Nakun supporter put it to me, Han was being "moulded" (*pan*) by *Kamnan* Chang. Nakun's claim to courage of thought, word and deed probably also referred to Han's alleged dependence on *Kamnan* Chang. His declaration that he was a "true descendant" of Ban Thung people was again designed to highlight Han's outsider and also ethnically distinct status.[21]

Headman Nakun did not present or appear to have a more detailed 'policy statement' than is given above. Informants who were his supporters reported him saying that he would stop monthly subdistrict meetings since "they waste time that could be spent making a living". He was also reported as saying he would permit cock-fights and gambling in the subdistrict, activities *Kamnan* Chang had endeavoured to stamp out.

Han's election literature was more substantial: he produced a poster with a letter on the reverse face. The poster reads:

> Please choose Headman Han, candidate No.2, to be the *kamnan* of Ban Thung. Set on development (*phatthana*). Ventures to sacrifice his private interests. Has good work results.[22]

In his letter he appeals for support by implying he is sincerely concerned for the subdistrict, and lists the 'development' projects he would introduce:

> My dear kinspersons, people of Ban Thung subdistrict. I apologise to you all that, because of time constraints, I cannot come and tell you what lies in my heart. I would like to point out the thoughts and feelings that have led me to be a candidate, so that you can select a *kamnan* to replace *Kamnan* Chang who has now retired.
>
> I, myself, am a child of Ban Thung by birth. In a way I am able to say that "my umbilical cord is buried in Ban Thung" and every single thing which I now am and have originates entirely in Ban Thung. That is to say that Ban Thung has done me a great service, and now I see that I have the opportunity, and have reached the time, where I can repay this debt to the land of my mother. Therefore I have applied to be the *kamnan* of Ban Thung subdistrict, and have been given polling No.2. If, kinspersons and people of Ban Thung, you put your trust in me and choose me to be *kamnan*, the things which I plan to do in our subdistrict are as follows...

---

[21]When electioneering for his son, Headman Pramoth was said to call Han a "cheating-Chinese-pig-thief". Han, who had once bought locally reared pigs to sell in Ayutthaya market, was portrayed as a rapacious Sino-Thai.

[22]*Prot luak phu yay Han pen kamnan tambon Ban Thung. Mungman phatthana, kla siasara phonprayot suan tua. Phon ngan di.*

He then makes a number of pledges. He aims: to improve local irrigation facilities so that farmers can cultivate two crops a year; to introduce fish breeding into the canal; improve subdistrict roads; to develop the existing household water-supply; and to request two public telephones for the subdistrict.[23] Given its ambitiousness, some among Nakun's supporters were suspicious of Han's manifesto. They commented that his projects were not practical and that, even if they were, he would not implement them. Finally, Han writes:

> I am ready to give my services to ameliorate suffering, to nurture happiness and to protect each and every kinsperson so that they have happy and peaceful lives at all times (happy that they are consulted, and that their problems get solved) without reference to where they live.
>
> I hope that each and every kinsperson, whom I respect and love, will give some thought to electing a person who is suitable to be *kamnan* in the elections of May 20, 1990 [P.S. 2533]. I sincerely thank those of you who trust me and choose me to be *kamnan*.
>
> And finally, I would like to invoke the power of the Three Jewels, and all sacred things which inhabit this subdistrict and vicinity, to ordain that each of you experience only happiness. I pray that your thoughts and reasoning are guided by the dharma when you decide who to choose so that we lead our subdistrict into prosperity.
>
> [Hand-written, not typed, postscript] Try it and see just once. If he's not good you'll be able to choose again in four [sic] years.[24]

Han's claim to genealogical, geographical and status proximity is more tenuous than Headman Nakun's. Perhaps this explains why he delivers such a morally powerful explanation for his political involvement. One of the most compelling norms in Thai society concerns a child's filial duty towards its mother. The child is perceived to owe its very existence to the mother and should, when it is able, reciprocate by caring for her (see Mulder 1990:64, Kemp 1984:68, Bechstedt 1989). In his letter Han casts Ban Thung as his mother and he as the child: "I...am a child of Ban Thung", "every single thing which I now am and have originates entirely in Ban Thung". He depicts himself as the dutiful child returning to meet his filial obligation: "I have the opportunity, and have reached the time when I am able to repay this debt to the land of my mother". This metaphorical device places Han's essentially political motives within the realm of the morally exemplary. He

---

[23]Han's stated intention to develop roads and acquire telephones was probably made in the knowledge of the resources his friends, Provincial Councillor Sanit and Sawan could soon wield (see Chapter Seven).

[24]See Appendix 3 for transliteration.

portrays his candidacy as motivated by an apolitical desire selflessly to meet his filial duty.

By 'praying' that villagers are guided in their decision-making by dharma (*tham*), Buddhist teaching or righteousness, Han achieves a similar effect. Since he is recommending that villagers elect him, and he asks that their choice be informed by dharma, then must he not be morally superior to the opposition? If he were not, then why would he enjoin people to be guided by dharma?

In urging his readers to elect someone who is "suitable to be *kamnan*" Han may be alluding to Nakun's alleged unsuitability - he may have hoped that Nakun's recent arrest for gambling would be brought to mind. There is an incidental allusion to the consultative style of leadership he apparently intends to practice: people will be "happy that they are consulted". However, Han also portrays himself as a paternalistic leader who will "ameliorate suffering" and "protect". Referring to people's expectation that Han would 'take care of his own', he claims he will give his services without reference to where people live.

The claim made at the end of the letter - that villagers would be able to "choose again" in four years - is false. A debate stimulated by Han's faction centred on the relative lengths of terms of office that Han and Nakun would enjoy. Han's supporters pointed out that at 55 he would only have five years in office before retirement, whereas Headman Nakun, at 28, would have 32. The shorter term was portrayed as an advantage.[25] The argument put forward was that if Han was a bad *kamnan* he would only have to be suffered for five years, and if he turned out to be a good *kamnan* then villagers would enjoy five years of good leadership. Informants claimed that Nakun had neglected his duties and had appropriated public funds. Han's putative good character was seen as evident from the way he had, by his own efforts, risen from relative poverty to prosperity. Han's faction played on villagers' fears that they would - as they had been under *Kamnan* Chang - be under a 'bad' leader for many years if Nakun was elected. As one resident of Village Two commented to me, it was less of a risk (*kan siang*) to vote for Han.

In fact Han deceived all but his closest aides regarding the number of years he could hold office. He was, as he claimed, aged 55, but according to his school-leaving certificate he was only 52. Because his retirement date would be based on his school record he would not be required to retire until he was 63, by which time he would have served eight years in office. He probably won a few votes on

---

[25]It was not universally perceived as such. One woman, from among the poor of Village Three, considered Han's relatively short term a disadvantage. He would, as it were, be 'here today, gone tomorrow'.

account of this lie. Even several months after Han had become *kamnan,* villagers still supposed that he would only hold office for five years.

VI.B.6. Views from the Poor

Both factions drew support from among the landless wage labourers of Village Three. However, neither of the candidates could be said to have represented 'the poor'. Poorer residents allied themselves for any number of reasons, stemming, for example, from kinship, patronage, neighbourhood or employment linkages. If they had no prior links with either candidate they tended to side with the party who appeared able to, or did in fact, deliver the best rewards.

At least some of the poor explained their loyalties in terms of rejection of a member of a dominant status group. One Village Three woman told me she would not support Han because he was from Village Four. She said she resented some residents of that Village for "looking down" (*du thuk*) on her. Although Headman Nakun was linked by kinship to many Village Three residents, he appeared to have generated similar resentment among others of the poor. Three women, two of whom were kinspersons, criticised Headman Nakun for treating them off-handedly on account of their relative poverty. He and his father were apparently apt to "scold" (*ta*) as well as *du thuk* them.

Some among the poor of Village Three expressed concern that Han did not live in the subdistrict: if he was *kamnan* he would not be at hand if urgently needed. This point was exploited by Nakun's faction. A rumour circulated some weeks before polling avowing that, if Han became *kamnan,* he would employ policemen to live at the Centre to administer the subdistrict for him. So far as I was aware Han had no such intention, but the fact that the view gained currency reveals how, in the minds of poorer villagers, Han was identified with powerful, essentially repressive forces such as the police.

Irrespective of the faction they supported, the poor experienced similar intimidatory strategies aimed at securing their votes. Village Three supporters of Headman Nakun expressed concern that Han's vote brokers had been through the Village 'buying' the identity cards of those who would sell them, and writing down names. The names of people who would not sell their cards and who sold their vote but kept their cards were apparently noted. One female resident spoke of this as "tying people up" (*mat khon*), putting them in a position from which they could not escape. A few days after this Headman Nakun's aides went from house to house noting down the registration number on residents' identity cards -

presumably he surmised that those without a card, and without a convincing explanation as to why they lacked one, had sold it to Han.

The poor voiced what seemed to me at the time a fanciful belief that candidates would know for whom they had voted. One Village Three woman, who acted as a vote broker for Han, feared that Headman Nakun would somehow use the identity card registration numbers he had collected to discover villagers' voting behaviour. A middle-aged man from the same neighbourhood appeared to believe that MPs could discover who had not delivered their votes, and sent gunmen to punish accordingly. His explanation for how they came by this knowledge was vague and unconvincing.[26] If he and other villagers had known Han's actual practice some would have been a good deal more worried than they actually were.

At least one poorer villager expressed dismay that votes were paid for. In her view vote-buying displaced patronage. Mother of one of the poorest Village Three households, she declared "Two hundred baht is used up in a moment, but goodwill lasts a long time" *(diaw song roy mot, tɑ namjay yu nan)*. The assumption behind this statement is that, if one freely gives support to a successful candidate, then one had a purchase on this person's 'goodwill' at a later date. The corollary of this is that the transaction between vote-buying candidate and vote-selling villagers precludes any residual obligation on the part of the former. For households under economic hardship the 'insurance' of knowing one could call on an officeholder in a time of need would be valuable and of more benefit than a quickly spent payment. However, this woman went on to contradict herself immediately. If her husband was to stay at home to vote, she said, he would have to be compensated for the day's wage he would forego. He would have to be paid to vote. The contradiction is not so puzzling when we understand that this woman could not afford to trust that the recipient of her household's vote would in fact reciprocate: it would be better to take money 'up front', as it were, than to hope that the candidate would deliver favours. Her predicament reflects the degree of uncertainty aroused by new electioneering practices.[27]

The election was a sensitive subject for everyone in Ban Thung. This was particularly true for poorer, more vulnerable residents. In conversation, close

---

[26]He thought that an MP's *hua khaŋn* would note the order in which villagers voted, and then, assuming that ballots were taken out and read in roughly the same order to which they were cast, would surmise whether individuals and residents of different neighbourhoods had voted 'appropriately'.

[27]Incidentally, this informant rejected a popular explanation among officials, richer villagers and urban dwellers, which says the persistence of vote-buying is explained by rural poverty: "Although we are poor it does not mean we cannot survive without receiving money for our votes".

informants among the poor would indicate who they were talking about with a nod in the direction of the candidate's home. Views would be given elliptically. Villagers with whom I did not have an established rapport were understandably reluctant to talk about the conflict. People had reason to fear the consequences of demonstrating 'inappropriate' allegiance. Vote brokers were menacing. Core faction members and vote brokers were armed. Headman Pramoth was said to electioneer by 'intimidating' (*khom khu*) people, twirling a pistol on his finger as one informant recounted.[28] On one occasion a group of young men joked to me that Headman Nakun had just set off to shoot Han having discovered him canvassing in Village Two. The young men said they would go and collect Han's corpse in the morning.

VI.B.7. Electioneering Strategies

Han's faction used a number of methods to gain votes. These included making personal appeals to household heads, activating kinship relations, introducing 'ghost votes', bussing in 'outsider' eligible voters, making strategic gifts to neighbourhoods, paying people to prevent them from voting and outright vote-buying. Some of these strategies were also used by Headman Nakun. However, since I only had immediate access to Han's campaign this account focuses on his, rather than Nakun's strategies.

Soon after Han was made headman, *Kamnan* Chang visited almost every household in the subdistrict to ask household heads for their support. Nearer polling, when Han had established his position in the subdistrict, he canvassed on his own behalf. He also used his assistants, deputies, and consanguines as vote brokers. Han's faction members sought the support of their kinspersons, consisting of their bilateral kindred and affines.[29] For example, Han's nephew (eBS) was able to request the votes of a large Village Two household because his wife's sister had married into it. Such links were probably only dependable in themselves where social relations were already close and active. Tenuous kinship relations would be bolstered with cash payments.

---

[28]Headman Pramoth's threatening approach was seen by both factions as counter-productive and he was reportedly stopped from approaching voters shortly before the election. A joke circulated that he was Han's best canvasser.

[29]Han's consanguineal relatives consist of only his elder brother, his elder brother's two children, his mother's younger brother and MyB's two children - only one of whom lived in Ban Thung. However, since he himself and his elder brother, MyB and MyBS had all married residents of the subdistrict he had numerous affinal relatives.

Another strategy used was to donate items that were of value to a group of people, in all cases a neighbourhood. For example, Han promised members of Ban Klang hamlet, situated in Village Three, materials for rebuilding their hamlet spirit house (*san*). He promised five lorry-loads of earth to members of a Village Four neighbourhood for building a ramp up to the main subdistrict road. Furthermore, he had two lorry-loads of laterite road-surfacing laid on the perennially flooded track to the Health Centre (donated by Sawat and Provincial Councillor Sanit, see Chapter Seven).

Prompted by *Kamnan* Chang, Han developed a highly effective strategy to bring in what I refer to as 'outside' voters - people who had voting rights, since their names were still on district registers, but who resided outside the subdistrict on a more or less permanent basis. To be successful this strategy required polling to be held when people were free to leave work and return to vote - that is, on a Sunday. Headman Nakun, probably for the same reason, was also concerned that polling should be on a Sunday. This arrangement was successfully requested from the district office by *Kamnan* Damrong, the BMA chairman. The official concerned demanded a bribe, understandably perhaps since officials and police would be working on what was normally a day off.[30] Polling was subsequently set for Sunday, 20 May.

For this strategy of bringing 'outsiders' to cast their votes, Han targeted the offspring of households in Villages Four and Five who worked in a limited number of textile factories in the vicinity of Bangkok (Rangsit). Shortly before polling Han sent out letters to these people inviting them to Ban Thung to vote. Transport was arranged but those who made their own way were reimbursed as well as paid for voting. Headman Nakun did not appear to have made any organised attempt to obtain the votes of 'outsiders'.

Both Han and Headman Nakun made use of "ghost votes" (*khanan phi*): that is, they registered the names of relatives onto existing household registers thereby giving them voting rights. It is unlikely that more than a handful of such votes were cast since the introduction of a large number of new names onto a household register would arouse suspicion and objections from the opposition.

Han's vote-buying was highly organised. He obtained copies of the electoral registers and used them to seek every available vote. Nakun also

---

[30]The 6,000 baht bribe was supposed to be met equally between the two candidates but Han settled both halves after Nakun refused to pay following his defeat.

obtained copies and probably used them in a similar way.[31] Money for the vote of every eligible family member was offered to the household head. The standard amount paid for each vote was 100 baht, but rose to 200 baht in areas such as Village Two where both factions competed for the same voters.

Generally, close kin and close friends are not offered money, their support is expected (cf. Ananya 1985:381). Friendly neighbours will be offered money, but if they refuse it, their refusal is taken to signify that they wish to give their support freely. On the other hand, where a vote-buyer suspects a villager's protestation that support is freely given, they may insist that their money is taken.

There are two ways in which money can be used to influence voting. People can be hired to cast their vote for a candidate - referred to in this account as 'vote-buying' - or, if they are deemed untrustworthy, they can be paid not to vote. The latter is accomplished by 'buying' the identity card, which is required to cast a vote, from the elector for the duration of polling. This will only be done if a villager's vote is seen as unreliable - if the opposition is seen to have such a strong claim on their loyalty that they could not be expected to vote 'correctly' if they are paid to vote. For example, one of Han's assistants, Tri, said he wanted to buy the votes of a Village Three family whom he regularly employed in his fields. These people are kin of Headman Nakun, but according to Tri, disliked him. Despite their antipathy to Nakun, Tri judged that he could neither trust nor ask them to vote for Han. Consequently he offered to 'buy' their identity cards for the duration of polling. They, incidentally, refused. Where the appropriate or 'correct' delivery of a vote is uncertain it is seen as best blocked.

As the above case illustrates, at least normatively, 'blood is thicker than water'. The morality of kinship demands that kinspersons put differences aside to support each other. This was expressed by one old man who regretted that his kin ties set him against his erstwhile friends: "I am on this side [so] I must help this side" he said. However, I was aware of several cases where people did not honour kin relations - for example, an employee of Han, while affinally related to Headman Nakun (he was Nakun's MZDS) assisted his employer's campaign.[32]

---

[31]The voting registers were pinned up at the two polling stations - one at Wat Lamu and one outside my door, at the Centre in Village Four. One night some men from Nakun's faction removed the registers from the Centre for a few hours, either to photocopy or study them.

[32]This can be compared with Ananya's comments on reported conflict entailed in *kamnan* elections: "Kinship ties were often cited as one of the most significant factors in deciding who to support. Nevertheless, one also heard frequent complaints against 'betraying' kinsmen and clients" (1985:381).

Some voters had links with both factions and did not wish to alienate either one. Two householders with whom I spoke said they overcome the problem by evenly dividing the number of votes in the household. This strategy seems a common solution to the predicament of such households in small communities: it has been practised among Chachoengsao villagers electing a *kamnan* (Ananya 1985:382), and among Burmese villagers electing a headman (Nash 1965:288)

People who received money from both factions while intending to vote only for one were vilified by vote-buyers and were said to 'grab a fish in each hand' (*jap pla song mu*). My impression was that relatively few people were opportunistic enough to do this voluntarily - villagers appeared to act as though receipt of a candidate's money entailed an obligation (which was expressed in moral terms) to reciprocate appropriately. However, some villagers were effectively forced to 'receive from two sides' (*rap song khang*). One woman who was a distant kinsperson of Headman Nakun (his MMZDD) wished to give her and her family's votes to Han, from whom she had already received payment. She told me that when Headman Pramoth asked her for her family's votes and was about to pay for them, she told him that he need not pay, implying that because she supported him, they would be given freely. Suspicious, Headman Pramoth reportedly challenged her claim to loyalty, saying "So you're not going to vote for my son then?". Her refusal was, correctly, taken to imply her opposition and, in the event, she felt obliged to accept his money to contradict this view.

At a premium for both factions was information about the views of villagers in different parts of the subdistrict. As mentioned in Chapter One, I was asked by Han to provide such information myself. The fact that I was asked reveals how little daily contact Han had with the majority of Ban Thung residents. A week before the election Han's men started to collect accurate assessments of the number of votes they could expect, making Han's attempts to obtain an intuitive grasp of the situation unnecessary. An aide went through Villages Four and Five counting the number of votes promised by each household. More accurate data was later gathered by vote-buyers (see below).

Han's attitude to buying votes was pragmatic. Before the election he had criticised the practice as "not good" (*may di*). But when he was persuaded, in one of the night-time 'insider' meetings at the Centre, that he would not stand a chance without vote-buying he employed the strategy effectively.[33] He was evidently concerned with the contradiction between his presentation of self as a morally

---

[33]Not all Han's assistants shared his flexibility. One of the former *kamnan's* deputies did not participate in vote-buying because, as he put it, he was "afraid of being corrupted" (*klua sia*).

inspired leader and the reality of his strategy. After returning from vote-buying one day he approvingly repeated, for my benefit, what a villager whose vote he had just bought told him. This man, who could be classed as poor, had referred to Han's vote-buying as "reciprocating by giving succour" (*top than hay khwam chun*). Han appeared to like the presentation of vote-buying as charity.

On account of his patronage activities, Han had expected not to have to pay for the votes of residents of Villages Four and Five. In the event, however, and to his disappointment, Han felt obliged to do so and canvassers went on to offer money to almost every household which had pledged support. The rationale for doing this derived from the fear that if individual residents of Villages Four and Five were not rewarded for their support they might defect to Nakun if he offered them money. They might resent the fact that Han was giving money to more marginal voters in other Villages but not to them. Thus, it was considered that Han could not assume that his patronage had created a sense of obligation strong enough to guarantee their support.

On 18 May, Han's vote brokers started vote-buying in earnest. I briefly observed a vote-buying team in action during the afternoon. Han's nephew, Jan, had parked his battered Land-Rover in the middle of a group of houses in Village Five. In the back were two crates of cheap alcohol. Jan, two of Han's assistants and Han's wife were canvassing and the former and one assistant had automatic pistols tucked into their belts, butts covered by shirt tails. Jan carried a photocopy of the Village Five voting register, a bundle of Han's canvassing posters and a thick roll of one-hundred baht notes. Probably on account of the large number of households he had to get through, Jan was methodical, brisk and efficient. Han's wife spent more time with people making personal appeals.

I observed the team canvass three households. At each household Jan read the names of listed eligible voters to the respondent, in all three cases the male household head. The householder was asked to confirm whether each person still lived at home and would be able to vote. As a rule, the person would then be offered money on behalf of each eligible voter. Jan wrote the amount of money given on behalf of each person onto his copy of the electoral register beside their name.

The occupants of the first household I saw canvassed were an old landless man and his wife. Two of their children worked in a Rangsit factory. The father confirmed that he could call his children back in time for polling, and that he would do so. He was given 100 baht for each of them, then, after claiming that this would not cover his children's expenses, received another 200 baht for them both.

He was given 200 baht for his and his wife's votes and so ended up with 600 baht. For good measure he was also given a bottle of alcohol when he requested one.

The second householder I observed being canvassed was a relatively wealthy man who ran a local pick-up bus service. Contrary to my expectation, he took the 300 baht offered him. This case, at least, contradicts the view that only the poor want and accept money to vote. The last householder I saw canvassed, a relatively rich farmer, vehemently refused the 500 baht offered for his household's five votes. He said he would certainly help Han, but did not want money. He and Han were affines (he was Han's WMZDH) and one of his sons had married the daughter of the former *kamnan's* deputy. His links with Han and the former *kamnan* meant that his refusal to receive money was accepted as a sign of wholehearted support.

VI.B.8. The Eve of Polling Day

Both factions distributed money feverishly throughout the day and late into the night of 19 May. Han's faction had covered every Village Five household the previous night. Because of the large number of remaining households the vote-buying team split up to visit Villages Three and Four. A few residents of Villages One and Two acted as vote brokers for Han in their neighbourhoods.

In the afternoon of the 19th *Kamnan* Chang made a lightly veiled appeal for support for Han. Speaking over the public-address system he advised villagers to "Choose a good person, someone who is going to develop the subdistrict, not someone who would take the subdistrict backwards (*thoy lang*)". Saying that he himself had ruled by "a system of repression" (*rabob prab pram*) he claimed that "era" (*samay*) had ended and that the new leader must be someone who "develops the subdistrict". It was obvious to the Nakun supporters with whom I sat at the time who the former *kamnan* was promoting.

On each of the last three nights before polling Han met with his 'inner circle' and staged vote-buying forays from the house of his brother in Village Three. Vote-buying in areas 'controlled' by Nakun was carried out at night. This was to minimise the risk of a confrontation between members of the different factions and to prevent those being canvassed from being exposed. Han's brother's house is set apart from other house clusters and is surrounded by thick vegetation such that people could come and go without being observed. I was present at the proceedings on the eve of election day.

During the night of 19 May men distributed money to areas as yet not penetrated, and discussed and decided upon strategies. Those present included:

Han's brother, his two nephews, a cousin, his two headman assistants, one of the former *kamnan's* deputies, two gunmen (*mu pun*) who acted as vote brokers as well as bodyguards (one is from Village Four and the other from Village Three but resides in a neighbouring subdistrict), and finally Han's burly brickyard foreman. The women of Han's brother's household provided food throughout the night and alcohol was freely available. Groups of these men repeatedly set off and returned throughout the night, distributing money and appealing to voters in different parts of the subdistrict. One pump-action shotgun circulated between the men and several had automatic pistols.

Outsiders arrived during the night to lend their support to Han. A Sino-Thai merchant who was a headman in the market town, and a close friend of Han, arrived bringing three automatic pistols which he distributed to Han's vote brokers. Two co-members of the BMA, Chalo and Headman Chalong, the Association secretary, arrived to give moral support. Chalo, having failed in his attempt to purchase his employees identity cards, agreed to stop his Village Two workers from voting by not allowing them to return during the day to vote.[34] Headman Chayan came but did nothing of practical significance.

One returning canvassing group brought Han unsettling news; *Kamnan* Bay was at that moment at Headman Nakun's campaign headquarters, which was based at Nakun's father-in-law's house in Village One. The implication was that *Kamnan* Bay was actively assisting Headman Nakun's campaign, furnishing funds as well as giving logistical advice. Furthermore, Han realised that he could no longer count on getting the votes of *Kamnan* Bay's 30 Village Three workers.

This prompted someone to appeal to *Kamnan* Chang, who, having taken a relatively back-stage role since Han became headman, was not present. The former *kamnan* was asked specifically to influence a handful of borderline Village One households, spoken of as being 'soft' (*on*), who were judged to "still respect" (*yang khawrop*) him. Returning from his foray, *Kamnan* Chang advised Han not to allow a group of eight Village Three residents to vote unless absolutely necessary. Han held their identity cards and had been about to tell a vote broker to return them to enable these individuals to vote. Instead, euphemistically, he was told to "knock them out" (*ti non*), and was told to tell them to "go fishing" (*pay ha pla*) for the day.

In the course of the evening a strategy was developed to provide Han with the polling results as votes were cast. To prevent ballot box 'stuffing' voters give

---

[34]This ploy failed, since his employees did not meet the pick-up truck sent to take them to work, as was usual.

their papers to an official who places them in the box. In this case, the two men with this responsibility were *kamnan* from two adjacent subdistricts. When approached that night they agreed to read the ballot papers and convey the results to Han. This information would enable Han to keep account of the poll margin between himself and Nakun. Han told me that if this were narrow he would do whatever was necessary to obtain the votes needed for victory - borderline voters, like those told to 'go fishing', would be called back to vote and anything up to 500 or 1,000 baht would be paid for votes.

As vote buyers returned, Han's cousin (MyBS), a headteacher in a neighbouring district, calculated the number of votes Han could expect. He had photocopies of voting registers for every Village except Village One. A tick beside a name signified that a vote had been promised. Figures beside the ticks indicated the amount given for each vote - either 100 or 200 baht. The total of promised votes in Village One had been forwarded by a local vote broker. Figures from all five Villages indicated that Han would receive 641 votes, a total which did not include votes expected from 'outside' eligible voters bussed in to vote, or the 10 percent Han's nephew reckoned would be lost in spoiled ballots. In the event Han received 647 votes. The total being only six more than anticipated; ballots received from outside residents and spoiled ballots appear to have cancelled each other out. This pre-polling evaluation was thus strikingly accurate, and illustrates just how thorough and effective Han's vote-procuring campaign was. It also signifies that the majority of recipients of Han's money voted as they had been paid to vote .

One of Han's vote brokers later estimated the total amount of vote-buying money spent at 83,000 baht. According to my informant 8,000 baht went to households in Village Five but much of this was allegedly later returned. Only about 5,000 baht went to Village Four; all the wealthier households on the east bank of the canal apparently refused money. A total of 70,000 baht was said to have been spent in the other three Villages. Thus, about 10 percent of funds went to Village Five, six percent to Village Four and the other 84 percent to the other three Villages. If these figures are accurate, and I could not verify them, then they show, as we could expect, that most resources were concentrated where Han had the weakest ties.

VI.B.9. May 20: Polling Day

Shortly after dawn, Han received the blessings of the district ecclesiastical governor (*jaw khana amphur*). Having been sprinkled with holy water, Han was told to pay obeisance to the Buddha images at four temples in Ban Thung and Ban

Say subdistricts to secure success. He visited the temples and pledged (*bon*) the powerful Buddha of one temple 'circles of dances' and a play (*lakon*) if it granted him victory.[35]

Polling took place in the temple halls (*sala*) of Wat Ban Thung and Wat Lamu. Three or four armed policemen, and about six district officials attended each polling station. Polling arrangements were identical in the two stations: an area was roped off surrounding some six voting booths and the ballot box. Voters showed their identity cards to officials seated at the entry point. When their details were checked against those on voting registers they were given a ballot paper. After marking the ballot paper, voters handed it to the person behind the box. A senior official sat directly in front of the ballot box. Observers representing each candidate were seated near him.

Han's faction went to every effort to ensure that all promised votes were delivered and were not spoiled. Transport was provided and late in the day Villages Four and Five were scoured for people who had not yet voted. The elderly among Han's supporters were briefly coached on how and where to mark the ballot paper. A few sample papers had been obtained and each vehicle on the way to the polling station drew up to instruct the elderly among its occupants how to mark it. Every vote was seen to count.

For those not closely involved, polling was a festive occasion and provided an excuse to dress up. Some supporters of Han resident in Village Four made no effort to hide their allegiance. For example, the owner of the noodle stall opposite the *sala* called people to eat bowls of noodles (*kwiteaw*) with the cry "Free if you've voted for No.2, pay if you voted for No.1". She had been given money by Han to pay for the ingredients.

Han's strategy to gain a running total of votes was highly effective. Ballot papers at Wat Ban Thung were easy to read: officials had cut them, leaving only two rather than a dozen or so empty boxes, in an attempt to reduce the number of spoiled votes. The previous night a code had been arranged between Han's faction and the *kamnan* behind the ballot box. The latter rubbed his face or hair with his right hand if a vote had been cast for Han. He did nothing if a vote had been for Headman Nakun. Two people at the back of the temple hall noted the number of votes cast for Han. Other core faction members aware of the code sat around the

---

[35]At least one woman thought supernatural forces had contributed to Han's success. The owner of the noodle stall opposite Wat Ban Thung claimed that the district official overseeing voting there had told her that many people intending to vote for Headman Nakun had, despite themselves, been guided to put a mark beside Han's. She explained this as resulting from Han's "goodness" (*khwam di*) and the fact that the local Buddhas which he had supplicated were acting for him.

hall observing with interest who had and who had not voted for Han. This strategy exposed in particular those who, having received his money, did not vote for Han.[36]

The practice at Wat Lamu was not quite as successful for Han. Here ballot papers had not been cut, making it more difficult to surreptitiously read votes. I observed the *kamnan* behind the ballot box quite obviously, and without attempt to disguise his actions, opening up the ballot papers, reading them and then noting the result. He was stopped late in the morning, after most polls had been cast, when Headman Tim complained. No action was taken, however, besides telling the *kamnan* to stop. The official in charge later told me it was unnecessary to stop the *kamnan* because the results he was compiling were for gambling purposes, and that he could not affect the results anyway. An informant suggested that the official had not acted because he and this *kamnan* were "from the same group" (*phuak diaw kan*).

In the course of polling, members of Han's faction discovered that the voting registers for Villages Four and Five had been altered to their disadvantage. Several individuals, and some entire households were not permitted to vote because information on their identity cards and on the register did not correspond.[37] Apparently these changes had been introduced when the register had been re-typed to accommodate legitimate alterations some two weeks previously. The District Officer eventually allowed these people to vote after they produced their household registers (*thabian ban*), and Han lost only a handful of votes. Han later discovered that Headman Nakun had bribed an official for 3,000 baht to make the changes.

Throughout the day outsiders arrived out of curiosity, to gamble, or to lend their moral support to Han or Nakun.[38] *Kamnan* Bay arrived and spoke mainly to Headman Nakun. Han received visits from the two BMA members and headman friend who had appeared the previous night, as well as Provincial Councillor Sanit, Sawat (see Chapter Seven) and a third BMA member.

By midday, on account of his 'informal' ballot count, Han was confident of success. To avoid the possibility of a violent confrontation he left Wat Ban Thung

---

[36]Although I heard faction members comment angrily when they saw people who had received Han's money vote for Nakun, I do not think that retaliatory action was taken against them, at least not in terms of physical violence.

[37]The changes were only small but enough to prevent people voting - a 'Mr' became 'Mrs' (*Nay* into *Nang*) for example, or a letter or two was changed in a name.

[38]The results of the election had been subject to intense gambling for several weeks. At this point the most common odds were five-to-four in favour of Han winning.

polling station before votes were counted. He subsequently did not enter the subdistrict in daylight for several days, and even then was accompanied by his brickyard foreman who 'rode shotgun'. Han also carried a gun as was now his right.

At exactly 3 P.M. voting was stopped and ballots were counted. The policemen, who had been sleeping in the abbot's quarters, were roused. Ballots were tallied in full view of everyone, giving no opportunity for cheating. Voting papers were taken out of the box, the vote shouted out, and the paper handed to another official who checked it under the eyes of observers from both factions. Tallies were marked onto a blackboard. Villagers crowded round, supporters of both candidates standing apart in groups. Soon after the count, the results from Wat Lamu polling station came in over a policeman's radio. Han won by a total of 110 votes, obtaining 641 against Headman Nakun's 531 votes. Han received 34 percent of votes in Polling Station One and 74 percent in Polling Station Two.

Table 6.1: *Kamnan* Election Results in Ban Thung, 20 May 1990

	Polling Station					
	No.1: Wat Lamu - Village Nos. 1 & 2		No.2: Wat Ban Thung - Village Nos.3,4 & 5			
Candidate	No.	%	No.	%	Total	%
H. Nakun	373	66	158	26	531	45
Han	196	34	445	74	641	55
Total	569	100	603	100	1,172	100
Spoiled	43		40		83 (7%)	

VI.C. Subsequent Developments, Han as *Kamnan*, and Motives

The section below firstly traces the consequences of the election with respect to subdistrict factionalism. It then examines the leadership role played by *Kamnan* Han then asks why his campaign, as opposed to that of Headman Nakun's was successful. Finally, an attempt is made to explain *Kamnan* Han's motives for seeking office. Firstly, however, there is a comment on Han's assumption of office.

As soon as Han became *kamnan,* villagers and fellow BMA members addressed him as *'Kamnan* Han' and, if of inferior status, greeted him deferentially with a *wai.* I could detect no irony in the behaviour of these people, who would all have been aware that Han had used illegal means in his efforts to obtain the

position. Han also started referring to himself in the third person as *kamnan*. These observations signify that the status associated with office fixes to the incumbent automatically and instantly. Of course, this does not mean that people privately esteemed Han any more than previously. Han was officially invested with office at the next district meeting. In front of the assembly of officeholders the District Officer fixed the epaulettes onto his new uniform.

It is perhaps not surprising to discover that factionalism generated by the election continued to influence social relations in Ban Thung for some time after the cause of the conflict had receded. Supporters of the opposing candidates remained polarised; core faction members held villagers' voting behaviour against them, and headmen would not cooperate in the administration of the subdistrict.[39]

Residents from the north and south of the subdistrict no longer communicated. As one mature Village Four woman mused, "before the election we would greet each other in the bus to market, now people don't talk to each other". Some villagers expressed puzzlement and sorrow that years of friendly relations with subdistrict leaders had been wiped out by their voting behaviour. A Village Two woman lamented that Headman Tim had refused to attend her son's ordination because she had not supported his son-in-law. Headman Tim also refused to attend an ordination party hosted by a former friend from Village Five. Whilst attending to guests at his feast, the man repeatedly returned to the table at which I sat, and, with tears in his eyes, repeated with disbelief that Headman Tim had refused to come. People were surprised that *kan muang*, politics, had carried over into daily life.

In similar fashion, members of Han's faction held villagers' voting behaviour against them. One of Han's assistants told me he had not attended two ordinations to which he had been invited which were hosted by residents of the southern end of the subdistrict. Nor would he subsequently hire a family of Village Three labourers because they had voted for Headman Nakun, he said.

Neither Headmen Tim nor Headman Nakun subsequently cooperated with Han in the administration of the subdistrict. Headman Nakun made his first appearance at a subdistrict meeting seven months after polling, but otherwise both he and his father-in-law did not cooperate with Han's administration. The impasse was such that a visiting district official once appealed, in a subdistrict meeting, for

---

[39]This was also the result of electoral competition at subdistrict and Village levels in Ananya's Chachaengsao fieldsite, where elections "led many candidates and some *hua khanaen* [sic] to turn into irreconcilable enemies". Similarly, rivalry "was said to destroy the unity of the local community as it tended to divide the villagers into factions" (1985:380).

an end to factionalism. The abbot of Wat Ban Thung once dedicated a sermon to an appeal for subdistrict leaders to put their differences behind them.

VI.C.1. Han as Kamnan

The broadcast of the former *kamnan* on the eve of polling contained an element of truth: with Han's assumption of office, the 'era of repression' in Ban Thung had been succeeded by an 'era of development'. Han did not have the 'personal power' (*amnat nay tua*) of the former *kamnan*, but derived authority primarily from his status as a government servant: he performed a duty (*tham natthi*), and his duty - as he saw it - was primarily as an agent of 'development'. His idea of the latter was informed by official notions, which tend to amount to the introduction of urban infrastructure and lifestyle to rural areas (Hirsch 1990:13). Initially, at least, Han made token attempts to facilitate villagers' participation in the formulation of development plans. For example, in two subdistrict meetings (an institution he maintained) he asked villagers to vote on which of several development projects they wished him to pursue in the Five Year Rural Employment Scheme (*ko so cho*). While this represents somewhat limited participation, even if decision-making power had genuinely been devolved such that villagers were asked to propose their own schemes for example, the result would have favoured some neighbourhoods over others because of continued factionalism. Since supporters of Headmen Nakun and Tim tended not to attend subdistrict meetings, the projects which villagers elected benefited those neighbourhoods in which Han's supporters resided. As it turned out, however, villagers' desires were ignored anyway: the projects were selected by Han's subdistrict council, which, again, his political opponents did not attend.

Further indications that Han drew his authority primarily from his role as a state servant derive from examining the conduct of subdistrict meetings. Essentially, use of space at these meetings replicated that at district meetings - speakers representing the local branches of the district administration faced villagers from behind a table, addressing them from a microphone. Communication was one-way, dialogue was not encouraged; villagers were spoken to and told information (see Hirsch 1990:193). Perhaps, understandably, given their many years under *Kamnan* Chang, some villagers were bemused by the fact that Han asked them to vote on decisions , and some took his doing so as a sign of weakness.

VI.C.2. Explaining Han's Victory

One could possibly summarise the events described in this Chapter in one sentence: a Sino-Thai capitalist brickyard owner obtained office in a subdistrict with which he had minimal links, and in the face of local opposition, by using his wealth and relations with influential district personages and some representatives of the subdistrict upper stratum. One could elaborate by saying that his status as a major employer of local labour, his access to capital, and his ability to obtain the assistance of fellow brickyard owners guaranteed him success. To some extent this is an accurate representation, but it does fail to draw attention to all the finer points of the contest and it could lead to some false assumptions. For example, it would be a mistake to assume that if Han had not been interposed, or interposed himself, the successful candidate would have been any more representative of the majority of villagers in terms of economic and social status than Han himself. Headman Nakun was no more likely to have served the interests of the average villager than Han. Such a summary also skates over Han's attempts to cultivate legitimacy and demonstrate his suitability to the electorate - efforts that reveal that in his view, at least, vote-buying alone does not secure office. This said, the summary draws attention to some of the most significant elements of this case study: that Han is the owner of a capitalist brickyard and that access to capital was a *sine qua non* of contesting the election.

Kinship links were an important, though not predominant, factor in Han's campaign. Han was perceived by Ban Thung residents as an 'outsider' prior to his campaign. Not only had he not resided in the subdistrict for 18 years, but in the minds of most villagers he was representative of the wealthy town-dwelling merchants. Moreover, because his Chinese and Sino-Thai parents and a maternal uncle had moved into the subdistrict he had very few consanguineal relatives. However, since he and three consanguines had married into local families, he was able to draw on a larger number of affinal links for support - links which were occasionally contested by Headman Nakun's faction. It should be evident then that Han did not obtain victory on the basis of an extensive kin network. Votes were mobilised along the lines of kinship, but other factors were equally, if not more, important.

Any attempt to rank the importance of different factors explaining Han's victory is bound to be speculative. But, perhaps the greatest advantage Han had was the active support of the former *kamnan*. *Kamnan* Chang recommended Han to the electorate - sometimes coercively, and threateningly, sometimes drawing on the respect he still commanded. Without the former *kamnan's* support Han would probably never have obtained office as headman of Village Four.

Secondly, Han's strategic vote-getting arrangements appear far superior to those of Nakun. As the account of Han's sophisticated campaign reveals, every last vote was valued and every vote was monitored. 'Borderline' voters were disenfranchised, and perhaps most significantly in terms of ballots obtained, steps were taken to acquire the support of eligible voters who resided outside the subdistrict. An informant with access to Nakun's campaign considered that his defeat resulted largely from his failure to take similar steps to Han with respect to 'outsider' voters. My attempt below to quantify the impact on polling results of 'outsider' voters reveals that they made a significant though not decisive difference. Table 6.3 shows that a total of 141 votes were cast by individuals not physically resident in the subdistrict. Twice as many 'outsider' votes (94 as opposed to 47) were cast at Wat Ban Thung as at Wat Lamu. While it is obviously impossible to know exactly for whom these 'outsider' votes were cast, an approximation can be obtained by assuming they were distributed in the same ratio as the ballot results in each polling station. Since 75 percent of votes in Polling Station No.2 (Wat Ban Thung) were for Han we can assume that a similar proportion of 'outsider' votes were cast for him (70 of 94). Accordingly he would have gained only 16 (34 percent of 47) 'outsider' votes from Polling Station No.1, giving him a total of 86 'outsider' votes. Nakun would have received a total of approximately 55 'outsider' votes (66 percent of the 47 at Polling Station No.1 and 26 percent of 94 votes at Polling Station No.2). These figures are only informed estimates: they do not take account of spoiled votes nor the fact that some of these 'outsider' ballots would have been from 'ghost voters'. At the very most 86 of Han's 110 majority were from 'outsider' voters.

Table 6.2: *Kamnan* election results and 'outsider' voters

	Polling Station No.1	Polling Station No.2	Total
No. votes cast	612	643	1,255
No. eligible resident voters	565	549	1,114
No. outsider voters	47	94	141

Thirdly, Han's general legitimising strategy was effective in predisposing some among the electorate toward him. His status as wealthy businessman and employer was advantageous insofar as it enabled him to demonstrate that he had resources which could be put at the disposal of the subdistrict, and equally importantly, that he had contacts with other influential figures who could 'help' the subdistrict. Han was also well-regarded and tacitly supported by the influential abbot of Wat Ban Thung. This contributed to his ability to portray himself as a suitable potential *kamnan.* Finally, and this was not unimportant, his reputation was not tarnished by a record of malpractice, as was that of Headman Nakun.

VI.C.3. Kamnan *Han's Motives*

A materialist interpretation of Han's motives for desiring office would claim that Han wanted access to potential economic gains which incumbency would give - these may be legal or illegal. A cultural interpretation would assert that Han was motivated by desire for the social identity associated with office: the prestige, status and power awarded by office were ends in themselves. My comments below suggest interpretations of these kinds are not mutually exclusive but that Han was motivated by a combination of material and culturally structured goals.

When I met *Kamnan* Han a couple of days after the election he spoke of his victory in a rather curious way. Mainstream Thai religious ideology states that people have positions of authority because of merit earned from past lives (see Hanks 1962), thus by definition all officeholders 'have merit' (*mi bun*). However, Han told me:

> I think I would have merit if I hadn't been elected as *kamnan*. To be *kamnan* means that my fate has caught up with me. It appears that in my former life I used other people, and now in this life my lot is to serve others.[40]

His statement does two things. Firstly, it tells the listener that as *kamnan* he will be dedicated to serving others - that is, he dispels any assumption that he will use office to serve his own interests, a familiar theme in his discourse. Secondly, paradoxically, it reminds the listener that, indeed, he must have merit to have obtained office and it thus serves to assert the legitimacy of his incumbency. Just as the ritual reversal of norms may have the effect of reaffirming them, so Han's negation of official discourse concerning merit and authority informs the listener that he must indeed possess office on account of merit from a past life. Han repeated his statement to at least one other person. I would suggest that Han himself was a member of the audience for this argument: he used it to help establish his legitimacy in his own mind.

To my knowledge, since gaining office *Kamnan* Han has not attempted to recoup his campaign expenditure by exploiting his position illegally (appropriating percentages of development grants and so forth). This is not so surprising when one realises that the sums he could make from graft are relatively small in comparison to his income from brick manufacture. The reader, especially one familiar with the general record of local officeholders, may consider that I am being extremely naive in asserting this. Why would the operator of a capitalist concern spend upwards of 80,000 baht on vote-buying, not to mention other campaign expenses, without expectation of return? I would suggest that Han aspired toward cultivating a reputation as an exemplary developer-*kamnan,* in the image of the incumbent BMA chairman, *Kamnan* Damrong. Petty abuse of office would be beneath him, and would detract from his dignity. The material rewards of office are more subtly obtained, than straightforward graft (see below), but even these, I would suggest, are not what drove Han to obtain office. In my view, and that of a few key informants, Han was motivated by the prestige and status (*kiat yot*) office awarded. It seemed that he sought recognition not so much from villagers but from fellow BMA members and district worthies in general.[41] By becoming *kamnan,* Han attained the same rank as the most influential members of the BMA,

---

[40]*Phom khit wa pen bun tha may day pen kamnan. Tha pen, ko mi wen. Sadang wa nay chat kon raw chay khon un pay, le chat ni raw tong rap chay.*

[41]Han's status was subsequently affirmed in a rather novel way. He was asked to participate in a fund-raising scheme by the district high school sports department. By sponsoring the purchase of football shirts for one of the teams, he could get his name, status and subdistrict name emblazoned on the shirt.

the chairman and vice-chairman. To be *kamnan* was an end in itself: it is a position of power.

As owner of a brickyard, office may facilitate capital accumulation for Han in any of a number of legal ways. It may enhance opportunities to develop advantageous business contacts, it may enable him to limit the impact of legal and illegal demands made by the state, and it may give access to and some control over labour.

Office as *kamnan* would give Han prestige when dealing with others in a commercial capacity, in particular raw material suppliers and buyers. This might translate into greater access to credit and more reliable markets. His brickyard might attain some renown. This was clearly something that concerned Han: some six weeks before polling he had told me he wanted his sons to inherit the enterprise with the words '*Kamnan* Han' inscribed above the entrance.

As a wealthy *kamnan,* Han would have greater access to officialdom than was previously the case. He would be able to use contacts within the district office to (illegally) minimise the effect of legislation which might cut into his profits. For example, he could more easily get around enforcement of labour legislation and taxation with the cooperation of 'helpful' officials. His status as a government servant would allow him greater opportunity to establish 'mutually helpful' relations with other representatives of the state.

Office gives Han access to a ready supply of workers at a time when one of the chief limits on productivity was a shortage of labour (see Chapter Five). As *Kamnan* he cannot in any way force residents to work for him, but his position makes him a first choice for villagers seeking such employment. The size of his labour force and his productive capacity steadily increased subsequent to his election: and he increased the capacity of his brickyard from four to six extruders shortly afterwards. In December 1990 I observed three Village Two women approach *Kamnan* Han at his brickyard asking for work on behalf of themselves and seven others. Some Village Four women, and other people who had formerly worked at Ray's brickyard joined Han's yard shortly after his assumption of office. Han was able to use his position to recruit villagers, as the following speech, which Han gave in a subdistrict meeting six months after gaining office, attests. Han began by saying that as a householder he knew how expensive foodstuffs were, and went on to note that the harvests would be bad that year (on account of pest infestation) such that little money could be earned from harvesting. The surrounding brickyards, he said, fed hundreds of thousands of baht in wages into the local communities each month. He then suggested that villagers try working, or advise their children to work, in a brickyard. He suggested that they try his own

brickyard. They would, he said, come out with many tens of baht remaining from their wages.

VI.D. Concluding Remarks

This Chapter has described how the owner of a capitalist brickyard, a relative outsider in terms of residence, socio-economic status and ethnic identity, obtained the position of *kamnan* in one of the study subdistricts. The account demonstrated that while his ability to obtain office owed much to his status as a capitalist brickyard owner, to cite this as the reason for his success is to present only a partial account. Legitimising strategies and the support of key local figures were also important. The account traced the ways in which electoral support is mobilised at the local level, and described the emergence of subdistrict factionalism. The following Chapter describes how Ban Thung subdistrict residents were mobilised to provide electoral support for candidates contesting office at the district level. In so doing, Chapter Seven provides an opportunity to observe the formation of a clientelist political structure.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISTRICT ELECTORAL POLITICS: PROVINCIAL COUNCILLOR ELECTIONS

> The practice of using money to buy votes, without regard for the nation's laws, has spread epidemic-like down to local elections. It has spread throughout the country like fire spreads through a field....The power of the country will fall into the hands of capitalists whose supporters are local 'dark powers'. The democratic platform will become dominated by economic power and vested interests (Editorial, *Thai Rath*, 28 October 1990).

Like Chapter Six, the core of this Chapter comprises a case study and commentary. In view of the paucity of the literature on Thai district electoral politics, the description is extended and fairly comprehensive. It complements the portrait of subdistrict electoral politics presented in Chapter Six in at least two ways. Firstly, the case study allows us to examine the realities of local democracy at a level higher than the subdistrict level. Provincial councils are forums for local government and are charged with meeting the needs of subdistricts and districts which comprise the province. This mirrors the role of the subdistrict council, which putatively serves the needs of residents in composite villages.[1] The Chapter thus broadens our understanding of the practices underlying the rhetoric of political democracy at the wider levels of the district and province. Secondly, the case study provides an opportunity to view the mobilisation of a rural electorate by local leaders on behalf of higher level politicians. That is, it reveals the clientelist nature of representative politics in the Thai political system. The Chapter begins by outlining the ideal role and actual performance of councils and councillors and proceeds to examine electioneering in Ban Thung subdistrict and Banglen district as a whole.

---

[1]However, there is an important difference between *kamnan* and provincial councillors, and subdistrict councils and provincial councils. Unlike provincial councillors, *kamnan* are part of the central government administrative system, not the Provincial Administrative Organisation (PAO).

VII.A. Provincial Councils and Councillors

Provincial councils (*sapha jangwat*) were established in 1933, soon after the abolition of the absolute monarchy in 1932. Initially, provincial councils had only a consultative role (Riggs 1966:186-187), but the Provincial Administrative Act of 1955 Act made them part of the Provincial Administrative Organisation (PAO, *ongkan borihan suan jangwat*), granting them a measure of autonomy and control over provincial budgets. While each province is under the direct control of central government through the provincial governor, local government in the form of the PAO is an attempt to decentralise power. The PAO consists of the provincial council and the provincial governor. Council members, representing individual districts, are elected every five years. The provincial council is charged with policy formulation, supervision of the general administration of the province, passing legislation and approving the provincial budget (Ministry of Interior 1958:6). It has other miscellaneous responsibilities, mainly relating to the provision of services within the province.

However, partly because of constraints imposed by central government, provincial councils have not been able to fulfil their original role. The state's attempt to 'democratize' government has been largely rhetorical:

> ...since the central government maintains a high degree of control over the procedural and law-making functions of local government, the council has been of limited effectiveness (Neher 1979:214).

The personnel running the PAO are completely under the control of central and provincial governments such that Likhit (1985:438) considers that the provincial council "although elected by the people is but window dressing": "At best it is a consulting body that plays an insignificant role in local government". The autonomy of the organisation is further restricted by the financial control the central government holds over it:

> The central government has continued to provide government subsidies to the provincial authorities and in so doing has been able to determine the carrying out of certain programs. The tax structure of the provinces is not yet broad enough to obtain the funds needed to administer the province without central government subsidies (Neher 1974:13).

Statements of intent to decentralize power to provincial bodies have been made recently by governments of the day (see, for example, Thongsri 1984:84-87 and NESDB 1992:128). However, in all likelihood the limitations on the performance of councils remain as they were in the early 1970s. Turton, for example, implies

that the most significant activity performed by councils relates to their role in deciding the use of budgets in the locality (1989b:86).

Quite apart from the restrictions imposed on provincial councils by the state, the indications are that councils do not represent the interests of constituencies so much as the private interests of representatives. For example, Murishima has noted that the incumbent provincial assembly in Nakhon Sawan "was primarily interested in maintaining its own vested interests and not in drawing up and executing policy" (1987:384). This is probably the case for the vast majority of councils, and certainly represents the *status quo* in Chachoengsao province, as recently researched by Michael Nelson (personal communication, 1992).

Notwithstanding the reality of the way provincial councils operate, the state designates councillors the role of "the peoples' representative" (*tua thąn prachachon*), (Ministry of Interior 1990:29). Provincial councillors are supposed to promote the development (*khwam phatthana*) of their districts by taking up the needs of the electorate, as the following excerpt from a Ministry of Interior journal declares:

> Provincial councillors will have a support base among the electorate. Therefore, there is no evading the necessity for provincial councillors to listen to the needs of the people and attempt to solve their problems. By listening to the needs of the people, the provincial councillor can propose development programmes (1990:33)(My translation).

As part of their representative role, councillors are theoretically empowered to examine the use the District Officer makes of those development funds derived from local taxes (Ministry of Interior 1990:34). A council may meet three or four times a year, at which time the provincial governor may be questioned. It is probably rare for a councillor to use this power, since both parties are likely to cooperate in abuse of such funds, although one unsuccessful candidate, in the case study below, did promise to do so whilst campaigning. One can note at this point that all the case study candidates played up their commitment to 'development' - that is, they presented themselves as committed to securing grants for local infrastructural development.

Turning from councils to councillors, Turton has noted (1984:32) that a typical provincial councillor may run a contracting business,[2] an observation which

---

[2]For example, a provincial councillor in Ananya's research district won public contracts "ranging from road building to the supplying of desks and chairs for government schools" while another was reputed to use less than the contracted amount of road surfacing

applies to incumbent and outgoing officeholders in Banglen. Provincial councillors, unlike *kamnan* and headmen, receive a stipend for expenses, not a salary. This stipend cannot in any way compensate a successful candidate for the vast sums spent on obtaining office and should not be considered an incentive for candidates. Rewards are unofficial.

Typically, unless they simply sub-contract all work, contractors own the resources necessary to undertake construction projects. That is, they will be in possession of capital, heavy machinery (dump trucks, excavators, levellers and so on) and perhaps also building materials as well as labour. Councillor-contractors obtain funds either by gaining contracts or by simply demanding percentages from local development budgets.

Council members are able to exclude outsiders from bidding for contracts and thereby allocate contracts among themselves.[3] When a provincial councillor gains a grant for his district he can either do the job himself, or sell the contract on. Councillors also benefit from grants allocated to subdistrict councils. They may either extract a percentage or demand contracts where they are able to influence the allocation of grants.

If a councillor executes a project he effectively decides how much of the grant he will appropriate. As one informant noted, "It depends on him how much he 'eats' (*kin*)". It is unlikely, however, that 'eating' will be indiscriminate: the provincial councillor will consider his voting base - probably rewarding those who comprise it and penalising others. Several informants claimed to expect provincial councillors to 'eat' some of the grants which come their way, since they do not receive a salary and deserve remuneration for their services. The issue was not whether or not a contractor 'eats', but how much and to whose direct disadvantage.

As Turton has noted, provincial councillors "are often drawn from commercial, bureaucratic, and to a lesser degree landowning interest groups" (1984:32), an observation largely shared by Murashima, and one true of the present case study.[4] 'Vote brokers' or 'bosses' (*hua khanan, hua khanaen*), as Turton

---

material on local roads (1985:377). Michael Nelson (personal communication) has noted that provincial councils are often dubbed as 'contractors' council' (*sapha phu rap maw*)

[3]For example, the provincial council in Nakhon Sawan province operated "corrupt bidding practices" in the process of implementing the school construction programme (Murashima 1987:384). Incidentally, when the provincial governor attempted to intervene, councillors called on their political patrons in the national assembly and he was transferred.

[4]"The membership of local representative councils and assemblies is composed mainly of wealthy, urban merchants and businessmen; large land owners are not present" (Murashima 1987:384).

remarks, may be local commercial agents (see Preecha 1980:216-219 for an example), and may spend personal funds of a million baht and more on campaigning (Turton 1984:32). A 'composite profile' of a provincial councillor, has been drawn by Turton, an exercise which "if unorthodox suits the unorthodoxy of the realities" (1984:32). The match between this profile and those of the successful Banglen candidates is strong:

> He is a Provincial Assembly representative, owns a transport company, and is involved in sales of agricultural inputs, and in construction work of all kinds.. .He has various district and subdistrict officials 'in his pocket'. He receives the provincial budgets for his 'territory', from which he may take a percentage before passing it on and subsequently profiting from contracts. He is a member of the local branch of Rotary, Lions or Jaycee etc....He or his subordinates are likely to have 'gun hands' (*mü pün*) to do their dirty work for them. So he is involved in both capitalist activity and primitive accumulation, with much use of extra-economic coercion (Turton 1984:32).

In the case study below, the successful candidates are merchant-contractors, and hold socially eminent positions. When it came to eliminating a competing candidate, one of the successful candidates was prepared to do his 'dirty work' himself.

VII.B. The Candidates

The following five candidates stood for election in the provincial councillor election of Banglen in October 1990. There are 32 members of the Ayutthaya provincial council and Banglen district is represented by two seats - giving each member of the electorate two votes. According to district office records there were 23,491 eligible voters at the time of elections. Candidates are identified by name (pseudonyms) and the numbers they were given when registering their candidacy, a form of reference often used by the electorate.

Candidate No.1, Yongyut. He was provincial councillor for two terms (1980-1985, 1985-1990). He owns a small-scale contracting business but was said to subcontract out a good deal of work. He is an employee of the national electricity company and a resident of Ban Dong subdistrict.

Candidate No.2, Sanit. He was provincial councillor for one term (1985-1990), and was now standing jointly with his brother-in-law (eZH), candidate No.3. He is Sino-Thai, aged 35, and married. He owns the largest food store in Banglen town, where he also lives, and owns a share of candidate No.3's business. At the time of the elections he was the director of the Board of Governors of the district high school.

Candidate No.3, Sawat. He resigned from the position of director of the Municipal District Council (*sukhaphiban*) in order to submit his candidacy. He had been a sergeant (*ja*) in Banglen police station and still retains intimate, high-level contacts with district police. He is aged 38, is Sino-Thai, and is married to the sister of Sanit (candidate No.2) and is resident in Banglen town. He owns the only building materials store (up to 1990), and the largest contracting business in the district. He sits on the Board of Governors of the district high school and replaced his brother-in-law as director late in 1990.

Candidate No.4, Chit. He is aged 28, ethnically Thai, and received tertiary education. He owns a mechanised brick factory, employing migrant labourers, and a coach which he hires out to a large Japanese factory in the province. He is a member of the Brick Manufacturers' Association and owns 60 *rai* in Ban Dong subdistrict, where he lives. He had never held office before.

Candidate No.5, Chalem. He too had never held office. Although born in Ban Thung he did not canvass there and appeared unofficially to withdraw his candidacy some time before polling. It was rumoured that he stood for election only in order to be bribed to stand down. He won only 0.3 percent of all votes in the district and does not feature in the following account.

Below, the focus is on the campaigns of candidates No.2, No.3 and No.4. Candidates No.2 and No.3 obtained office, trailed closely by candidate No.4. I had no access to Candidate No.1's campaign and he did not canvass heavily in Ban Thung or Ban Say. The most intense competition was between the three candidates mentioned.

VII.C. Preliminary Electioneering

VII.C.1. Candidates No.2 and No.3

Sanit (No.2) had become provincial councillor by virtue of his father's efforts. His father had been a large merchant and a headman presiding over the market area. He had used his contacts throughout the district to gain support for his son.[5] Sanit himself was generally unpopular: he was widely perceived to have spent the last five years in office single-mindedly serving his own interests. Several informants considered it unlikely that he would manage to be re-elected because of

---

[5]Much as Preecha describes a trader doing for his son in Wang Thong district, Phitsanulok province (1980:217).

this. Perhaps because he was aware of such judgements, as early as February 1990 he was assiduously attending all parties and events (*ngan*) to which he was invited, in all likelihood making generous cash contributions (*chuay ngan*). He told me at one such party in Ban Thung that he had already been to 13 that day: he was probably not exaggerating.[6]

Sawat (No.3) had never been a candidate for the district council before. Like his running-mate he began canvassing some time in advance of the election. Sanit and Sawat are friends of *Kamnan* Han of Ban Thung and, as was indicated in Chapter Six, had given him their moral and some practical support during his election campaign. Now Han supported their campaign in Ban Thung by speaking on their behalf and by giving them both opportunities to present themselves to villagers as generous and capable patrons. For example, early in January 1990, with Han's permission, Sawat distributed blankets to elderly villagers in the subdistrict. In September *Kamnan* Han publicly signified his support for Sawat by bringing him to Wat Ban Thung to make merit. On this occasion Sawat gave 500 baht to the temple and his donation was announced over the temple public-address system. Not long afterwards, Sawat was a sponsor of Ban Thung celebrations for the Queen Mother's birthday, donating 3,000 baht to offset the cost of refreshments. Again, this contribution was announced to the congregation at the accompanying merit-making ceremony. In the first week of October, Sawat went through Ban Thung distributing canvassing cards, giving betel nut to the elderly and *wai-ing* them.

In mid-October Ban Thung suffered severe and sudden flooding. Sanit helped *Kamnan* Han obtain permission to open a sluice gate in another district to reduce flooding in Ban Thung. This assistance was publicised over the public-address system by one of Han's assistants and was later used by Han himself to gain support for Sanit (see below).

Canvassing cards of these two candidates were widely distributed. Photographs of the candidates, decked out in the uniforms of their previous positions, appear on the front along with their names and candidacy numbers. The back of the card has a 'fate calendar' (*yam ubakong*), identifying auspicious and inauspicious times for new undertakings, and the words: "The sincere people - the development group - volunteering to work for the locality" (*khon jingjay - fay phatthana - asathamkan phua thongthin*). Billboards advertising the pair were

---

[6]Ananya has noted that candidates in general elections may attend 30 to 40 functions in a single day (1992).

erected in Banglen town and one was put up opposite Wat Ban Thung, in which several of their posters had been stapled.

VII.C.2. Candidate No.4

It should be noted that Chit's candidacy was not proposed by the BMA leadership; he was not an 'official' representative, as such, but had submitted himself independently. He attempted to obtain the backing of the Association's leadership and other members. To this end he twice gave the BMA free use of his coach and driver: once for the BMA annual weekend holiday, and once to take members to an ordination hosted by an important Chonburi brick merchant. He first announced his candidacy and made an appeal for support to the BMA *en route* to the holiday resort in April 1990. He repeated his request for support at the BMA meeting of 5 October. At this occasion, the chairman announced Chit's candidacy and reminded members of the favours which he had done for the Association. Chit was given the floor and, in a few rather mumbled words, asked for members' help.

I interviewed Chit at his brickyard towards the end of July. When I first asked him whether he would be buying votes he claimed he did not intend to because to do so would oblige him to recoup his expenses once in office, and he wished to avoid putting himself in such a position. When I expressed disbelief that he would consider competing without being prepared to buy votes, he admitted he was prepared to spend between 200,000 and 300,000 baht. He considered, however, that he would obtain the bulk of his votes from the support of influential district officials. Firstly, his elder brother had recently been district head of primary education, retaining links with his successor and senior officials from other departments. Secondly, Chit claimed to receive support from the head of district health services, his close friend. He expected these contacts to put pressure on their subordinates (teachers and health workers in individual subdistricts) to, in turn, influence villagers.

Chit's strategist was his friend and fellow brickyard operator, Ot. In an interview in July, Ot commented that Chit's support base was weak and his chances of success slim. Shortly after this conversation he began actively backing Chit by giving advice and campaign funds. Ot had vast resources at his disposal, he valued his assets at 20 million baht in 1990, and was politically extremely shrewd. He had helped mastermind the BMA vice-chairman's successful campaign to become a *kamnan* a few years earlier.

VII.D. National Politicians and the Elections

National politicians participated in the provincial election campaign to maintain and extend their voting bases in the district, as they had done in the Ban Thung *kamnan* election. Both incumbent councillors had acted as vote brokers for Col. Narong Kittikachorn in the 1988 National Assembly elections. In this his first campaign, Sawat put himself under the political wing of the Communications Minister, Montri Phongphanit. While retaining links with Narong, Sanit appeared to follow his brother-in-law's lead and expressed support for Montri. It is important to note that at the time (and, as it turns out, even currently) Banglen did not lie in Montri's constituency. It later emerged that Montri was laying the foundations for an electoral base should boundaries be changed to bring Banglen into his own constituency. Sawat was able to offer specific incentives to the Banglen electorate on account of his patron's status as Minister of Communications. For example, he promised road improvements and connection to the national telephone network to several subdistricts.

Candidates called on MPs for support or to withdraw their support from the opposition as occurred during the Ban Thung *kamnan* campaign. The BMA chairman asked Narong MP to back Yongyut's campaign. In response, Sanit attempted to dissuade Narong MP from doing so by enlisting the help of a friend, a construction contractor who was Narong's foremost *hua khanan* in a neighbouring district. Narong attempted to arrive at a compromise which was designed to limit the damage to his own vote-procuring network. He appealed to all Banglen *kamnan* to support the two incumbent councillors. This he did at a meeting he convened at a local restaurant. *Kamnan* Han did not attend, sending Headman Chayan in his name. He expressed a desire not to meet Narong (who had supported Han in his own election campaign, see Chapter Six) probably because he had committed himself to support Sawat, and indirectly to Montri.

VII.E. The BMA and the Election

As noted above, although Chit was a BMA member it was not the case that, at least initially, he represented the Association. Not all members gave him their support, and the leadership lent theirs almost by default, being more antagonistic towards Sawat and Sanit than attracted to Chit. Both these candidates had attempted to canvass in the subdistricts of *Kamnan* Damrong and *Kamnan* Bay without first seeking their permission and had approached individual headmen hostile to the *kamnan*. By so doing they had not acknowledged the authority of the *kamnan* and had given personal offence. It is possible that less personal

reasons were behind the two *kamnan's* antipathy. In a BMA meeting, the chairman once voiced disgust for Sanit's corrupt practices. These directly affected *Kamnan* Damrong insofar as the funds Sanit appropriated detracted from those at his disposal to 'develop' his subdistrict. Sanit's activities undermined his ability to prove himself an exemplary *kamnan* - a point which will be examined in more detail in Chapter Eight.

The chairman unsuccessfully attempted to dissuade those BMA members who had decided to back Sanit and Sawat from doing so. For example, at the last BMA meeting before polling I overheard the chairman try to convince *Kamnan* Han to retract his support for 'the opposition'. He had already failed to influence the Association secretary to withdraw his support, and I was aware of one other member who tacitly supported Sawat and Sanit while publicly following the chairman's line. Thus, the BMA could not enforce unity among members - relationships forged outside the Association were sometimes given priority over those entailed by membership.

Kamnan Han informed me that the BMA chairman contributed some 100,000 baht to Chit's campaign. He certainly used his influence within and outside his own subdistrict on Chit's and Yongyut's behalf. In the process of enlisting support for these two candidates, he came into bitter conflict with the abbot in his subdistrict. It is highly likely that individual brickyard owners advised their employees to vote for particular candidates of their choice.

VII.F. Electioneering in Ban Thung

VII.F.1. Ban Thung Vote Brokers and Electioneering

The candidates sought the support of Ban Thung village headmen, or rather they sought to enlist them as *hua khanan*. The line of opposition evident in the earlier *kamnan* campaigns was replicated to a large extent. Headman Tim of Village One gave his support to Chit (No.4) and Yongyut (No.1), as did his son-in-law, Headman Nakun of Village Three. This was despite the fact that Sanit and Headman Nakun had previously been class-mates and friends. It was as if Nakun considered that his enemy's friend must be his enemy, or as one of Han's assistants put it: "If we want white, he wants black; he has lost to us once already." Headman Tim probably refused to support Sawat or Sanit on the same grounds. Headman Nakun was said to have earned 10,000 baht from his role as Chit's

Village Three *hua khanan*: reportedly, he was allocated funds to give 50 baht to each voter but only distributed 30.

Headman Khwang of Village Two was without prior alliances or significant personal relationships with any candidate. As in the *kamnan* election it seemed that he sold his support to the highest bidder. Notwithstanding approaches from Sawat and Sanit he finally sold his support to Chit (No.4). Toward polling day he could be seen hosting drinking circles in his Village.

Given Headman Chayan's earlier support, Han expected him to follow his lead and give the Village Five vote to Sawat and Sanit. Despite this expectation Headman Chayan was said to have attempted to bargain money out of Sawat independently - he was said to have gone to Sawat's store on the eve of polling demanding 5,000 baht for his support.

Figure 7.1: Lines of Support in 1990 Provincial Councillor Elections

	Candidates		
Status	No.1	No.2 & No.3	No.4
MPs	Narong	Montri	Narong
Core BMA members	K. Damrong K.Bay	K. Han Hm. Chalong	K. Damrong K. Bay Ot
Ban Thung Officeholders	Hm. Tim (V.1) Hm. Khwang (V.2) Hm. Nakun (V.3)	K. Han [V.4] Hm. Chayan (V.5)	Hm. Tim (V.1) Hm. Khwang (V.2) Hm. Nakun (V.3)

The May *kamnan* campaigns in Ban Thung aroused much more interest among villagers than did the provincial councillor elections. Forthcoming polling did figure in everyday conversation, but it did not arouse the same intensity of concern. This seems to signify that the more local the office contested, the greater the local participation.[7] Discussion about candidates' merits, and speculation on the results was relatively open. Considering residents had, and would have, little to do with provincial councillors and that little of local or direct importance hinged on polling results, this is not surprising. As one man said, reassuring *Kamnan* Han of

[7]This observation may be generally true. Villagers in Chachăngsao, for example, said that elections for *kamnan* and headmen were more fiercely contested than higher level elections and "produced a far more tense and heated atmosphere in the local community" (Ananya 1985:377).

the ease with which he could influence voters, "It's easy, this is something of the outside (*wong nok*), villagers aren't involved".

To some extent this explains why candidates use local intermediaries or vote brokers . For example, the vast majority of Ban Thung villagers had no contact with Sawat and Sanit - if they did it was only to buy house-building materials from Sawat's store, or basic foodstuffs from Sanit's. Some did not even know who the candidates were. Thus, when most locals voted they did so because a local prominent person had advised or paid them to do so. As I heard one old man tell Han after polling: "I voted for you not for No.2 and No.3".

It could be said that betting odds serve the purpose of pre-election polls in Thailand. Until some three weeks before polling day Yongyut (No.1) and Sawat (No.3) were the favourites. Opinion held that Sanit (No.2) could not win on account of his bad record, and the newcomer, Chit (No.4), was simply not considered a serious contender. However, as polling drew near the effectiveness of Chit's campaign, and the comparative ineffectiveness of Yongyut's, became apparent. Chit displaced Yongyut and remained favourite with Sawat until polling day. The following traces the candidates' campaigns and related events in the days immediately prior to the election, mainly from the perspective of Ban Thung.

As indicated above, Sawat was able to offer the Banglen electorate certain resources which came under the control of his political patron, Minister Montri Phongphanit. While the state-owned Telephone Organisation of Thailand was pressing ahead with a programme to connect every subdistrict to the national system, at this stage insufficient telephones had been allocated to Banglen district. Sawat successfully appealed, on *Kamnan* Han's behalf, to Montri to have one sited at Ban Thung and just before the election a telephone, which was subsequently spoken of as 'Montri's phone', was installed in the Centre. *Kamnan* Han, only half in jest I am sure, briefed me on how to respond appropriately should Montri himself telephone to ask if "everything is all right".

From the outset Han told the electorate of Villages Four and Five that Sawat and Sanit wanted to give money and goods to the community as a whole and not to individual households. Villagers were told that these candidates wanted to donate a large lump sum to the temple and would deliver benefits of value to the community after polling. Gifts were promised to localities too however: for example, one of Han's assistants pledged a water cooler to the school at Ban Say temple on Sawat's behalf. Sawat and Sanit also donated road surfacing to areas of Ban Thung (Village Two in particular), in direct competition to Chit. Free alcohol was distributed by Han and under the instruction of the abbot of Wat Yom.

It should be noted that gifts were not always passively received. Some Village Five women complained to Han's canvassers that while men received alcohol for their support, they received nothing. As a compromise Han's nephew said he would give them 1,000 baht to buy ingredients for noodles . This offer was later withdrawn when Han funded free noodles at the stall opposite Wat Ban Thung. Since men and women voting for No.2 and No.3 ate free, women did not in fact receive any reward equivalent to the alcohol given to men.

VII.F.2. The Ban Thung Kathin *Rite*

Keyes has suggested that the rite of *thot kathin* is "perhaps the rite of patronage par excellence in Thailand today" (1989:136), a feature certainly confirmed by the present material. As was mentioned in Chapter Three the *kathin* rite marks the end of Buddhist lent and is the foremost opportunity a temple has for raising funds. Almost every member of a temple's ritual community will attend. By acting as ritual patron (*jaw phap*) a person can earn prestige and a measure of legitimacy in the eyes of the congregation. Such an evaluation may accrue because of the endorsement received from the religious and secular leadership and from the act of donation itself. As Gray suggests, "Merit ceremonies are the primary context in which economic power is converted into religious prestige" (1991:47).

The Wat Ban Thung *kathin* rite took place on 14 October, less than a week before polling.[8] Patronage of the rite was an important electioneering opportunity for both district and national politicians. Colonel Narong Kittikachorn MP, Sawat and Chit used the rite as a political platform. *Kamnan* Han fended off attempts by Chit to patronise the rite, and it is to this scuffle that we first turn.

Chit made known that he would contribute 20,000 baht to each temple's *kathin* rite sited at the district's 25 polling stations.[9] The assumption was that, in return, the congregation of each temple would reciprocate with their votes. *Kamnan* Han did not want to receive this money because he wished to avoid such

---

[8]The method of organising the event departed from all preceding ones. Rather than nominate one sponsor, as was formerly the case, a 'unity *kathin*' (*thot kathin samakhi*) was held, bringing in several independent sponsors, on the grounds that it would yield more income. In this case there were two major sponsors, the BMA and a Bangkok factory, and several individual patrons such as Sawat.

[9]The potency of patronizing *kathin* ceremonies is widely recognized. Another influential district figure and BMA member (the unofficial BMA compère) told me that if he campaigned to be provincial councillor (which he was considering doing) he would not buy votes but would patronise *kathin* ceremonies at every temple in the district in rotation. Even if he lost the election he would have earned merit (*day bun*), he said.

an obligation - both in regard to himself and villagers. I was present when *Kamnan* Han told one of his deputies that, if offered the money by Chit he should tell Chit to make the donation directly to the abbot. As the *kamnan* said, he did not want his "wrists tied" (*phuk kho mu*). If he received the money the transaction would unambiguously entail a political obligation, but if the money was received by the temple the meaning imputed to the gift would remain ambiguous. Han could defend his lack of reciprocity by claiming that Chit's gift was pure merit-making. For, according to Buddhist doctrine, merit-making should be performed without expectation of return in this world.

Chit must have realised that *Kamnan* Han was neither going to give him a platform, nor switch allegiance. In the event he contributed only 2,000 baht to Wat Ban Thung instead of the proclaimed 20,000 baht.[10] Predictably, Han and his deputies scorned Chit's actual contribution as rather cheap - if Chit had been a man of honour he would have kept his word and disguised his instrumentality.

The *kathin* rite of October 1990 was the first *Kamnan* Han had organised, and was noticeably more attuned to extracting money from visitors than had been the case in 1989.[11] Adoption of new methods of preparing for the *kathin* appeared to dissuade some villagers from participating (see Chapter Three). Nevertheless, the temple hall had been decorated and villagers had been preparing food for two days prior to the event in anticipation of receiving hundreds of guests, including several dignitaries.

Before the arrival of any significant political figures the abbot of nearby Wat Yom, who took a leading role in the proceedings, canvassed on Sawat's behalf. Over the public-address system the abbot described how Sawat had allegedly written to and then visited Montri Phongphanit in order to obtain a telephone for Ban Thung. He then told villagers how they would benefit from having a telephone. Later in the day the abbot again praised Sawat, saying, in addition, that he was responsible for gaining Montri's agreement to construct an asphalted road into Ban Thung.

Chit arrived early in the day's proceedings and was met by *Kamnan* Han, as was seemly. His attire seemed intended to deliver a political message. He wore an indigo peasant's shirt (*sua pha hom*), although he normally wore a collared shirt. He alone was dressed like this: even old farmers wore the style of shirt common

---

[10]Indeed, he went on to contribute 10,000 baht to other temples in the district.

[11]For example, a monk 'sold' piles of earth from a stall outside the temple hall. He enticed visitors using a loud-hailer. Several villagers I spoke to were unhappy with this practice, which was new to Ban Thung, and the general tone of the event.

among Thai bureaucrats. He was, it seemed, imitating the appearance of Chamlong Srimuang, the charismatic leader of the Phalang Tham (Righteous Force) Party, a man who was popularly seen as honest, humble and concerned for the well-being of ordinary people (see below). Chit may have wished to identify himself with the politician and these qualities. He presented 2,000 baht to the abbot, and left some 20 minutes later. Before doing so one of the two compères[12] publicly announced the value of Chit's donation and his candidacy in the forthcoming elections.

The next politically significant figure to arrive was Col. Narong Kittikachorn MP, together with bodyguards. Both Narong MP and Bunphan MP had been invited, but the latter did not attend, instead sending 2,000 baht with two clerks employed by his bank.[13] The radio presenter publicised Narong's arrival, referring to him as "our representative" (*phu than khong raw*). He was given a seat of honour on the sofa, while all other visitors were on the floor, and was attentively flanked by *Kamnan* Han and Headman Chayan. Narong was asked to address the crowd: after expressing his gratitude for the invitation, he announced that the road into Ban Thung would soon be asphalted, implying that his intervention was behind the development. He made a cash contribution to the temple and left soon afterwards.

The radio presenter subsequently cautioned the audience to vote wisely in the forthcoming elections, telling them to choose a "good person" (*khon di*) and not to be influenced by vote-buying. The crowd was advised to base their choice on candidates' "work record" (*phon ngan*) because money is "just money" and does not last.

Finally, Sawat arrived, dressed in the unassuming suit of his former office. He arrived amidst the auctioning of government lottery tickets, another fund raising practice novel to Wat Ban Thung, and was somewhat obliged to demonstrate largesse - he paid 1,000 baht for a lottery ticket with a street value of 20 baht. As with all substantial contributions this was announced over the temple public-address system. In contrast to Chit, Sawat was given the opportunity to directly address the crowd. He declared that within a few days a telephone would

---

[12]One is the self-appointed BMA compère, Santi, the other is a Ban Thung born professional radio announcer. He has his own late evening radio show on a Bangkok-based radio station. Although I never heard his programme, I was told that he had advised Ban Thung villagers to support Han in the May *kamnan* elections, and that, after this *kathin* ceremony, he spoke regarding the provincial councillor elections and allegedly endorsed Sawat.

[13]They, having donated the 2,000 baht, counted the total sum collected in the *kathin* (274,314 baht), and took it to Bunphan's bank for deposit. Han commented that Narong was admirable for attending whilst he appeared to feel slighted by Bunphan's absence.

be installed and in the following year the dirt road would be asphalted - adding his view that "prosperity (*khwam jarẹn*) will follow the building of this road". He implied his efforts had brought these facilities and ended with an appeal for support for "No.2 and No.3". *Kamnan* Han subsequently introduced Sawat to various groups of men in the crowd, then left him to circulate alone.

VII.F.3. Ban Thung Residents are 'Advised'

In the fortnight preceding polling, Ban Thung villagers were repeatedly bombarded with advice regarding the elections. They were told of their duty as citizens of a democratic country, about the role and duties of provincial councillors, and they were advised, albeit subtly, on the identity of 'appropriate' candidates. Specifically, a local teacher wrote a half-hour speech about the duties of citizens and of councillors. He recorded it on a cassette-recorder, then played it twice over the subdistrict public-address system. The headman of Village Five lived up to his nickname (*'phu yay may[k]'*, Headman Microphone) and made three interminable speeches from the Centre. District officials also addressed villagers on the subject at subdistrict meetings - one deputy district officer spoke twice, and the head of the Community Development Department spoke once. The following is a transcript of part of the deputy's second speech; given some five days before polling, it is fairly typical. After telling villagers that they live in a democratic system (*rapob prachathipaday*) he enjoined them to use their democratic right:

> If you don't come, or only a few of you come, you will be giving a chance for a bad person to be elected. Officials greatly desire that everyone who has the right to vote, let's say 100 percent, vote. This is a very important issue because the provincial councillor is our representative...

He then went on to say that provincial councillors are responsible for proposing projects and getting funding on behalf of the subdistricts in their constituencies. He continued:

> If we don't have a provincial councillor or we have a councillor who isn't interested and neglects his duty (*nathi*) we won't have our projects proposed. We must have someone who is interested in helping (*chuay lụa*) the people - in helping maintain and keep an eye on the roads, and whatever else. So, on the twentieth [election day] I'd like you all to come and use your right to vote...[14]

---

[14]For transliteration see Appendix 3.

Two points merit comment. Firstly, the official's preoccupation with obtaining a high voter turnout reflects the fact that the administration measures political participation by voter turnout regardless of whether votes are bought or not. Secondly, the provincial councillor's role as representative amounts to his meeting a locality's need for infrastructural development. This portrayal is fairly typical insofar as others who spoke about the elections tended to give primacy to this aspect of a councillor's role.

At this same meeting *Kamnan* Han managed obliquely to electioneer for Sanit, and by association his running mate Sawat. Han's appeal was by necessity obscure because officeholders are required by law not to influence voters in elections. The greater part of Han's speech is presented below, along with its extended clauses, meanders and inconsistencies, so as to give a flavour of how he attempted to influence villagers. After complaining about villagers' poor attendance at the recent *kathin* festival, he continued:

> ...there's one other matter. On the twentieth I would like us lot to come and help by using our rights to the utmost. Because if we don't come - or some of us might think 'I'm not coming because there's no reward [*kha top than*, i.e. vote-buying money]' I consider that people think wrongly. Because, if we help them, they have to help us. At the very least, if we help them to have a good number of votes, and they get elected...[pause] whatever happens they've got to come and help (*chuay*) us.
>
> I believe that the candidates have got to have an 'elevated mind' (*jitjay sung*) or great thoughtfulness (*namjay sung*) - [because] they look out for the common good, or they sacrifice themselves in order to come down and serve us. It's not as if they get elected and sit around doing nothing - they don't get a salary. People like this, they've got an 'elevated mind', each and every candidate. But, I'd like you kinspersons, people of Ban Thung subdistrict, to examine which person has got such a mind, which person sacrifices (*sia sara*) for the group as a whole (*phua suan ruam*) and is going to work for our district - for our collective benefit. We have to think and to examine who is suitable. Whichever way, I'd like everyone to come. If you don't come I might come after you to your house. Because, whatever happens, don't 'lie on top of your right to vote' (*non thap sit*). Well, some people might, how shall I say it [pause] they would like there to be something, a 'service charge' (*kha borikan*) or whatever. I say "Don't [think like this]!" When the candidates have been elected they're going to come and help us - help the temple, make roads, whatever like this. When we have a problem of some sort - for example like the day the rain fell [referring to recent flooding]: I went to see *So Jo* Sanit - he hadn't even woken up. He got up, brushed his teeth and I took him with me. We went to the irrigation system and he helped all out. If it was me alone - well, it was many people, many, many voices together....If we didn't have a provincial councillor, or a *kamnan* or headman, I think they wouldn't have opened the sluice gates on that day. It probably would have been several days before we could have got them opened. We went and pursued the problem. There

> are people who can make contact really easily (*tit to*) [and get things done]. These people, who can help easily, came and worked and the work was done better. On that day [polling day], whatever happens, I'd like you to tell your children and grandchildren, everyone, that if they're going anywhere - going to the market or wherever - to use their right to vote first and then go....I'd like every person to look and see that it's most important that the suitable person (*phu thi mo som*) is very honest (*sụ sat*). If we get a good person to come in, he will help a lot, and our district will get more prosperous. Some people, when they've got office, it's like they say, they don't go anywhere, they don't go about at all. Us lot, we'd have used our right and then what? It's not worth it [to sell your vote] (*man may khum kha*).

A number of Han's statements warrant closer attention, but firstly we can note Han's pragmatic attitude toward vote-buying. A few months earlier he had bought votes on a large scale, now he told villagers not to consider accepting money, and to support Sawat and Sanit without expectation of financial reward. He argued that villagers would receive patronage from the candidates in the future if they gave their votes freely first. It was in Han's interests that 'his' villagers' votes did not have to be bought. On the one hand it would signify his influence over them, on the other it would obligate the two candidates to him - he would be able to make demands on the candidates if they were successful, and benefit from their position.

In attempting to gain villagers' compliance he presented as given a proposition which was, in fact, contingent. He tried to persuade villagers not to sell but to give their votes in the expectation that they would be collectively rewarded after the election. He asked them to sacrifice their immediate household interests for the promise of future reciprocity from the successful candidate. However, as some informants commented, politicians appear at election time only to disappear after it (cf. Ananya 1985:374). Politicians no longer behaved as patrons of a community in the way that *Kamnan* Chang's teacher once had. Thus, *Kamnan* Han had to argue that the norm of reciprocity still governed candidates' behaviour - the electorate had to be convinced that candidates would remember and reward the support of voters.

One thread in this argument was that villagers would be better rewarded if they gave their votes 'on credit', as it were. The rewards will be greater if individual households subsumed their immediate interests for the long-term interests of 'the group as a whole' (*suan ruam*).[15] When appealing to subdistrict

---

[15]This argument was also once made by the abbot of Wat Yom. Having just received a 20,000 baht merit-making contribution from Bunphan MP, given because a significant proportion of the temple's congregation had given him their votes rather than sold them in the last election,

solidarity Han was probably seeking to further his "own short-term self-interest, while appearing to speak for the long-term good of the village" as Loizos (1975:5) has described Greek-Cypriot village leaders as doing .

Furthermore, Han managed to obliquely recommend Sanit, and by implication, Sawat to his listeners. Villagers were told they ought to choose a candidate who sacrifices his interests for those of the collectivity, who is public spirited, and ready and able to act on behalf of others. Han then detailed how Sanit had helped him solve the flood problem and proceeded to stress that a desirable candidate should be able to use his contacts for the benefit of the community. In other words, Sanit was portrayed as fulfilling the criteria *Kamnan* Han himself set up.

Finally, we should note Han's claim that all the candidates have an "elevated mind" or 'high moral character' (*jitjay sung*). This turns upside-down villagers' common-sense knowledge of politicians - that they are self-interested and dishonest. By saying the candidates are morally unimpeachable Han seemed to be foreclosing any public exploration of their motives. It is as though he presented before the audience the 'public transcript' (Scott 1990) concerning politicians, and thereby designated any other kind of public debate inconceivable or at least unacceptable.

VII.G. "No.4 Comes Darkly"

Early one morning, some four days before polling, one of Han's deputies muttered to me, in a tone expressing admiration and disquiet, "No.4 comes darkly" (*bɛ̱ si ma mu̱t*). While previously Chit was virtually unknown in the district, let alone Ban Thung, he now appeared to be displacing Sanit, No.3. Of immediate concern to the deputy, Chit was obtaining support among the Ban Thung and Ban Say electorate. This he did using a combination of strategic 'gift-giving', propaganda, and outright vote-buying.

He made unsolicited 'gifts' of laterite road surfacing to a number of neighbourhoods, expecting residents to reciprocate in the form of their votes. Ot's tipper lorries deposited laterite road surfacing on the roads of several subdistricts on Chit's behalf. This form of electioneering was highly visible - villagers had

---

the abbot announced over the public-address system that this lump sum would 'last longer' than the 50 baht those households which sold their votes had received.

physical evidence of Chit's generosity in the form of improved roads.[16] This strategy, like making donations to temples, obligates a collectivity to the donor: a group of villagers who benefit may feel obligated or otherwise inclined to give their support. Chit's road surfacing strategy was shrewd in that to implement it he did not require the prior agreement of local officeholders. In some localities he surfaced roads with their agreement, in others in the face of opposition. As I will briefly recount, his activity gave rise to conflict between officeholders and, in one case I knew of, between an officeholder and a religious leader.

Just as Han had earlier taken measures to avoid receiving Chit's 'merit-making money', he now attempted to prevent Chit laying laterite on Ban Thung roads. Chit, knowing where Han's loyalty lay, did not even ask Han's permission to surface subdistrict roads. The same day that Han's deputy expressed disquiet regarding Chit's campaign, Han learned that Ot's lorries were dumping laterite on roads in the north of the subdistrict. He told his deputy to ask Ot's drivers to stop, with the albeit genuine reason that the stretch had recently been resurfaced. The deputy returned unsuccessful, saying that Ot's driver had continued regardless.

In neighbouring Ban Say subdistrict Chit's activity gave rise to bitter conflict between religious and lay leaders. The abbot of Wat Yom, himself supporting Sawat and Sanit, saw the headmen of his congregation's Villages (Village Five, Ban Thung and Village One, Ban Say) permit Chit to resurface local roads. Han told me he was not overly concerned that Headman Chayan accepted Chit's laterite - Han considered it unlikely that the somewhat opportunistic Chayan would feel bound to support Chit by this gesture. However, the headman of Village One, Ban Say, did give the abbot of Wat Yom cause for concern. The headman, a gentle and conscientious man, was widely respected for his integrity. On account of his reputation, he was perceived to have committed his own and his villagers' support to Chit by permitting the resurfacing of his Village's roads. Using the public-address system he operated from the temple, the abbot criticised both

---

[16]The laterite used to surface dirt roads needs to be supplemented periodically since heavy vehicles tend to grind it into the mud, leaving the road virtually impassable in the rainy season. Tipper lorries deposit, and to some extent spread, the laterite directly onto the road such that only minimal labour is required to apply it. It is particularly ironic that Ot's lorries were resurfacing the roads since at the time his lorries were largely responsible for the appalling state of an important stretch of Ban Thung and Ban Say road. His digger was excavating, and his lorries were transporting, the topsoil from a 20 *rai* plot in Ban Thung - the hundreds of lorry trips progressively disintegrated existing laterite and weakened the raised road. Some of Chit's 'gifts', then, were in fact restoring roads to the condition they had been in before Ot's activity. Although probably not an intentional attribute, Chit's laterite was a different colour to regular laterite so that on any journey one could easily identify the stretches he had surfaced. Soon after the elections it became evident that the material he had given was of low quality: with heavy rains the laterite became sticky because of its high earth content.

headmen, and coaxed and threatened villagers into backing candidates No.2 and No.3. He told villagers that if they voted for 'No.4' he would disrobe. Despite obtaining widespread compliance, he still 'punished' villagers (*hay thot*), as he himself put it: he cancelled the booking he had made for a folk opera troupe (*like*) to perform at the temple.[17]

Chit's propaganda was as shrewdly planned as his road surfacing strategy. In addition to a standard poster distributed and displayed throughout the district, Chit sent out a canvassing letter in which he detailed his policies, and portrayed himself as incorruptible and devoted to the electorate's interests. A letter had never before been used by a politician campaigning in the district.[18] Letters were sent to households in all 17 of the district's subdistricts and were sent in sealed envelopes via the postal system. Perhaps the main advantage of using a letter was that access to the electorate was gained without consideration of the local officeholder. The *jaw thi,* 'owner of the place' did not have to be consulted. Secondly, the strategy saved campaigning time.

Four days before polling a batch of the stamped, sealed envelopes were delivered by the postman to Wat Ban Thung school in Ban Thung. They were given to schoolchildren to take home to their parents in Villages Three, Four and Five. It appeared that most, though not all, households received letters. While I am unable to comment on any influence the letter may have had on local voting behaviour it is worthwhile examining its content (see Appendix 3 for full text).

Chit began the letter by introducing himself as a provincial councillor candidate and member of the Phalang Tham Party, which comes under the leadership of Major-General Chamlong Srimuang.[19] He wrote that rumours saying he is going to buy votes are false. He wrote that he resents the accusation because if he did not, in fact, buy votes people would accuse him of not honouring

---

[17]The polling results from Ban Say reflect the abbot's success: Candidates No.1, No.2, No.3 and No.4 were 82, 203, 248, 178 votes respectively.

[18]The practice is, however, not unknown in Thailand. Murashima notes that one campaign team in provincial councillor elections in Nakhon Sawan used "direct mail to send its pamphlets and political messages to the voters" (1987:382).

[19]At the time Chamlong Srimuang was Governor of Bangkok. He held the moral high ground in Thai politics, condemning corruption and publicly eschewing vote-buying. Chamlong's name and ideals were familiar to all village residents on account of television and newspaper coverage (see Jackson 1989:181-189 and McCargo 1993). The party is perceived to share the same moral tenets as its leader and has rapidly gained support in recent years. While at this time it had only 14 National Assembly seats, in the 13 September 1992 election it gained 47, mostly in the Bangkok region (Economic Intelligence Unit, 1992). The first candidate to officially represent the Phalang Tham Party in Ayutthaya Constituency Two came fourth, winning 96 votes (9.4 percent) in Wat Ban Thung polling station in this poll (source: village informant).

his word. Candidates who buy votes must aspire to recoup their expenditure but he is not such a candidate, he claimed. The letter lists four 'aims', some being simply statements. Firstly, he is not a merchant or 'capitalist' (*nak long thun*) and as a member of the Phalang Tham Party he will not buy votes. Secondly, he promises not to become a contractor (*phu rap maw*) because this activity leads to dishonesty among officeholders and to poor quality work (both are accurate observations). Thirdly, he promises to attempt to attract development grants into the district and, fourthly, to oversee the local bureaucracy's use of grants to ensure efficiency and to prevent corruption. He says that he only wants fame (*chu siang*) and honour (*kiat*) for his family - he is not motivated by material concerns. He tells voters they should choose someone they can trust and who will use development funds properly, and implores them not to be influenced by money or goods. Finally, in a postscript, he tells readers that the laterite his opponents (candidates No.2 and No.3) are laying is not in fact a gift but derives from development grants - i.e. they are giving what already belongs to villagers.

I was never able to discover from Chit the nature of his relationship with the Phalang Tham Party, or indeed whether one existed.[20] It is highly likely that he simply used the party name in an attempt to capitalize on its reputation. In the original letter he reiterated his purported party membership no fewer than five times, as if to embed the association in the reader's mind, but perhaps also to give the impression that he represents the party. The fact that he went on to buy votes may have detracted from villagers' trust of Chamlong and his party.

To my mind, Chit denounced extant corrupt practices in order to convince readers of his honesty and integrity. Most readers would be aware of corruption among provincial councillors but any criticism would be muted and private - to criticise publicly the practices of incumbent councillors would invite retribution. To go public and express what had previously been the 'hidden transcript' must have given readers the impression that the writer was himself honest.

Chit bought votes on a massive scale in the days preceding polling and therefore contradicted his policy statement. Also, he contradicted his request for villagers not to be influenced by receipt of 'things' (*singkhong*) since he himself had been donating road surfacing materials as we have seen. Why did Chit proceed to buy votes when he promised he would not? He was prepared to buy votes from the outset, as he admitted in my interview, but may have hoped it would prove

---

[20] I did not interview Chit after my July conversation because I was loosely associated with his opponents, Sanit and Sawat, by virtue of my relationship with *Kamnan* Han. When the conflict between theopposing parties intensified it seemed unwise to meet Chit. My concern proved justified, as it turned out.

unnecessary. He may have decided to buy votes when he saw he could not succeed without doing so.

Given that he broke his promise not to buy votes why did the electorate still vote for him? Why did he not lose all credibility? I would suggest that the statements in his letter became irrelevant and were nullified by the relationship created by the exchange of money or goods. Confronted by his money or goods, villagers would be obligated to reciprocate with their votes. Finally, one should note that Chit objects to rumours that he is going to buy votes not because the practice is immoral or illegal but because he would appear untrustworthy if he subsequently did not do so. In other words, to dishonour the conditions of a transaction entails greater moral censure than accompanies vote-buying.

VII.H. Final Electioneering

The candidates grasped every opportunity to win votes during the last few days before polling. For example, both Chit and Sanit made use of the funeral of an elderly Village Three man at Wat Ban Thung two days before voting. Chit took the trouble to donate a wreath: it was one of only two adorning the temple hall and took pride of place on a pillar beside the coffin. It was a rather shameless piece of electioneering - the wreath bore the words, "From Chit Bunlap, Provincial Councillor Candidate No.4". Sanit, finding out about the funeral while visiting Ban Thung to see how his campaign was progressing, returned home to dress appropriately and subsequently donated a sum of money to the host.

The day before polling Sawat performed an act intended, it seemed, to neutralise or at least soften the opposition of the BMA vice-chairman toward him. The vice-chairman was hosting his daughter's extremely grand wedding. Towards the end of the event, Sawat suddenly appeared and joined the queue of people blessing the newly-weds. Having poured water over their hands (*rot nam*), he placed a substantial gold chain around the bridegroom's neck. The compère, Santi, observing this, enthusiastically broadcast Sawat's gracious act of generosity.[21] In so openly paying respect to *Kamnan* Bay, by making a gift to his son-in-law, Sawat made it difficult for *Kamnan* Bay to vilify him publicly.

On the evening of 18 October *Kamnan* Han led a meeting of his 'inner circle' at the Ban Thung Centre. Six participants, Han's two deputies, two

---

[21] I saw this through the eyepiece of my video camera. The BMA vice-chairman had asked me to use my camera to relay a picture of the proceedings to viewers of a series of television sets sited around and outside his mansion. The public-address system used by the compere could be heard from several hundred metres.

assistants, and two nephews, were present apart from Han. Those owning firearms bore them. *Kamnan* Han told his group that the following day he wanted to obtain a running total of votes - as had been obtained five months earlier at Wat Ban Thung (Chapter Six). He suggested using a more elaborate code than previously to enable the person behind the ballot box to indicate which of the five, rather than two, candidates had been selected. In the event, however, a code was not needed. There was no official presence at polling apart from the police; the person behind the ballot box was a local and simply noted for whom votes were cast as they were made, giving totals to *Kamnan* Han when he requested them.

Han had mobilised the support of the same households in the subdistrict which had voted for him in his own electoral campaign five months earlier. He reactivated the vote procuring network he had established for himself, for example by approaching the same households in Village One and Village Two as before. One consequence of this strategy - which it seems Headman Nakun also pursued - was that the factions established during the May campaigns were recreated. As one Village Four informant noted sadly, "the subdistrict has completely shattered (*dak kan mot*)."

No vote-buying took place on behalf of Sawat or Sanit in Villages Four and Five, although Han was prepared should the need arise - he had withdrawn 50,000 baht from the bank to meet the eventuality. The arguments made in his speech, given above, as well as the patronage-type activities of the two candidates, appear to have been persuasive. However, money was used in the other three Villages by all four major candidates.

Some time before polling, and in an attempt to render Chit's campaign ineffective, Sanit had threatened to kill Chit if he bought votes. According to both Sanit himself and another informant, Sanit went in search of Chit the night before polling with the intention of shooting him. Fortunately for Chit, Sanit's search was fruitless: it was also perhaps fortunate for Chit that he did not manage to displace Sanit as provincial councillor. For, some two months after polling, Sanit told me that he would still have shot Chit had he been beaten by him.[22] Sanit complained he had spent an extra 180,000 baht on vote-buying because of his rivalry with Chit. Laughing, he claimed it had caused a run on 50 baht notes at the local bank.

---

[22]One would imagine that someone with Sanit's resources would have hired a gunman to do his dirty work. However, Sanit was known to be very hot tempered, he also drank heavily and some considered him a little unbalanced (following an accident several years previously in which he had sustained head injuries). These points do not, of course, detract from the fact that he intended to wound if not kill his political opponent.

According to Han, Chit spent between 700,000 and 800,000 baht and Sanit and Sawat had jointly spent 1,500,000 baht on vote-buying.

VII.I. Polling Day

Arrangements for polling were very similar to those of the May *kamnan* election: polling station No.1, used by residents of Villages One and Two, was at Wat Lamu and polling station No.2, used by residents of Villages Three, Four and Five was at Wat Ban Thung, though polling actually took place in the Centre. Polling was not administered by district officials: a group of eight men from the latter three Villages officiated at Wat Ban Thung and had earlier attended a day's 'seminar' at the district office in preparation. None of them could be said to come from among the subdistrict's poor. Two policemen, armed with rifles, were sent to each polling station, ostensibly to prevent electoral fraud and any disturbances.

Polling opened at 8 a.m. and was slow to start on account of torrential rain the previous night. *Kamnan* Han had organised transport to and from the Centre, and the noodle stall opposite provided a further service by giving free food to those who had voted for candidates No.2 and No.3.

During the course of the morning several notable people passed through the Centre as they did the rounds of polling stations. The District Officer paid a lightning visit, followed by the deputy chief of police - a close friend of Sawat - who spent his visit in conversation with Han rather than inspecting his men. Han subsequently commented to me that the police "sided with" Sawat (*khaw khang*), though I do not know in what ways they might have given assistance, apart from by ignoring irregularities which would have been to his advantage - as occurred here. Sawat himself briefly passed through later, followed by his own and Sanit's wife. Towards the close of balloting Chit's supporters left two men at the Centre to observe the counting of ballots.

Voting procedure was identical to that described in Chapter Six: a ballot paper was obtained after presentation of an identity card, and marked ballot papers were handed to the officiator behind the ballot box. The latter person periodically compiled a vote count for Han: this he obtained by examining the papers and noting the votes. This activity was carried out relatively openly since no district officials were present and the attendant policemen were sympathetic and barely observed the proceedings.[23] In contrast to the visual code used at Wat Ban Thung

---

[23]They were made comfortable in my room adjacent to the hall: someone brought them a portable black-and-white television and they were supplied with refreshments, including

when Han was elected, this means of obtaining a total did not allow bystanders to 'read' villagers' voting behaviour. Only the individual behind the ballot box knew for whom each person voted.

Some balloting irregularities did occur but they were not organised and would not have influenced more than a handful of votes. For example, a couple of Village Four men were illegally allowed to cast votes on behalf of their kinspersons, whose identity cards they used. Such laxity was applied selectively: a Village Three woman who had cast her votes for 'the opposition' was not permitted to vote for her father - the ballot box officiator, having just seen her own ballot paper, indicated to his colleague not to give her another paper on behalf of her father.

When polling was stopped at 3p.m. a crowd, small in comparison to that at the May *kamnan* election, gathered at the Centre to watch the count. At Wat Ban Thung polling station Sawat and Sanit gained most votes by far:

Table 7.1: October 1990 Provincial Councillor Elections: Ban Thung Polling Station No.2

Candidate	No. Votes	%
No.1	59	7.3
No.2	303	37.4
No.3	318	39.3
No.4	127	15.7
No.5	3	0.4
Total valid	810	100.1
Invalid	7 (0.9%)	
Total Cast	817	

Note: The third column excludes invalid votes.

The ballot box, containing the papers, was sealed and taken to the district office, escorted by the rifle-toting policemen and about a dozen villagers, most of whom had supervised polling. Local dignitaries, including the head of police, the BMA leadership and the wealthiest town merchants, were among the large crowd

---

alcohol. I saw Han show the illegally-obtained running total of polling results to someone in their presence, a sure sign that they had 'taken sides'.

watching the results as they came in. Sanit and Sawat, candidates No.2 and No.3, won in the final count.

Table 7.2: October 1990 Provincial Councillor Election: Banglen District

Candidate	No. Votes	%	Rank
No.1	4,112	21.0	4th
No.2	5,149	26.2	2nd
No.3	5,734	29.2	1st
No.4	4,585	23.4	3rd
No.5	51	0.3	5th
Total Valid	19,631	100.1	
Invalid	308 (2.7%)		
Total Cast	19,939		

Source: Banglen District Office Records.
Note: Of a total of 23,491 registered voters, 11,287 ballots had been cast. A little under half of eligible voters went to the polls (48.1 percent).

Kamnan Han then took the group from Ban Thung for a celebratory meal at a Banglen restaurant. Before heading back to Ban Thung the group called in at Sawat's compound to congratulate him: among the 50 or so well-wishers present were the BMA secretary and a senior Interior Ministry official still in uniform. The abbot of Wat Yom was waiting for the Ban Thung villagers at the Centre, and after hearing the results from Han he telephoned Sawat to congratulate him and to invite him to make merit at his temple the following week. Rather significantly, the abbot thanked Sawat for his help in providing building materials for the temple.

VII.J. Subsequent Developments in Ban Thung

Soon after polling, residents of the northernmost Villages of Ban Thung saw evidence of the new councillors' patronage. Two days after polling, three lorry loads of laterite from Sawat were deposited on rutted and sunken stretches of Ban Thung road. Furthermore, engineers came to survey the main road which was finally asphalted and enlarged in 1991 (personal communication). The donation of laterite, the promise of road improvement and the arrival of the telephone were

publicised over the Centre public-address system at least three times, as the work, and by implication the reward, of the councillors.

It seems that Sawat and his wife valued highly the fact that votes in the north of Ban Thung had been given and not bought. Two days after polling one of Han's helpers, having just returned from Sawat's store, excitedly announced over the public-address system the following:

> This morning the *kamnan* was at *Ja* [sergeant] Sawat's shop. *Ja* Sawat's wife was so happy that she hugged him [pause] I'm really proud, and I felt great when I saw it. She said *"Kamnan*, if you want anything tell us. I'm glad we didn't lose money [for vote-buying in 'Han's' Villages]: if we lose things (*sia khong*) that doesn't matter". *Kamnan* asked for three lorries of laterite. We didn't get money but we got things!"

Sawat's wife was probably delighted, not because providing laterite is cheaper than buying votes (this gift would have been a promise of things to come anyway), but because obtaining office by virtue of patronage accredits the incumbent with more legitimacy than if all support was bought.

VII.J.1. Analysis of Polling Results in Ban Thung Subdistrict

Three assertions are substantiated by an examination of polling results in Ban Thung. Firstly, there was less participation in polling for provincial councillors at Wat Ban Thung polling station (No.2) than in the May *kamnan* election. Secondly, the advice of officeholders can have a determining effect on voting patterns, irrespective of whether votes are bought or not (see Murashima 1987:380-381). And thirdly, the lines of conflict drawn in May *kamnan* elections were re-formed as individual officeholders and *hua khanqn* mobilised their support networks.

Above, it was suggested that subdistrict residents were less concerned with the election of provincial councillors than they had been with the election of a *kamnan.* This observation is born out by comparing voter turnout in the two elections. In the *kamnan* election voter turnout at Polling Station Two was 17.1 percent above the number of eligible voters who reside on a day-to-day basis in Ban Thung. Turnout in the provincial councillor elections was 73.8 percent; that is 43.3 percent less than voted in the *kamnan* elections.[24] Lower voter turnout in

---

[24]This is based on the following: of 810 votes cast, 14 were single rather than double votes, and seven were invalid. These ballots were cast by 405 voters. Given that there were 549 permanent resident voters using Polling Station Two, 73.8 percent of the resident electorate went to the polls.

provincial councillor polling was undoubtedly also a consequence of less intensive vote-buying.

If *Kamnan* Han was able to influence the voting behaviour of the electorate then we could expect his advice to be reflected in polling results. His influence would show up not just in the total number of votes obtained by each candidate (Table 7.1) but in the frequency with which villagers selected 'his' two candidates. We would expect candidates No.2 and No.3 to appear together on the majority of ballot papers. This is indeed the case. I noted the combinations of votes as ballot papers were read at polling station No.2. Since counting was conducted simultaneously at Wat Lamu, polling station No.1, I was unable to obtain the same data from there.

Table 7.3: October 1990 Provincial Councillor Election: Ballot Combinations at Polling Station No.2, Ban Thung

Combinations of Candidates	No. Ballot Papers	%
No.2 & No.3	264	64.1
No.3 & No.4	48	11.7
No.1 & No.4	44	10.7
No.1 & No.	24	5.8
No.1 & No.2	13	3.2
No.4 only	9	2.2
Total Other	10	2.4
Total	412	100.1
Invalid	7	-

Table 7.3 shows that 64.1 percent of voters in Villages Three, Four and Five selected *Kamnan* Han's choice. The next most common combination of candidates appearing on the ballot papers represents only 11.7 percent of total valid ballots cast. Clearly *Kamnan* Han was able effectively to influence villagers' choice of candidate.

I have suggested that factionalism generated by the May *kamnan* election was recreated in the provincial councillor elections. As a matter of principle, Headman Nakun supported those candidates opposed to those whom Han supported. If these leaders mobilised the support bases they had earlier established then we can expect to find a similar distribution in provincial councillor polling as displayed in May *kamnan* polling. Table 7.4 compares the proportion of votes given to *Kamnan* Han and Headman Nakun in the *kamnan* elections, with those

given to Sanit and Sawat (Candidate No.2 and No.3) and Yongyut and Chit (No.1 and No.4 respectively) in the provincial councillor elections. Although Yongyut and Chit did not canvass together, members of Headman Nakun's faction acted as vote broker for them both.

Table 7.4: Comparison of *Kamnan* (May 1990) and Provincial Councillor (October 1990) Polling Results in Ban Thung Subdistrict.

Candidates & election	Polling Station No.1: V.1, V.2		Polling Station No.2: V.3, V.4, V.5		Total	
	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%
(K.) Han (May 1990)	196	34.4	445	73.8	641	54.7
No.2 & No.3 (Oct. 1990)	322	43.5	621	77.0	943	61.4
H. Nakun (May 1990)	373	65.6	158	26.2	531	45.3
No.1 & No.4 (Oct 1990)	418	56.5	186	23	604	39.3

Note: Votes of candidate No.5, who gained only four votes in these polling stations, are not included. Percentages are of valid votes only.

Table 7.4 indicates a close correlation between the results obtained by each faction in the *kamnan* election and those obtained by the paired candidates in provincial councillor polling - differences do not exceed 10 percent. In effect, the *kamnan* polling pattern of voting behaviour was replicated in the provincial councillor election. However, a shift is noticeable: the share of total votes obtained by candidates No.2 and No.3 was 6.7 percent greater than that obtained by Han five months earlier (61.4 percent as opposed to 54.7 percent). The shift was proportionately larger in polling station No.1 (Villages One and Two) where Sawat and Sanit gained 9.1 percent more votes than Han had won in his own campaign. Some of this increase may be a result of the candidates' own independent campaigning and vote-buying. However, it is also very likely that some is due to the fact that Han had extended his support base in these Villages since becoming *kamnan*. The smaller proportional increase in polling station No.2 (3.2 percent) is probably explained by the fact that fewer remaining Nakun supporters, whose support could be obtained, reside there. These figures not only indicate that

factionalism was pervasive, but that officeholders are able to mobilise their own local support networks for higher-level politicians.

VII.K. Religious Leaders and Electioneering

As indicated above, candidates competed for the support of religious leaders.[25] Chit donated large sums of money, some 10,000 baht, not 20,000 baht as he had initially declared, to a number of temples in the district. However, Sawat had a more deep-rooted and almost systematic relationship with the district's 37 abbots. As the district's only building supplies merchant he extended generous and often interest-free credit to almost all of the district's temples. As noted in Chapter Three, the physical appearance of a temple is important to its abbot and congregation, and the abbot's reputation will benefit greatly from developing it. Funds for temple construction projects are obtained mainly on such occasions as annual *kathin* ceremonies, and abbots who wish to enlarge and generally 'improve' their temples need to rely on credit for building materials. In effect then, a number of the district's abbots were dependent on the goodwill of Sawat. He appeared to translate this dependence into votes. One informant, a monk, voiced the opinion that most abbots supported candidates No.2 and No.3, adding that contact between them was already frequent. Another, a headteacher, considered that a symbiotic relationship between candidates and abbots existed in every subdistrict. To my knowledge three of the district's abbots openly supported Sawat to the point of publicly and vehemently clashing with those secular leaders whose loyalty lay elsewhere.[26]

Religious leaders' attempts to influence villagers demonstrate varying degrees of subtlety, which perhaps reflect the interests at stake. The abbot of Wat

---

[25]This is not an altogether unknown form of electioneering in provincial councillor elections: Murashima has described one team of candidates donating "cement and other needed materials to village temples in their electorate" in order to "try and please the head priests of these temples, that they might favourably influence the villagers" (1987:382). However, he makes no further mention of the role of religious leaders, and I have found no reference to the kind of relationship I describe here.

[26]The ecclesiastic district head (*jaw khana amphe*) is abbot of one of two temples in the subdistrict of the BMA chairman. His temple is, significantly, the most ornate in the district. He and *Kamnan* Damrong were at loggerheads, the abbot appealed to villagers to support candidates No.2 and No.3, and the *kamnan* promoted candidates No.1 and No.4. *Kamnan* Damrong threatened to resign if villagers voted as the abbot wished. Another abbot was said to have threatened not to perform the mortuary rites of any villager who did not support candidates No.2 and No.3. Mention has already been made of the conflict between the abbot of Wat Yom and a headman. I was aware of only one case of similar conflict where the religious leader supported a candidate other than Sawat and Sanit.

Ban Thung signalled which candidates he favoured indirectly. During a merit-making ceremony before polling, a temple committee member told the congregation it would not be right to support anyone but No.2 and No.3 because they had for several years supplied building materials on credit. As well as permitting people to speak on the candidates' behalf, the abbot allowed their campaign posters to be displayed in the temple hall - the other candidates were not represented. An example of a less subtle approach was exhibited by the outspoken abbot of Wat Yom: he campaigned explicitly and emphatically. It would not be inappropriate to say that some abbots are effectively *hua khan̲n.*

VII.L. The New Provincial Councillors

I left Banglen district two months after polling and was therefore able to observe the new councillors in office for only a short time. Sawat (people still referred to him as *'Ja',* Sergeant) adopted the style of a representative and consensus-seeking, rather than authoritarian, leader. He also demonstrated his status as political client of the powerful Communications Minister, Montri Phongphanit.

Firstly, one should note that not all district officeholders were happy with the election results. Criticism was largely 'backstage' since to openly challenge the legitimacy of the incumbents would leave the speaker open to reprisals. My data are somewhat one-sided since the officeholders who were my close informants were pleased with the election results. However, the following exchange between two headmen, speaking before entering the first district meeting after polling (1 November), gives a flavour of the disgust some must have felt: "Banglen, the Golden District! Pah! It's the district of corruption!" To which his friend replied: "The powerful get 'big bites': it's that kind of a democracy!"[27]

They seemed to be referring to the fact that the new councillors had obtained their positions on account of their wealth, which they would now be able to augment further by using their position. On the other hand, the powerful could afford to make public their displeasure: *Kamnan* Damrong and *Kamnan* Bay, who

---

[27]*Banglen, mu̲ang thong, hu̲ mu̲ang corapchan. Phu mi amnat day kham yay, pen prachatipaday ba̲p ni.* This exchange took place in the urinals outside the district meeting hall. Built from funds docked from officeholder's salaries, it was half-completed and stank. It was probably this environment and the fact that the new provincial councillors were about to be introduced to the assembly that prompted their remarks. People were evidently aware of the extent to which vote-buying had influenced the election outcome: I heard another two officeholders comment to one another: "You can't beat money" (*su ngen may day*).

usually occupied the front row in district meetings, were conspicuous by their absence. They remained outside the hall while the councillors were presented.

Although officially inaugurated at the provincial hall, the new councillors were invited by the District Officer to address the assembly. Sawat gave an unremarkable speech, thanking everyone for their support and announcing his commitment to work on behalf of the district. Sanit was more forthright and, rather outrageously, referred explicitly to vote-buying[28]: after thanking everyone for their support he attempted to pre-empt criticism by claiming not to have used money to canvass. He then asked that differences be put aside:

> ...let's consider these elections as a game (*gam*) and forget about them. I don't bear any of you who opposed me any grudges and I hope you won't bear me any. I will try to develop (*phatthana*) the district as much as I can...

Evidently he was aware that others criticised him for buying and perhaps intimidating his way into office.

Unusually - for I had never seen a councillor take an active part in a district meeting - Sawat contributed to discussion of practical problems affecting the district. Firstly, hearing officeholders' complaints that local transport fares had risen disproportionately in response to Gulf War-related petrol price rises, he volunteered to negotiate fairer prices from operators. Secondly, he proposed a solution to a problem afflicting traders and residents of the market area in which he lived. On hearing that the water pump supplying this area was faulty and that funds for a replacement were unavailable, Sawat offered free use of his own pump, saying he would not charge for electricity. This act, at least, was strategic, as he himself implied, when he commented that the area "is my biggest vote giver" (*pen siang yay thi sut*). Finally, one can note that he continually enjoined officeholders to be close to him (*klay chit*), appealing that "We must work together" (*raw tong tham ngan ruam kan*).

I am unable to say, on the basis of fieldwork data, in what ways Sawat and Sanit have used their positions for economic gain, though one can probably assume they now have an effective monopoly on government construction contracts in the district. However, in the second district meeting they attended, they signalled the potential use they could make of their positions. They invited *kamnan* to contract to them maintenance of their subdistrict water supply systems. While, to my knowledge, *kamnan* were not subjected to extra-economic pressure to comply, the

---

[28]Discussion of which was normally excluded from all public discourse: district officials colluded with candidates in pretending nothing untoward marked the election campaigns.

councillors would probably have been unable to make such a proposition without holding the position they did.

VII.L.1. Sawat and Minister Montri Phongphanit

Sawat received the support of the Minister of Communications, Montri Phongphanit, during his campaign. The impression that Montri was Sawat's political patron is confirmed by developments after he obtained office. Montri appeared to be cultivating Sawat as a *hua khanqn* in preparation for the eventuality that he could bring Banglen into his constituency. This seemed to be in anticipation of the incumbent government falling, and that subsequently a general election would be called.[29]

On 26 October Montri staged what was acclaimed as one of the grandest acts of electioneering (*ha siang*) ever performed in Thailand. He sponsored an extravagant *kathin* rite at a royal temple in Ayutthaya town and distributed funds, from a variety of donors, among all religious institutions in the province.[30] The *kathin* ceremony was preceded by an enormous party which seated and fed 2,500 guests (*to jin*), and which was attended by all local dignitaries including the new provincial councillors. A total of 32.3 million baht was disbursed: 200,000 baht was given to temples which had not yet held their *kathin* rites and 45,000 was given to all others as a *pha pa* donation. Money went to 491 temples and 54 mosques in the province (Bangkok Post, 4 November 1990, 11 November 1990). The political significance of this event was not lost on the national press:

> Following the historic *kathin* ceremony, Mr Montri, who is secretary-general of the Social Action Party (SAP), and his running mate, Mr Boonpan Kaewattana[31] can now relax without having to engage in any political campaigning in the next general election..."They can even sleep because the SAP team is already declared the winners in Ayutthaya before the election actually takes place" said one observer (Bangkok Post, 4 November 1990).

We have already encountered the potency of merit-making as an electioneering strategy. Significantly, Sawat distributed the merit-making cheques on Montri's

---

[29]At the time it appeared that, at any moment, the National Assembly would be dissolved. In fact nothing happened until February 1991 when the military 'National Peace-keeping Council' took control.

[30]National politicians have for a long time earned ritual legitimation from their patronage of the *sangha* (Tambiah 1976:392).

[31]Transliterated in this text as 'Bunphan Kawatthana'.

behalf to temples in several Banglen subdistricts, including Wat Ban Thung and Wat Yom.

Following deep flooding and consequent crop damage in October 1990, Montri donated rice to affected areas in Ayutthaya. During the December district meeting, Sawat, having received a consignment for Banglen, raised the question of how the rice should be distributed. In so doing he implied he enjoyed an especially close relationship with Montri: the Minister, he said, had given him 10 tonnes of rice, twice the amount received by every other councillor. The rice sacks bore the Minister's name and party. No attempt was made by Sawat to bias distribution towards 'loyal' subdistricts, though distribution within subdistricts was probably skewed. How the rice should be distributed was a contentious issue: should it be divided equally among all subdistricts or all Villages,[32] or to only those subdistricts or Villages which had suffered crop losses? To whom should it be given: everyone or just landowners? The *kamnan* of Ban Say subdistrict quite rightly pointed out that the really needy were the landless, not farmers. The District Officer terminated this attempt at consensus, telling Sawat to divide the rice equally among all the district's administrative Villages, regardless of whether they had suffered losses or not, leaving it up to individual *kamnan* to decide to whom it should go locally.[33] After giving evidence of his 'special relationship' with Montri, and of his patron's largesse, Sawat went on to ask officeholders whether they would like to come under his electoral constituency.

As was indicated above, Banglen falls outside, but is contiguous with Montri's constituency. Montri appeared to use Sawat to establish whether there was popular support in Banglen for bringing the district into his constituency. Sawat addressed the December 1990 meeting:

---

[32]The number of administrative Villages, and by implication the population, of the constituent subdistricts varies between 4 and 11; thus this is an important distinction.

[33]In Ban Thung the rice was effectively used as a reward for loyalty to *Kamnan* Han. Although a list had been compiled of subdistrict households which had suffered damage, in the event, Han and his deputies distributed the rice to only those households which were represented at the 15 December subdistrict meeting. Because of continued factionalism, residents of Villages One and Two were not attending the meetings. The rice consequently went to residents of Villages Three, Four and Five.

> Montri asked me to ask *kamnan* and headmen this. We are in Constituency Two. In the future there will be 'big' elections. But not yet. Although the government at the moment [pause] well, things aren't so good, you would have heard the news....I want to ask you which constituency you would like to come under, Constituency One or Two. I'm just asking - I'm not a 'vote broker' (*hua khanan*) or anything.[34]

At which point the District Officer interrupted, saying that since he had received no information from the Ministry of Interior about changing electoral boundaries he could not let Sawat continue. Clearly embarrassed, Sawat apologised. To date Banglen lies in the constituency of Montri's running mate, Bunphan. According to an informant in the district, during the 22 March 1992 general election Sawat acted as Bunphan's vote broker. Montri may well have asked Sawat to perform this role; thus his investment in Sawat may not have been altogether wasted.

Kamnan Han and other residents of Ban Thung were clearly impressed by Montri's *kathin* electioneering strategy and by Sawat's special relationship with him. Han commented that as a result of the former, Montri's voting base (*than siang*) went "extremely deep" (*luk sung*) and, recounting how Sawat had walked beside Montri when the latter opened the new provincial council, exclaimed that Sawat "is right in there!" (*khaw thung ley*).[35] Han also relished the possibility of coming under Montri's electoral constituency:

> If we were in Montri's constituency, well, our Banglen, you don't need [to say]! We wouldn't be deprived. Those on the 'inside' would be really comfortable.

Sawat, having already brought Montri's rice and 45,000 baht temple contribution, was seen as the vehicle of Montri's patronage.

While provincial councillors may wield considerable influence in the district they represent, they may be relatively powerless in the actual council. Sanit once complained that he and other less wealthy councillors, were dominated in the council by the truly wealthy, the *sia*. He complained that MPs try to prevent provincial councillors from becoming too influential and just use them for canvassing (*ha siang*) purposes. This is probably an accurate observation:

---

[34]*Phom ko day krap rian rap sab ma jak so so wa hay ma thom han kamnan phuyayban. Nay khet kan luak tang khong raw ni, yu nay khet song. To pay nay wan khang na ni na ha, ja mi kan luak tang khrang yay. Ta yang may mi. Phro wa ratthaban ton ni ko musuk wa* [pause] *kamnan phuyayban ko fang khaw....Aw yangngay, yak ja khaw yu khet nung ru wa a yu khet song di. Phom ma ha pruksa hay kamnan du. Raw ma khit pruksa kan yu na ha, may chay wa phom ja ma pen hua khanan ru yangan.*

[35]According to Sawat, on this occasion Minister Montri gave a gold chain, weighing 75 grams, to himself and Sanit.

provincial councillors are in a prime position from which to launch a campaign in a general election, since they have an established voting base in one district, and thus may pose a threat to MPs.[36]

VII.M. The Elections in National Perspective

Press reports concerning the elections of 20 October 1990 put the contest as reported in Banglen district in wider perspective: they demonstrate that clientelism was a general phenomenon and that incorrect electoral practice in Banglen was modest in comparison to some other areas. Elections were held simultaneously in 668 districts throughout the nation, using a total of 30,824 polling stations. Of more than 25 million potential voters just over 13 million voted (51.81 percent). A total of 2,046 provincial councillors were elected (*Thai Rath*, 29 October 1990).

Poorly disguised moves by the Minister of Interior to get his political clients into office came under criticism. The Minister "went and gave his support to his clients (*luk nong*) and 'vote bosses' who were candidates" (*Thai Rath,* 22 October 1990). According to the report, he supported candidates in three districts of his constituency. These candidates were said to have spent several million baht on vote-buying, the implication being that their campaign funds were provided by the Minister. Results in five subdistricts within these districts indicated official complicity in electoral fraud. For example, in one area ballot returns were unusually high despite the fact that sudden deep flooding had kept most voters at home. The Minister appeared to be securing the support of provincial councillors who would act as his *hua khanan* in subsequent general elections - a good example of political clientelism and one which mirrors the relationship pursued by the Minister of Communications in relation to Sawat. An editorial published shortly after the elections suggests that this strategy was not an isolated one:

> Of the new provincial councillors many are 'vote brokers' of MPs. They received both open and covert support from MPs who wanted to take care of, and expand their voting base for use in future elections (*Thai Rath,* 28 October 1990).

Furthermore, the editorial comments that, in a similar way, some provincial councillors had prepared for their candidacy by sponsoring the earlier campaigns of headmen and *kamnan*:

---

[36]As Han himself noted, Sawat could one day become an MP.

> In some places provincial councillor candidates had invested (*long thun*) in the long-term by earlier supporting candidates who had become *kamnan* and headman, so that these people would, in return (*pen kan top thqn*), help them obtain office (*Thai Rath,* 28 October 1990).

To some extent this occurred in the case study above. During his bid to become *kamnan*, Han received moral and some practical support from Sanit and Sawat. They subsequently received Han's support in their bid to become provincial councillors.

Nationally, electoral rigging and fraud were rife. For example, in Don Chedi District of nearby Suphanburi Province, candidates eliminated the need for elections by drawing straws (*jap salak*) prior to polling. The seven unsuccessful candidates withdrew their candidacy leaving the remaining two to be appointed. Straws were drawn "so that there was no need to spend a lot of money on canvassing" (*Thai Rath*, 23 October 1990). According to the report about 1,000 villagers from five subdistricts subsequently demonstrated outside the Provincial Hall, eventually forcing the two provincial councillors to resign. In this case candidates cooperated with each other for their mutual benefit: little attempt appears to have been made to establish their legitimacy. Whether the protest was orchestrated by a disgruntled candidate or was genuinely popular resistance, one can only guess.

Elsewhere in the same province election officials were implicated when it was discovered that the winning candidate had obtained eight votes more than were cast in total (*Thai Rath*, 22 October 1990). In one subdistrict in Ratchaburi province, villagers were reportedly so dissatisfied with the extensive use of money, both to bribe voters and officials, that they boycotted the elections: of 1,008 registered voters, only four valid votes and one invalid vote were cast (*Thai Rath,* 22 October 1990). Events in Banglen were tame in comparison.

VII.N. Concluding Remarks

This Chapter has described elections for provincial councillors in Banglen district in 1990. The successful candidates are Sino-Thai district town residents who are merchants and own a contracting business. Their chief competitor was the owner of a capitalist brickyard who is a member of the BMA. Similar tactics were used by both sides. Vote brokers were employed to act on behalf of the candidates, either to buy votes or to deliver political patronage (as in the case of the Ban Thung *kamnan*). Vote canvassers were generally local officeholders who could control 'bloc' votes, but it is not inappropriate to consider local religious

leaders as also fulfilling this role. The candidates sought the support of temple abbots either by patronizing temple rites, or by relying on relations of dependence cultivated over the medium term. That is, as a supplier of building supplies on credit, one candidate in particular was able to rely on the support of abbots and temple committees. In turn, the latter may evoke the morality of reciprocity to acquire the backing of the parish.

Whereas the Chapter Six case study illustrated how MPs cultivate the support of subdistrict level officeholders, this one showed an MP enlisting the loyalty of district level politicians in order to use them as vote canvassers. Links of political clientage were also illustrated between subdistrict and district level officeholders (between *Kamnan* Han and Sawat). Finally, as an aside, one could note that, although they did not appear to have affected the outcome of the election, threats of violence were used by one candidate to limit the viability of the campaign of another.

The following Chapter takes up some of these issues and views the two case studies comparatively as well as in the broader context of the literature on local politics.

CHAPTER EIGHT

LOCAL-LEVEL ELECTORAL POLITICS

This Chapter brings together the findings of the latter two Chapters and draws out a number of general points regarding structures and strategies in contemporary Thai local politics. After first reflecting on the case study data, I attempt to interpret electioneering strategies from the village perspective.

VIII.A. Aspects of the Election Campaigns in Ban Thung

A number of points can be made about the conduct of the election campaigns in Ban Thung. I have argued that, although of great importance, the breadth of the respective candidates' kin networks was not the main determinant of electoral success in the Ban Thung *kamnan* elections. As was indicated, Headman Nakun's kin network was larger than that of Han, both of whose parents were settlers in Ban Thung. When individual vote brokers canvass, they will do so along the lines of kin links, but will also draw on other relationships, such as those of employer/employee, friendship and so on. Similarly, when vote brokers acted on behalf of provincial councillor candidates they mobilised networks which comprised but were not limited to kin links.

It could be seen as inevitable that all candidates bought votes in both case study elections. As a result of the prevalence of vote-buying by representatives of national politicians in general elections in the 1980s, this had become a 'normal' campaign instrument at the local level, leaving participants with no option but to use it or face defeat.[1] Prior use of money had set a precedent and candidates campaigned with money effectively and efficiently. However, even without such a precedent, the socially and economically differentiated composition of Ban Thung subdistrict provides an appropriate ground for vote-buying. The candidates in the *kamnan* election, representing the subdistrict upper stratum as they did, lacked reciprocal relations with landless households. Furthermore, candidates could not

---

[1]This is widely recognised and represented in people's comments - people say that a candidate does not have a chance of success if he does not buy votes.

always rely upon kin to give support without payment. In a more general sense, there was little basis for mutual exchange and sharing in the subdistrict such that even individual *hua khanqn* - headmen for example - could not easily depend upon obtaining the electoral support of those with whom they had links without paying for it. To sum up, class and status differences undermine the basis for effective linkages between candidates and electorate; money is used as an alternative or a supplement to other ties and mediates the socio-economic divide between candidates and villagers.[2]

In a sense, and seemingly paradoxically, the increase in vote-buying of recent years, may be indicative of greater freedom among the rural electorate. Candidates and vote brokers would not pay for votes where they could command them.[3] The breakdown of established status and economic structures as well as patterns of deference, explains, to some extent, the pervasiveness of vote-buying (cf. Scott 1972:111). Further, rural dwellers do participate in politics by virtue of their bargaining power: they realise the value of their votes and, in particular, individuals who can unite the rural voters to form blocs, for example abbots, may negotiate benefits from candidates.

Another way of looking at vote-getting strategies is in terms of Scott's analysis of the 'orientation' of the electorate (1972). Where this is to a community or locality, reward for electoral support is generally indivisible - in the form of public works, schools and so on (1972:110). Where an electorate is oriented to the household or small groups (neighbourhoods) inducements comprise particularistic material rewards such as cash. As described in Chapter Three, prior to the 1980s, under the virtual autocracy of the incumbent *kamnan*, residents of Ban Thung subdistrict voted in a bloc and received indivisible rewards. Latterly, as solidarity within the subdistrict has dissolved, national then local politicians found it expedient to offer particularistic rewards. However, one must not assume that the

---

[2]A recent comparative study of politics in two Indonesian villages (Cederroth 1991) demonstrates how vote-buying serves to supplement weak ties. In a more commercialised village, which was close to an urban centre and in which social and economic differences were more marked, vote-buying and material rewards were used. In a village which was relatively uncommercialised and distant from an urban area, 'traditional' ties between kinsmen and noblemen guided voting behaviour.

[3]This point is illustrated with reference to late eighteenth and early nineteenth century England where two types of electorate, 'locked-in' and 'free', existed. A 'locked-in' electorate were economically dependent rural tenants whose votes were controlled by landlord-patrons; town-dwelling 'free voters' were independent of such relationships and had the freedom to sell their votes (Scott 1972:101). It is also illustrated by the wistful utterance of a headman advising Han on the conduct of his *kamnan* campaign: "you cannot force villagers to vote any more because they've 'wised up'" (*hua samong than lqw*), he said.

move from a community to household orientation, from communal to particularistic rewards, is necessarily evolutionary or inexorable. For example, while acting as vote broker for his friends Sawat and Sanit, the new *kamnan* of Ban Thung managed to persuade the electorate of Villages Four and Five to accept communal inducements despite the fact that just five months previously he himself had disbursed particularistic rewards. Where the appeal to communal interests is made vigorously enough households may forego their individual interests for those of the putative community. Such appeals are likely to be particularly effective when reward is made to the moral institution of the temple. One could expect that in urban areas, where there are few bases for solidarity beyond the unit of the household, attempts are not made to persuade the electorate to accept communal inducements.

Finally, one can consider the relationship between factionalism and the elections. It was noted in Chapter Three that factions did not exist in Ban Thung subdistrict before the retirement of the domineering and long-standing *kamnan* in 1990. Upon his retirement, factions formed around the candidates competing for his post. It was suggested in Chapter Seven that these factions were reactivated in polling for provincial councillors. Faction leaders mobilised the support networks built up during their own campaigns on behalf of their political patrons. In this way local factional conflict is fuelled by participation in provincial, and probably also national elections[4] - a phenomenon implied by Ananya, who comments that local and national level elections have "politicized already pre-existing personal ties as well as creating new ones" (1985:371).

VIII.B. The Brick Industry and Local Politics

It should be evident by now that an examination of electoral politics in Banglen would be incomplete if owners of large, capitalist brickyards were not included. Owners of capitalist enterprises are incumbent or potential officeholders, and are sought as vote brokers in subdistrict, district and general elections. Workers in the industry are seen by candidates as comprising a captive electorate.

Owners of capitalist brickyards are perceived to exert some control over their employees' voting behaviour. Thus, they are sought out as, or are themselves, *hua khanan* - their support was sought by candidates in both case studies. We saw that employees are likely to vote in accordance with the wishes of their employers

---

[4]According to a Ban Thung informant, headmen representing the different factions in the *kamnan* election acted as vote brokers for opposing MP candidates in the March 1992 general election.

to a degree: to reject openly the 'advice' of their employer might be to invite dismissal. However, as was demonstrated by the failed attempt of Chalo to influence his workers (Chapter Six), any leverage is weak where the majority of employees have loyalties at odds with those of their employer, and where the employer is not prepared to risk alienating the entire workforce. Moreover, except where the relationship is extraordinarily close, the employer/employee link is not so strong that the former will expect the latter to vote for a candidate of his choosing without payment: an employer may influence for whom employees vote, but votes must still be bought. It is likely that this finding can be extended to other rural areas where similar relations of production pertain: Ananya suggests that the wage-labour relationship was a source of political support for big Chachaengsao poultry-farmers (who were seen by some employees as "an alternative source of patronage" [1985:381]), but she does not reveal whether or not votes were paid for in elections. Regardless of whether they hold office, mechanised brickyard owners are figures of political importance in the district and in the immediate vicinity in which they operate. They are wealthy, are major employers in the neighbourhood in which they operate, and are likely to enjoy favourable relations with local state representatives. Ordinary villagers appear aware of their powerlessness relative to the economic power of large brickyard owners. While I did not confirm this claim, one operator, Ot, told me that prior to the retirement of the incumbent *kamnan* of the subdistrict in which his brickyard lies, a group of headmen asked him whether he wanted the post. It appeared that they were aware that none would be able successfully to contest the election if he desired the post.

Some owners do choose to augment the influence they wield by virtue of their economic power by obtaining local political office: in 1990 six of the core 24 male BMA members were officeholders. Chapter Six documented how one member successfully won office as *kamnan*; Chapter Seven gave details of an unsuccessful attempt by another member to become a provincial councillor. Owners of capitalist brickyards are able to use office to serve their own economic interests in any of several ways: as an officeholder they can encourage locals to work in their enterprise; their enterprise will probably expand by virtue of prestige accompanying office; and they will also be able to use their weight on the subdistrict council to propose development projects, for example roads, from which they will benefit. They may also, like *Kamnan* Bay and *Kamnan* Damrong, obtain development funds with an eye to enhancing their prestige as officeholders and perhaps also to rewarding those loyal to them (cf. Ananya 1985:383). Again, it is not only in Banglen district that owners of rural capitalist enterprises assume political office - as is attested by Ananya's Chachoengsao poultry farmers

(1985:382-383). Moreover, this is true of the rural Philippines where the benefits of office are strikingly similar. Wolters notes that rural entrepreneurs, who obtained positions of municipal councillor, saw their businesses flourish because of acquired prestige, were able to "protect their own business interests" in the case of legal problems, and were "able to arrange things more easily", for example reducing police-extortion payments (1983: 209).

It is very likely that more members of the BMA could obtain office if they so desired it. Certainly, several members have the knowledge, economic wherewithal and personal contacts to obtain office at the subdistrict level and perhaps also at the district level. Two members with whom I spoke had in mind comprehensive strategies that they could use should they wish to contest the 1990 provincial councillor election.[5] Probably more large brickyard owners do not seek office because of the perceived 'costs' of incumbency: these two brickyard owners stated that they did not want to become provincial councillors because of the time and energy taken from their business operations and because office would necessarily involve them in corrupt practices.[6]

To some extent, if a brickyard owner is at once a BMA member and an officeholder, he will be expected to protect the interests of co-members with respect to the area over which he has jurisdiction. For instance, shortly after *Kamnan* Han assumed office, villagers of Ban Thung and Ban Say proposed raising a levy on brickyard and tipper lorries using local roads in an effort to gain compensation for the destruction they wrought. *Kamnan* Han effectively suppressed this move, and persuaded those proposing the scheme that it would not be viable. Had he not autonomously undermined this move, he would probably have been subject to pressure from fellow BMA members, whose lorries and operations would have been affected. Because his business is located close to the Asian Highway, he was only dependent on a small stretch of Ban Say road, and so he himself would not have been unduly affected. That is to say, he does not appear to have acted primarily because his own interests were threatened.

Finally, an important question remains to be considered concerning the relationship of the BMA and lines of conflict in provincial councillor elections. Does the opposition of the BMA leadership to the two successful merchant/contractor candidates reveal a conflict of economic interests or simply

---

[5]One, Ot, told me he would buy votes, employ "gangsters" (*nakleng*) to "intimidate" (*khum khu*) voters and buy over the necessary officials. Another, Santi, as already mentioned, said he would sponsor merit-making at all of the district's temples in rotation.

[6]Whether we are to take the latter reason at face value I am not sure.

conflict of a personal kind? It was mentioned that the BMA chairman criticised an incumbent councillor for appropriating development funds, and that the reason for his dissatisfaction was that it reduced the means at his disposal to develop his subdistrict, and thereby enhance his prestige. On separate occasions three other BMA members voiced similar criticisms. It is possible that BMA members were critical of corruption among provincial councillors because in a fundamental way it impaired their profitability. In one restricted way, the interests of contractors who are provincial councillors, such as Sawat and Sanit, oppose those of brickyard operators. Brick manufacturers benefit from the presence of good physical infrastructure, in particular from roads, which they use to transport labourers as well as raw materials and products. Officeholding contractors, however, profit by appropriating, in one way or another, funds which are targeted to such projects. Rüdiger Korff (personal communication 1991) has suggested that conflict may be emerging between technocratic and corrupt business interests in Southern Thailand. On the basis of the evidence available it is difficult to determine whether or not imputing this kind of conflict in this case is pure speculation: however, if such conflict is incipient, then it should emerge more clearly in the future. Research of such groups elsewhere will reveal whether it exists generally.

VIII.C. Electoral Politics and Religion

Protagonists in the case studies invested effort and money into winning the support of religious leaders and temple congregations. It was noted that one provincial councillor had cultivated a relationship of dependency with abbots in the district's temples - a phenomenon I have not seen described elsewhere in the literature. Candidates campaigning in both *kamnan* and provincial councillor elections, and incumbent national politicians acted as ritual patrons of *kathin* ceremonies. While something has already been said about the way in which religious leaders, biased toward a particular candidate, may influence the electorate, further comment is warranted regarding patronage of *kathin* rites.

Gray (1991) has argued that royal religious rituals, and in particular *kathin*, produce prestige and distinction for those who control them. Whether royal or not,

> *Kathin* sponsors, the owners or lords of the ceremony, receive merit (*bun*) and honour (*kiat*) through their generosity to Buddhist monks. In ritual they show (*sadaeng*) and build (*sang*) transcendent virtue (*barami, parami* P. [Pali]) which is synonymous with credibility (1991:47).

It is a sin to criticise religion and it is similarly inappropriate to question the motives of those who sponsor a *kathin* ceremony (1991:49). Gray describes how the vast Sino-Thai controlled Bangkok Bank obtained the royal prerogative to sponsor *kathin* at royal temples throughout the Northeast. The manner in which the bank performed *kathin* ceremonies gave the impression to villagers that this was the bank of the King: the ceremonies were used to win the trust of the rural populace and thereby enter, and subsequently control, the rural credit market. The bank converted economic power into religious prestige, and reconverted this into economic power.

In Chapters Six and Seven, local and national politicians, by sponsoring *kathin* ceremonies, demonstrated their morally exemplary character, earned credibility and prestige, and entered a reciprocal relationship with the recipient temple community. One could say that, just as the Bangkok Bank, by sponsoring royal *kathin,* converted economic power back into economic power through the rite, so politicians convert economic power into political power. Economic power is converted to religious prestige which is then transformed through the electoral support of the temple congregation into votes. The process may be said to come full circle, just as Gray's case does, if one argues that political power is subsequently reconverted into economic power. That is, if politicians who obtained votes by patronising temple rites use office to extract monetary gain - legally, as in the case of the Bangkok Bank, or illegally.

An interesting question which, to my knowledge, has not been addressed, concerns the use politicians may make of Islamic religious institutions.[7] Muslims constitute much of the population of Southern Thailand and a sizeable minority in Central Thailand. As mentioned in Chapter Seven, the Minister of Communications disbursed money to mosques as well as to temples in Ayutthaya, signifying that at least the donor expected that the same morality of exchange prevails among representatives of both institutions. However, whether it is considered meritorious to patronize Islamic institutions as it is Buddhist, I do not know.

VIII.D. Parties, MPs, Provincial Councillors and Vote Brokers

In more ways than one, contemporary Thai national electoral politics resembles 'machine-style' politics. Political parties in such a system are less

---

[7]This question was suggested to me by Michael Nelson (personal communication 1992).

interested in political principle "than in securing and retaining political office for its leaders and distributing income to those who run in and work for it" (Scott 1972:108). Authority depends more on distributive activity than coercion or primordial ties: material rewards are distributed to small groups to maintain and extend the machine party's control over the electorate (Scott 1972:108-109). The aptness of such a description is further indicated by the fact that party politics had no significant role in the two case studies. National politicians acted as individuals rather than as representatives of a party. None of the provincial councillor candidates, except for one, claimed to represent a party, nor did either of the *kamnan* candidates claim party affiliation. The provincial councillor candidate who did imply (but not explicitly claim) he was a party representative was probably doing so spuriously. This may have changed slightly since I completed fieldwork. Recent events have led to greater attention being given, particularly among urban voters, to the pro- or anti-military stance of parties and by extension to candidates' party affiliation (see Chapter Nine). Suwannarat (1985:81) and Murashima (1987:383) have both noted that national political parties do not demonstrate any interest in provincial assembly elections.

The case studies illustrate how national politicians attempt to obtain and extend control over grass-roots votes by establishing vote-procuring networks. These networks are built up by providing candidates for local-level office with vote-buying funds and/or services and resources which can be offered to collective electorates. If they obtain office, these client candidates are expected to reciprocate by mobilising the vote-procuring network which they established in their own campaign for their political patron. It is worth reiterating a point made in Chapter Two: these relations, while contributing to a model of representative clientelism are not the same as dyadic, multifaceted patron-client relations. Relations may be mediated only by a cash transaction, or, at the other pole, they may be so personalistic that they warrant description as patron-clientage (for example, the relationship between Sawat and the Minister of Communications approximates to this).

National politicians will also cultivate incumbent subdistrict-level officeholders and other influential people as vote brokers (Murashima 1987:380-381). They may attend parties hosted by such people or provide gifts periodically (for example, Narong MP attended the Wat Ban Thung *kathin* rite, Bunphan MP contributed funds to Wat Lamu's crematorium). They may also use public occasions to appear before the electorate as generous patrons.

Data in Chapter Six illustrate how MPs attempt to create a direct link with potential officeholders at subdistrict level. If Headman Nakun had become *kamnan*

of Ban Thung, Bunphan MP would have expected him to reciprocate for the contribution he had made to his campaign funds. In the event of a general election Nakun would have been expected to mobilise the vote-procuring network he had created in the subdistrict on Bunphan's behalf. If Han had accepted Narong MP's offer of campaign funds he would have been similarly beholden.

Data in Chapter Seven illustrate how national politicians attempt to create political clients at the district level. They will expect their district-level vote brokers to mobilise the vote-procuring network which they themselves had established when they obtained office. For example, if Montri Phongphanit was able to change constituency boundaries for the 22 March 1992 general election then it is likely that he would have mobilised his political client, Provincial Councillor Sawat. Sawat would, in turn, have asked all his subdistrict and Village level vote brokers to activate their vote-procuring networks. Just as *Kamnan* Han had mobilised the network he had cultivated for his own *kamnan* campaign for Sawat's provincial councillor campaign, he would have reactivated it for the campaign of Sawat's political patron. However, as noted in Chapter Seven, constituency boundaries remained unchanged and Sawat acted as the vote broker of Montri Phongphanit's running mate, Bunphan Kawatthana.

The above presentation of national politicians' vote-getting strategies might give the impression that lower-level vote brokers are passive partners. This is not the case. Within limitations, local vote brokers will transfer their support as and when it is convenient. For example, although *Kamnan* Han received the moral support of Narong MP in his own electoral campaign, he supported Sawat, the client of Narong's potential opponent (Montri Phongphanit), in the provincial councillor election campaign, even though he knew this went against Narong's wishes. However, the mobility of vote brokers is circumscribed by the sanction of violence, especially where an exchange of money has taken place: they are often the target of the estimated 800 to 2,000 political assassins active in the period before a general election (Handley, 27 February, 1992).

Events described in Chapter Seven revealed provincial politicians cultivating relations with key vote brokers at lower levels and with national politicians at higher levels. Again, at least according to contemporary press reports, this now seems a feature of provincial politics. However, it is not the case that national politicians demand loyalty in their capacity as representatives of political parties, but simply as individuals. In the Philippines during the 1960s (Lande 1965:60-62) and 1970s (Wolters 1983:206-207), local politicians, in a similar way, cultivated relations with higher and lower level politicians. The use national and provincial politicians make of *hua khanan,* and the way the latter

work to obtain votes mirror the part played by *lider* in the electoral politics of the Philippines. A *lider* is a "political broker, [a] supporter of a politician who actively recruits votes" (Wolters 1983:271). A *lider*, like a *hua khanan*, is an intermediary who links a politician to the electorate. He or she does not control resources directly, but provides access to them. *Lider* obtained votes by calling on the support of kin and/or by buying votes (1983:208-209). Relations between *lider* and the electorate were thus not qualitatively uniform: some were personal, some were chiefly transactional. As in Banglen

> Various kinds of relationships were often linked. For example, a politician had a patron-client relationship with a lider [sic], who in turn had a purely transactional relationship with the voters, or the politician had a transactional relationship with the lider, who acquired votes through kinship ties (Wolters 1983:209).

The similarity with the Thai situation is marked.

VIII.E. Political Patronage, Patronage and Vote-Buying

In this section I wish to examine the strategies of collective political patronage and particularistic vote-buying in more detail. Candidates in both case studies combined the donation of items to collectivities (political patronage), and vote-buying in their campaigns. Obviously, if goods or services are given to a collective electorate in return for votes, the recipient electorate is expected to vote together. In order to do this, members of the target electorate, whether this is a neighbourhood, Village or subdistrict, will perceive there to be common interests. Where electoral competition is intense, where the electorate is highly socio-economically stratified, factionalised, or where secular or religious leadership is weak, it is likely that use of communal inducements to vote will be ineffective - that is, orientation will be particularistic rather than collective. The current pervasive nature of vote-buying may be as much a reflection of extensive and increasing agrarian differentiation as an expression of the absence of links between political centre and periphery.

There is a qualitative difference between political patronage of the collective kind and vote-buying. Whether the former is a less expensive campaign strategy than the latter it is impossible to say. From the candidate's perspective, delivering material rewards to collective electorates can be portrayed paternalistically as 'taking care' of the electorate. However, it is less easy to disguise the commercial nature of vote-buying. When vote-buying as an issue enters the public domain, as it recently has, those officeholders who obtained office by virtue of it leave themselves open to denunciation. This may explain why the

Minister of Communications went to such lengths to extend political patronage to every temple and mosque in Ayutthaya province. Candidates at the subdistrict level may wish to present themselves as patron-style leaders - thus vote-buying and material patronage may, as is often the case, go hand-in-hand. The national or provincial politician who seeks and obtains office must to some extent be responsive to the needs of the electorate over the medium term: the transaction between politician and electorate may not run its course for several months or years. The situation is not dissimilar to that in England in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century where:

> In addition to purchasing of votes as election day approached, successful candidates learned that they might enhance their chances considerably by 'nursing' a constituency between elections. The prospective candidate might contribute to local charities, offer to fix the town clock, found a school, or pay for some needed public works improvements...Candidates, in short, made every effort to create a solid base of support well before the campaign began (Scott 1972:100-101).

The patronage of incumbent national politicians with respect to *Kamnan* Han's *kathin* rite should be seen in these terms.

Where political patronage is used it is not inevitable that the rewards benefit the majority of villagers. For example, the asphalted road and public telephone delivered through the auspices of Sawat to Ban Thung subdistrict are likely to be of greater economic value to the few local owners of capitalist brickyards than landless workers or small-scale farmers. That said, it is unlikely that in Banglen at least, political patronage is responsible for actually generating socio-economic differentiation, a process which, according to Moberg (1991), has developed in a factionally divided community in rural Belize. When leaders, including religious ones, appeal to villagers to subsume their interests in those of a socially constructed 'collectivity' (*suan ruam*), they may well be serving their own purposes.

I would suggest that political patronage and the idiom of patronage are used fairly extensively by candidates at all levels in rural Thailand. What research exists on the local level may not always give this impression, however. For example, Neher and Budsayamat have written that national and local politicians had not "assumed patron roles" in three Northern villages they surveyed, nor had their village interviewees had any contact with such people (1989:65). Two factors might explain why they arrived at these results. Firstly, the authors were using a 'purist' notion of patron-clientage that requires there to exist in the relationship an affective element for it to be defined as one of patronage. Secondly, the research was conducted by means of questionnaires, not participant

observation. Thus, the research methodologies adopted excluded the possibility that politicians delivered political patronage on the one hand, and used the idiom of patronage in their presentation of self on the other.

As has been indicated, in contrast to use of political patronage, when a politician buys votes he appeals not to a collectivity but to the interests of individual households. Vote-buying relationships are marked by less interdependence between electorate and candidate. Once elected, the vote-buying politician can more legitimately use office to serve his own interests: having 'paid' voters, the officeholder is under less, if any, obligation to serve them. As noted in Chapter Six, at least one villager was aware of the effect vote-buying had on her relationship with an officeholder. She appeared to consider that she could not subsequently request any favours from a candidate who bought her vote. But if she was able to give her support freely, then the candidate would be indebted to her, and she could legitimately call on him when in need.

An alternative interpretation of vote-buying, made by Damrong (1985:175-176), draws on Scott's notion of 'everyday-resistance'. He interprets villagers' demands of money to vote, or to put it another way, their acceptance of money, as resistance against politicians. Damrong writes that the majority of voters cast their ballots for particular candidates because of either donations or the vote-buying of the politician. Surely, if they had been 'resisting', villagers would have surreptitiously spoiled their ballots or cast their vote for the 'wrong' candidate? Or, more likely still, they would have refused to accept money or vote at all (as villagers were reported as doing in the newspaper report cited in Chapter Seven). It does not seem helpful to conceive of villagers' acceptance of vote-buying money and subsequent 'appropriate' voting as 'resistance'.

When political patronage is used as a campaign tool one can construe the relationship between candidate and electorate as one of balanced exchange. The candidate who receives villagers' votes is put under an obligation to reciprocate by disbursing goods or services; villagers who receive a candidate's political patronage are put under the obligation to vote for the donating candidate. That this is so has been observed by others. Neher, referring to general elections in 1969, reports that villagers saw their role in terms of selecting an honest and generous patron and stated that "their vote often went to candidates who made tangible contributions to the village" (1979:329). Neher concludes that voters "perceived their vote as somehow obliging the candidate (patron) to perform special services" (1979:330, see also Phillips 1958). Somewhat earlier, Wilson (1962:83) made a similar observation: he perceived that the electorate had begun to "use the vote as a method of obligating the successful candidate to his constituent". But how are we

to understand the relationship between electorate and candidate when votes are exchanged for money? Should we conceive of the relationship any differently? Does the established framework of 'politician as patron' still prevail, or does vote-buying introduce a new rationality? One way of trying to answer this question is to ask why rural voters might vote as they are paid to do when they receive money. That villagers generally do vote as paid is indicated by the case study data but also by the fact that vote-buying is such an extensive phenomenon. Here I am seeking an explanation that refers to conditions among the electorate - the reasons why politicians may use vote-buying have already been given in Chapter Two. To ask why vote-buying is effective one must keep in mind the fact that its effectiveness relies on voters honouring a transaction which is itself illegal: they select the paying candidate in a secret ballot. To my mind, there are three possible partial explanations for why vote-buying 'works', as it were.

Firstly, it is likely that villagers fear reprisals if they do not vote 'correctly'. In Ban Thung poorer villagers in particular expressed fears that vote buyers would know their voting behaviour, and, as we saw, this fear was justified. Fear of retribution, however, does not seem to account for why the majority of recipients of vote-buying money reciprocate appropriately. I do not think that measures used in Ban Thung to 'read' peoples' voting behaviour are employed on a wider scale. Indeed, I have not, as yet, found mention of such practices in the literature. Thus, an explanation which refers to the fear and reality of coercion is, though very important, at best a partial one.

Secondly, the electorate may vote for the paying candidate because they respect the rules predicated by commodity exchange. That is, they deliver their vote 'correctly' because they, having received a 'wage', have been contracted to do so. I would suggest, however, that although this explanation most accurately reflects the nature of the transaction in political-economic terms, culturally this explanation does not apply: values which underpin capitalist production have little purchase on villagers' behaviour and, more importantly, are not, or at least not yet, hedged by moral precepts. There is no reason why honouring the terms of a wage relationship should have any more hold over the electorate than does an ideology concerning a citizen's 'democratic' duty, which villagers negate by the act of selling their votes.

Thirdly, it could be that villagers conceive that when they accept vote-buying money, receipt brings with it a moral obligation to reciprocate (*top thqn*) just as receipt of political patronage does. I would argue that this is indeed the case: to a greater or lesser degree villagers experience a moral obligation when paid for their votes. My suggestion that villagers transpose the morality of

patronage to vote-buying is to some extent supported by Bechstedt's observation that despite enormous change in the Thai political-economy, there is remarkable continuity in terms of cultural values and ideologies: "there exists a striking perseverance in Thai rural peoples' moral standards and values about proper conduct, in rules and regulations of day-to-day behaviour" (1989:12, original emphasis). The following explanation offered by a local village health officer as to why villagers vote 'honestly' is typical: "They give us money, so we must reciprocate" (*khaw hay ngen raw, raw ko tong top than duay kan*). This morality enjoining reciprocity is buttressed by religious discourse. Some villagers claimed to consider it a 'sin' (*bap*) not to vote appropriately, a view also encountered by others. For example, one journalist reported a villager as saying "If you take something from someone and you don't give him something in return, then you are committing a sin" (McBeth 1986:45). Prior to the March 1992 general election a Yasothon villager was reported as saying, "Once we take the money, we have to vote for them. It'd be a sin otherwise" (Bangkok Post Weekly Review, 21 February 1992). Taiwanese villagers in the 1950s, soon after the introduction of vote-buying, appeared to apply a similar morality to the exchange. Gallin considers that:

> The villagers,...in their own way, were extremely moral on the issue of selling their votes; as several villagers pointed out, "you can accept a gift from only one candidate and then you are obligated to vote for him" (1968:386).

Perhaps one can say, then, that vote-buying 'works' because the electorate feels compelled to discharge faithfully the obligation which they perceive is entailed in the receipt of money. Clearly vote-buyers often hold the expectation that villagers will feel bound by receipt of money, and much of vote-buying strategy concerns giving money to voters before the opposition. It is assumed that voters will be loyal to the first donor of money.

That receipt of money, as opposed to any other object, can entail a moral obligation independently of the logic of commodity exchange may appear strange, but becomes less so when we question our assumptions about money. As Parry and Bloch have observed "the idea that the very impersonality of money makes it of questionable appropriateness as a gift...seems to be a peculiarity of our own culture" (1989:8). In societies where the economy is 'embedded' and not a separate

and autonomous sphere there is nothing inappropriate about making gifts of money to cement social bonds, a characteristic certainly true of Central Thai society.[8]

While rural voters may regard vote-buying money as a gift which entails reciprocity, vote buyers use money as a commodity. Money is used to purchase another commodity: the labour of the elector to deliver a vote. The price of labour changes relative to demand and supply (the 'price' of a vote will be higher where contestation is more intense). In other words, politicians work within the logic of commodity exchange. Local discourse reflects this: to spend money on vote-buying is referred to as 'investing capital' (*long thun*)[9], the price of a vote is spoken of as a 'wage' (*kha jang*), and the exchange is represented as 'buying'(*sụ siang*) and 'selling' (*khay siang*) a vote. While politicians use money as money, the transaction with the rural electorate transforms money into a gift, and attaches the associated moral injunction to reciprocate. Again, it should not be cause for surprise that at one minute money functions as a commodity and the next a gift. As Parry and Bloch argue, there is no universal "unbridgeable chasm between gift and commodity exchange" (1989:10) - valuables such as cash can switch from gift to commodity and back (cf. Werbner 1990:282).[10] The rural electorate's interpretation of vote-buying as a form of gift exchange goes some way to explaining why it is an effective campaign strategy. The relationship masquerades as a moral rather than a contractual one: coercion is not required to ensure 'correct' voting behaviour because the discipline is internal and predicated by an indigenous theory of social action. That this discipline is sometimes reinforced with threats and menacing behaviour is not incompatible with the fact that it is also internalised and is an everyday norm of behaviour. But like all norms, this is not adhered to slavishly, and recipients have much room to manoeuvre - they may see vote-buying for what it is and use it as an opportunity to gain as many benefits as they can. It seems that as villagers gain more experience of vote-buying, they treat the transaction as less and less binding (see, for example, Ananya 1992; Tasker and Handley, p.15, 27 August 1992). It is highly likely that the morality of exchange

---

[8]Money serves as a gift in a variety of social contexts, including ordinations, weddings, and new house ceremonies. Relationships are forged and maintained by donation (*chuay ngan*) of cash at such events. The relative size of cash gifts often indicates the nature and strength of the relationship and there is strict reciprocity between households: a party host records receipts and will return the gift, often with a small increment, when the initial donor is a host.

[9]Cf. Ananya (1985:374).

[10]Or, as Gregory has noted of the contemporary Papua New Guinea economy, "A thing is now a gift, now a commodity, depending upon the social context of the transaction" (1982:116)

informs the behaviour of older rather than younger members of the electorate. The latter would have experienced the commoditisation of their labour on a permanent basis, in, for example, brick factory employment. But the point I wish to make is that money itself is such an appropriate campaign tool because of its versatility: it can switch from commodity to gift and back.

My argument can be taken further with the use of a metaphor. When buying votes a politician uses money as an entrepreneur uses capital. Money is used not just as a commodity but as capital: he purchases the labour of others and profits from the surplus value they produce. Aggregated votes 'produce' political office and office gives a return on the incumbent's initial investment - either directly and illegally, in the form of graft, or indirectly by enhancing opportunities for legitimate capital accumulation. Although not literal, this metaphor reflects political economic reality: it is elucidatory insofar as politicians, to a greater or lesser extent, invest in electoral campaigns for reasons related to the accumulation of capital. Other analysts have also made this connection:

> The political world is thought of as a market where [a] vote is a commodity available to be sold at an agreeable price. An elected MP is in essence a successful merchant who was able to accumulate the greater quantity of this commodity than other competitors in his constituency [sic] (Somkiat 1991:118).

One can note that candidates and politicians bring quite different assumptions to the vote-buying relationship. Politicians pursue a relationship with the electorate only insofar as it is necessary for electoral success. While politicians treat the electorate in a sense as a factor of production, the electorate relate to the politician as to a patron. Although many of the electorate are undoubtedly aware that politicians are playing by a different set of rules to themselves, it seems that many continue to give primacy to a rationality based on reciprocity rather than the accumulation of capital.

Having attempted to interpret vote-buying from the perspectives of both parties in the transaction, I will now reflect briefly on the significance and implications of vote-buying on the development of political democracy in Thailand. According to political theorists the purchase of votes should be regarded as an unacceptable practice in a political democracy (Hadenius 1992:46) - it is, of course, ordinarily illegal and is so in Thailand. The principles of democracy stipulate that the people's political desires must influence the public decision-making process: vote-buying, however, "is *de facto* tantamount to selling the franchise" (Hadenius 1992:46-47). Political patronage, which Hadenius refers to as 'client voting', is not to be regarded as unacceptable because preferences are expressed, despite the fact that they are made according to narrow, short-term

interest (1992:46). Thus, where vote-buying takes place, elections are not what he calls 'correct'. To what extent can we expect voting procedure in Thailand to become more correct?

Vote-buying is perpetuated by the activities of both politicians and the rural electorate. The rural electorate assumes that contemporary politicians use their positions to enrich themselves. This being the case, they expect some return on their votes - the return may be targeted to individuals or collectivities as we have seen. In Banglen this assumption was sometimes made explicit.[11] That the electorate expects reward is balanced by the fact that politicians inevitably recoup their expenditure by using office: as Suthy (1991:30) has recently noted and as I have argued, politicians "now consider politics as an investment which must be recouped". One inevitable consequence of this state of affairs is that poorer candidates do not get elected, and that this in turn reduces the chances that poorer sections of the population will have their interests represented. The democratic process currently produces and reproduces 'capitalist' politicians and an unrepresented but paid-off electorate.

Politicians will buy votes for as long as officeholding is a lucrative activity, a profitable investment, or until it is effectively eradicated. If vote-buying does die away, it is likely that political patronage, or 'client voting' - of the kind practised by the Minister of Communications - will replace it as a means of rewarding the electorate. Institutional and cultural change would have to be profound if policies and parties replace representative clientelism as predominant elements of Thai electoral politics.

VIII.F. Concluding Remarks

This Chapter has made a number of empirically grounded statements about local-level politics, some of which appear to be more generally relevant, not only to contemporary Thailand but to other South-East Asian contexts. National and local electoral politics approximate to a model of representative clientelism: there is heavy dependence on intermediary vote canvassers or brokers but these vertical relations are not necessarily equivalent to multifaceted, dyadic patron-client relations. These intermediaries deliver political patronage which takes two forms,

---

[11]For example, the abbot of Wat Yom once claimed a temple can legitimately request a share of an MPs 'corrupt', or 'eaten' money, saying "He 'eats' so we've got to get a share back for ourselves" (*khaw kin, law ko raw tong aw khun mang*). This and other utterances reveal an assumption predominant among rural voters in Belize where, asserts Moberg, "villagers are conscious of the fact that they are essential to politicians' careers, and they openly employ that knowledge to extract meaningful concessions from them" (1991:230).

collective or particularistic - goods or services may be delivered to a collectivity or the divisible reward of money may be given to individual households. It was argued that both political patronage and vote-buying share the characteristic that donor and recipient assume that the transaction entails reciprocity. An attempt was made to explain the extensiveness of vote-buying in contemporary Thai electoral politics. It was suggested that vote-buying is effective because money, in the transaction from canvasser to elector, becomes a gift and the morality of reciprocity is invoked to impel 'appropriate' voting behaviour. This explanation does not exclude the threat of violence, however. In political economic, rather than cultural terms, however, politicians' use of money is best seen as a form of capital investment rather than gift-making.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

Social and economic change in Banglen district has been rapid over the last few decades. Traditional rice cultivation is losing importance for large sectors of the population as the proportion of landless households and households which own small-scale enterprises increases. Members of a significant number of households effectively constitute a rural working class. Those households which own some resources, in particular land, while giving the impression of being independent petty commodity producers are also obliged to sell their labour in order to subsist. At the other end of the economic scale households endowed with sufficient resources are able to meet their subsistence needs by petty commodity production alone. While yet others have launched themselves on a path of accumulation and have become employers of local labour in brick manufacturing enterprises. Status differences within communities in Ban Thung and Ban Say are correspondingly extreme. Although the rich may privately attach moral judgements to the poor, differences, when they are shared by members of a single temple, may be subordinated publicly in the interests of communal solidarity.

In Banglen, the brickmaking industry, particularly the mechanised, capitalist sector, has expanded rapidly during the last 20 years. It has not been directly affected by rural industrialisation policy, but is an autonomous local response to national economic growth, and more specifically to expansion in the construction industry. Enterprises range from petty commodity to capitalist enterprises: the former are non-mechanised, and employ only household labour; the latter may be non-mechanised or mechanised and employ up to 120 local and migrant workers. While some enterprises develop gradually from petty commodity to capitalist production, others are capitalist from the outset.

Residents in this area have never before entered local factory employment in such numbers. Owners of capitalist enterprises, in their efforts to manage villagers not schooled in the disciplines of factory production, use the idiom of patronage to secure the loyalty and increase the productivity of their work force. Employers self-consciously use symbolic acts to denote the employer/employee relationship as one of patron-clientage.

Banglen owners of capitalist, mechanised brickyards have formed a producers' association. While it was originally founded to reduce conflict between individual enterprises, it has taken on the characteristics of an economic and political interest group. The Brick Manufacturers' Association is able to represent the industry's interests to the local administration because of the wealth of individual members and because several among them hold local office. It is important to realise that unity among members is not a constant feature of the Association because considerable interpersonal as well as business conflicts divide it. This said, however, it does have the potential to strengthen its position and influence the administration, other brickyards and labour. The absence of literature on district-level institutions comparable to the BMA reveals a space for future studies. With regard to the BMA itself, further field research would help to ascertain the path along which it will develop. The support given by members to co-members who compete for local office represents one facet of the Association's influence-building orientation.

Three BMA members gained office between 1988 and 1990 with the help of fellow members. The successful campaign of one member to become *kamnan* of Ban Thung is one such case. His success was remarkable insofar as he had few significant links with the electorate and won in the face of stiff local opposition. He was set apart from the majority of villagers in terms of kinship, socio-economic status and residence, but, with capital and the assistance of the former officeholder, he secured the position. To campaign, he used a number of strategies and cultivated a variety of linkages. Strategies included the use of political patronage, which was delivered in the idiom of dyadic patronage; the mobilisation of kin networks, his own restricted one as well as those of his 'inner circle'; and the use of 'dirty tricks' and various illegal methods, of which vote-buying was most significant. He also cultivated legitimacy by patronising the *wat*, and disseminating propaganda. His propaganda invoked morally charged values to persuade the electorate that he was not motivated by self-interest. I suggested that his motive for competing for office was only partly related to material gain: it stemmed as much, if not more, from a desire for status.

The formal apparatus for local-level democracy exists in Thailand but fails to function appropriately for at least two reasons: first, central government has not enacted measures to make decentralisation effective; and second, provincial councils appear to operate in the interests of council members rather than those of the electorate. The October 1990 election in Banglen was contested most fiercely by a team of two merchant/contractors and a BMA brickyard owner. The data available are inconclusive as to whether or not this opposition reveals a more

fundamental conflict between fractions of the district-level capitalist class. The candidates used a similar array of campaign strategies to those used by the new *kamnan* of Ban Thung. Deployment of vote brokers and buying of votes went hand-in-hand with temple-centred legitimising strategies. Candidates acted as political patrons to temple communities and neighbourhoods, in addition to disbursing cash payments to individual households. In one area of Ban Thung the electorate sacrificed immediate household interests by giving support in return for the promise of future communal rewards: the fact that only a few months previously they accepted money for their votes indicates that there is not an inexorable process whereby a communal orientation gives way to a particularistic one.

Candidates sought and were offered the support of national politicians, who themselves used the occasion to cultivate local vote-procuring networks. Candidates also cultivated the support of subdistrict-level officeholders. However, relationships between politicians and vote brokers are not necessarily relationships of patron-clientage: only where they are marked by a high degree of personalism is this description warranted. But it is important to realise that when candidates approach the electorate they often speak the language of patronage, and convey their expectation that their provision of material advantages will be reciprocated in the form of votes. It is my contention that despite the commercial image of vote-buying, some rural vote brokers and voters currently treat the transaction as a form of gift exchange. The electorate accept a moral obligation to reciprocate appropriately when they receive payment for a vote, a fact which politicians have exploited. There are signs, however, that with greater experience of vote-buying, villagers may accept that the transaction has, as its label implies, more to do with commodity exchange than gift exchange, and that morality is irrelevant to the transaction.

Just as entrepreneurs invest in an enterprise, candidates invest in obtaining office. Because entrepreneurs and candidates are often one and the same person, this metaphorical similarity is often also a literal one. It was shown that entrepreneurs and politicians pursue cognate strategies. Owners of capitalist brickyards and 'capitalist' politicians - seeking labour and votes, respectively - attempt to cultivate the loyalty and self-disciplined acquiescence (whether to work hard or to vote 'correctly') by self-consciously casting themselves as patrons and by casting the relationship as one of personal obligation. That this is so indicates that among rural dwellers, at least, the idiom of patronage still has currency, even where political and economic realities make it clear that this relationship is irrelevant.

Before concluding with a sketch of recent local responses to national political events, I would like to review the shortcomings and contribution of the thesis as I perceive them. Turton has recently repeated a call, originally made several years earlier (1984:33), to the effect that "local realities of power deserve greater theoretical prominence and conceptualisation" (1989b:88). I would argue that in Thai studies this still remains the case, although two recent studies appear as exceptions (Ockey 1992; Nelson, forthcoming). Some studies, albeit carried out before 1984, have been primarily of the model-testing kind rather than prioritising the analysis of political realities as they stand (e.g. Chartchai 1983, Radom 1980). Others, whose main concerns lie elsewhere, have contributed data in an almost incidental way. In contrast, this study has responded to Turton's call by revealing the underlying similarities of the strategies pursued by both capitalist producers vis-à-vis labourers, and politicians vis-à-vis the rural electorate. In so doing it has described the composition and strategies of local powerholders as revealed in electoral competition.

This said, two shortcomings must be admitted. I have already drawn attention to the first in Chapter One. Insofar as this study focuses on vertical linkages between local officeholders, district and national politicians, and an economically and socially differentiated electorate, it focuses on exchange relations of a reciprocal nature. However, as Kerkvliet (1990) and others (Scott 1985, Turton 1984) have shown, conflict between different class and status groups - whether over material resources or over ideology - is also an important feature of political life. Thus, this thesis does not satisfy the need for a study which gives emphasis to this dimension of conflict. Related to this is my second point. Turton considers the realities of 'local powers' so important because their economic, political and ideological activities are "close to the experience and conditions of the rural poor" (1989b:88). In the balance, this thesis contributes much more to our knowledge of local powers in themselves than to our knowledge of their influence on the lives of the poor. To a large extent this is a product of fieldwork. As Turton himself has acknowledged, work among local powers is apt to be "a highly uncomfortable research milieu" (1989b:88). Apart from the tensions and anxieties such fieldwork arouses, it imposes limits on the extent to which one can simultaneously gain access to the strategies of local elites and share the confidence of many people among the poor. Thus, just as this thesis prioritises reciprocal over conflictual relations, it examines local powerholders in themselves rather than in relation to other groups. These two weaknesses are the costs, as it were, of the study's main contribution: this, I would suggest, is the fine-grained, 'insider' portrait

of local powerholders' strategies. As far as I am aware no comparable studies exist in the Thai literature.

IX.A. Epilogue: Recent Political Developments

On 23 February 1991, some two months after I left Banglen, a military group calling itself the National Peace-Keeping Council (NPKC) dissolved parliament and abrogated the constitution. Following this bloodless coup, the military formally held power until a general election, which it had pledged, on 22 March 1991. However, the shift in power which followed polling was more apparent than real. The NPKC drafted a new constitution which, among other measures, intended to protect a pro-NPKC government, and did not require an elected Prime Minister (Neher 1992). When, the NPKC leader, Suchinda Kraprayoon, was nominated Prime Minister, some 150,000 pro-democracy protesters led by Phalang Dharma Party leader Chamlong Srimuang, confronted the government demanding that the office be an elected one. In the ensuing military crackdown against protesters, who were drawn from a broad social spectrum (King 1992:1113), at least 52 people were killed. The military subsequently stepped down and a second general election took place on 13 September 1992. Below, I attempt to assess how these events have affected Banglen. My comments are partly based on written communication with informants.

A key argument used by the NPKC to legitimate its coup of February 1991 was that Thai democracy was 'impure' because politicians bought votes and were corrupt. The council pledged to eradicate vote-buying before the next general election, which followed 13 months later. The campaign against vote-buying in the provinces amounted to the setting up of teams comprising a teacher, public health official, villager and either a policeman, or member of the military. These teams, apparently referred to by villagers as 'The Four Musketeers', were responsible for 'teaching' residents not to accept money for their votes. One report suggested that the teams were used by the NPKC to deflect support from anti-military parties (Bangkok Post Weekly, 21 February 1992). Irrespective of whether this was one of the many NPKC strategies geared to maintaining their control after the elections, the programme was deeply flawed.[12] The view that 'teaching' the

---

[12]Another NPKC move reveals a more direct attempt to control rural votes. The Ministry of Interior proposed legislation to make headman and *kamnan* office appointed rather than elected positions (Bangkok Post Weekly Review, 30 August 1991). If this had became law the military-controlled bureaucracy would have had control of the most influential of local vote brokers.

electorate will eradicate vote-buying belies an assumption that 'peripheral' villagers respect and obey utterances from the powerful 'core'. The emphasis on recipients in the vote-buying relationship is also misguided. More fundamental, however, is the fact that those chosen to implement the programme are themselves implicated in undermining political democracy. It goes without saying that the military has demonstrated little respect for democratic politics. The use of the police seems equally inappropriate: their role in this programme is particularly ironic in Ayutthaya, where the provincial police headquarters had reportedly functioned as the vote-buying headquarters of the Minister of Communications in the previous general election. Finally, one of the Ban Thung villagers designated to 'educate' his neighbours had been *Kamnan* Han's main vote buyer just a few months earlier.

That this scheme was nothing other than cosmetic is apparent from the conduct of the subsequent general election in March 1992 in which vote-buying was heavy nation-wide. The military-appointed interim Prime Minister, Anand Panyarachun, established an independent election monitoring body, the Poll Watch Committee (PWC). This estimated that 50 percent of votes cast throughout Thailand were bought, while 70 to 90 percent of votes cast in the relatively impoverished Northeast involved an exchange of money (Handley, 2 April 1992). Apparently, its monitoring activity led to the use of less visible practices of vote-buying: for example, in Srisaket town "a compliant voter could shop at a designated market stall without paying for up to a pre-determined value" (Handley, 2 April 1992).[13]

In Ban Thung, according to an informant, electioneering involved only the use of money, and the sums paid were higher than all previous general elections. None of the more sophisticated campaigning and legitimating tactics used by candidates in the *kamnan* and provincial councillor elections were practised: donations were not made to the temples, nor were roads resurfaced. Reportedly, *Kamnan* Han acted as a vote broker on behalf of the former incumbent MPs, Bunphan Kawatthana and Narong Kittikachorn. Village headmen acted as vote brokers independently. Bunphan held his seat but Narong lost his to another military man, a member, like Bunphan, of the Social Action Party. Nationally, pro-military parties, and a 'military party' itself won a majority.

The results of the general election six months later, on 13 September, tell a somewhat different story. The bloodshed of the May 1992 'pro-democracy' demonstrations, led to a "clearer demarcation of political groups and parties"

---

[13]This strategy is not unique to contemporary Thailand. Prospective MPs in mid-nineteenth century England would give town-based voters "merchandise certificates redeemable through local merchants" (Scott 1972:100).

(Tasker and Handley, p.14, 27 August 1992). Parties were judged by the public as to whether they had supported or opposed the military and its new constitution and the press dubbed them as the 'angels' and 'devils' respectively. Vote-buying was still an important part of campaigning despite the role of the resurrected Poll Watch Committee which monitored complaints and forwarded cases to provincial governors for prosecution (King 1992:1114-1117). May events in Bangkok did not, however, lead to a landslide victory for pro-democracy parties. King has suggested that this was because of the effectiveness of pro-military parties' political patronage and vote-buying strategies, the confusion of the rural electorate as to who was responsible for the May bloodshed, and the fact that pro-democracy parties tended to fight over the same constituencies (King 1992:1118-1120). Nationally, then, these events did not shatter existing vote-mobilising structures or cause a change in strategies. Whether there was a similar lack of change in Banglen it is difficult to say: the data available to me are ambiguous. In Constituency No.2 of Ayutthaya in which Banglen lies, two representatives of the pro-military Social Action Party won office (but Narong and Khasem were not candidates), but in polling station No.2 of Ban Thung (incorporating Villages Three, Four and Five) there was a good deal of support for a resident of Banglen who represented the pro-democracy Democrat party: this man, according to an informant, did not buy votes.[14] While apparently, *Kamnan* Han - perhaps influenced by local feeling - did not act as a vote broker, individual headmen did do so and vote-buying was reportedly less intensive in the subdistrict than in the March campaigns. Future research in Banglen district would establish whether or not voting behaviour at the recent elections was largely determined by political patronage and the distribution of money by vote brokers, or whether recent events had broken the pattern, in this locale at least. I am reluctant to speculate on the degree to which change has actually occurred without having conducted more research. My feeling is, though, that as was the case in the elections described in Chapters Six and Seven, communal and particularistic exchange relationships will continue to carry most influence over the voting behaviour of the majority of rural dwellers.

---

[14]Bunphan won 347 votes at this polling station, the Democrat representative who did not, reportedly buy votes, won 312 votes, a second Social Action Party candidate won 294, and a Phalang Dharma candidate won 92 votes. Results from the subdistrict's other polling station, unavailable to me at the time of writing, would establish whether previous voting patterns set by vote brokers had been recreated.

APPENDIX 1: *DRAMATIS PERSONAE*

1. Headman Tim
Age 56, headman of Village One, Ban Thung, since 1977. Owns 20 *rai* of riceland; moneylender. Is major middleperson for woven headpieces of farmers' hats in Villages One and Two. Has several children and is father-in-law to Headman Nakun. Bunphan Kawathana's *hua khangn.*

2. Headman Khwang
Aged 54, landless headman of Village Two, Ban Thung. Held post since 1977. Has one child. Lives in small wooden house with grandson and wife. Intermittently raises ducks for market. Narong Kittikachorn's *hua khangn.*

3. Headman Pramoth
Father of Headman Nakun. Is retired headman of Village Three, though still authoritative (and is still addressed as 'headman'). Has several children from three wives; married into the subdistrict: owns 40 *rai* of riceland and a tractor which is hired out.

4. Headman Nakun
Son of Headman Pramoth, married to daughter of Headman Tim. Aged 32; has been headman of Ban Thung's Village Three, where he resides, for three years - he contested the election with Han's elder brother and was the first candidate for local office to obtain a position with use of vote-buying. Collects electricity payments on commission in Ban Thung and Ban Say subdistricts; runs food stall at Wat Lamu school where his wife teaches; is main dealer in illegal lottery tickets in Ban Thung; farms 10 *rai* of rice land and is a land sales broker. Recently built first urban-style house in Village Three. Obtained a teaching diploma from Ayutthaya college; is Bunphan Kawatthana's *hua khangn.*

5. Headman Chayan
Fifty-two year old head of Village Five, Ban Thung. Also held office since 1977. Landless, his wife sometimes works in Han's brickyard. Since 1986 has been Narong Kittikachorn's *hua khangn.* Wished to succeed *Kamnan* Chang in office but subsequently joined Han's electoral campaign.

6. Kamnan Chang
Kamnan of Ban Thung and headman of Village Four 1952-1990. Retired when turned 60 on 28 March 1990. Given office on death of father. Earned fear and respect by eradicating lawlessness and by commitment to welfare of residents in early years of office. Malpractice alleged since mid-1970s. Owns 20 *rai* of riceland and a food stall in Bangkok where he is also large-scale money lender. Narong Kittikachorn's *hua khangn* since 1986.

7. Han
Sino-Thai owner of poultry farm and mechanised brick factory located in Ban Say subdistrict. Born Ban Thung, aged 52; wife from Village Five; has five children. Core member of BMA. Headman of Village Four 11 April - 20 May 1990, *kamnan* of Ban Thung (and Village Four headman) 20 May - present date.

8. Kamnan Damrong
Chairman of BMA, representative of all district's officeholders to local bureaucracy, *kamnan* of Nam Hak subdistrict. Owns the second largest brickyard in Banglen district, several hundred *rai*, and a Mercedes-Benz; lives in a large town-house in Ayutthaya town.

9. Kamnan Bay
Vice-chairman of the BMA and *kamnan* of Hua Rong subdistrict since 1988. Owns the largest brickyard in the district and lives in mansion adjacent to it. Most of his permanent labourers are from Ban Thung. Office was obtained with assistance from members of the BMA. Drives a BMW. Became *hua khangn* of Bunphan Kawatthana.

10. Sanit
Provincial councillor for one term (1985-1990), and stood in October 1990 election, alongside his brother-in-law (eZH), as candidate No.3. He is Sino-Thai, aged 35, and married. He owns the largest food store in Banglen town, where he also lives, and owns a share of candidate No.3's business. At the time of the elections he was the director of the Board of Governors of the district high school.

11. Sawat
Former director of the Municipal District Council: resigned in order to submit his candidacy in 1990 provincial councillor election. He had been a sergeant (*ja*) in Banglen police station and retained intimate, high-level contacts with district police. He is aged 38, is Sino-Thai, is married to the sister of Sanit (candidate No.2) and is resident in Banglen town. Owns the only building materials store (up to 1990), and the largest contracting business in the district. He sits on the Board of Governors of the district high school and replaced his brother-in-law as director late in 1990.

12. Colonel (Retired) Narong Kittikachorn
(Real name) Son of ex-Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn (1963-1973). As one of the 'three tyrants' leading the military regime he was exiled after the 14 October 1973 student-led revolt. Elected MP of Ayutthaya constituency No.2 in 1986 after reportedly large scale vote-buying. Representative of Democrat Party. Lost seat in March 1992.

13. Bunphan Kawatthana
(Real name) MP for Ayutthaya constituency No.2. Largest shareholder in Ayutthaya-based bank. Social Action Party representative.

14. Montri Phongphanit
(Real name) MP for Ayutthaya constituency No.1. Minister of Communications (with responsibility for road network and telecommunications) 1988-1992, and secretary general of Social Action Party. Son-in-law of Bunphan Kawatthana. Very high profile politician, often appearing on television and in press. After keeping his seat in both the March and 13 September 1992 general elections, he joined the post-September coalition government, despite the fact that his party had taken a pro-military stance in May. However, Montri was not included in the cabinet since he was under investigation for being 'unusually rich' by an anti-graft committee (Economist Intelligence Unit 1992:11).

APPENDIX 2: STRUCTURED SURVEYS

Household Survey

The Ban Thung and Ban Say survey was conducted between September and November 1990. Households were selected in a systematic sample of 25 percent by taking each fourth household on Village registration lists: 165 households were interviewed, 111 in Ban Thung and 54 in Ban Say. The interview schedule is summarized below.

Section 1: Household census.

Section 2: Employment: brick industry employment; employer, duration of employment, prior occupation, whether harvested or not during last season; other local employment, cottage industry.

Section 3: Land holding: ownership, rental.

Section 4: Land use: agricultural use, sale of top-soil.

Section 5: Land sales; land sold within last ten years; prospective sale; number of speculative visits from land brokers.

Section 6: Income derived from non-agricultural, own account sources; domestic and commercial animals; fishpond; remittances from family members living elsewhere.

Section 7: Credit and debt.

Section 8: Assets: agricultural or other machinery owned, vehicles, household items, consumer durables owned.

Brickyard Survey

Owners of seven non-mechanised and 16 mechanised brickyards were interviewed between June and August 1990. All non-mechanised brickyards were situated in either Ban Say or Ban Thung; mechanised brickyards were in these and another four subdistricts. Sampling was not systematic.

Section 1: General: age, education, place of origin, ethnic identity of parents, public office, previous economic activities, amount of start-up capital used, source of capital. Other concurrent economic activities.

Section 2: Tools of production owned, land ownership. Number of extruders owned and type; average monthly output of non-mechanised works.

Section 3: Labour: participation of household members; number of workers employed, place of residence of workers, number of kinspersons among

employees, live-in workers. Wages paid: wage regime, use of incentive scheme. Identity of supervisors. Perceived 'problems' with labour.

Section 4: Brickearth supply: bought or supplied by interviewee. Marketing: how product is purchased, by whom.

Section 5: Brick Manufacturers' Association membership: date joined, opinion about Association and perceived benefits of membership. BMA rotating credit scheme (*len shq*) - use made of last two lump sums borrowed.

Section 6: Miscellaneous: relations with other factories (satellite non-mechanised brickyards), ability to produce during deep flooding.

APPENDIX 3: TRANSLITERATIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

From Chapter Six

Transliteration of Han's Campaign Letter

Krap rian pho ma phi nong, prachachon chaw tambon Ban Thung thi rak khong kraphom. Kraphom kho krap aphay thuk than thi may samat ma rian khwam nay jay khong kraphom hay thuk than day sab day, phro mi kho jamkat nay ruang khong wela. Kraphom jung kho thu okat ni rian chi jang hay thuk than day mi khwam khawjay nay khwam khit le khwam rusuk an nawna khong kraphom thi ja ma samak hay than day phijarana luak pen kamnan tambon Ban Thung than kamnan Chang Bunmi, sung khrop kasiang ayu pay law.

Tua kraphom eng pen luk Ban Thung ma doy kamnet. Phut doy thua pay ko samat phut day wa 'sayrok fang yu thi Ban Thung' le thuk sing thuk yang thi phom pen, phom mi, yu nay khana ni luan ta mi jut rem ton ma jak tambon Ban Thung thang sin. Jung nap day wa tambon Ban Thung mi bunkhun an yay luang tua kraphom; le nay okat ni hen wa thung wela law thi phom ja day top than bunkhun phandin ma jung day samak rap luak tang pen kamnan tambon Ban Thung, day be 2. Nay kan thi phom long samak rap luak tang khrang ni tha hak pho ma phi nong chaw tambon Ban Thung hay khwam way wang jay nay tua khong kraphom, luak tua khong kraphom hay pen kamnan tambon Ban Thung. Sing thi kraphom khit thi ja hay ket pen, ket mi khun nay tambon Ban Thung khong raw mi dang ni...

Kraphom phrom thi ja hay borikan lambak thuk, bamrung suk le pokpong thuk than hay mi chiwit thi sangopsuk (mi thuk rap pruksa, mi panha rap ka khay) doy talot wela, may jamkat satan thi. Kraphom kho hay pho ma phi nong thi khawrop rak, thuk than, hay khwam khit phitjarana nay kan luak bukkhon thi mo som pen kamnan tambon Ban Thung. Sung ja mi kan luak tang nay wan thi 20 phrutsaphakhom 2533 [1990] *ni le kho krap khopkhun thuk than duay jay jing thi hay khwam way wangjay phitjarana luak tua khraphom pen kamnan Ban Thung nay khrang ni.*

Le thay thi sut ni kho arathana amnat khun phra sri ratanatray talot jon sing saksit thi yu nay tambon Ban Thung le boriwen klay khiang jong donbandan, hay thuk than prasop ta khwam suk. Mi khwam khit mi hetphon an thuk tham nong khrong tham nay kan phitjarana tatsinjay luak kamnan tambon Ban Thung phua nam tambon khong raw hay jaren sup to pay.

Jak jay jing phu yay Han.

Long du sak thi, tha may di ik 4 pi than mi okat luak may.

From Chapter Seven

Transliteration of Deputy District Officer's Speech:

Tha may ma, rụ wa ma kan noy mak, pen okat thi ja tham hay khon may di day rap lụak tang phay na. Yangan kharatchakan mi khwam prasong yang ying. Yak ja hay ma kan thuk khon thi mi sit, na. Riak wa roy 'percent', na. Thụ wa pen rụang samkhan phro wa samachik sapha jangwat ni khụ pen tua thạn khong prachachon thang jangwat...

Tha raw may mi samachik sapha jangwat, rụ wa raw day samachik sapha jangwat thi may sonjay - le lẹy kap nathi - khrongkan khong raw ja may day sanẹ pay. Tong mi khon sonjay nay rụang suan ruam, rụang satharana prayot, sonjay thi ja chuay lụa prachachon, chuay prapprung du lạ thanon hon thang aray yangngi. Yangngi wan thi yi sip ni, kho hay ma chay sit kan thuk khon.

Kamnan Han's Electioneering Speech given in Ban Thung Subdistrict Meeting:

Mi ik rụang nụng, ko wan thi yi sip ni na ha, ko kho hay phuak raw ma chuay chay sit kan hay tem thi na. Phro wa tha raw may ma; rụ raw bang khon at ja wa may mi kha top thạn aray, ko may yak ma, aray yangngii, phom wa khit phit na ha. Khụ wa raw chuay khaw lạw khaw ko tong chuay raw. Yang noy, tha raw chuay hay khaw mi khanạn siang di, na, khaw ko day pen. Yangngay khaw ko tong ma, ma chuay raw na. Phom chụa na ha, khon thi long samak ja tong mi jitjay rụ namjay sung, hen kạ suan ruam na, rụ wa khaw sara tua long ma rap chay raw. May chay wa, pen lạw khaw ko pay nang yu chẹy chẹy. Khaw ko may mi ngẹn dụan. An ni khaw pen khon thi mi jitjay sung, na; thuk thuk khon thi long samak ni na ha. Tạ kho hay phi nong chaw tambon Ban Thung raw phinit phitjarana du wa khon nay thi mi jitjay, sia sara phụa suan ruam, lạw ko ja tham ngan phụa amphẹ khong raw, rụ phụa suan ruam. Raw ko tong khit phitjaranaa du na ha, ko khray ja mo som. Aw yangngay kho hay ma thuk khon na ha. Tha may ma, bang thi phom at ja tam thi ban na ha. Phro wa yangngay, ko ya non thap sit lẹy. Raw ha khon aw ma chay, ma thạn tua raw na ha. Khụ bang khon at ja mi [pause] ja wa yangngay - ja hay mi aray, kha borikan aray thawray. Phom wa ya! Wela khaw pen lạw, khaw ja ma chuay raw pen lạw, chuay wat, tham thanon honthang aray yangngi. Raw mi panha aray yangni, na, chen yang wan thi fon tok, phom pay ha so jo Sanit- khaw ko yang may tụn non ley, pluk khụn ma, ko plạng fan lạw ko phom aw khaw pay duay. Pay thi chon prathan. Ko, khaw ko chuay rụa tem thi. Tha pen phom khon diaw - ko, man ko lay lay khon, lay lay siang duay kan...Tha hak wa tha may mi so jo, may mi kamnan phu yay ban pay phom wa khaw may pẹt nam wan nan. Khong ja lay wan kwa ja pẹt kan day. Raw day pay tit tam yu na ha. Mi khon titto ngay ngay. Khaw, khon thi chay ngay ngay, day khaw ma ruam tham ngan, ngan ko ja di knụn. Wan nan, yangngan kho hay bok phuak luk lan, thuk khon, wa tha ja pay nay, pay talat rụ pay nay, kho hay chay sit sa kon, lạw ko pay....Kho hay thuk than phitjarana du wa phu thi mo som, samkhan ja sụ sat mak ley. Tha raw day khon di khaw pay, khaw ja chuay hay mak, le amphẹ khong raw ja jarẹn khụn. Tha bang khon pen lạw, ko yang wa, may pay nay lẹy, may pay yiam yian lẹy, phuak raw ko, chay sit pay lạw ko yang wa: man may khum kha.

Candidate No.4's Campaign Letter:

Dear Kinspersons, people of Banglen District,

I, Mr Chit Bunlap, a candidate in the Banglen District provincial councillor elections, Candidate No.4 am a member of the Phalang Tham Party - whose leader is Major-General Chamlong Srimuang.

I, Mr. Chit Bunlap, Candidate No.4 would like to tell you the truth regarding rumours a group of people have been spreading about me. A group has been saying that I, Mr Chit Bunlap, Candidate No.4 and Phalang Tham Party member, am going to pour out money to buy votes - between 100 and 200 baht for each voter. Spreading news like this is done to blacken my name. If it turns out that I do not in fact spend money then people will be disappointed and criticise me for not doing as I say. They will despise me and not select No.4.

Kinspersons, use your judgement to see that people have spread this rumour just to harm me. People who canvass using money to buy votes must hope to get a return on their money. This is a fact. When such people are provincial councillors they only think of getting their money back, and raking in more besides. How can our home prosper with this going on?

I am determined to work honestly. I ask you, kinspersons of Banglen, for just one chance to prove myself by my work. If I do not work towards making our area more prosperous, then in four years time you can reject me and not re-elect me [sic, the term of office is five years].

I have the following policies and aims:-

1. I am neither a merchant nor a capitalist. If I spend money on buying votes, as rumour has it, that is the same as if I invest money, and this goes against my policy. And, as I am a member of the Phalang Tham Party I must follow their practice - this party absolutely forbids the buying of votes.

2. I will not be a contractor. It is being a contractor that leads to dishonesty amongst provincial councillors. When a provincial councillor is a contractor you lose out: completed projects end up with half measure.

3. I will try to attract the greatest possible number of grants to develop our district.

4. I will oversee the work of the administration and the use of grants to ensure efficient and honest practices. I will do this without hoping for any reward (I wish only for fame and honour for my ancestors). My respected kinspersons, we must chose someone whom we trust to watch over our local development grants. These grants come from our sweat and labour which the government gathers as taxes, then returns as local development grants. If you see the whole-heartedness of my intentions to develop our locality, then please choose me, but choose me in good faith. Don't let money or goods come and influence you.

Finally, I therefore implore you, and ask for your kindness to help Chit, No.4, the Phalang Tham Party candidate, just this once. Because, if you don't help, No.4 will lose for certain.

With respects,

Mr. Chit Bunlap, Candidate No.4, Phalang Tham Party.

Postcript: Right now there are people campaigning using local development grants [referring to candidate No.2 and No.3]. They themselves are contractors employed to surface the roads in some villages and subdistricts. But they say that the laterite is a gift from candidate Number so-and-so. The fact is that the money

comes from a local development grant not from the individual candidate. Kinspersons, if you are suspicious you can go and ask at the district office.

[Underlining in the original]

Transliteration of Candidate No.4's Campaign letter::

Sawatdi khrap pho ma phi nong chaw ampe Banglen. Krapom, nay Chit Bunlap phu samak rap luak tang samachik sapha jangwat (so jo) khet amphe Banglen maylek 4 pen samachik phak phalang tham sung phontri Chamlong Srimuang pen hua na phak.

Jak kan thi mi khawlu la mi bukhon klum nung ok khaw Nay Chit Bunlap, phu samak be 4 samachik phak phalang tham, ja thum ngen phua su siang doy ja jay siang la 100-200 bat nan. Kraphom nay Chit Bunlap, be 4, kho chi jang duay khwam satjing wa kan ploy khaw ok pay chen nan ko phua wang tham lay chu siang khong kraphom, phro wa hak khraphom may jay ngen jing tam khawlu prachachon ko ja phit wang le kiatchang be 4; klaw ha phut law may tham jing tam kham phut, law ko ja pha kan kiadchang la may luak be 4.

Khraphom jung kho wingwon pho ma phi nong chaw Banglen hay chay adunphinit wa het day klum bukhon dang klaw jung tong ok khaw tham lay kraphom. Bukhon thi ha siang doy chay ngen su siang, khaw tong wang khaw pay thon thun yang na non. May mua pen so jo law khit ta ja thon le kopthoy thong thin khop raw ja jaren yangray khrap.

Kraphom mi khwam tangjay tham ngan duay borisutjay. Chanan kraphom jung khray kho okat jak pho ma phi nong sak khrang phua day phisut phongnan. Hak kraphom may day tham khwam jaren ma hay thong thin khong raw law, 4 pi khang na hay sab chang la may tong luak khraphom khaw ma ik.

Khraphom mi nawnayobay le udomkan dang ni:

1. Kraphom may chay pho kha may chay nak long thun. Hak kraphom jay ngen phua su siang jing, tam khawlu, ko thaw kap kraphom long thun jung khad kap nayobay khong kraphom la kraphom pen samachik phak phalang tham jung tong lian bap yang khong phak phalang tham phro phak ni may mi kan su siang doy ded khat yu law.

2. Kraphom ja may pen phu rap maw. Kan rap maw pen honthang diaw thi ja thutjarit day. Tha hak so jo tham kan rap maw, sia eng. Phongngan tang tang thi ok ma ko ja day may tem metnuay tam pay duay.

3. Kraphom ja phayayam dung ngoppraman khaw ma phatthana thong thin nay amphe khong raw hay mak thi sut.

4. Kraphom ja khoy kamkap dula kan borihan ngan khong fay borihan le khoy dula kan borihan ngen ngoppraman thi day ma hay mi prasitthiphap la trong pay trong ma doy may wang sing top than (wang ta phiang chu siang phua pen kiat ka wong trakun). Pho ma phi nong thi khawrop, khrap, yat ngua rang ngan khong raw thi rath day jad kep pay, doy rup phasi akon, la rath day jay khun ma nay rup khong ngop phatthana thong thin raw. Jung jampen thi ja tong luak bukkhon thi raw chuajay day khaw pay dula ngopphatthana thong thin khong raw. Hak than hen khwam borisutjay khong kraphom thi mung ja khaw phatthana thongthin ko prod luak kraphom duay khwam borisutjay. Ya hay ngen ru singkhong ma pen khruang chi wat le na khrap.

Thay thi sud ni kraphom jung kho wingwon kho khwam meta jak pho ma phi nong chuay Chit be 4, samachik phak phalang tham, sak khrang nung, phro tha pho ma may chuay be 4, pha na khrap.

Duay khwam nap thu̲,

Nay Chit Bunlap, phu samak be̲ 4, samachik phak phalang tham.

Ma̲y het

Khana ni day mi phu chuay okat khosana ha siang doy asay ngop phatthana thong thin, su̲ng klum ton eng pen phu rap maw long lukrang thanon thong thin nay muban bang tambon la̲w bok wa phu samak be̲ nan ma long hay. Kho het jing khu̲ pen jing khu̲ pen ngop phatthana thongthin khong amphe̲, may chay ngop suan tua khong phu samak be̲ nan nan. Pho ma̲ phi nong songsay truat sop du day thi amphe̲, khrap.

REFERENCES

Akin Rabibhadana. 1969. *The organization of Thai society in the Early Bangkok Period, 1782-1873.* Data Paper 74. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program.

Amara Pongsapich. 1988. Female participation and industrial development in Thailand. *Occasional Papers on women in Thailand.* Women Studies Programme, Publication No.3. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute.

Amsden, A. 1985. The state and Taiwan's economic development. In P. Evans *et al* (eds) *Bringing the state back in.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Amyot, J. 1976. *Village Ayutthaya: social and economic conditions of a rural population in Central Thailand.* Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute.

_____. 1990. *National Rural Development Committee 1988 Village Survey: Pilot analysis - Ayutthaya Province.* Paper presented at Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute; Social and Economic Change in Ayutthaya Province Seminar.

Anan Ganjanapan. 1984. *The partial commercialisation of rice production in Northern Thailand (1900 - 1981).* Ph.D. thesis, Cornell University.

Ananya Buchongkul. 1985. *From chaonaa to khonngaan: the growing divide in a Central Thai village.* Ph.D. thesis, University of London.

_____. 1992. Vote-buying. *Bangkok Post*, 23 February, 1992.

Anderson, B. 1990. Murder and progress in modern Siam. *New Left Review.* (181):33-48.

Anek Laothamatas. 1992. *Business associations and the new political economy of Thailand: from bureaucratic polity to liberal corporatism.* Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Arghiros, D. 1993. *Links between political and economic power at the district level: the case of the Brick Manufacturers' Association.* Paper presented to Fifth International Conference on Thai Studies, London, 5-10 July.

Bailey, F. 1969. *Strategems and spoils: a social anthropology of politics.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Barnard, A. and A. Good. 1984. *Research practices in the study of kinship.* ASA Research Methods in Social Anthropology 2. London: Academic Press.

Basham, R. 1989. False consciousness and the problem of merit and power in Thailand. *Mankind* 19(2):126-137.

Bechstedt, Hans-Dieter. 1989. *Formal social structures and unwritten rules of behaviour in rural Thailand: the paradigm of the patron-client model.* Southeast Asia Programme, Working Paper No.128. Bielefeld: University of Bielefeld.

_____. 1991. *Identity and authority in Thailand.* Southeast Asia Programme, Working Paper No.147. Bielefeld: University of Bielefeld.

Bernstein, H. 1979. African peasantries: a theoretical framework. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 6(4):421-443.

Biggs, T. *et al.* 1990. *Rural industry and employment study: a synthesis report.* Bangkok: Thailand Development Research Institute Foundation.

Blanc Szanton, Maria Cris. 1982. *People in movement: mobility in leadership in a central Thai district.* Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University.

Boissevain, J. 1986. Factions. In A. Kuper and J. Kuper (eds) *The Social Science Encyclopedia.* London: Routledge, Chapman and Hall.

Breman, J. 1974. *Patronage and exploitation: changing agrarian relations in South Gujarat, India.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Brummelhuis, Han ten. 1982. Control of land and control over people: the case of 'Thai feudalism'. In E.E. Boesch (ed.) *Thai culture.* Report on the Second Thai-European Research Seminar. Saarbruecken: University of the Saar.

Brummelhuis, Han ten and J.H. Kemp. 1984. Introduction. In Han ten Brummelhuis and J.H. Kemp (eds) *Strategies and structures in Thai society.* Amsterdam: Anthropological-Sociological Centre.

Bunnag, Tej. 1977. *The provincial administration of Siam 1892-1915: the Ministry of the Interior under Prince Damrong Rajanubhab.* Selangor: Oxford University Press.

Carrier, J, G. 1992. Emerging alienation in production: a Maussian history. *Man.* 27(3):539-558.

Cederroth, S. 1991. From PNI to Golkar: Indonesian village politics 1955-87. In M. Morner and T. Svensson (eds) *The transformation of rural society in the third world.* London: Routledge.

Chai-Anan Samudavanija. 1989. Thailand: a stable semi-democracy. In L.J. Diamond (ed.) *Democracy in developing countries.* Vol. 3: Asia. Boulder, Col.: Lynne Rienner.

Chai-Anan Samudavanija and Sukhumbhand Paribatra. 1990. Political contestation in Thailand. In N. Mahmood (ed.) *Political contestation: case studies from Asia.* Singapore: Heinemann Asia.

Chaichana Ingavata. 1990. Community development and local-level democracy in Thailand: the role of *tambol* councils. *Sojourn* 5(1):113-143.

Chairat Charoensin-O-Larn. 1988. *Understanding postwar reformism in Thailand: a reinterpretation of rural development.* Series of Contemporary Thai studies. Bangkok: Editions Duang Kamol.

Chakrit Noranitipadungkarn. 1981. *Elites, power structure and politics in Thai communities.* Bangkok: National Institute of Development Administration.

Chartchai Na Chiangmai. 1983. *Parapolitical behaviour of Northern Thai Villagers: an application of social network concepts.* Ph.D. thesis, University of Wisconsin.

Chatthip Nartsupha and Suthy Prasartset (eds) 1978. *The political economy of Siam, 1851-1910.* Bangkok: The Social Science Association of Thailand.

Chayan Vaddhanaphuti. 1984. *Cultural and ideological reproduction in Northern Thai society.* Ph.D. thesis, Standford University.

Chayanov, A.V. 1966 [1926]. *The theory of peasant economy.* Homewood, Illinois: Richard M. Irwin.

Christensen, S.R. 1990. Thailand in 1989. *Asian Survey.* 32(2):179-181.

Christensen, S.R. 1992. The public policy process and political change in Thailand: a summary of observations. *TDRI Quarterly Review.* 7(1):21-26.

Chulacheeb Chinwanno. 1988. Rice, farmers and politics of conflict in Thailand. In P. Wallersteen (ed.) *Food Development and conflict: Thailand and the Philippines.* United Nations Peace and Global Transformation Programme. Uppsala: United Nations University.

Clapham, C. 1982. Clientelism and the state. In C. Clapham (ed.) *Private patronage and public power: political clientelism in the modern state.* London: Frances Pinter.

Cohen A.P. 1985. *The symbolic construction of community.* Ellis Horwood Series in Key Ideas. Chichester/London:Ellis Horwood/Tavistock.

Cohen, E. 1991. *Thai society in comparative perspective.* Studies in Contemporary Thailand Volume No.1. Bangkok: White Lotus.

Cohen, P.T. 1983. A bodhisattva on horseback: Buddhist ethics and pragmatism in northern Thailand. *Mankind.* 14(2):101-111.

Cook, S. 1984a. *Peasant capitalist industry: piecework and enterprise in Southern Mexican brickyards.* Lanham: University Press Of America.

_____. 1984b. Peasant economy, rural industry, and capitalist development in the Oaxaca Valley, Mexico. *Journal of Peasant Studies.* 12(1):4-40.

Cook, S. and L. Binford. 1990. *Obliging need: rural petty industry in Mexican capitalism.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

CUSRI [Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute]. 1987. *Rayngan khomun phunthan, khrongkan witjay le phatthana ayutthaya (Report on Ayuthaya research and development project).* Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute.

Damrong Thandee. 1985. *Politics of policy implementation: a case study of rural development in Thailand.* Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute.

Demaine, H. 1986. *Kanpatthana*: Thai views of development. In M. Hobart and R.H. Taylor (eds) *Context, meaning and power in Southeast Asia.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Southeast Asia Programme.

Douglass, M. 1984. *Regional integration on the capitalist periphery: the Central Plains of Thailand.* Research Report Series No.15. The Hague: Institute of Social Studies.

Economist Intelligence Unit. 1992. *Thailand, Myanmar (Burma).* Country Report No.4. London: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Egedy, G. 1988. *Thailand: stability and change in a bureaucratic polity.* Discussion Paper 248. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.

Eisenstadt, S.N. and L. Roniger. 1981. The study of patron-client relations and recent developments in sociological theory. In S.N. Eisenstadt and R. Lemarchand (eds) *Political clientelism, patronage and development.* London: Sage Publications

Embree, J.F. 1950. Thailand - a loosely structured social system. *American Anthropologist.* 52:181-193.

Evers, H-D. 1982. *Sequential patterns of strategic group formation and political change in Southeast Asia.* Working Paper No.14. Bielefeld: University of Bielefeld Faculty of Sociology.

Fallon, E.B. 1983. *The peasants of Isan: social and economic transition in Northeast Thailand.* Ph.D. thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Feeny, D. 1982. *The political economy of agricultural productivity: Thai agricultural development 1880 - 1975.* Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Feldman, S. 1991. Rural industrialization: the shaping of "class" relations in rural Bangladesh. In G. Scott, R.F. Levine and R. Fantasia (eds) *Bringing class back in: contemporary and historical perspectives.* Boulder: Westview Press.

Gallin, B. 1968. Political factionalism and its impact on Chinese village social organisation in Taiwan. In M.J. Swartz (ed.) *Local-level politics: social and cultural perspectives.* London: University of London Press.

Gillis, J.R. 1983. *The development of European society, 1770-1870.* Lanham: University of America.

Girling, J.I.S. 1981. *Thailand: society and politics.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

_____. 1986. Is small-holder cultivation viable? A question of political economy with reference to Thailand. *Pacific Affairs.* 59(2):189-213.

_____. 1991. Review of *Institutionalization of democratic political processes in Thailand: a three-pronged democratic polity*, by Pisan Suriyamongkol. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies.* 22(2):460-461.

Gosling, D.L. 1981. Thai monks in rural development. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science.* 9(1-2):74-75.

Granovetter, M. 1985. Economic action and social structure: the problem of embeddedness. *American Journal of Sociology.* 91:481-510.

Gray, C. E. 1991. Hegemonic images: language and silence in the royal Thai polity. *Man.* 26(1):43-65.

Gregory, C.A. 1982. *Gifts and commodities.* London: Academic Press.

Hadenius, A. 1992. *Democracy and development.* London: Cambridge University Press.

Hall, R.A. 1980. Middlemen in the politics of rural Thailand: a study of articulation and cleavage. *Modern Asian Studies.* 14:441-464.

Handley, P. 1992. Have gun, will kill. *Far Eastern Economic Review.* 27 February. p20.

_____. 1992. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 2 April 1992.

Hanks, L.M. 1962. Merit and power in the Thai social order. *American Anthropologist.* 64:1247-1261.

_____. 1975. The Thai social order as entourage and circle. In W.G. Skinner and A.T. Kirsch (eds) *Change and persistence in Thai society: essays in honor of Lauriston Sharp.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Hatch, E. 1989. Theories of social honour. *American Anthropologist.* 91:341-352.

Hewison, K. 1989. *Bankers and bureaucrats: capital and the role of the state in Thailand.* Monograph Series 34. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies.

Hirsch, P. 1987. *Participation, rural development, and changing production relations in recently settled forest areas of Thailand.* Ph.D. thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

_____. 1989. The state in the village: interpreting rural development in Thailand. *Development and Change.* 20:35-56.

_____. 1990. *Development dilemmas in rural Thailand.* South-East Asian Social Science Monographs. Singapore: Oxford University Press.

Holland, S. 1990. *Development and differentiation in rural Thailand: a case study from the Central Region.* D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford.

Hong, L. 1984. *Thailand in the nineteenth century: evolution of the economy and society.* Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

IBRD [World Bank]. 1990. World Development Report 1990. New York: Oxford University Press for World Bank.

Ingram, J.C. 1971. *Economic change in Thailand: 1850-1970.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Jackson, P. A. 1989. *Buddhism, legitimation, and conflict: the political functions of urban Thai Buddhism.* Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Jansen, K. 1991. Thailand: the next NIC? *Journal of Contemporary Asia.* 21(1).

Jazairy, I., M. Alamgir and T. Panuccio. 1992. *The state of world rural poverty: an inquiry into its causes and consequences.* International Fund for Agricultural Development. London: Intermediate Technology Group.

Johnston, D.B. 1975. *Rural society and the rice economy in Thailand, 1880-1930.* Ph.D. thesis, Yale University.

Joseph, S. *et al.* 1990. A study of brick production in Thailand. *TDRI Quarterly Review.* 5(2).

Kaufman, J.C. 1960. *Bangkh d: a community study in Thailand.* Monograph of the Association for Asian Studies No.10. Locust Valley, New York: J.J. Augustin.

Keddie, J. and W. Cleghorn. 1980. *Brick manufacture in developing countries.* David Livingstone Institute Series on Choice of Techniques in Developing Countries Vol.3. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.

Kemp, J.H. 1976. *Social organization of a hamlet in Phitsanulok Province, North-Central Thailand.* Ph.D. thesis, University of London.

_____. 1982. A tail wagging the dog: the patron-client model in Thai studies. In C. Clapham (ed.) *Private patronage and public power.* London: Frances Printer.

_____. 1984. The manipulation of personal relations: from kinship to patron-clientage. In Han ten Brummelhuis and J.H. Kemp (eds) *Strategies and structures in Thai society.* Amsterdam: Anthropological-Sociological Centre.

_____. 1987. *Seductive mirage: the search for the village community in Southeast Asia.* Comparative Asian Studies No.3. Dordrecht, Amsterdam: Foris Publications, for the Centre for Asian Studies.

_____. 1988. *Community and state in modern Thailand.* Working paper No. 100. Bielefeld: University of Bielefeld.

Kerkvliet, B. J. 1990. *Everyday politics in the Philippines: class and status relations in a Central Luzon village.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Keyes, C.F. 1978. Ethnography and anthropological interpretations in the study of Thailand. In E.B. Ayal (ed.) *The study of Thailand: analyses of knowledge, approaches, and prospects in anthropology, art history, economics, history and political science.* Center for International Studies Southeast Asia Series No.54. Ohio: Ohio University

_____. 1979. Local leadership in rural Thailand. In C.D. Neher (ed.) *Modern Thai politics: from village to nation.* Revised edition. Cambridge (Mass.): Schenkman Publishing Company.

_____. 1989. *Thailand: Buddhist kingdom as modern nation-state.* Boulder: Westview Press.

King, D.E. 1992. The Thai parliamentary elections of 1992. Return to democracy in an atypical year. *Asian Survey.* 32(12):1109-1123.

Korff, R. 1989. *Political change and local power in Thailand.* Southeast Asia Programme, Working Paper No.119. Bielefeld: University of Bielefeld.

_____. 1991. Personal communication.

Lande, C.H. 1965. *Leaders, factions and parties: the structure of Philippine politics.* Monograph Series No.6. Yale: Yale University Southeast Asian Studies.

Lenin, V.I. 1982. The differentiation of the peasantry. In J. Harriss (ed.) *Rural development: theories of peasant economy and agrarian change.* London: Hutchinson University Library.

Lewellen, Ted C. 1983. *Political anthropology: an introduction.* Massachusetts: Bergin and Garvey.

Likhit Dhiravegin. 1985. *Thai politics: selected aspects of development and change.* Bangkok: Tri-Sciences Publishing House.

Llambi, L. 1988. Small modern farmers: neither peasants nor fully-fledged capitalists? *Journal of Peasant Studies.* 15(3):350-372.

Loizos, P. 1975. *The Greek gift: politics in a Cypriot village.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Manas Chitakasem and D. Smyth . 1984. *Thai course.* London: Linguaphone Institute Ltd.

McBeth, J. 1986. Political crossroads. *Far Eastern Economic Review.* June 19, pp40-49.

McCargo, D. 1993. *The three paths of Major-General Chamlong Srimuang.* South East Asia Research. 1(1).

McVey, Ruth T. 1984. Change and consciousness in Southern Thailand. In Han ten Brummelhuis and J.H. Kemp (eds) *Strategies and structures in Thai society,* Amsterdam: Anthropological-Sociological Centre.

_____. 1992. The materialization of the Southeast Asian entrepreneur. In R. McVey (ed.) *Southeast Asian capitalists.* Studies in Southeast Asia. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University

Ministry of Interior. 1958. *Local government in Thailand.* Ministry of Interior: Bangkok.

Ministry of Interior. 1990. *Amnat nathi le khwam samphan rawang samachik sapha jangwat le nay amphur* [The powers and duties of provincial councillors and their relationship with the District Officer]. *Thetsaphiban.* August 1990.

Mitchell, J.C. 1983. Case and situation analysis. *Sociological Review.* 31(2): 187-211.

Moberg, M. 1991. Citrus and the state: factions and class formation in rural Belize. *American Ethnologist.* 18(2):215-233.

Moerman, M. 1979. A Thai village headman as a synaptic leader. In C.D. Neher (ed.) *Modern Thai politics: from village to nation.* Revised edition. Cambridge (Mass.): Schenkman Publishing Company.

Morell, D. and Chai-anan Samudavanija. 1981. *Political conflict in Thailand: reform, reaction, revolution.* Cambridge (Mass): Oelgeschlager, Gunn and Hain.

Mulder, N. 1990. *Inside Thai society: an interpretation of everyday life.* Bangkok: Editions Duang Kamol.

Murashima, Eiji. 1987. Local elections and leadership in Thailand: a case study of Nakhon Sawan Province. *The Developing Economies.* 25(4):363-385.

_____.1988. The origin of modern official state ideology in Thailand. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies.* 19(1):80-96.

Nakharin Mektrairat. 1991. The economic base and power in modern Thai political parties. In Eiji Murashima (ed.) *The making of Thai political parties.* Tokyo: Institute of Developing Economies.

Naruemol Bunjongjit and Xavier Oudin. 1992. *Small-scale industries and institutional framework in Thailand.* OECD Development Centre Technical Papers No.81. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Nash, M. 1965. *The golden road to modernity: village life in contemporary Burma.* New Yord: John Wiley and Sons.

Neher C.D. 1972. The politics of change in rural Thailand. *Comparative Politics.* 4(2):201-16.

_____. 1974. *Dynamics of politics and administration in rural Thailand.* Papers in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series No.30. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University.

_____. 1979. Constitutionalism and elections in Thailand. In C.D.Neher (ed.) *Modern Thai politics: from village to nation.* Revised edition. Cambridge (Mass.): Schenkman Publishing Company.

_____. 1987. Thailand in 1986: Prem, parliament and political pragmatism. *Asian Survey.* 28(2):219-230.

_____. 1991. *Southeast Asia in the New International Era.* Boulder: Westview Press.

Neher, C.D. and Bidhya Bowornwathana. 1986. Thai and Western studies of politics in Thailand. *Asian Thought and Society.* 11:16-27.

Neher C.D. and Budsayamat Bunjaipet. 1989. Political interaction in Northern Thailand. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science.* 17(1):53-69.

Nelson, M. 1992. Personal communication.

_____. Forthcoming. *Administration and politics in rural Thailand: internal differentiation and expansion of the political system.* Ph.D. thesis, University of Bielefeld.

NESDB (National Economic and Social Development Board). 1981. *Fifth National Economic and Social Development Plan, 1982-1986.* Bangkok: Office of the Prime Minister.

NESDB. 1987. *Sixth National Economic and Social Development Plan, 1987-1992.* Bangkok: Office of the Prime Minister.

NESDB. 1991. *Seventh National Economic and Social Development Plan, 1992-1996.* Bangkok: Office of the Prime Minister.

Nicholas, R.W. 1977. Factions: a comparative analysis. In S. W. Schmidt et al (eds) *Friends, followers and factions: a reader in political clientelism.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ockey, J. 1992. *Business leaders, gangsters, and the middle class: societal groups and civilian rule in Thailand.* Ph.D. thesis, Cornell University.

Parnwell, M.J.G. 1986. Migration and the development of agriculture: a case study of North-East Thailand. In M. Parnwell (ed.) *Rural development in North-East Thailand: case studies of migration, irrigation and rural credit,* Occasional Paper No.12. Hull: University of Hull.

_____. 1990. Rural industrialisation in Thailand. Hull Papers in Developing Area Studies No.1. Hull: Centre of Developing Area Studies.

Parnwell, M. J.G. and Suranart Khamanarong. 1990. Rural industrialisation and development planning in Thailand. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science.* 18(2):1-28.

Parry, J. and M. Bloch. 1989. Introduction: money and the morality of exchange. In J. Parry and M. Bloch (eds) *Money and the morality of exchange.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Phillips, H.P. 1958. The election ritual in a Thai village. *Journal of Social Issues.* 14(4)38-50.

_____. 1965. *Thai peasant personality: the patterning of interpersonal behaviour in the village of Bang Chan.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California.

Phisit Pakkesem. 1988. *Leading issues in Thailand's development transformation 1960-1990.* Bangkok: National Economic and Social Development Board.

Phya Anuman Rajadhon. 1986. *Popular Buddhism in Siam and other essays on Thai studies.* Bangkok: Thai Inter-Religious commission for Development and Sathirakoses Nagapradipa Foundation.

Piker, S. 1975. The post-peasant village in Central Plain Thai society. In W.G. Skinner and A.T. Kirsch (eds) *Change and persistence in Thai society: essays in honor of Lauriston Sharp.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

_____. 1983. *A peasant community in changing Thailand.* Anthropological Research Papers No3. Arizona: Arizona State University.

Pisan Suriyamongkol. 1988. *Institutionalization of democratic political processes in Thailand: a three-pronged democratic polity.* Bangkok: Arunsee Indrasuksri.

Potter, J.M. 1976. *Thai peasant social structure.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Preecha Kuwinpant. 1980. *Marketing in North-Central Thailand.* Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute.

Pronpilai Lertwicha. 1989. State of Small Scale industry in Thailand. *Rudoc News.* 4(1):1-33.

Rachain Chintayarangsan. 1989. Thailand's expectation on reaching NIC status. In Suchart Prasith-rathsint (ed.) *Thailand's national development: social and economic background.* Bangkok: Thai University Research Association.

Radom Wongnom. 1980. *Opinion leadership and the elite in rural Thailand: a case study of two villages.* Ph.D. thesis, University of California.

Rigg, J. 1988. Land ownership and land tenure as measures of wealth and marginalisation: evidence from Northeast Thailand. *Area.* 20:339-345.

Riggs, F. 1966. *Thailand: the modernization of a bureaucratic polity.* Honolulu: East-West Center Press.

Romijn, H.A. 1987. Employment generation through cottage industries in rural Thailand. In Rizwanul Islam (ed.) *Rural industrialisation and employment in Asia.* New Delhi: International Labour Organisation Asian Employment Programme.

Roxborough, I. 1979. *Theories of underdevelopment.* London: Macmillan Education.

Sanitsuda Ekachai. 1990. *Behind the smile: voices of Thailand.* Bangkok: Thai Development Support Committee.

Scott, J.C. 1972 *Comparative political corruption.* Contemporary Comparative Politics Series. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

_____. 1977. Patron-client politics and political change in Southeast Asia. In S.W. Schmidt *et al* (eds) *Friends, followers and factions: a reader in political clientelism.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

_____. 1985. *Weapons of the weak: everyday forms of peasant resistance.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

_____. 1990. *Domination and the arts of resistance: hidden transcripts.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Scott, J.C. and B.J. Kerkvliet. 1977. How traditional rural patrons lose legitimacy: a theory with special reference to Southeast Asia. In S.W. Schmidt *et al* (eds) *Friends, followers and factions: a reader in political clientelism.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Seri Phongphit. 1988. *Religion in a changing society: Buddhism, reform and the role of monks in community development in Thailand.* Hong Kong: Arena Press.

Sharma, M. 1978. *The politics of inequality: competition and control in an Indian village.* Asian Studies as Hawaii No.22. Hawaii: University Press of Hawaii.

Sharp, L. and L.M. Hanks. 1978. *Bang Chan: social history of a rural community in Thailand.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Somkiat Wanthana. 1991. The power context of the Thai political party system. In Eiji Murashima (ed.) *The making of modern Thai political parties.* Joint Research Programme Series No.86. Tokyo: Institute of Developing Economies.

Somsak Tambunlertchai. 1989. Thailand's industrial strategy in the Sixth Economic and Development Plan. In Suchart Prasith-rathsint (ed.) *Thailand's national development: social and economic background.* Bangkok: Thai University Research Association.

Strathern, A.J. 1984. *A line of power.* Tavistock: London.

Strauch, Judith. 1981. *Chinese village politics in the Malaysian state.* Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press.

Stowe, J. 1991. *Siam becomes Thailand: a story of intrigue.* London: C. Hurst and Co.

Suchit Bunbongkarn. 1987. *The military in Thai politics 1981-1986.* Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Suehiro, A. 1985. *Capital accumulation and industrial development in Thailand.* Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute.

Sumitr Pitiphat. 1981. Toward non-farm activities and employment in Chainat and Singburi, Central Thailand. Bangkok: Thammasat University.

Suthy Prasartset. 1991. *Democratic alternatives to maldevelopment: the case of Thailand.* Occasional Paper Series Number 10. Yokohama: International Peace Research Institute Meigaku.

Suwannarat, G. S M. 1985. *A quantitative analysis of socio-economic, distributional, and political effects on voting turnout in Thailand,1976-1979.* Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute.

Swartz, M. J. 1968. Introduction. In M.J. Swartz (ed.) *Local-level politics: social and cultural perspectives.* London: University of London Press.

Takaya, Yoshikazu. (Trans. P. Hawkes). 1987. *Agricultural development of a tropical delta: a study of the Chao Phraya Delta.* Monographs of the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, No.17. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Tamada, Yoshifumi. 1991. *Itthiphon* and *amnat*: an informal aspect of Thai politics. *Southeast Asian Studies.* 28(4):445-465.

Tambiah, S.J. 1970. *Buddhism and the spirit cults in North-East Thailand.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

_____. 1976. *World conqueror and world renouncer.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tanabe, Shigeharu. 1978. *Peasant farming systems in Thailand:a comparative study of rice cultivation and agricultural technology in Chiangmai and Ayuthaya.* Ph.D. thesis, University of London.

Tannen baum, N. 1987. Tatoos: invulnerability and power in Shan cosmology. *American Ethnologist.* 14:693-710.

Tasker, R. and P. Handley. 1992. 'A second chance'. *Far Eastern Economic Review.* 27 August.

Terwiel, B.J. 1989. *Through travellers' eyes: an approach to early nineteenth century Thai history.* Bangkok: Editions Duang Kamon.

Thongsri Kambhu. 1984. Thai administrative structure and reform: problems with decentralization. *Philippine Journal of Public Administration.* 28(1&2):65-96.

Tomosugi, Takashi. 1980. *A structural analysis of Thai economic history: case study of a Northern Chao Phraya Delta village.* I.D.E. Occasional Papers Series No.17. Tokyo: Institute of Developing Economies.

Tongroj Onchan. 1990. *A land policy study.* Research Monograph No.3. Bangkok: The Thai Development Research Institute Foundation.

Trebuil, G. 1993. *Farmer differentiation in Southern and Central Thai agrarian systems: who benefits from agricultural growth?* Paper presented to the Fifth International Conference on Thai Studies, London, 5-9 July.

Turton, A. 1976. Northern Thai peasant society: twentieth-century transformations in political and jural structures. *Journal of Peasant Studies.* 3(3):367-298.

_____. 1984. Limits of ideological domination and the formation of social consciousness. In A. Turton and S. Tanabe (eds) *History and peasant consciousness in South East Asia.* Senri Ethnological Studies 13. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology.

_____. 1987. *Production, power and participation in rural Thailand: experiences of the poor farmers' groups.* Geneva: UNRISD.

_____. 1989a. Thailand: agrarian bases of state power. In G. Hart, A. Turton, B. White *et al* (eds) *Agrarian transformations: local processes and the state in Southeast Asia.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

_____. 1989b. Local powers and rural differentiation. In G. Hart, A. Turton, B. White *et al.* (eds) *Agrarian transformations: local processes and the state in Southeast Asia.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Van Roy, E. 1971. *Economic systems of Northern Thailand.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Vella, W.F. 1957. *Siam under Rama III 1824-1851.* Monographs of the Association for Asian Studies No.4. Locust Valley (N.Y.): JJ. Augustin.

Vincent, Joan. 1990. *Anthropology and politics: visions, traditions and trends.* Tuscon: Universtiy of Arizona Press.

Wathana Wongsekiarrthirat. 1991. *Kan plian plang kan chay thi din le rangngan khong chumchon chonabot nay jangwat ayutthaya (2512-2532) (Changing land and labour utilization in rural communities in Ayutthaya province).* Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute.

Weber, M. 1977 [1948]. *From Max Weber: essays in sociology.* H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds. & trans.). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Werbner, P. 1990. Economic rationality and hierachical gift economies: value and ranking among British Pakistanis. *Man.* 25(4):266-285.

White, B. N.F. 1980. Rural household studies in anthropological perspective. In H.P. Binswanger, R.E. Evenson *et al* (eds) *Rural household studies in Asia.* Singapore: Singapore University Press.

_____. 1989. Problems in the empirical analysis of agrarian differentiation. In G. Hart, A. Turton, B. White. *et al* (eds) *Agrarian transformations: local processes and the state in Southeast Asia.* Berkeley: University of California Press

Wilk, R.R. 1989. Decision making and resource flows within the household: beyond the black box. In R. R. Wilk (ed.) *The household economy.* Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Wilson, D. 1962. *Politics in Thailand.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Witayakorn Chiangkul. 1982. *The effects of capitalist penetration on the transformation of the agrian structure in the Central Region of Thailand (1960-1980).* Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute.

Wolters, W. 1983. *Politics, patronage and class conflict in Central Luzon.* Research Report Series No.14. The Hague: Institute of Social Studies.

Wyatt, D. 1984. *Thailand: a short history.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Young, Stephen. 1968. The Northeastern Thai village: a non-participatory democracy. *Asian Survey,* Vol.8.

NEWSPAPERS

Bangkok Post, 1990: 20 January, 5 May, 25 June, 30 July, 16 September, 7 October, 4 November, 11 November.

Bangkok Post Weekly, 30 August 1991, 21 February 1992.

Thai Rath, 2 July 1990; 22, 23, 28, 29 October 1990. Bangkok.