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Research Report from the Overseas Training Program 2 2017 in Thailand on “Migrants, Minorities and the Role of Women”

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1. Introduction

Naoko SHINKAI, Associate Professor, GSID, Nagoya University

The Overseas Training Program (OTP) is a required course for scholars of the Women Leaders Program to Promote Well-being in Asia, one of the leading programs at Nagoya University, and is designed to help participating students understand issues in Asia and look for possible pathways for better outcomes in multicultural and multidisciplinary environments.

This is the second year for participating faculty at Nagoya University for the Women Leaders Program to Promote Well-being in Asia (hereafter the Well-being Program) to conduct OTP for doctoral students. OTP is divided into two parts: one for master’s students and the other for doctoral students. OTP2 is arranged for doctoral students who can expand on their previous findings from OTP1. There are about 20 scholars selected each year for this program. Five departments in four institutions, the Graduate School of Bio-agricultural Science, Graduate School of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of International Development (GSID), and Graduate School of Medicine, which consists of the School of Health Sciences and School of Medicine, took part in the Well-being Program, and each is responsible for at least one OTP this year. Therefore, six to seven students are expected to participate in each training program.

OTP1 2017 for master’s students will be conducted in Indonesia, Myanmar, and Vietnam during the winter, and OTP2 2017 were conducted in Malaysia and Thailand during the summer, and one more program will be facilitated in Cambodia next winter.

GSID is responsible for the organization and implementation of OTP2 2017 in Thailand for doctoral students as it was last year, and we have coordinated with our sister institutions in Thailand at the

*For the order of authors, first students from Nagoya University are listed, followed by students from Chiang Mai University and advisers from Nagoya University and Chiang Mai University in alphabetical order.

Faculty of Economics, Chiang Mai University, with which we have a MOU, and the Women's Studies Center in the Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University, to deliver a learning environment for doctoral students to deepen their understanding of the situation and role of women in Asia.

Based on the comments received last year at the presentation at Chiang Mai University and from participants, we have decided to customize places for field visits as much as possible based on the research interests of participating students. Since April is the first month of the Japanese school year, we started recruiting participating students from mid-April, and the Well-being Program OTP working group asked their first and second choices for destination countries. At that time, we asked potential participants about their research interests and what kind of communities they were interested in visiting. Then, since we found certain commonality regarding ethnicity, migrants, and minorities in their interests, migrants and minorities became the major research theme of OTP2 2017 in Thailand. This year, participating students in OTP2 in Thailand were finalized in early May. Simultaneously, possible migrant and minority communities to visit, such as Hmong and Tai Yai (also called Shan), were identified and suggested by advisers from Chiang Mai University. Two advisers from Chiang Mai University, Dr. Ariya and Dr. Nalitra, were invited to GSID, Nagoya University, to give lectures to all the participants of OTP2 on the Thai economy, social development, and the situations of women in Thailand as well as on issues in migrant and minority communities.

OTP2 has important objectives for participating students to discover what they found in OTP1 and build teamwork skills through group work in a multicultural and multidisciplinary setting. Therefore, in the first preparatory seminar for participants in OTP2 in Thailand, we grouped them into two teams based on their research interests collected in advance, fields of concentration, and nationalities. We tried to form groups where there was no overlap of subjects and nationalities but a similarity in research interests. Then, we synthesized what they learned in OTP1 and would like to learn in OTP2 at this meeting. Since we had six students enrolled in OTP2 in Thailand this year, we divided them into two groups of three members each: one group on business, culture, and farming in migrants' and minorities' communities (BCF) and another group on social services in migrants' and minorities' communities (SS). Key phrases used by Group BCF's members regarding societal issues picked up from their experiences in OTP1 were "gender's roles in labor," which could be naturally or socially constructed, and a "traditional vs. modern approach." Group SS's members recognized the "relationship between nature and communities," "discrepancies in public and private medical services," and "the connection of education with communities" as crucial findings from OTP1. Similarly, Group BCF's focal points of research for OTP2 were gender roles based on traditional beliefs vs. modernization, markets for agricultural goods, and financial behavior and the role of women. Group SS's research interests lie in the role of spirituality and community in education and health. Then, together with group advisers from Nagoya University and Chiang Mai University, each group formulated research objectives and questions after research directions were determined by the group.

Advisers from Chiang Mai University gave advice based on situations in the communities of minorities and migrants in Thailand, and advisers from Nagoya University facilitated group discussions and gave advice regarding methodology.

One preparatory session was subsequently made on methodology at the second preparatory seminar. In that session, I introduced possible methods to be used in the field for the research topics and questions formulated and addressed in the earlier meeting based on the Participatory Learning and Action (PLA), as was done last year. PLA is the exploratory advanced form of the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). PRA has multidisciplinary roots, such as applied anthropology, participatory action research, agricultural eco-system analysis, farming system research, rural development, and Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) (Chambers, 1997). Some methods of PLA or PRA are easy to use and applied regularly in the field of international development during many stages, such as feasibility studies, problem findings, implementation processes, and evaluations by international cooperation and

Table 1.1 Schedule of 2017's OTPS2 for OTP2 in Thailand

	Date	Activities
1	May 10, 2017	Orientation session for all OTP2 participants
2	May 11, 2017	Special lectures on OTP2 in Thailand: Dr. Nalitra Thaiprasert, "Introduction to Thailand: Economic and Social Issues" Dr. Ariya Svetamra, "Female Leaders and Their Situations in Communities from Women's Studies Perspectives"; Facilitator: Eiji Shinkai
3	May 11, 2017	Preparatory seminar I for OTP2 in Thailand: Introduction, Grouping, and Discussion on Research Topics; Facilitator: Naoko Shinkai
4	June 5, 2017	Preparatory seminar II for OTP2 in Thailand: Second Group Work: Introduction to Field Sites by Eiji Shinkai and Methodology by Naoko Shinkai
5	June 26, 2017	Preparatory seminar III for OTP2 in Thailand: Thai Language Course 1 by Kornwika Poonnawatt; Facilitator: Eiji Shinkai
6	July 5, 2017	Preparatory seminar IV for OTP2 in Thailand: Thai Language Course 2 by Kornwika Poonnawatt; Facilitator: Eiji Shinkai
7	July 5, 2017	Risk management in overseas fieldwork; Akinari Hoshino, International Education Center, Nagoya University
8	July 13, 2017	Preparation of research proposals and presentations; Facilitator: Naoko Shinkai
9	July 27, 2017	Pre-departure seminar: Administrative introduction by Eiji Shinkai, Kei Fukunaga Methodology, revisited by Naoko Shinkai

Note: This table does not include preparatory seminars addressed to all the participants of OTP2, such as "Pre-departure presentation of research proposals for the program," other special lectures by invited professors for other destinations, and "Post-OTP2 presentation of research outputs for the program."

Source: Author

Table 1.2 Schedule of OTP2 2017 in Thailand

July 29	Departure from Nagoya, travel to Chiang Mai via Bangkok
July 30	Morning: Special lecture by Dr. Ariya Svetamra Afternoon: Visit to Chiang Mai City Arts and Cultural Center, Hmong Market, Warorot Market, and Sunday Market
July 31	Morning: Visit a Hmong Community at Mae Sa Mai, Presentation by a female leader at the Hmong Community and an interview with her Afternoon: Visit the Royal Project and Agricultural Laboratory near the community and an artisanal factory of a Hmong family
Aug. 1	Morning: Group interviews with the Hmong community Afternoon: Individual interviews with the Hmong community
Aug. 2	Morning: Mid-term review at Women's Studies Center, Chiang Mai University Afternoon: Mid-term review, visit the Tribal Museum
Aug. 3	Morning: Visit Bhikkhuni Arama, Nirotharam at Chom Thong Introduction and Dharma talk Afternoon: Q&A session and facility visit
Aug. 4	Morning: Visit Chinese Muslim Market, visit an NGO, which helps migrant workers, and healers in the Tai Yai community Afternoon: Visit an NGO, presentation and interviews with the leaders
Aug. 5	Morning: Group interviews with the Tai Yai community Afternoon: Individual interviews with the Tai Yai community
Aug. 6	Morning: Preparation for presentation at Women's Studies Center, Chiang Mai University Afternoon: Preparation for presentation
Aug. 7	Morning: Presentation at Women's Studies Center, Chiang Mai University Afternoon: Visit sites in Chiang Mai city ⇒ Travel to Bangkok
Aug. 8	Bangkok ⇒ Nagoya

Source: Author

governmental organizations, NGOs, researchers, and universities. While RRA developed into PRA and later into PLA, the roles of outsiders and insiders, and notably, the roles of participants, have been transformed. Participants became main players, and outsiders essentially function as facilitators at the later stage of methodological development in application (Kumar, 2002). However, in certain situations, this division of roles may not be clear, and the role may shift based on the synergy in discussions and situations in the fields. Overall, OTP2 in Thailand, was for students to understand those participatory techniques in the field so that they can observe restrictions as well as potentials of the participatory methods applied. All of the methods introduced in the session have been frequently employed in fieldwork and projects in the related fields of sectional and inter-sectional development issues, such as poverty and well-being, as well as other related issues on agriculture, anthropology, ecology,

Table 1.3 Participants in OTP2 2017 in Thailand

Group on Business, Culture, and Farming in Migrants' and Minorities' Communities	Group on Social Services in Migrants' and Minorities' Communities
Students from Nagoya University	
Ms. Miki Onidani (GSID), Ms. Rin Soriya (GSBS), Ms. Jennifer Stewart (GSID)	Ms. Keiko Migliacci (GSID), Ms. Eri Nanizawa (GSM), Ms. Wang Quianran (GSEHD)
Students from Chiang Mai University	
Ms. Paravee Maneejuk (FE), Mr. Woraphon Yamaka (FE)	Ms. Tanya Promburom (FSS), Ms. Jantanee Kanto (DWS)
Advisers	
Main Advisers: Dr. Ms. Naoko Shinkai (GSID), Dr. Ms. Nalitra Thaiprasert (FE) Sub-adviser: Mr. Eiji Shinkai (GSID)	Main Advisers: Dr. Ms. Naoko Shinkai (GSID), Dr. Ms. Ariya Svetamra (DWS) Sub-adviser: Mr. Kei Fukunaga (GSID)

Note: GSBS is the Graduate school of Bio-agricultural Science; GSM is the Graduate School of Medicine, Nagoya University; GSEHD is the Graduate School of Education and Human Development, Nagoya University; DWS is the Department of Women's Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University; FE is the Faculty of Economics, Chiang Mai University; and FSS is Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University, respectively.

Source: Author

economics, education, environment, finance, geography, public health and sanitation, and rural studies. I added references on the participatory approach to the previous year's materials, which illustrate examples of techniques, including those demonstrated in the second meeting. Those references had been reserved at the GSID library. Group members from Nagoya University selected methods to apply during the fieldwork out of various methods of the participatory approach. Then, questionnaires were proposed by each group. I distributed the questionnaires to the advisers from Chiang Mai University together with profiles of interviewees in the communities requested by group members, followed by field coordination by community leaders. The next table shows the schedule of the Overseas Training Program Seminar (OTPS) 2 for OTP2 2017 in Thailand.

Due to ethical concerns, written consent forms were prepared by each group in advance for individual interviewees and signed by the interviewees. For group interviews, the leader orally explained the research objectives, research output, and usage of the output, and I addressed other required ethical matters and took the role of facilitator of group interviews in the communities, and translation was done by Chiang Mai University's advisers.

2. Research Outcomes of Group BCF Regarding the Relationship Between Gender and Market Activity of Hmong and Tai Yai in Chiang Mai, Thailand

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2.1. Introduction

In order to contribute to gender studies on ethnic minorities, we defined a domain of investigation within market activities. This is because working in the markets is crucial for ethnic minorities in Thailand to economically and socially survive in society. Moreover, being exposed to mainstream Thai society in the markets may change their traditional gender roles. Therefore, it is significant to investigate the market activities of ethnic minorities in order to well understand their contemporary gender issues (Halkias & Caracatsanis, 2011).

The conventional studies of ethnic minorities in Thailand have been limited in revealing the diversity of gender issues among the different ethnic groups. These gendered studies tend to stereotype that women in ethnic minorities are vulnerable to existing kinship structure and also to stigma from Thai people who treat especially women in a pejorative manner (Cohen, 1992 & 2003, Tooker, 2012 & Toyota, 1998). This stereotype of victimizing women in ethnic minority as “vulnerable” to existing cultural and social structure could neglect how gender issues of ethnic minorities are being reconfigured in an immediate setting. Therefore, the present study aims to contribute to highlight the reconfiguration and heterogeneity of gender issues of ethnic minorities in Thailand. This objective is achieved by investigating how ethnic minorities define and redefine their gender roles in the markets.

This study was conducted over a ten-day fieldwork trip to Chiang Mai, Thailand in July and August 2017 in collaboration with Chiang Mai University. We conducted research activities and interviews with Hmong and Tai Yai community leaders and individuals working in the local markets. This was supplemented with trips to cultural centres, tribal museums, and observations in the markets. In this report, we describe the methods and findings of our study, followed by a discussion on the discrepancies between the communities we interviewed.

2.1.2. Research Objectives

Our researched was aimed at understanding the relationship between gender and market activity for Hmong and Tai Yai people in Chiang Mai.

2.1.3. Research Questions

To fulfill our research objective, the following questions were investigated:

1. How do Hmong and Tai Yai prioritize market products?
2. What is the purpose of the markets for Hmong and Tai Yai people?
3. How do Hmong and Tai Yai women and men understand gender roles in the market?

2.2. Methodology

This study was qualitative in nature and was largely based on the concept of having community members take an active role in data collection. We used the following two Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methods to analyze people and communities: pair-wise ranking and mobility map. The pair-wise ranking activity was used to find out how people choose which items to sell in the market, and mobility map was used to find out the purpose of the market. Each of these activities was prefaced with introductory questions and concluded with follow-up questions. In addition, we conducted semi-structured interviews with individual participants following both activities. Our research activities were translated by professors and student assistants of Chiang Mai University.

2.3. Findings and Analysis

2.3.1. Choice of Market Products

Pair-wise ranking was used with the Hmong and Tai Yai groups to find out which items were preferred by sellers in the market. To do the activity, we first asked the participants to list a few of the different items they sell. After collecting several items, we asked them to narrow these choices down to six of the most popular items. We put the items on a table along the top and down the side. Next, we paired two items, asked the participants to choose which one they preferred, and then continued until all possible pairs of items had been presented. After completing the table, we asked the participants several follow-up questions to find out the reasoning behind their selections.

2.3.1.1. Hmong: Choice of the Market Products

The most preferred market item by all participants was clothes and scarves, which was chosen each time when compared with other item for a total of five. Potatoes, cabbage, and Chinese cabbage were each chosen three times, and shoes and cabbage were not chosen (Table 2.1).

There were several factors that influenced our participant's preference for clothes and scarves. They stated that clothes and scarves are easy to sell in the market, and it is easy for the seller to walk home with a profit each day. When compared with agriculture items, which also make a profit, clothes and scarves were preferred because agricultural items require a long wait period until sellers can get cash for them — first a field must be prepared, the seeds planted and cultivated for weeks or months, and then harvested before they can be taken to the market. There are also the unpredictable changes

Table 2.1 Pair-wise Raking in the Hmong Community

	Clothes, scarves	Shoes	Bags	Cabbage	Chinese cabbage	Potato
Clothes, scarves	X	Clothes, scarves	Clothes, scarves	Clothes, scarves	Clothes, scarves	Clothes, scarves
Shoes		x	Bags	Cabbage	Chinese cabbage	Potato
Bags			x	Bags	Bags	Potato
Cabbage				x	Chinese cabbage	Potato
Chinese cabbage					x	Chinese cabbage
Potato						x

Source: Authors, created from pair-wise ranking conducted in Hmong community

in weather and climate that make agriculture somewhat of a gamble. Thus, clothes and scarves are preferred because there is not the same wait period. However, when agricultural items are sold, hardy and long-lasting vegetables are preferred. Potatoes, cabbage, and Chinese cabbage are all solid and strong vegetables that are less likely to be damaged during transport, and they have a long shelf-life before they spoil.

In addition to these preferences for clothes and scarves, the participants also said that they regularly pay close attention to market demands and which of their items are selling well and which are selling poorly. For instance, if they notice that an item of clothing or pattern is popular, they will work on making more of it and improving it. At the same time, if another item of clothing or pattern is continually passed over by customers, the participants would make less of them. Thus, market demand was an important factor in their preference for not only clothes when compared with other items, but also which items and clothing and patterns were popular among their customers.

2.3.1.2. Tai Yai: Choice of the Market Products

For the Tai Yai participants, two types of noodle dishes were the most preferred: Shan noodles and Tai Yai rice noodles. They were each chosen four times. After this, Tai Yai snacks were chosen three times, pickles two times, fermented pork one time, and herbal medicine was not chosen at all (Table 2.2). The reader should note, the words Shan and Tai Yai are used interchangeably and refer to the same ethnic people. For the sake of cohesion, our group has chosen to use the word Tai Yai. However, in a few instances, our Tai Yai participants used the word Shan, for example when distinguishing between the Tai Yai rice noodle dish and the Shan noodles dish. Thus, we have used the word Shan

Table 2.2 Pair-wise Ranking in the Tai Yai Community

	Tai Yai rice noodles	Tai Yai snacks	Pickles	Herbal medicine	Shan noodles	Fermented pork
Tai Yai rice noodles	x	Tai Yai rice noodles	Tai Yai rice noodles	Tai Yai rice noodles	Shan noodles	Tai Yai rice noodles
Tai Yai snacks		x	Tai Yai snack	Tai Yai snack	Shan noodles	Tai Yai snack
Pickles			x	Pickles	Shan noodles	pickles
Herbal medicine				x	Fermented pork	Herbal medicine
Shan noodles					x	Shan noodles
Fermented pork						x

Source: Authors, created from pair-wise ranking conducted in the Tai Yai community

only in the few instances when referring to Shan noodles because that is what our participants told us.

The Tai Yai people we interviewed had very different reasons for choosing these items than the Hmong people did for choosing their items. We noticed that the Tai Yai people mainly listed prepared meals rather than clothing items or meal ingredients. They told us they believe that 80–99 percent of their customers are Tai Yai, whereas the Hmong’s primary customers were tourists. This was an important finding, as our Tai Yai participants mentioned that when new Tai Yai people come from Myanmar to Thailand, they often feel lonely, sad, and uncomfortable. Food is an important element in establishing a sense of familiarity and home, and we believe this is a large reason why Tai Yai specialty meals are the most popular items for Tai Yai people to sell in the markets. Serving food that new Tai Yai people are familiar with helps them to feel a sense of home and comfort in their new environment. Due to this, food and Tai Yai meals are easy items to sell in the markets because there is a demand for familiar food and meals. Especially as many Tai Yai people in Thailand have undergone great suffering before coming to Thailand and continue to struggle in Thailand, finding familiar food is an important step in building a comfortable life in Thailand.

2.3.2. Purpose of the Markets

Mobility map was used with the Hmong and Tai Yai groups to find mobility patterns and the purpose of the market. Two female and two male respondents from each community participated in the data collection. To see the geographical location of the markets, we first asked the participants to write down each market and their community with circles on a white paper. The size of the circles indicates

Figure 2.1 Mobility Map Completed by the Hmong Participants While Interacting with Authors

Source: Authors

the size of the markets. Also, participants named each market and indicated the products they sell in the respective markets. Then, we asked them to visualize: 1) time spent in the markets; 2) time taken to get to the markets; 3) cost of going to the markets; 4) the mode of transportation; 5) with whom they go to the markets; 6) frequency of going to the markets; and 7) preference of markets. After completing the mapping, we asked the participants several follow-up questions to find out the purpose of the markets. Figure 2.1 shows the process of the mobility map being completed. The Hmong participants actively participated in the mapping while interacting with the authors.

2.3.2.1. Hmong: Mobility Pattern

As Hmong people chose clothes and scarves as their most preferred products (see Findings 2.3.1: the choice of the products), they also move to the markets in accordance to the demand for clothes and scarves. Hmong people typically target a type of market popular among tourists rather than those only for the locals. For example, though Hmong people are living in the hills of Chiang Mai, they travel to nearby Bangkok to sell their products well. The main reason to select the markets is if Hmong products can be unique in the respective markets. The uniqueness of the Hmong products makes their work easy to attract customers, not only among foreigners but also among Thai people. Thus, the mobility patterns of Hmong people are determined by the choice of the products (i.e. clothes and scarves) and their observation of market demand.

Their intention in the mobility patterns is well shown in their seasonal choice of the markets (Figure 2.2). For example, two among the four key respondents travel to Rayong market nearby Bangkok in January, March and April, when the number of tourists increases.ⁱ A male respondent travels with his wife and a female respondent travels by herself. Since it takes 12 hours by car from their community, they stay near Rayong market during the peak seasons. Another female respondent travels alone to Huahin market near Bangkok in November and December.ⁱⁱ She takes a bus going to Huahin market

Figure 2.2 Mobility Map of the Hmong People



Source: Authors, mobility map completed by the participants of the Hmong community

and it takes 12 hours (850 Baht one way). She also lives near Huahin market during the peak season because of the long distance from home. These narratives show that the mobility patterns of Hmong people are determined by their strategic choice of the markets, which makes Hmong products (i.e. clothes and scarves) unique in appealing to tourists and also Thai people.

2.3.2.2. Hmong: Purpose of the Markets

The purpose of the markets for Hmong people is twofold: one is income generation and the other is socialization. As the mobility patterns show, the choice of the markets primarily aims to generate and secure income. At the same time, the semi-structured interviews revealed that the female respondents consider the markets also as a place for socializing. On one hand, male respondents tend to understand the market solely as a site of income generation. Thus, the purpose of the markets is a critical domain to understand how gender and market activity are related.

How do Hmong women see the markets as place of socializing? Although Hmong women have been treated unequally within the community (e.g. bride-napping, men's control over decision-making, and restrictions on wives to talk to other men), Hmong women in the markets have a certain degree of freedom to interact with customers and other sellers. A female respondent who works in a couple in the markets states that she is proud of her skills of selling.ⁱⁱⁱ As evidence, she stated that she was able to obtain more than 20 regular customers who spend 400 to 500 Baht per shopping visit.^{iv} Considering

the respondent's skill to connect to the customers, she and her husband mutually decide the place to sell, which is the one of the most important strategies in the markets. The patterns of how women interact with her husbands (e.g. mutual decision-making) are significantly different from the traditional way of communication in the Hmong community.

In addition, female Hmong sellers can freely interact with other female sellers to get lunch and take a rest together while their husbands are taking their turn to work. The friends in the markets are not restricted to Hmong people, but rather are diverse, from other ethnic minorities to Thai people. The existence of diverse customers and close relationships among the sellers suggests that Hmong people are widely accepted in the markets, although "Hmong" is sometimes equated with "minority". Therefore, for female respondents, the sense of social acceptance and the changing pattern of interaction with spouses (e.g. mutual decision-making) in the markets create a strong value of socialization.

2.3.2.3. Tai Yai: Mobility Pattern

The choice of the markets of Tai Yai people is highly affected by the places where Tai Yai people live and gather. They typically aim to serve Shan noodles and Tai Yai rice noodles to their fellow Tai Yai (see Findings 2.3.1: the choice of the products). For example, the markets they go are typically located within or nearby the Tai Yai community or construction sites where Tai Yai people are collectively working. Another occasion is relatively large but irregular markets where many Tai Yai people gather to search for their ethnic food. These markets are open only a few days, but Tai Yai sellers also prefer them as an occasion to generate supplementary income to support their families. Therefore, the mobility patterns of Tai Yai people are not as dynamic as Hmong people, since they sell just near the Tai Yai community. They usually sell their products within a distance of 30 minutes by car and wives and husbands travel together.

2.3.2.4. Tai Yai: Purpose of the Markets

The purpose of the markets for Tai Yai people is primarily for income generation, while one female and one male respondent also mentioned socialization.^v It should be noted that these two respondents who mentioned socialization are relatively better off economically. For example, the female respondent has another main source of income. That is an informal money transfer agency generating around 2,100 Bath per month. Therefore, she works in the markets as a supplementary activity, and only at the construction sites or irregular markets. However, as the general situation of other Tai Yai sellers primarily depends on market activities, they intensify the purpose of the markets solely for income generation.

Unlike Hmong people, there is no gender difference in understanding the purpose of the markets. One male respondent answered that he could have not generated enough income to support his

children as a construction worker until six years ago.^{vi} He is now able to save 20 percent of his total earning every month for his two children from market activities. However, working in the markets is not easy. All the female and male respondents are afraid of being apprehended by police in the markets.^{vii} Yet, Tai Yai people still choose to work in the markets. This contradictory behavior significantly indicates that what is most important for both Tai Yai women and men is to generate income as much as possible to financially survive and support their families back in Myanmar. In this context, “being Tai Yai” in Thai society could intensify the economic purpose of the markets regardless of gender.

2.3.3. Gender Roles in the Markets

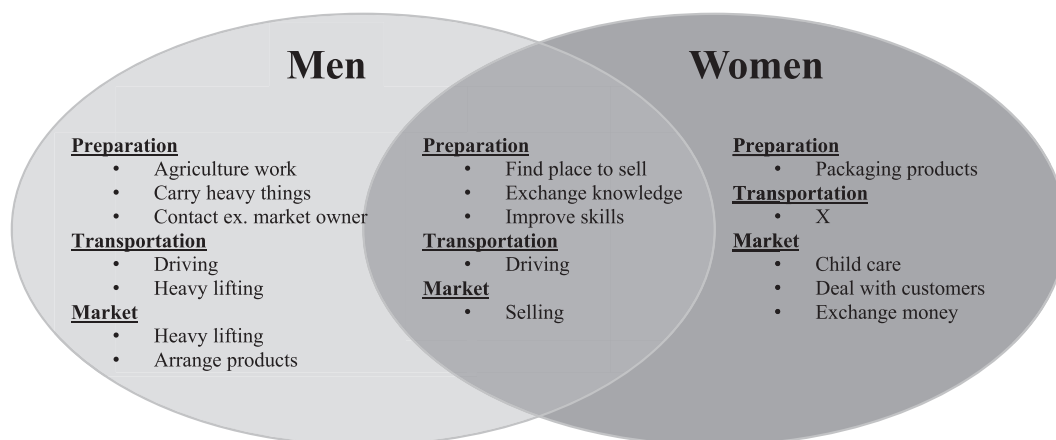
Semi-structured interviews were used with the Hmong and Tai Yai groups to find out gender roles in the market. To do the activity, we asked their experiences of what women and men do as their roles in the markets and why do they do that (Venn Diagram). One interviewer and one respondent conducted the interview individually and separately. We interviewed eight people, four (two women and two men) from the Hmong community and four (two women and two men) from the Tai Yai community, with interpretation support from Chiang Mai University staff and students.

2.3.3.1. Hmong: Gender Roles in the Markets

Hmong women and men work together in the markets for income generation, but some tasks are separated. (Figure 2.3).

In the markets and households, Hmong men do heavy jobs such as agricultural work, carrying heavy things, driving, and arranging the products for sale. At the same time, women work packaging the

Figure 2.3 Gender Roles of the Hmong People in the Markets



Source: Authors, created from semi-structured interviews conducted in the Hmong community

products, dealing with customers and exchanging money with buyers in the markets, and sometime driving as well (e.g. a woman who has no husband or man in family must drive herself to markets.).

Hmong people get more profit from selling clothes rather than from agriculture (see Findings 2.3.1: the choice of the products), so women play more roles in producing clothes (i.e. designing clothes and scarves). However, after market work, women have extra duty to take care of children, family and do housework, including cooking.

Interestingly, Hmong also have work in common for women and men in the markets, such as finding the place to sell, communicating or exchanging knowledge with other sellers (asking for information or technical questions for improving skills), selling, and driving.

Surprisingly, only the man (father, husband or son) is the financial manager in the family. For example, one interviewee controls the family budget, a single man who is living with his divorced mother. Under his management, he uses income for food, electricity, raw materials (for clothes and agriculture), travelling and saving. This finding indicates that the roles of Hmong women and men are separated depending on the type of jobs. For the markets activities they tend to have similar roles, but in the household, men play an important role in the family economy.

2.3.3.2. Tai Yai: Gender Roles in the Markets

In Thailand, Tai Yai women and men play similar roles in the markets. To understand the gender roles of Tai Yai in the markets, we interviewed four Tai Yai migrants. We were told by two persons that there is equality between men and women, and another one mentioned that there is no problem in terms of gender in Thailand for the Tai Yai community.

Tai Yai people move from Myanmar to Thailand because of war. Some of them are legal and some are illegal migrants in Thailand. Most of our participants answered that men and women do the same thing depending on the opportunities that Thai people offer them, including construction work and selling food in the markets or at construction sites.

Most Tai Yai people have a low level of education, especially women. They are sometime harassed or disparaged by some Thai people in the markets. This is causing them to have less opportunity to work in the markets compared to other people, like Thais or citizens of other nation. This problem leads women and men to sacrifice to do whatever they can for money.

When we asked them about how they understand gender roles, they seemed not to care about who does what, such as insisting that women must stay home to do housework or take care of children and so on. Interestingly, one woman said that anyone can do the housework or take care of children or outside work; it is not only one sex that does these tasks. We can say that they do their best to work individually outside the house to earn as much money as possible to support their families and other expenses (i.e. one woman sends some money back to Myanmar, while another respondent earns money for her children's higher education). Thus, the gender role of Tai Yai in the markets is non-

specific. Their roles are not separated but depend on the individual situation. We think that because they are in Thailand to survive, both women and men must work equally hard to live.

2.4. Discussion

2.4.1. Hmong

Compared to the past, gender issues among the Hmong community have improved thanks to new educated generations.

As participants told us, today women and men are working together outside the house to improve family finances. For example, women are motivated to work outside for socialization and income in the markets by becoming sellers. This way is good for Hmong women to communicate little by little with other people in society. One woman explained that, according to Hmong rules, she is not allowed to talk to other men after getting married, but being a seller in the markets she has to deal with diverse costumers, so she can talk to other men during her work. Thus market activity can improve a little the right of women to communicate with other men.

At the same time, another man also told us that he strongly believes that from his generation afterward, elements of Hmong culture such as bride knapping will surely disappear. Then the women in this community will be officially recognized so they can decide about their future husband. The same man had experienced bride knapping, as his girlfriend was kidnapped by a group of men from another Hmong village. Since then, he does not like this part of the culture (“I do want to change”, said the man). He continued that it is only education and the new generation can change this culture.

Today, the Hmong household economy is not only relying on agriculture, but also handicraft leads to extra profit. They think that most Hmong can assist their children for higher education. This is the good way that Hmong issues will be solved, hopefully.

In this research, we did not have much time to do more interviews and observation with other people around the community, but based on our four participants and the speech from a Hmong women leader, the old concept of women in the Hmong community will be positively changed.

2.4.2. Tai Yai

Regarding gender, there were some disparities between what our participants told us during individual interviews and what we heard during discussion with the Tai Yai migrants’ organization. For example, when meeting with the head of the organization, she stated that women hold a lower place in society and she sees this firsthand. She mentioned that when she holds meetings for Tai Yai migrants, many times women do not come, or they feel that they should not stay long. This is because a gendered division of labour dictates that women are expected to be preparing meals at home, taking care of the house, and should not be bothered with such activities. She even mentioned that Tai Yai women experience domestic abuse, which is one of the issues her organization addresses. On the

other hand, when we talked with individual participants during interviews, they believed that Tai Yai society is equal and women do not experience discrimination.

However, the reason that our participants may be oblivious to gender discrimination is because it is not a high priority for them. Instead, they mentioned the collective suffering of all Tai Yai people escaping from Myanmar, which puts all people on a perceived even playing field. There seemed to be little interest from our participants regarding gender roles in the market, but rather a greater sense of urgency regarding the war in Myanmar. It could be that, since both men and have suffered as refugees, men perceive that both genders have suffered the same. However, this way of thinking may also be the result of a gendered power difference, since it is possible that men are not fully aware of the added layer of violence that women face during times of war, such as rape and sexual abuse.

From the data we collected, we can say that gender is not a significant factor in market activities, and we found that both men and women do similar jobs in the market, even if this may not be the case in the home. In many cases, our participants worked in the market individually, so they alone were responsible for preparing items to sell, displaying items, dealing with customers, and handling money. There were men who worked alone, and women who worked alone. Rather than worrying whether a job is a “woman’s job” or a “man’s job” in the market, there was an understanding that all Tai Yai people had suffered and had a desire to help each other in any way possible, such as selling familiar Tai Yai meals or traditional herbal medicine. Thus, we can say that gender roles are broken down in the market for Tai Yai people, and gender does not dictate what activities men and women should do there.

2.5. Conclusion

We conclude that the relationship between gender and market activities is context specific. In order to well understand the relationship between gender and market activities, first an understanding of how different context of each ethnic minority affects their different experiences in the markets is needed. We expect that comprehending the context of each ethnic minority can highlight why their understanding of gender roles in the markets is so diverse from one ethnic minority to another. Therefore, we conclude the present report with two themes: 1) ethnicity and market activities; and 2) gender and market activities. We expect that the two themes of conclusion give a comprehensive understanding of how gender and market activities are related among ethnic minorities in Thailand.

2.5.1. Ethnicity and Market Activities

There are two important contextual determinants in understanding the different experiences of Hmong and Tai Yai in the markets. These are: 1) a sense of social acceptance; and 2) urgency of economic survival. Regarding a sense of social acceptance in the markets, for example, Hmong women and men tend to actively interact with non-Hmong people as customers and other sellers (e.g. Thai people, other ethnic minorities or foreigners). This pattern of interaction indicates that Hmong people

have a certain sense of social acceptance in the markets (see 2.3.2.2 Hmong: purpose of the markets). On the other hand, Tai Yai people try to hide being Tai Yai and restrict their communication in Tai Yai in the markets. For example, a male respondent stated that he avoids interacting with non-Tai Yai people in the markets, because it may cause some kind of problem just because he is Tai Yai. Also, Tai Yai sellers intentionally interact only with Tai Yai people (see 2.3.2.2 Tai Yai: mobility pattern).^{viii} Thus, a sense of social acceptance is an important factor to understand why Hmong and Tai Yai people experience the market activities differently.

Second, the urgency of economic survival is another critical factor to understand the different experiences of Hmong and Tai Yai in the markets. For Hmong people, economic survival is a less immediate issue than it is for Tai Yai people (see 2.4 Discussion). Hmong people understand that working in the markets is one of the best kinds of work among others, such as agriculture, since it enables them to utilize their skills of making clothes and scarves and earn cash every day. It gives them a sense of economic security in everyday life. For Tai Yai people, however, economic survival is a more immediate issue (see 2.4 Discussion). What makes the situation severe is the law restricts the types of work allowed for Tai Yai people (i.e. construction work, fishing and farming). These works generate minimum or less than minimum income in Thailand. Thus, the market activities attract Tai Yai people as a means to raise their economic status, although it puts them in illegal status and has the risk of being apprehended.^{ix} Therefore, it is also important to understand the economic situation of each ethnic minority to realize why the meaning and values of the market activities are so diverse among ethnic minorities. The cases of Hmong and Tai Yai reveal the importance of analyzing both social and economic contextual factors to explain how each ethnic minority experiences market activities differently in Thai society.

2.5.2. Gender and Market Activities

In order to well explain the relationship between gender and the market activities of different ethnic minorities, we highlight the importance of comprehending the social and economic context of each ethnicity. This is because it provides the background why gender roles of ethnic minorities in the markets are so diverse. As mentioned above, social and economic contexts are explained by: 1) a sense of social acceptance in the markets; and 2) the urgency of economic survival (see 2.5.2 Ethnicity and market activities). For Hmong people, a sense of the social acceptance of women significantly widens their roles in the markets, especially in the decision-making sphere. For example, women's popularity as sellers among customers allows them to decide the couple's strategies in the markets. These include the most important decisions for sellers, such as where to locate their shops so that they can attract as many customers as possible (see 2.3.2.2 Hmong: purpose of the markets). This phenomenon reveals the significant impact of markets activities on changing traditional gender roles. Through the case of Hmong, we argue that women's sense of social acceptance in the markets is the

one of the critical factors to analyze how women and men understand and reconfigure their gender roles in the markets.

On one hand, for Tai Yai people, the urgency of economic survival is the significant factor to define their gender roles in the markets. As mentioned in the discussion of the Tai Yai, the urgency of economic survival in the limited types of jobs pressure Tai Yai people to work supplementarily in the markets, despite illegal status and the risk of being apprehended. This economic situation blurs the traditional gendered division of work in the markets, since the severe economic condition of the Tai Yai people intensifies their need to earn as much as possible in the markets regardless of their illegal status. Through the case of the Tai Yai, we argue that a sense of urgency in economic survival is another critical factors to analyze how women and men understand and reconfigures their gender roles in the markets.

The study aims to identify how gender and market activities are related among ethnic minorities in Thailand. The case of the Hmong and Tai Yai shed light on how different ethnic minorities in Thailand experience market activities differently. Despite the significant difference in the market activities between Hmong and Tai Yai, the present study also revealed the commonalities in the relationship of gender and market activities. It is that the market as a space can become a locus of reconfiguring the traditional gender roles of ethnic minority. The important contextual factors to understand how people define and redefine gender roles in the markets are: 1) a sense of social acceptance, especially of women; and 2) the urgency of economic survival. Therefore, in gender studies of ethnic minorities, the social and economic construct of each ethnicity first needs to be carefully examined. This will enable researchers to highlight the diverse and dynamic gender values of ethnic minorities.

3. Fieldwork by Group SS on Thai Women's Approach to Childbirth: From a Case of Hmong Community and Tai Yai Community

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3.1. Introduction

This sub section illustrates our survey design, the guiding questions for discussion, and the structure of this section with a group member in charge of each part.

3.1.1. Background

This survey was conducted as part of Overseas Training Program 2 (OTP2) of the Women Leaders Program to Promote Well-being in Asia (Well-being program). The objectives of the OTP2 are to understand the local issues from multiple perspectives with an eye to the role of women, and to learn teamwork (Shinkai, 2017: 2). At the first meeting, we were given the main theme and the sub theme of the survey,¹ the survey sites,² length of interviews,³ group members to work with,⁴ and the methodology.⁵ Under these conditions, we were expected to work out the challenging task of coming up with a topic within the given main and sub theme, and designing a field survey that all three members from different backgrounds and interests⁶ could equally participate in with given targets, a timeframe and methodology. We chose childbirth as a topic for the Hmong and Tai Yai communities. Apart from fulfilling all the requirements listed above, we thought it would be something that the local people would talk fondly about to the strangers like us who show up suddenly for a day. As for the *bhikkhunis* (fully ordained female monastics) we decided to ask their engagement with ethnic minority women.

Once the topic was set, the field survey was carefully designed in such a way that the group member with the least experience in field research could comfortably participate in the survey and actively engage in discussion from the viewpoint of her expertise. By doing so, we tried to achieve the two objectives of OTP2 mentioned earlier.

3.1.2. Guiding Questions

The guiding questions mentioned in the previous sub-sections are as follows:

Main question

How do Hmong and Tai Yai women experience childbirth?

Sub questions:

- 1) What is the process to give birth to children of Hmong and Tai Yai women?
- 2) How do Hmong and Tai Yai women access health knowledge?
- 3) How do *bhikkhunis* perceive and relate to the women in the ethnic minorities?

3.1.3. Structures of This Section

This section has seven sub-sections (3.1 through 3.7). Following this introduction (3.1) is a review of selected previous studies on childbirth in Hmong communities (3.2). The background of the fieldwork site and methodology are explained in 3.3 and 3.4 respectively. The results are presented in 3.5, discussed in 3.6 and concluded in 3.7.

The sub-sections from 3.1 to 3.4, which set the frame of this survey, were written by Migliacci. Results and discussion (3.5 and 3.6) were mainly written by Nanizawa and Wang with some input regarding sub-question (3) by Migliacci. While Nanizawa discusses the sub-questions (1) as a health

scientist, Wang responds to the sub-questions (2) as non-formal education specialist. The Conclusion (3.7) was written jointly.

3.2. Previous Studies

Among many studies on birthing practices, Symonds (2004) and Culhane-Pera et al. (2015) focus on Hmong women. Symonds conducted her extensive ethnographic research in the Hmong villages in northern Thailand with the hope of helping Western medical staff to gain more cultural understanding (Symonds, 2004: xi). We share this position and further explore how Hmong women in Mae Sa Mai today experience childbirth. We are also interested in how Hmong women manage their fears of both delivering at the hospital⁷ and at home⁸, as discussed in Culhane-Pera et al.'s community-based rapid ethnographic study (Culhane-Pera et al., 2015: 2389).⁹

We could not find studies about Tai Yai women's childbirth experience,¹⁰ therefore we shaped our survey plan based on the input from the studies on Hmong women.

3.3. Fieldwork Site

Here is a brief background of our field sites: Mae Sa Mai (Hmong village), suburbs of Chiang Mai city (Tai Yai people), and the Nirotharam Bhikkhuni Arama (Buddhist convent).

Mae Sa Mai is the largest Hmong community in northern Thailand, with most of its area designated as Doi Suthep-Pui National Park in 1981 (Svetamra, 2017). According to Tomforde (2006: 103–111),¹¹ the village is between 1125 and 1200 meters above sea level, located thirty seven kilometers north-west of Chiang Mai city,¹² and established in 1965 by four founders from three clans.¹³ As of 2001, the population was 1750, consisting of 340 families living in 196 houses. 114 households believe in the “traditional Hmong religion”.¹⁴

The Tai Yai people we visited are mostly labor migrants from Shan state in Myanmar living in temporary housing provided by their employers close to the construction sites where they work. All the people we met hold proper work permits; however, there are also people without permits (Svetamra, 2017).

Nirotharam Arama is the Buddhist convent headed by Nanthayani Bhikkuni. According to Ito (2009), Nanthayani went to Sri Lanka¹⁵ for *sameneri* (female novice) ordination in 2006 with thirteen fellow *maechis* (Buddhist lay women who practice eight precepts)¹⁶ in her convent. While the number of *sameneris* and *bhikkhunis* is increasing¹⁷ since the first *sameneri* ordination by Dhammananda in 2001, the public is still debating the legitimacy of *bhikkhuni* ordination and the National Sangha does not officially recognize *sameneris* and *bhikkhunis* (Ito, 2012).¹⁸

3.4. Methodologies

This sub-section explains the design of the interview and its limitations.

3.4.1. Data Collection

We used the Mobility Map from PRA Tools¹⁹ in the morning group interview in order to create a common understanding of the local situation among local people, Chiang Mai University (CMU) students, Nagoya University (NU) students and faculty members.²⁰ The individual interviews in the afternoon were based on the knowledge produced in the group interview.²¹ Since none of the authors have a command of Thai, Hmong or Tai Yai languages, students and faculty members from CMU kindly agreed to act as interpreters between Thai and English.²² In the Arama, we asked questions in open dialogue with five *bhikkhunis* and *sameneris* directly in English.

Table 3.1 shows the interview schedule at a glance.²³

Table 3.1 Interview Schedule

Sites and dates	Hmong community (1 August)	Tai Yai people (5 August)	Nirotharam Arama (3 August)
Topic	Childbirth experience	Childbirth experience	Experience as a <i>bhikkuni</i>
Resource persons AM (90 min)	1 group of 4 women	1 group of 4 women	<i>Dharma</i> talk (sermon) and presentations by <i>bhikkunis</i> (60 min)
Resource persons PM (45 min for each slot)	Woman A	Woman I	One group of five <i>bhikkunis</i> and <i>sameneris</i> (60 min)
	Woman B	Woman II	
	Woman C	Woman III	
	Woman D	Woman IV	

Note: Four women from both Hmong and Tai Yai communities (Woman A, B, C, D and Women I, II, III, IV) all have childbirth experiences and are from different age groups.

Source: Authors

3.4.2. Limitation of the Data Collection²⁴

This survey has some limitations associated with language,²⁵ sampling,²⁶ and the authors' lack of knowledge of the local context²⁷ and misuse of the methodology. The PRA was not properly introduced nor conducted, and was treated merely as a collection of tools, exactly as Kumar criticizes (Kumar, 2002).²⁸

3.5. Results

3.5.1. Process of Giving Birth to Children

1) Hmong women's case

We interviewed four women in the Hmong community. Woman A was 53 years old and she was a leader of women's community, Woman B was 60 years old, Woman C was 59 years old and she was a spiritual medium, and Woman D was 33 years old. There were no women who had experience of going

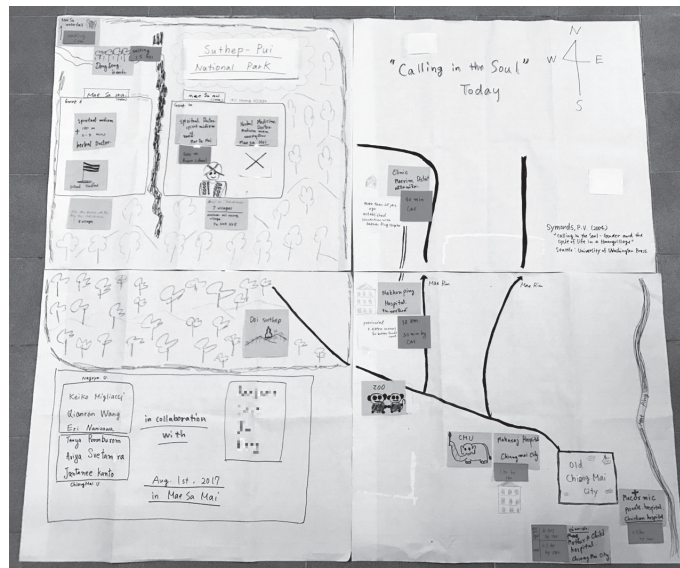
to the hospital for prenatal care during their pregnancy. Woman C gave birth to children at her home, Woman D gave birth to her children in hospital, and Woman A and C experienced giving birth both in their homes and hospitals. (Figure 3.1)

According to Woman C, the people who attended the delivery of children at home were their mothers-in-law, the women in the village who had experience of giving birth, and the pregnant woman’s husband. The women who attended the birth worked in the role of midwife, and the husband prepared hot drinks and food.

Woman A, B and D had experience giving birth in hospital. However, only Woman D preferred giving birth to children in the hospital. She was the youngest woman of the interviewees. The reasons why Hmong women tend to dislike giving birth in hospital were the fear of episiotomy and caesarean section, isolation from family and discrimination in the hospital. On the other hand, the reasons why women want to give birth in hospital were the lack of the husband’s knowledge to assist childbirth, the provision of medical facilities and the sense of security with medical workers in the hospital. However, according to Woman A, nowadays almost all women in the village give birth to children in hospital.

After the baby was born, they held a ritual called *Ouan Neug* to call the newborn baby’s soul into the body. In this ceremony, a spiritual medium used wooden tools and people prepared an offering. After the delivery, Hmong women followed some traditional rules called *Yoo Fai*. For example, they could only eat boiled food, they made fire under their bed, and they had to pose their head higher when they slept.

Figure 3.1 Map of Medical Facilities Used by Mae Sa Mai Women



Source: Authors and participants from Chiang Mai University, based on discussions with local people on 1 August 2017

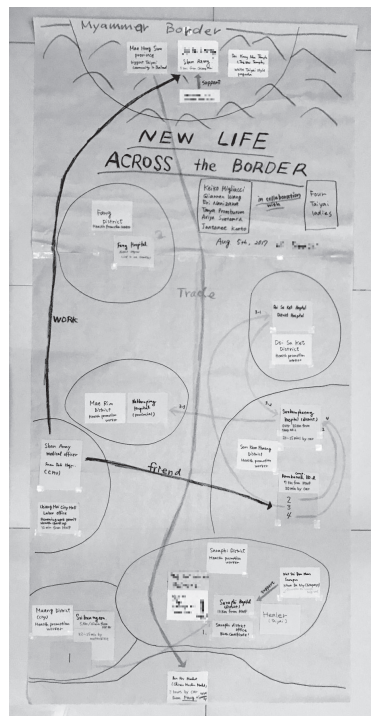
2) Tai Yai women's case

In the Tai Yai community, we interviewed four women (Woman I–IV). After they found that they were pregnant, woman I, II and III went to the hospitals regularly. During the first examination, they took blood and urine tests. The husbands who accompanied their wives took a test for infectious disease. All interviewees gave birth to children in hospital. Woman III went to three hospitals when she gave birth because her uterine could not open well, and Woman I also experienced post mature delivery. However, they could give birth to healthy babies (Figure 3.2).

During pregnancy, Woman II went to a massage doctor regularly for maternal and child health. Woman IV had the experience of having an intravenous drip at her home from a medical officer of the Shan army (Figure 3.2).

All interviewees answered that they wanted to give birth in hospital. However, they tended to have negative images of hospitals. For example, they had to wait a long time in the public hospital, the quality of treatment was not consistent, and medical workers treated them with a discriminatory attitude.

Figure 3.2 Map of Each Woman's Routine to Give Birth



Source: Authors and participants from Chiang Mai University based on the discussion with local people on 5 August 2017

Tai Yai people can enroll in the insurance plan called 30 Baht Health Care. If they enroll in it, they can see a doctor in the specified public hospital by paying thirty Baht. Three of four interviewees had this insurance, while another woman had the social security service of the construction company she worked in.

3.5.2. Health Education in the Community

In this part, I am going to discuss about how Hmong and Tai Yai women access health knowledge and the health education situation in both communities.

3.5.2.1. Hmong Women

All four interviewees had no knowledge about pregnancy and delivery until they found out they were pregnant, and they believe giving birth is a natural instinct. Their knowledge about pregnancy came from elder women in the village or in their family.

Regardless of their generation, they more or less believe in traditional customs for pregnancy and delivery. For example, Woman D was told to see a spiritual doctor by her father and husband when she could not get pregnant after two years.

There is an NGO named Indigenous Women's Network of Thailand (IWNT). This organization works with 13 indigenous women's groups in North Thailand. The Hmong is one of them. Woman A is one of the leaders of the Hmong group. She introduced educational activities for women, especially on reproductive and sexual health. She said this educational activity started in 1993 and they hold lectures from time to time. Organizers usually invite medical specialists to give lectures on sexual and reproductive issues. There are about 10~20 participants every time. However, because of budget problems, this activity had to be combined with other activities. The lecture is to correct unsanitary parts of customs by using modern medical knowledge. For example, one custom said there should be no washing and no teeth brushing for one month after delivery. Besides Woman A, there are three regular members assisting in this activity, and there are also temporary volunteers helping with the activity. They track participants after the lecture to make sure they correct the unsanitary behavior. If participants make no changes, they will try to reeducate them.

3.5.2.2. Tai Yai Women

Among the four Tai Yai women we interviewed, Woman I, III and IV had little knowledge about pregnancy. Woman I said her first knowledge about pregnancy was from a pamphlet from the hospital after she became pregnant. Woman III and IV did not realize they were pregnant until they started to show symptoms of pregnancy and were told by other experienced women. Even though most of them have lived in Thailand for many years, those who came to Thailand at an older age still believe in old beliefs about pregnancy and delivery in the Tai Yai tradition. Woman III believes that if you stepped on

the rope tied to a cow's neck or rode a cow during pregnancy, the time pregnant will be longer, because cows are pregnant for a long time. Also, it is not good to take shower in the afternoon. It is normal to visit a massage doctor to adjust the position of the child and do meditation. It is also said that after delivery, sewing is forbidden. These traditional customs exist and are passed from generation to generation.

Woman I said that in each village, there is a health promotion office set up by the government. People who work there are volunteers with medical knowledge called health promotion workers. They do educational activities about health in the community. Woman III said, several years earlier, there were foreign NGO which came to hold lectures and workshops on HIV, Dengue Fever and so on. They distributed condoms, napkins and blankets to villagers. All of the interviewees think these kinds of educational activities are valuable and they would like to participate in them in the future.

Since jobs are limited for foreigners in Thailand, and considering their immigration status, they are not treated equally in Thai society. In the Tai Yai community we visited, there is a federation initiated by local Tai Yai people dedicated to fighting for human rights, especially for women's rights. According to Woman II, this federation conducts lectures mainly about laws and working conditions, and also about childbirth for women.

Since they also suffer from discrimination because of language problems, language education is regarded as an important issue. Woman II said she received birth control surgery without understanding the explanation from the doctor because of her language level and her lack of health knowledge. She did not realize she had received that surgery until several years later when she was trying to get pregnant again. In this Tai Yai community, there is a Shan Youth School (*Sue Haeng Num* in the local language) which teaches the Tai Yai language, Thai language and English for free. It is a community school using the facilities of the primary school in this community. Classes are in the evening and open to people of all ages. Teachers are volunteers and they are all educated Tai Yai people. Woman II and Woman III learned the Thai language in this Youth School. With the improvement of their language skill, they can be treated better and have a better understanding of doctors when going to hospital. Women IV said that since their children were born in Thailand and are going to Thai schools, they speak the Thai language most of the time. In order not to let their kids forget the Tai Yai language, they send their kids to this Youth School to learn it.

3.5.3. *Bhikkhunis'* Approach Toward Ethnic Minority Women

We could not ask about this in the limited time given to us. However, Dr. Svetamra and Migliacci managed to ask this question to one of the *sameneris* during an informal conversation when she was showing us around the Arama. She said some Karen and Hmong people visit the Arama occasionally and they also run a project called the Mae Sai project²⁹ in the far north (Informal conversation, 3 August 2017).

3.6. Discussion

3.6.1. Comparison of Their Way of Thinking Between Generations in Hmong Community

In the Hmong community, the women who were older than fifty tend to prefer giving birth to children in their home even if some of them had experience of giving birth in hospital. Giving birth under the situation where there is a shortage of medical facilities involves various risks for both mother and child. However, they chose delivery in their homes because of the reasons mentioned in 3.5.1. On the other hand, the youngest woman in the four interviewees preferred to give birth in hospital. This is a limited investigation with four interviewees, but it seemed that older women tend to feel disposed to respect tradition and customs in the village, while the young generation tends to like giving birth to children in a safer place.

3.6.2. The Reason Why Tai Yai People Give Birth in Hospital

All interviewees in the Tai Yai community gave birth to their all children in hospital. However, during the interviews, they had many complaints about hospitals. We heard stories about discrimination against ethnic minorities in hospitals from both Hmong and Tai Yai women. Nevertheless, Tai Yai women hoped to give birth in hospital. It seemed that this was not because Tai Yai people were less discriminated against than Hmong women, but affected their by ethnic background. Tai Yai people originally emigrated from Myanmar as workers. They had to go to the labor office regularly to get work permits, and they could also apply for the 30 Baht Health Care at the labor office. It is said that birth certification was needed for them to get an insurance card.³⁰ These things considered, Tai Yai people are in an unstable situation because they are immigrants from Myanmar, so they tended to prefer to give birth in a place which is recognized as a public place and has a clear process before and after delivery, like a hospital.

3.6.3. Women Empowerment

Both Hmong and Tai Yai women suffer from discrimination as minorities when they go to hospital. In addition, as women in their own ethnic group, there is also discrimination from men. How they cope with this situation is an interesting point to discuss.

Woman A, the leader of IWNT, stated that she is half Chinese, so that she is not Hmong, and therefore she has the right to sit with men (Hmong women do not have the same right to sit with men). Woman D mentioned she does not wear Hmong traditional clothes when going to hospital so that they cannot tell she is Hmong, and thus she can get equal treatment. On the other hand, Woman A found out that in old Hmong tradition, it is a custom for women to go back to their original home after they divorce or grow old, but now divorced women are not allowed to do this. It is one of the largest reasons for women who face domestic violence do not dare divorce. Therefore, she is going to make a statement of this custom to Hmong society in order to fight for more freedom for Hmong

women.

In a word, Hmong women are trying to use the tradition to improve Hmong women's situation, but at the same time in order to live they have to conceal their identity in society. Therefore, women empowerment does not mean fighting directly all the time, there are also flexible ways to protect women's rights.

For Tai Yai women, Woman IV said she learned the Thai language in jail, and she took part in educational activities in the community afterwards. In addition, she encourages her children to participate in as many educational activities in the community as possible. Since they all need to overcome the language barrier, they have a strong consciousness of receiving education. Woman II changed her way of life after she took part in social work in the human rights federation. After learning about law and women's right she changed from a shy person to a positive person. On one hand, they are trying to hide their identity by displaying good language skill and behavior in public. The human rights federation is promoting activities for Tai Yai women, but they would not like to be identified in public because of their sensitive citizenship status.

In order to live, Tai Yai women are fighting for their working and living rights in Thai society. They are also struggling with keeping their own ethnic identity and trying to be a Thai citizen for the sake of the next generation.

3.6.4. Various Strategies of Minority Women

We visited three communities and talked to women. Even though there are significant differences among them regarding their position in the society, they are all minorities. However, the strategies Hmong women take in their patriarchal and clan-based society, those Tai Yai women take against social stigma and political instability, and the attitude of *bhikkhunis* toward the silence of the National Sangha are quite different. The leader of the IWNT redefined her identity, saying "I am not a Hmong, I am Chinese,³¹ therefore I don't follow Hmong rules" (Interview, 31 July 2017) in order to challenge oppressive community rules and negotiate creative solutions. Tai Yai people (both men and women) initiate social action with outside supporters. Apart from this collective action, individual women seize every window of opportunity³² and take advantage of their Shan networks³³ to improve their lives. Meanwhile, *bhikkhunis* do not confront. Instead, they believe in the power of dialogue and talk to people gently and warmly. By doing so, they attract voluntary support from the local community, including financial contribution. They also create the network with *bhikkhus* (fully ordained male monastics) in the neighboring temples in the same manner to act together as Buddhist monks. They say that is all they need to pursue their missions and there is no need to fight for rights (Q&A session, 3 August 2017). This variety of strategies suggests unlimited possibilities to initiate social change from within.

3.6.5. Roles of Buddhists

The Arama consider Bhuddhism as socially engaged³⁴ in principle (Q&A session, 3 August 2017). Therefore they care about highland people and create opportunities to be in contact with them even though highland people are not always Buddhists. They believe in the power of Buddhism and inspire people to initiate change in their mindset. A subtle change in each person would change his way of interaction with others, which leads to make the world a slightly better place. We could say that this is the engagement that the Arama aspires to.

3.7. Conclusion

In conclusion, we could observe a variety of minority women groups in northern Thailand. Each group has their own way to adopt to mainstream Thai society.

We can conclude that in both Hmong and Tai Yai communities there are traditional customs for pregnancy and delivery. These customs are passed from generation to generation as a common sense in their community. Both Hmong and Tai Yai women have a tendency to use modern medical institutions during pregnancy and delivery.

However, for the Hmong community, the educational activities are more focused on striking a balance between tradition and modern medical treatment, while for the Tai Yai community, the educational activities are more focused on getting involved in Thai society.

In order to improve the discrimination against minority women in hospitals, how to establish an equal system for everyone needs to be further discussed.

4. Comments from Thai Advisers and Thai Graduate Students

4.1. Comments on Group BCF's Research

Nalitra THAI PRASERT, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Economics, Chiang Mai University

The OTP2 in Chiang Mai this year was well-planned and focused. Instead of visiting numerous different places, we could concentrate more on two communities, one in a rural and the other in an urban area. The students could match finely their research interests and their academic background with the settings that CMU could provide for them. This arrangement was possible because both sides had agreed in the beginning to have full engagement in the fieldwork. I think that planning fieldwork based on the interests of the students could yield the best outcomes since students would feel they were a crucial part starting from the designing of the fieldwork, and the practice allowed them to voice out their opinions throughout the entire process. The students could also experience unforeseen obstacles arising during the fieldwork, which allowed them to learn how to handle the situation when problems emerge. On the other hand, I think that fieldwork which relies solely on the advisors to

decide everything for students would only exhaust both sides without leading to desirable outcomes.

4.2. Observations of Thai Students who Participated in Activities of Group BCF

4.2.1. Comments

Paravee MANEEJUK, Doctoral Student, Faculty of Economics, Chiang Mai University

The problems with gender roles or gender equality is not something I realized before I got the chance to be a part of the OTP2. One of the reasons is that as our economics, politics, and technology developed, I believed that people started accepting equality between men and women and this enabled more women power, particularly in leadership roles. Hence, it seemed to me that gender problems no longer existed in society. However, after a couple of days working as a part of this research team, I realized that my perspective on this issue might not be true, especially for those people living in the highlands of Thailand. They are called ethnic minority groups.

The research team went to Hmong and Tai Yai communities which are in my home city, Chiang Mai, to observe how people there live their lives and how they think about the roles of women in family, in society, as well as in the market. During a research experiment, we had informants or participants who lived in Hmong and Tai Yai communities. I have to note that I was actually in the economic and marketing team and I was supposed to help my team complete their research questions, which were mostly about market activities. However, once I started asking the participants questions and listened to their answers, their stories about gender problems just put me into a depressed mood. They described women's roles in family as well as in market activities, but also pointed to the gender problem and many terrible things that happened to women in the community, especially the problem about bride kidnapping in Hmong community. I said sorry many times while listening to their stories; moreover, one participant from the Tai Yai community cried when she recounted the story about a woman being raped in her homeland.

Listening to their stories made me re-think the existence of gender problems in my country and how I can help to solve these problems. First of all, I would like to thank OTP2 for being concerned with this problem, especially in my country, and conducting the research program. They are all foreigners who just want to understand this issue thoroughly and also aim to provide useful information to help solving this problem. As I am Thai, I feel shame sometimes because I have done nothing with this problem, whereas at least this group of people who are from other countries realized it. Thais may think that people from the highland area are minority groups and perhaps they are not Thai people, so we do not need to take care of them or even concern ourselves with their problems as ours, and honestly, I used to think like that, but this research program just changed the way I am thinking.

Right now, I realize they are actually a part of our formal economy —though only Hmong people are accepted as Thai citizens, other groups still live in Thailand and become more or less a part of the

economic and social systems. They came to Thailand due to many reasons. However, the truth is that no one wants to leave home and stay in another country. According to the research findings, they came here mostly because they have to keep themselves alive and be safe from all the worst things, and they might think that Thailand is one of the safe places for them. So, what we can do as a good host is what we have to think about henceforth.

Finally, I would like to say thank again the OTP2 team. This program is high quality, impactful, and so much fun. In fact, I have learnt a lot of things, such as the way to conduct qualitative research, a novel research methodology (e.g. preference ranking method), and, most importantly, work in harmony.

4.2.2. Comments

Woraphon YAMAKA, Doctoral Student, Faculty of Economics, Chiang Mai University

Are women equal to men? This question has been thrown around and widely discussed in various studies. In history, we learned that the women have been oppressed and women have fought to achieve the same legal rights as men. This situation can be found in many countries or many areas in the world and Thailand is not an exception. In Thailand, however, women have been found to have more rights and the perverse attitudes toward the women in many countries have been changed. Still, there is a whole lot left to accomplish before we can say that there is equality between men and women. In some groups of people, especially the minority groups, are they truly equal?

Thailand officially contains 62 ethnic communities varying in history, language, religion, appearance, and patterns of livelihood. These people can be found in many different provinces. Chiang Mai is one of the provinces where these people are found. The major ethnic minorities in Chiang Mai are the Tai Yai of Myanmar and Hmong tribe people. I had the chance to be a participant in research which aimed to investigate the relationship between gender and market activities of Hmong and Tai Yai people. This research tried to investigate the equality of women and men from an economic perspective. It looked at the roles of women in relation to market activities in Chiang Mai with a focus on business activities, agriculture, and ethnicity. We observed whether women are empowered through their market activities or whether they still follow gender roles prescribed by Thai society or their ethnic community.

From my observation, I found that the inequality problem between men and women has dramatically improved beyond my expectation; however, there still exist some inequalities in the Hmong and Tai Yai communities in economic aspect and social terms.

In the case of Hmong tribe people, there are two groups, namely the Blue Hmong and the White Hmong. These two groups have a similar way of life but some traditions are different, for example only White Hmong will wear a white pleated skirt for special ceremonies. I found that the Hmong way of life is similar to northern Thais. They have adapted themselves in order to be compatible with

modern society. In the economic aspect, I found that the women in this Hmong village play more of a role in the market. They have more chance to discuss and also make decisions with their husbands. I also found that some widows can do everything by themselves to raise their families. These findings seem to be in conflict with Hmong traditions and customs, since I have thought that the right and freedom of Hmong women are limited by their traditional ways. In my opinion, the higher education among Hmong people might be the main factor changing the role of Hmong women. When the men and women are well educated, the educational influence probably goes beyond Hmong' tradition and custom. I think Hmong women leaders are gaining the knowledge, confidence, and momentum needed to join Hmong leaders' meeting.

In the case of Tai Yai people, most of them are immigrants from Myanmar and some are not here legally. I had the chance to interview both male and female merchants. The same questions were asked to these people. I found that the issue of women's role in the market is not likely to be important in their view. They confirmed that there is equality between men and women and this issue is not obvious in their community. However, I found another interesting issue from my interviews. The word discrimination came out many times during the interviews. Because Tai Yai are not Thai citizens, their merchants are not allowed to enter the market and some careers are prohibited by law. The Thai government is afraid that Tai Yai people will take jobs from native people. Moreover, their wages and salaries are less than Thai workers and sometime less than minimum wage. In light of this economic discrimination problem in Thailand, why do Tai Yai people still want to migrate to Thailand? I threw this question to them and found that the discrimination in Thailand is just a small problem when compared with the civil war in their country. They also said that Thailand is a potential place to move and find work. They can have a better life when compared to the life in Myanmar. I think the harmony of Tai Yai people is what they have to focus on and emphasize rather than the inequality between men and women. The uniqueness of people is the priority in the Tai Yai community.

To sum up, I found that there are many improvements in the role of women both among the Hmong and Tai Yai. They concentrate on and emphasize their well-being rather than their traditions and customs. In addition, education will lead these communities to become independent from the traditional limitations.

4.3. Comments on Group SS's Research

Ariya SVETAMRA, Lecturer, Department of Women's Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University

In the study of the situation of migration and minorities from the case studies of Hmong and Tai Yai communities and female monks, it was discovered that there is an imbalance of power between the sexes, with women in a subordinate role to men. Traditional belief systems have clearly defined and

fixed gender roles for men and women. It is often presumed that women's concerns are mostly in the private space, which are all issues about livelihood such as occupation, children's education and family economy. They have limited the way women express themselves, their identities, and opinions in public, such as in community meetings, important rites and religious roles, and as political leaders.

However, the study shows the active role of women both as individuals and in groups who are struggling in internal and external communities, for instance, Hmong and Tai Yai women and their networks as well as female monks. For example, the project that was initiated by members of the Hmong Women Network in recognizing the problem of violence against women in Hmong society, especially those who suffer from family problems, both from divorce or widowhood and childless marriage. The religious role of Hmong women's spirit mediums has been more accepted by people in community. There has also been the establishment of female monks' monastery and the Migrant Worker Federation.

Relating to the study of Thai women's approach to childbirth, it also shows the intersectionality of gender, race and class which are interconnected, creating a system of oppression that reflects the intersection of multiple forms of discrimination. For instance, the migrant women, as non-Thai citizens, have less access to social services. At the same time, as women working for wages together with men, they will get lower payment than men if they have to go back home early in order to take care of their children and housework.

4.4. Observations from a Thai Student Who Participated in the Activities by Group SS

Tanya PROMBUROM, Ph. D. Candidate, The Women's and Gender Studies Ph. D Program, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University

From the gender lens, the case studies of Tai Yai women migrant workers and Hmong women's life experiences can be explained in term of feminist concepts including intersectionality, women's voices, women's oppression, and sexual violence. Women are subordinate, oppressed and also face violence from the society because of norms and traditions. Males are dominant in the society. However, women can negotiate and undertake resistance by using some strategies or tactics to negotiate with the power relations in the society; for example, a Hmong woman who finds the way to negotiate with the traditional Hmong beliefs after she divorces her husband. Actually, Hmong women are not accepted by their clans after divorce, so they cannot go back to their home family, they have no place to live and die. But Nang Noi could break that rule, and was accepted by her clan after divorce. She is a change agent and a woman leader. As for the case of Tai Yai women involved with NGOs, some were educated by NGOs, so they have knowledge and more education that can help them to negotiate in their everyday lives, such as work and doing business in the public sphere.

As for medical services, Tai Yai and Hmong women can get access to the government healthcare

service under certain conditions, such as obtaining Thai citizenship, or health insurance and work permits, but the rights might not equal among Thai and ethnic people, something that still exists in society nowadays. However, Hmong and Tai yai women who have good economic situations have more choices to get access to the private healthcare services that treat them like others. Women are different even if they are the same ethnicity but they have different class as per intersectionality. However, we still need more women's voices in our society to make the world better and achieve gender equity.

4.5. Comments from Sub-Advisor

Eiji SHINKAI, Designated Assistant Professor, Well-being Program, GSID, Nagoya University

What we have witnessed during our fieldwork in northern Thailand is the realities of multi-ethnic Thai society going through the crucial transformation from rural and traditional society in which the hierarchy between men and women has been taken for granted into an urban and modern society where women are increasingly gaining more significance in decision making processes. In fact, the change-makers in the important processes are women themselves.

In the Hmong community, we learnt through the female community leader and her fellow villagers about the trajectory of how ethnic Hmong community have been granted legal status from the Thai government/Royal Family and acquired a solid economic foundation through the hard work of converting the forest to the agricultural land and participation in the local food market as goods-sellers.

In the Tai Yai community, we learnt from one of the female community leaders and her fellow community residents about the hardships they have experienced during the period of forced resettlement from Shan State in Myanmar as migrants or asylum seekers. Each story told was very compelling and emotional and showed how hard it was for them to survive economically and socially as ethnic others in the cohesive mainstream society of Thailand.

Through the leadership demonstrated by the wise and brave female community activists or leaders who do not fear the risk of confrontation with men, it seems as though their fate as minority residents of the communities are gradually getting better and stronger. At the same time, those female change makers are leading the communities into more livable space for all where people, regardless of gender or ethnic background, can find a space to enjoy economic and social wellbeing.

5. Conclusion:

Naoko SHINKAI, Associate Professor, GSID, Nagoya University

OTP2 in Thailand had two research groups consisting of three doctoral students of the Well-being

Program at Nagoya University and two doctoral students in the corresponding institutions at Chiang Mai University. These multinational and multidisciplinary teams conducted fieldwork mainly in two communities, the Hmong and Tai Yai communities in Chiang Mai Province, in order to investigate their research objectives, which were supported by two main advisers, one from Nagoya University and another from Chiang Mai University, and one sub-adviser from Nagoya University.

Group BCF had three research questions regarding their main research theme, the relationship between gender and market activities: 1. How do Hmong and Tai Yai prioritize market products? 2. What is the purpose of the markets for Hmong and Tai Yai people? and 3. How do Hmong and Tai Yai women and men understand gender roles in the market? They applied a pairwise ranking to answer research question 1 and mobility maps for research question 2. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to answer research question 3. Through fieldwork, they have proposed two axes to grasp the relationship between gender and market in these two communities in a comprehensible manner: social acceptance and the level of economic emergency. These are interesting dimensions for discussing income generating activities in ethnic communities and gender dissimilarity. They have concluded that the situation of the Hmong community can mainly be represented by the first axis and that of the Tai Yai community can be represented by the second axis, but market activities can establish the first for anyone. Through fieldwork, they have realized that this element derived from market activities can strengthen self-awareness and consequently challenge the role of gender in society.

Group SS identified three research questions on their research theme, Thai women's approach to childbirth: 1. What is the process of Hmong and Tai Yai women giving birth to children? 2. How do Hmong and Tai Yai women gain health knowledge? and 3. How do bhikkunis (female monks) perceive and relate to the women in ethnic minorities? Since this group's research theme emerged in the course of the literature survey on ethnic minorities in Thailand, the theme itself was identified and, simultaneously, challenging. They essentially applied semi-structured questionnaires to reply to every question. As group members detailed, the participatory approach may not have helped them address their research questions. Above all, interviews with women of different generations from the community seemed to have provided interesting insights to participating students in understanding women's perceptions of childbirth in two communities. They went one step further to interpret the bhikkunis' position in Thai society as female minorities in Thailand and integrate that understanding with the situations of women in two other communities. Based on this integration, they have concluded that distinct strategies were employed by these three groups of female minorities to withstand overbearing power: creative negotiation, external support, and contribution to the community through dialogue and networking with bhikkunis.

There are certain participants of OTP2 in Thailand who joined the overseas fieldwork program of GSID when they were first-year students in their master's program and traveled to the Philippines together. When I compare those days with today, I am impressed by their inner growth and

sympathetic attitudes they have maintained since their first-time field visits.

Lastly, I would like to convey our sincere appreciation to Ms. Nengnoi, the leader of the Indigenous Women’s Network and Hmong Women’s Network of Thailand, the bhikkunis at Nirotharam Foundation, the leader and officers of the NGO to help migrant workers in Chiang Mai, interviewees in the Hmong and Tai Yai communities, and all the people who helped to facilitate preparatory activities and fieldwork at Chiang Mai University and Nagoya University. I would like to also give my special thanks to Dr. Francis Peddie at GSID for the English editing of students’ reports. All of these people made this OTP2 happen. I hope our friendships continue and are further developed in the future.

Notes

Group BCF:

- i A male respondent SO (36 years old) is married and has two children. A respondent SO is a college graduate. A female respondent NE (43 years old) has a 23-year-old son. However, she has never been married in her life. She has never attended school education.
- ii A female respondent SA is married with a male respondent SO and has two children. A respondent SA is a two-year college graduate.
- iii A female respondent SA
- iv Among them, 10–12 customers are in Rayong makret (see 2.3.2.2 Hmong: the mobility pattern), where the couple work one fourth of the year.
- v A female respondent DA (34 years old) is married and has an adopted 13-year-old child. Her education attainment is grade three. A male respondent DE (45 years old) is married and has two children.
- vi A male respondent DE
- vii Constructing, Fishing and farming are the only works officially allowed for Tai Yai people in Thailand (Aliens working Act in B. E. 2551 or 2008)
- viii A male respondent DE
- ix Working in the markets as employees is legal (Aliens working Act in B. E. 2551 or 2008).

Group SS:

- 1 “Migrants, Minorities and the Role of Women” and “Social Services in Migrants’ Communities” respectively.
- 2 Mae Sa Mai (Hmong community), Taiyai people and Nirotharam Bhikkhuni Arama (Buddhist convent)
- 3 One day (six hours) each for Hmong community and Taiyai community, and ninety minutes at the Nirotharam Bhikkhuni Arama
- 4 Three authors of this section
- 5 Tools from Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)
- 6 Regenerative medicine on liver function, lifelong learning of senior citizens and spirituality in rural development
- 7 Major fears are medical procedures which affect cultural beliefs about the cycle of life such as an episiotomy, a Caesarean section, anesthesia to name a few (Symonds, 2004: x). Other factors are rude discriminatory staff and too vigorous uterine massage (Culhane-Pera et al., 2389) and language barrier (Indigenous Women’s Network of Thailand (IWNT) and Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), Thailand, 2017: 10).
- 8 Major fears to deliver at home occurs “when they were afraid of potential physical problems or they had obstetrical problems” (Culhane-Pera et al., 2389).
- 9 Acknowledging potential risk of disempowering people by identifying them as patients who requires medical

attention (Oakley, 1979 cited in Matsuoka, 1991: 23) we do not problematize peoples' preference of not using the western medical services. However, it is already reported as of 2001 that the villagers foresaw the decline of birth rates due to the various contraceptive methods such as oral contraceptives, hormonal injections and implants, and sterilization (mostly for women) (Tomforde, 2006: 110), which suggests that the western medical technologies regarding reproductive health has been widespread for a quite some time.

- 10 One exception is the following general statement about the indigenous women in Thailand as a whole; "For indigenous women who are pregnant, the dual stress of facing discrimination in the hospitals and overcoming cultural taboos to discuss SRH [Sexual and Reproductive Health] with a stranger, makes giving birth at home without medical aid more appealing." (Indigenous Women's Network of Thailand (IWNT) and Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), Thailand, 2017: 15).
- 11 He conducted fieldwork in Mae Sa Mai in 2001.
- 12 In Pong Yaeng sub-district, Mae Rim district, Chiang Mai province (Tomforde, 2006: 106).
- 13 Thao clan, Yang clan and Xiong clan relocating from Mae Sa Kau village which is four kilometers north in search for a better water supply and better environment for opium marketing (Tomforde, 2006: 103)
- 14 Breakdown for other religions are as follows, Sixty-two households are protestant, fifteen are Seventh Day Adventist and five are Catholic and none were Buddhist (Tomforde, 2006: 111).
- 15 She did so because Sri Lanka is the only Theravada Buddhist country which has established both male and female *sangha* together (Ito, 2009). People assume that *bhikkhuni* ordination has been considered disrupted in Thailand and Theravada Buddhist women cannot be ordained (Ito, 2012; Ito, 2009).
- 16 Definition by Ito (2009)
- 17 As of 2008, there are at least thirty-five *sameneris* and *bhikkhunis* in Chiang Mai only (Ito, 2009).
- 18 However, *bhikkhunis* at the Nirotharam Arama are respected and supported by the local community.
- 19 It was instructed to use PRA tools for interview with Hmong people and Taiyai people (see sub section 3.1.1).
- 20 We were introduced to the field as doctoral students from Japan through CMU network. Thanks to the good relationship between CMU and the communities, we were accepted by the communities without any rejection.
- 21 Interview itself was semi-structured interview, however, the map was frequently referred, consulted and modified as individual life experience added new information.
- 22 In some cases, we had two interpreters between Hmong and Thai, and between Thai and English.
- 23 Resource persons are selected through CMU in consultation with local people. Questions and consent forms were sent beforehand for translation and reference. Individual interviews planned in the afternoon in the Hmong village turned out to be a more like a continued group discussion from the morning. We were also invited to the female spiritual medium's house, who was one of the resource persons, later in the same afternoon. Therefore, we shortened original session for the afternoon and continued discussion at her house in front of her altar, where she conducts rituals.
- 24 Despite all these limitations, we believe that it was the best arrangement under the constraints and deeply appreciate the opportunities created by advisors from both CMU and NU.
- 25 Since most of the communications were through translation, we could not avoid possible misinterpretation, intentional or unintentional editing of the information and lost information in translation.
- 26 The information we got from a small number of resource persons might not have represented all members of the community properly.
- 27 Our lack of knowledge about the local context could have led to misunderstanding of the remarks.
- 28 As Kumar emphasizes the most important aspect of PRA is attitudes and behavioral change of the practitioners or researchers (Kumar, 2002: 47–49). However, this concept was not properly shared among the members of both universities and neither "handing over the stick", nor "democracy of the ground" (Chambers, 1997 cited in Kumar, 2002: 42–44) happened. No discussion with local people after the map was completed and no invitation for them to the feedback session held at CMU on August 9th, 2017. However, we deeply appreciate that Dr. Svetamra kindly agreed to return the completed maps to the local people, who are the owners of the information.
- 29 The detail of the project is unknown.

- 30 Embassy of Japan in Thailand, 2013
- 31 One of her parents is from China (Interview, 31 July 2017).
- 32 One such example is the Thai language classes during her imprisonment for the illegal stay (Interview, 5 August 2017).
- 33 One such example is the informal medical service from the well trained Shan army medical officer (Interview, 5 August 2017).
- 34 However, their understanding of “engagement” is not what is commonly understood as “Engaged Buddhism” and they do not run direct social, political or environmental projects.

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Photos:



At Chiang Mai City Arts and Cultural Center



At the Hmong Community

At a university cafeteria and the Women's Studies Center of Chiang Mai University



