

PRIMARY EDUCATION IN RURAL THAILAND :

A CASE STUDY OF PRIMARY SCHOOLING

IN A NORTHERN THAI VILLAGE.

by

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ABSTRACT.

The thesis begins with an introductory chapter in which the background to the field research, research methodology and objectives are detailed. Chapter One then outlines the socio-economic structure of Chompuu village, and provides an introduction to the school. In Chapter Two an account of recent educational development in Thailand is detailed; particular emphasis is given to curriculum changes within the past two decades.

In Chapter Three, the 'hidden' curriculum and its influence in Chompuu school is considered. The political, moral and social implications of the hidden curriculum at Chompuu school are discussed with reference to the 'socialisation' of the child, and the reproduction of dominant social values in the school.

Chapter Four considers the concepts of 'social reproduction' and 'socialisation' in relation to the formal school system. Chapter Five examines the related theme of knowledge and power in Chompuu village, exploring ways in which knowledge is used to establish power, or is the foundation of power in the community. Relations of power and authority in the school, and the education system in general, are then discussed in Chapter Six; the concern is with the ways in which control is established and maintained in the school by various means.

The final chapter addresses school-village relations in Chompuu, looking at the role (if any) the school plays in 'development'. In the conclusion I aim to demonstrate the complexity of the role of the school in rural village life in Thailand. Although it is realised that aspects of Chompuu school and village life are unique and that the research can by no means be considered as a representation of the position in the country on the whole; it is hoped that this thesis will increase the readers' understanding of some of the many issues surrounding 'modern' formal schooling in rural Thai society today.

NOTE ON SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION.

The system of transliteration of Thai, into Roman script, adopted in this thesis, is that outlined by the Royal Institute of Thailand in the Journal of the Thailand Research Society, 1941.

The majority of consonants are pronounced as read, exceptions are;

k	=	hard g sound as in 'girl'
kh	=	k aspirated
ph	=	p aspirated not the English ph
th	=	t aspirated not the English th
čh	=	hardened form of ch as in the cz in 'Czech'
ng	=	as in 'singer' never as in 'linger' (ibid.;51)

The pronunciation of some vowels requires explanation;

a	=	short sound as in the u in 'under'
aa*	=	long sound as in ar in 'barn'
i	=	short sound as in 'lit'
ii*	=	long sound as in ee in 'keep'
u	=	short sound as in oo in 'book'
ú	=	long sound eu (no English equivalent)
uu*	=	long sound as in oo in 'too'
e	=	short sound as in e in 'help'
ae	=	long sound as in ai in 'hair'
o	=	short sound as in 'fox'
o	=	long sound as in or in 'horn'

The use of two of the same vowels together \* to denote a long vowel sound is my only deviation from the system outlined by the Royal Institute. It is felt that this will ease reading, particularly for the non-Thai speaker. Thai words (other than place names) used in the text are written in italics and a translation of the word or phrase is given where it first appears. Words or phrases which are of the northern Thai language are followed with (NT) and in some cases (CT) is used in order to distinguish a central from a northern Thai term. All Thai words which appear in the script are listed in the glossary in alphabetical order.

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DEDICATION.

To my research assistant, interpreter and friend;

Miss Sophin Namwong.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE.	1.
ABSTRACT.	2.
NOTE ON THE SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION.	3.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.	4.
DEDICATION.	5.
TABLE OF CONTENTS.	6.
INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH METHODS AND OBJECTIVES.	10.
I. Background to Field Research	10.
II. Research Methodology.	14.
III. Research Objectives.	19.
Notes.	20.
CHAPTER ONE: CHOMPUU VILLAGE: SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE VILLAGE AND THE SCHOOL.	22.
1.1 Introduction.	22.
1.2 The Socio-Economic Structure of Chompuu Village.	23.
1.2i Family and household in Chompuu.	25.
1.2ii The employment structure of the village.	27.
1.3 Religion in the Village.	33.
1.4 The Political Structure of Chompuu village.	34.
1.5 Chompuu Village School.	35.
1.5i The school teachers.	35.
1.5ii The pupils.	41.
Conclusion.	43.
Notes.	46.

CHAPTER TWO: THE THAI PRIMARY SCHOOL SYSTEM; SOME RECENT DEVELOPMENTS.	48.
Introduction.	48.
2.2 The Origins of Formal Schooling in Thailand.	49.
2.3 The Historical Link Between Formal Education and Public Sector Employment in Thailand.	51.
2.4 The Development of the Thai Primary Curriculum.	55.
2.4i Concern for 'relevance'.	55.
2.4ii The present curriculum.	59.
Conclusion.	68.
Notes.	71.
CHAPTER THREE: THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM.	73.
3.1 Introduction.	73.
3.2 The Political Implications of the Hidden Curriculum.	75.
3.2i Indoctrination and the hidden curriculum. Nationalism.	75. 76.
Democracy.	78.
3.3 Social Aspects of the Hidden Curriculum.	81.
Conclusion.	90.
Notes.	93.
CHAPTER FOUR: SCHOOL, SOCIETY AND CULTURE.	94.
4.1 Introduction.	94.
4.2 Discrimination of Knowledge in the School.	96.
4.3 'Socialisation' and Social Reproduction.	101.
4.3i Credentialism and the 'function' of schooling.	101.
4.3ii Schooling as initiation.	103.
4.4 Schooling and Social Mobility.	109.
4.4i The question of equality.	109.
4.4ii The 'relevance' of schooling.	111.
Conclusion.	115.
Notes.	117.

CHAPTER FIVE: KNOWLEDGE AND POWER IN THE VILLAGE.	118.
5.1 Introduction.	118.
5.2 Authority on a National Scale: the Monarchy and the Bureaucracy.	121.
5.3 Power Structure at the District and Village Levels.	124.
5.3i The 'informal' village hierarchy.	129.
5.3ii Religious authority - the role of the village monks.	133.
5.4 Authority in the Family and the Influence of Education.	137.
Conclusion.	143.
Notes.	145.
CHAPTER SIX: SCHOOLING AND CONTROL.	146.
6.1 Introduction.	146.
6.2 Establishing Control.	147.
6.2i The bureaucratic hierarchy of the school system in northern Thailand.	147.
6.2ii Hierarchical relations within the school.	150.
6.2iii The physical structure of the school and its influence in establishing control.	153.
6.3 The Maintenance of Control in the School.	157.
6.3i Speech and behaviour codes.	157.
6.3ii Authority and the maintenance of control.	162.
6.3iii Reward and punishment.	167.
Conclusion.	170.
Notes.	172.
CHAPTER SEVEN: SCHOOL/VILLAGE RELATIONS IN CHOMPUI.	173.
7.1 Introduction.	173.
7.2 The Concept of Development.	174.
7.2i 'Development' in the eyes of Chompuu villagers.	177.
7.3 Education and Development.	181.
7.3i Can the village school promote	

'development' within the community?	182.
7.4 The Role of the School Teachers in the Village Community.	185.
7.4i Teachers' attitudes towards the school and the village.	187.
7.4ii Participation in village affairs.	190.
7.5 Villagers' Perception of the Role of the School in the Village.	193.
Conclusion.	193.
Notes.	201.

CONCLUSION: CHOMPUU SCHOOL AND THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY - CONFLICTS AND CONTRADICTIONS.	202.
I. Schooling and Social Mobility.	202.
II. Stability and Change.	207.
III. 'Alienation'.	209.
IV. Socialisation and Social Reproduction.	211.

GLOSSARY.	214.
MAPS; 1. Saraphi District.	219.
2. <i>Tambon Wat Phayachompuu.</i>	220.
3. <i>Rong Rian Wat Phayachompuu.</i>	221.

APPENDIXES.	
1. School Population - Chompuu School.	222.
2. Kindergarten and Elementary School Teachers Qualifications - Whole Nation. 1980.	223.
3. Primary School Teachers Monthly Salaries (in Thai baht); Saraphi District.	224.
4. Pass/Fail Rates Chompuu School.	225.
5. High School Entrance Rates Chompuu School.	226.
6. Population by Occupation - Whole Nation.	227.
7. Literacy Rates - Whole Nation.	228.
8. Number of Male and Female Teachers of Elementary Education; Whole Nation.	229.
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	230.

INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH METHODS AND OBJECTIVES.

I. Background to Field Research.

This thesis is based on field research conducted in Saraphi district in the north of Thailand during the period June 1987 to December 1987. It explores a number of themes in the light of research carried out at Chompoo village school, and discusses them with reference to writings about education in Thailand and general theoretical analyses of education.

On arrival in Chiang Mai, northern Thailand, the initial task was to select a site for field study, this was achieved with the assistance of academic contacts at Chiang Mai University. Due to the limited time available in which to conduct the research, and possible language difficulties, I had decided to confine the study to a single village rather than attempting a comparison between two or more villages. I felt that data based upon findings elicited through constant and close contact with villagers, would benefit the study more than comparative analysis. Originally I had planned to select a village in which a development project or non-formal education project was being carried out. This would have facilitated discussions with villagers about the key notions of education and development, which were of central importance to the research in its early stages.

In Chiang Mai province, very few teachers in village schools speak English, and most do not reside in the villages in which they teach. Therefore, the main consideration in selecting a village became the presence of a teacher with at least a minimal command of English, and preferably one who was also a resident of the village. Although a reasonable command of the Thai language had been acquired before arrival in Thailand, I foresaw possible difficulties with the local northern Thai language, *kham muang* (NT). For this reason some

assistance with language was regarded as essential at least in the initial stages of the research.

Other considerations in choosing a research site included, proximity to an urban centre and consequent employment opportunities for villagers other than the traditional occupation of farming. The size of the village was considered important because only six months was available in which to carry out the field research. Chompuu village was suggested as a potential research site by the deputy head of primary education in Saraphi district, who knew that there was an unmarried female teacher who resided in the village and spoke some English. After discussions with this teacher, the headmaster of the school and the headman of the village, Chompuu was chosen as the research site.

Saraphi district has been the site of several other anthropological field studies in recent years. In 1953/54 Kingshill carried out research in a village called 'Ku Daeng', during the 1970's S.H & J.Potter did research in the same village which they referred to as 'Chiang Mai village' (1). Furthermore within the first month of residence in Chompuu village I found that another anthropologist, Walter Irvine, had been based in the village during his field study which took place between 1977 and 1979 (2). Although the district of Saraphi is well documented, none of the previous studies have focussed on education in the area.

During the field study period I stayed at three different abodes within the village. I felt that it would be beneficial, in terms of facilitating communication with the villagers, to reside in the village itself, preferably with a family. Initially, due to the difficulty of mastering *kham muang*, and of finding a suitable family with which to lodge, I took residence with the unmarried female teacher who lived in the only teachers' accommodation in the village. As she taught English at the school and could speak English almost fluently she proved to be of invaluable assistance, especially in the first month of research. Her good command of English was an advantage in providing a link with the school, and in introducing me to the other teachers and answering many questions about the school.

Nevertheless, while the teacher provided useful connections with the school, she had very little contact with the villagers. I soon discovered that she spent most of her spare time alone at her home, visiting friends in Saraphi, or driving her car to Chiang Mai. Furthermore, while she could not introduce me into the village society, association with her was actually proving to be a barrier in this respect. During the first month of residence in the village many villagers assumed that I was a teacher (in spite of attempts to explain the contrary) and many used the polite term of address *khruu* or even *a'chaan* (3) when speaking to me. This may, in time have created greater distance between the villagers and myself than was to be expected from being an 'outsider' to the village and a *farang* ('westerner').

Fortunately, within the first fortnight of residence within the village, I was introduced to a young village woman who had recently graduated from Ramkhamhaeng University in Bangkok, was 'unemployed' (*waang*) and was virtually fluent in English. She offered to act as research assistant and help with language until the initial interviews were completed. She had attended Chompuu village school and the high school in Saraphi and, other than during her studies in Bangkok, had lived in the village all her life. She knew most of the village families and was able to provide valuable background information, such as family histories and kinship links within the village.

It was during this first month in the village that I learnt that, Walter Irvine, had stayed in the village a decade ago. Initially this proved to be a further obstacle in gaining acceptance. Villagers, particularly older men, frequently related tales of the achievements of 'Mr Walter'; how well he spoke *kham muang*, chewed *miang*, ate *laap* (4), planted rice and so on. Rather than seeing this as an indication that I might also adapt well to village life, many older villagers expressed disbelief that I, as a young woman, would be able to begin to match my predecessor's accomplishments. In time, as I was able to make my own mark in the village and the school, the references to 'Mr Walter' were less frequent and eventually were scarcely made at all.

In August I moved to live with my research assistants' family, the family of *phq khruu wan* a retired high school teacher and headmaster. This was considered an appropriate arrangement by the teachers and the headman, as the family is of considerable means, owning rice land and *lamyai* (5) orchards, as well as receiving a monthly pension from the government as a result of *phq khruu's* service as a teacher (6). The teachers did not believe that I should reside with a 'poor' village family who would be unable to provide the facilities which they assumed were essential (such as running water, an 'indoor bathroom' and a bed) (7).

*Phq khruu wan's* family live in a traditional house, which has recently been bricked-in underneath, making it one of the largest houses in the village. The house is situated close to the main road through the village, directly behind the cooperative shop, which was built on land previously belonging to *phq khruu wan*. The family has six children, of whom my research assistant was the fifth. Only she and her younger sister lived with their mother and father during the time of the field study. The other member of the household was six year old *Jip* the son of one of the older brothers, who is a school teacher in Chiang Rai province (north of Chiang Mai) and had recently separated from his wife (8).

After three months in the village, I decided that it would be beneficial to my research to change residence once more. My intention was to live with a more 'typical' village family who had children at the village school. This proved difficult from the point of view that there remained a misunderstanding of my actual requirements. It was only after considerable negotiations that the teachers, headman and my research assistant were persuaded that the chief requirements were not 'creature comforts' but to live with a 'typical' village family in order to participate in their daily activities. Once the misunderstanding had been clarified a farming family happily invited me to live with them for the remainder of the research period.

The head of this family (*aai ban*) is a man in his mid-thirties; he and his wife have three children; a son in the first year of high school, a daughter in the fifth year of the village primary school and the youngest daughter in the village school kindergarten (*anubaan*). The family live in the same compound as the wives' parents in whose house the boy sleeps for security reasons. The family rent rice land and also buy and sell cattle.

## II. Research Methodology.

Three research methods were used to gather the data on which this paper is based; participant observation, informal interviewing and key informant interviewing. Each of these methods is familiar to the anthropologist who has spent any time in 'the field'. I lived in the chosen village for the duration of the field research making only short visits to Chiang Mai city each month in order to collate field notes.

Participation in daily village affairs was considered highly important for several reasons. Firstly, it assisted the development of relations of trust and understanding between the villagers and myself. Thai villagers (or certainly Chompuu villagers) have a limited view of *farang* as people who are used to physical comfort and are not accustomed to physical labour or a 'rustic' way of life. It was important in order to increase my 'credibility' and diminish the distance from the villagers, to demonstrate that this was not the case in this instance. 'Participant observation' provided the villagers with many informal situations in which they could ask me questions and thereby experience an exchange of information, rather than always being at the receiving end of the questions.

I felt that this exchange of information, facilitated by informal discussion rather than 'interviewing', contributed greatly to the development of mutual understanding. In addition, the fact of living in the village, as much in the manner of a villager as was feasible;

provided many opportunities for learning about aspects of village life which were not directly related to the research interests but which, in many cases, proved valuable in their indirect connection.

During my six months in the village I made daily visits to the school, in order to observe the routine of the school and interact with both teachers and pupils. Initially I spent some time observing lessons, sitting at the back of the classroom. This was distracting to both pupils, whose curiosity was great, and teachers who appeared uncomfortable, although none ever expressed any reluctance to allow me into their class. I felt that if I continued this means of observation my position in the school was likely to be misunderstood by teachers, pupils and their parents.

After my first month in the village I began to hold informal English lessons for the fifth and sixth grade pupils, who were interested in spending extra time on their work and no doubt in satisfying some of their curiosity about me. I also found that I was spending an increasing amount of time teaching in the school, not only assisting the English teacher, but taking her class (with her permission) while she was absent attending various meetings and seminars at the district office.

Thus I became a 'teacher' in the eyes of many of the pupils, some persisted in calling me '*khruu*' throughout my stay while others (particularly those with whom I had most contact outside the school) used the more familiar '*phii*' (9) before my name. Although some pupils addressed me as '*khruu*' they clearly recognised that I was not a 'true' teacher, this was reflected in the fact that many, particularly the older boys were disobedient and difficult to control. Other teachers explained that the older pupils realised that I did not have the authority of a permanent teacher.

The teachers themselves responded to my presence in two ways; the first was to pay little attention to me, to ignore my presence and keep me at a certain distance; the second was to treat me as a 'younger sister' taking the trouble to look after me. While some teachers remained relatively aloof throughout my stay, and some were friendly and cooperative throughout, the behaviour of others fluctuated from one extreme to the other. The headmaster was the least consistent in his behaviour toward me. At first it could be described as rather paternalistic, making the effort to ask me how I was settling into the village, offering his help and volunteering information. After several months I detected a certain hostility in his manner. Far from going out of his way to advise me of, and include me in, school affairs, I found that he was actively excluding me. Whether this was deliberate or simply the result of his diminished interest in my work is uncertain. Nevertheless, the change was sharp enough to be commented on by other teachers.

Several of the teachers, while appearing disinterested and aloof during my visits to the school, were more forthcoming in their opinions of the school, and the education system in general, when interviewed in private away from the school. Therefore I endeavoured to attend social events with the teachers, and accepted invitations to visit their homes whenever possible. During these more private discussions a number of teachers voiced their discontent with the education system, the school itself, and with individual teachers at the school. Although no disrespect or disloyalty toward the headmaster was displayed by teachers at the school, in private many expressed discontent with his performance. One felt that there was an element of mistrust, of fear that expression of their views might jeopardise their position, which resulted in a lack of openness of discussion of problems at the school.

Secondly, throughout the field study period, informal 'interviews' were held with villagers on a daily basis. Initially each of the 215 households in the village were visited in order to gather general information with regard to the educational level, employment structure and economic layout of the village. I found that while all villagers

were apparently happy to speak with me in their homes, the degree of enthusiasm and the extent of confidence extended toward me varied from one household to the next. In some cases villagers took several months before they would discuss matters of a 'personal' nature with me while others were prepared to do so almost immediately.

I will not attempt to explain the reasons for these differences here, except to say that the presence of my research assistant may have had some influence. Just as I had become associated with the school and the teachers because of the time I spent at the school and my interest in education; the fact that my research assistant and I were frequently seen together, and that for three months I became a member of her household, meant that many villagers identified me with her and her family. This had both positive and negative consequences, it greatly eased the initial interviews as she was able to act as a 'go-between' between the villagers and myself. Not only did she help with interpretation but also generally with communication between us. Many villagers were shy and reluctant to openly ask me questions although they were prepared to do so through my assistant. In time, however, I found that the presence of my assistance was often hampering communication and I began to conduct interviews alone (in any case the original agreement with my assistant was that she would only help me for my first month or so in the village). As I did so I found that many informants began to use the situation of my research assistant (an 'unemployed' university graduate), and her family, as an example of some of the problems they consider linked to 'over-education' (*rian s'ung koen pai*).

A sample group of twenty households was then selected from the households with children currently attending primary or secondary school either in Chompuu village, Saraphi or elsewhere; and families with children who had recently graduated from primary or high school. It was felt that these families would be most likely to have views on the topic of education which they would be prepared to discuss. The limited time available for field research made this selection necessary, however it must be said that I continued to speak to many other

informants on a regular basis, and these less structured discussions provided a backdrop for the views expressed by the 'sample' group. Although the views of this group cannot be held as representative of the village on the whole, they are representative, to a certain extent, of the views of villagers who have a vested interest in the school system.

The 'interviews' were carried out not by asking a list of set questions, but by discussing general issues and asking indirect questions with the intention of obtaining certain information. It was felt that a degree of flexibility in 'interviewing' was essential due to the very varied interests of the informants; their enthusiasm for some issues and limited concern for others. Notes from these interviews were mostly made after the interview from memory. Again this was due to the desire to maintain a degree of flexibility and informality; the time required to make notes during conversations interrupted the flow of discussions and prompted questions such as '*what do you want me to tell you?*'.

Thirdly a number of informants were chosen for regular interviews due to the recognition of their personal experience within the education system as present or past teachers; or their position in the village, for instance the headman and members of the various village groups (10). Key informants outside the village, who were interviewed only a few times during the field study, included education officials at the district level and teachers and headmasters of other schools in the Chompuu subdistrict (*tambon*).

### III. Research Objectives

Initially the main objective of the research was to determine the role of the school in rural village development. This stemmed from my interest in rural development and particularly in what have been referred to as the 'qualitative' aspects of development, which include the 'right' to education (11). In time this objective became less central to the research due to a number of reasons. Firstly, no specific development projects were being carried out, either at the school or in the village, during the time of the research. Although my understanding of the term 'development' extends beyond the concrete, physical factor of development projects, it was found that many villagers discussed 'development' (*khwaam charoen, kaan phatanaa*) within the framework of such projects. Thus the absence of a project which might have stimulated discussion and debate would almost certainly have hindered research efforts. Furthermore, it was found that the relationship between education and development did not appear to be of central importance to the majority of villagers. Few spoke of the impact of schooling on the prosperity of the community, rather their concern was largely for the prosperity, or the future prosperity, of their own family.

As the objective of assessing the relationship between education and development began to take a less prominent position in the overall field study, the question which continued to direct research was; "For what are the villagers educating their children?", "Why have Chompoo villagers readily accepted the need to send their children to the village school and why do many strive to provide their children with higher levels of education?" These questions relate directly to a number of themes which emerged throughout the research.

The question 'what kind of education?' was of particular interest due to the recent literature about the 'relevance' of education to rural communities in the Third World. Consideration of this matter led to the analysis of curriculum content and of the implications of the 'hidden'

curriculum. The concept of the relevance of the curriculum leads on to another research objective which was to explore the relationship between education and employment opportunities for school leavers. As most informants spoke of the benefits of schooling in terms of job prospects, the objective was to discover what intentions various villagers had for their children, and what forms of employment they considered desirable (12).

Finally, the hypothesis that education, particularly at the secondary and tertiary levels, (but beginning at the primary level) alienates children from the village community, was examined. This again led to a study of curriculum content, and the attitudes of both parents and teachers to various aspects of the curricula. Furthermore, personal case histories of a few villagers were traced, in order to discover whether or not higher education had drawn them away from the village and, secondly, whether those remaining had settled into a village occupation and lifestyle. Each of these themes is explored throughout the thesis.

NOTES:

(1) See K.Kingshill "Ku Daeng - The Red Tomb. A village study in northern Thailand." 1960, J.M.Potter "Thai Peasant Social Structure." 1976 and S.H.Potter "Family Life in a Northern Thai village. A Study of the Structural Significance of Women."

(2) See W.Irvine "The Thai Yuan 'Madman' and the 'Modernising, Developing Thai Nation' as Bounded Entities Under Threat: A Study in the Replication of a Single Image." 1982 Phd Thesis SOAS University of London.

(3) *khruu* is the central Thai term for teacher used for both primary and high school teachers. In the northern Thai language, the word is pronounced slightly differently - '*khuu*', however in this thesis *khruu* will be used in order to avoid confusion. *a'chaan* is a more respectful term used to address and refer to teachers with degrees, university lecturers and often also university graduates.

(4) *miang* is fermented tea leaves which are chewed by many of the older villagers the taste is extremely bitter. *laap* is a favourite dish in northern Thailand traditionally it was eaten raw, today the men and many older women eat it raw while younger women prefer cooked *laap*. It is made of minced meat, offal, chilli and various other spices.

(5) *lamyai* is the Thai term for longan fruit, a small fruit similar to lychee which grows in orchards in certain areas of northern Thailand. In Chompuu village it is grown for sale to buyers from Bangkok and is an important cash crop in the village.

(6) One of the teachers explained that if a teacher works for 10 years he/she receives an incentive increase of 10% of his/her monthly salary. This is called *bam net*. If they work for 25 years or more they receive, on retirement, 3000B per month until death, this is *bam naan*.

(7) There was also great concern over my diet as the teachers and villagers do not believe that people other than northern and northeastern Thais can eat the indigenous glutinous rice (*khao nieo*). As this is the only rice grown and eaten by the majority of villagers, and as non-glutinous rice (*khao thao*) must be purchased from the market, there was concern about the ability of a poor village family to be able to provide me with meals. As I made it clear that I was happy to eat whatever the family normally ate the problem resolved itself.

(8) In the village there were many cases of children whose parents were separated, living with uncles, aunts or grandparents. Informants explained that the children would not be happy to live with a step-parent.

(9) *phii* means older brother or older sister and is used as an informal but polite term of address.

(10) These village groups include a development group, women's group, youth group, temple committee and education committee. See Chapter 5.

(11) The concept of 'development' is addressed in Chapter 7.

(12) See Chapter 7 for further discussion of villagers' attitudes toward schooling and employment.

CHAPTER ONE:            CHOMPUU: SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND TO  
THE VILLAGE AND THE SCHOOL.

1.1 Introduction.

The aim of this chapter is to outline some socio-economic details of the field study area; in order that the various issues discussed below might be placed within the context of a concrete setting, a village and school in northern Thailand.

Thailand is divided into 72 provinces (*changwat*); Chiang Mai is the major of the seven upper northern provinces and holds a very important place in the history of the north. Each *changwat* is further divided into districts (*amphoe*), subdistricts (*tambon*) and villages (*mubaan*). Chiang Mai province has 17 districts, of which Saraphi is the smallest (1), although it has one of the highest population densities in the entire country. Saraphi town (2) is situated seventeen kilometres from Chiang Mai city. Originally only one major road linked the two; the Chiang Mai-Lamphun road. Today the 'Super Highway' which leads from Chiang Mai to Lampang and on to Bangkok, and the Chiang Mai/Bangkok railway also pass through Saraphi district, close to the town.

Chiang Mai city is not only the provincial capital but the capital of northern Thailand. It is the second largest city in Thailand although it is far smaller than Bangkok, where the government, trade and industry are centred. Chiang Mai has recently become a major centre for tourism as *farang* ('westerners') flock to the north to visit the hill-tribe villages on treks which are organised from Chiang Mai.

The district office, police headquarters, education office and other offices of district level officials are situated in Saraphi town along the old Chiang Mai-Lamphun road. There is also a district hospital, a large primary school and a government high school. Chompuu village (*mubaan payachompuu*), is four kilometres from the town and only three

kilometres from the Super Highway (3). It is the central village of *tambon* Chompuu which consists of eight villages (4), within the *tambon* are four schools, Chompuu school (*rong rian wat payachompuu*) caters for children from four villages. The Thai name for the school incorporates the word 'wat' or temple; this is a reminder that the school originated within the temple grounds and was run by monks. It is interesting to note that not all primary schools retain the word 'wat' in their names even though they might also have originally been temple schools. Members of three of the four villages (5), and the headmen of each of these, form the school's education committee which is chaired by the headmaster.

#### 1.2 The Socio-Economic Structure of Chompuu Village.

The village has approximately 230 households (6) which are mostly spread along the road which winds through the village from the district town and leads on to other villages in the *tambon*. Various small side roads and paths lead off this 'main' road to other houses and beyond these to the rice fields. There are few places in the village where the rice fields are visible from the road. The road which runs through the village was sealed last year from the crossroads at the Saraphi end of Chompuu to the village cooperative shop (about three quarters of the length of the village).

As well as the cooperative shop, which was built less than five years ago, the village has a health centre established by the government in the 1960's. It serves all of the villages in the *tambon* and supports a staff of three nurses, one male, two female, who all trained in Chiang Mai. The centre is open for villagers who require minor treatment and medicines. The staff explained that in the past each village had its own medicine shop, but these closed down several years ago. The centre treats between ten and thirty patients a week, (one nurse claimed that the majority of these are women requesting the contraceptive pill (see

below)). There are two beds where patients may stay if necessary, serious ailments are referred to the district hospital in Saraphi town.

The nurses are active in encouraging improved health and hygiene in the *tambon* as well as treating illness. They provide pamphlets to the villagers, talk at village and school meetings, and visit villagers at their homes. Nevertheless the male nurse commented that a basic problem with health care in the village is that beliefs and practices are slow to change. For example, beliefs about the treatment and diet of a new born baby and its mother (see Irvine,1982), are not always in the best interests of their health, as far as the health care workers are concerned. Some younger female informants claimed that, although they do not share beliefs regarding certain taboos for women during pregnancy and after childbirth, they are reluctant to go against the wishes of their elders.

The health care workers are involved in accelerating the spread of 'modern' medicinal practices which, in many cases, may conflict with 'traditional' village beliefs and practices. As with many other aspects of village life, there appears to be little conflict even though the potential for conflict is great. Villagers utilise both the 'modern' health facilities, and the more 'traditional' services of spiritual healers and herbal remedies (7).

There are many signs of material change and influx of 'western' habits in the village today. Chompuu has an electricity supply and today almost every household has some 'modern' electrical appliance, mostly televisions and electric fans. Many houses have running water which is pumped from private pumps. All but the poorest families have motorcycles which they use to shop in Saraphi, to visit friends, or in some cases, to travel to work. Today the ownership of a car or van, rather than a motorcycle, signifies wealth. While older villagers continue to wear items of clothing of 'traditional' Thai style, younger villagers wear jeans, T-shirts and other western style clothes, younger girls prefer trousers, to skirts or dresses.

The majority of houses in Chompuu village are raised and wooden, their design provides a cool breezy area under the house in which to work or relax. The stilts are also a safeguard against the flooding which, until recently, occurred regularly with the seasonal monsoon rains. In 1987 the village flooded for the first time for twelve years, villagers commented that since the Super Highway has been completed they have not been troubled by floods. Many houses have now been bricked in underneath and the extra space used as a 'family' room, allowing for more bedroom space upstairs. Some small urban-style brick houses have recently been built in the village, informants say that these are cheaper to build today than the wooden ones. As the legal sale of teak has become severely restricted, it has become a precious commodity. In some parts of the village there are many small huts made from woven split bamboo which are mostly occupied by young couples who erect them within the parents compounds; they are the least expensive form of housing to construct.

The design and layout of village houses indicates a recent tendency toward privacy and seclusion, particularly of wealthier village families. It is pointed out below (Chapter 5, section 5.3i) that two of the wealthiest men in the village live in relative physical isolation from the remainder of the village. This tendency can also be seen in other less wealthy families, several houses in the village do not form part of a 'compound' but stand alone, some of the urban styled houses are surrounded by fences or walls.

#### 1.2i Family and household in Chompuu.

In Chompuu village it was found that the size of families has reduced greatly over the past three generations. Most elderly villagers claimed to have had six or more siblings. The greatest number which I recorded was twelve children. Further questioning revealed that one or more children in each family often died before reaching adulthood; several villagers commented that today fewer children die than in the past. Today most families in the village have between three and five children. This is due to the widespread acceptance and use of the

contraceptive pill. Mougne (1981), writing about a village in Mae Taeng district of Chiang Mai, claims that even though there was a lack of advertising of birth control methods, when they became available in the late 1960s, and even though the village is far from Chiang Mai city where services were available; fourteen women adopted birth control methods within a year of them being introduced. Mougne states that the most popular method of birth control was the contraceptive pill.

The main reason which informants in Chompuu gave for wanting to limit the size of their family, was the cost of bringing up a child, particularly the cost of schooling. Children are now a financial burden to their parents until the age of twelve or thirteen. Until that time they contribute little, if anything, to the family income. Furthermore, while attending school the children must be provided with uniforms, books, pens, cash for lunches and so on.

In Chompuu village, two 'household' types were prevalent; firstly the nuclear family plus one or more maternal relatives, secondly matrilineal extended families of three generations. Although precise figures for the various types of household could not be obtained, due to limited time in the field, the nuclear family with one or more resident relatives appeared to be most common. 'Households' and families are not synonymous, as Potter (1976:124) explains;

"Household (a living and property owning unit)  
and family (a jural unit which organizes labour  
and sometimes shares rice) do not always coincide."

The precise nature of the household in rural Thailand need not to concern us greatly here (8). One point of interest, as far as the education of children are concerned, is the fact that it is common for parents who are separated, who live in an isolated area, or who are in financial difficulty, to send their children to live with relatives. These may be relatives living in the same village, a separate village, or even another district depending on the circumstances of the family, and the reason for sending the child to live away from home. Chompuu villagers explained that parents may choose to do so in order to secure better educational opportunities, and, in some cases, a happier home

life, for the child. Another reason stated was not specifically to benefit the child, but to provide an elderly relative with a companion in old age. There are ten or more cases in Chompuu village, of children who live with uncles, aunts or grandparents.

In the village 'households' cluster together to form compounds. Within a compound there may be as few as two households, or as many as ten. The distinction between members of one's compound or immediate neighbourhood was made by Chompuu villagers, by referring to them as '*phuan baan*' (lit. house friends). The exact demarcation of the compounds in the village are not always clear, although in some cases there are physical boundaries such as a canal, fence, hedge or even a gate. The households of a single compound may share a well, in some cases the women share a fire on which they dry banana leaves for sale. The various households which form a compound are often members of the same extended family. As daughters marry, they often live with their husbands in the parental home for a year or more. In time, many then build houses within the parent's compound.

#### 1.2ii The employment structure of the village.

The majority of Chompuu villagers are 'farmers' (*chao naa*); they can be divided into four broad categories according to their relationship with the land they farm (9). Firstly, there are landlords who own land but do not farm it, these are the minority. Of the 215 families 'interviewed' only seven claimed to belong to this group. Few families can afford to own land which they do not cultivate. One example was the family of *phq khruu wan* (10) which owns at least twenty *rai* (11) and rents it out to various villagers on a sharecropping basis, whereby the tenants receive half the rice crop, (in an arrangement known as '*yia na pha khoeng*' (12) (Anan,1984;200). *Phq khruu wan*, a retired teacher, received a pension from the government which meant that his family was not totally dependent on the land for a living.

The second group is the 'owner-occupiers', those who own land and work at least part of it themselves. Some members of this group may also rent land, particularly if their holding is too small to supply the families' needs. The figures for this category were difficult to obtain because many informants claimed to rent land, yet also owned some land. The approximate number of households which could be described as 'owner-occupiers' in Chompuu was 82.

Thirdly, there are the 'tenants', those who classify themselves mainly as renting land although they may also work as agricultural or non-agricultural labourers for part of the year. In the village approximately 70 households referred to themselves as tenants. Fourthly, there are the landless agricultural labourers; like tenants they work land which is not their own, however they work, and are paid, on a different basis. Whereas the common arrangement for tenants is '*ya na pha khoeng*' (to divide the crop 50/50), labourers work for more than one landowner and are hired and paid on a daily basis '*chang pen wan / chang rai wan*' (ibid). They are paid either in rice or in cash. There were 30 or more households in Chompuu in which agricultural labouring was the main occupation (13). Many of the agricultural labourers in the village work in seasonal 'off-farm' employment.

Relations between these four groups are highly complex and cannot be explored in detail in this thesis. Generally speaking, the majority of Chompuu villagers are either owner-occupiers or tenants and many fall between these two groups. Some of the land tenanted by Chompuu villagers is owned by absentee landlords, mostly resident in other villages in the district although one family works land owned by a farmer who once lived in Chompuu but moved to Bangkok. The system of labour exchange ('*au mu au wan*' Anan, 1984, (original author's transliteration)), practiced during the labour intensive periods of transplanting and harvesting rice, demands a degree of cooperation between labourers, tenants and owner-occupiers (14).

The Thai system of inheritance, which results in the equal division of property between all children on the death of the parents, has contributed to severe fragmentation of land holdings. Many families own plots which are too small to sustain themselves without additional income. One way in which a family can guard against the problem of the shortage of land, and consequent inability to provide each child with a future in farming, is to diversify. If one or more children are educated to the secondary or tertiary level, the number of children in the family being totally dependent on agriculture for their future is, in theory, reduced. Furthermore it was found that many families in Chompuu engage in several different occupations, both agricultural and non-agricultural. The strategy appears to be one of guarding against the insecurity of farming due to price fluctuations, weather and so on.

One example is the family of the school caretaker (a man in his late fifties) and his wife. They live in a small house within the school grounds and share the work of looking after the school premises. Of their seven children, one is a construction worker in Chiang Mai, the second is married to a construction labourer who works in the village. The third worked as a barman in the city before becoming a monk. The fourth child, a daughter, lives in the village and helps her parents with their work, the fifth lives in Bangkok with her husband who is employed in the private business sector. The sixth also lives in Bangkok, he finished the third year of high school and became a soldier, before getting a job with a printing company in Bangkok. The youngest is an unmarried son who went to agricultural college in Chiang Mai but now cannot find work, his parents do not own any land. This family is by no means unusual in Chompuu village, in terms of the range of occupations which its members are engaged in, few families, however, have more than one child living in Bangkok.

The villagers practice either double cropping or triple cropping, planting cash crops after the rice harvest. The subsistence crop grown in Chompuu village is glutinous rice (*khao nieo*), which forms the basis of the village diet. Rice, once threshed, is stored in the household's granary and taken as required to one of the village rice mills. The

farmer pays the owner of the machine a fixed amount per sack. Very few villagers grow or eat non-glutinous rice (*khao chao*) which is the staple diet of central Thais, and is increasingly being adopted by many urban Thais in the north. *Khao chao* has a certain prestige in the village (although most villagers confess that they prefer their own *khao nieo*) and is served to special visitors, particularly if they are from the city or from central Thailand. *Khao chao* is served at school for the pupils lunches; during the fieldwork period only *khao chao* or *kuaitiao* (noodles) were served for lunch. The teachers explained that these are both popular with the pupils and are meals they rarely eat at home.

Some forty or so years ago, *lamyai* (longan) trees were first planted in Chompuu village. Today Saraphi is a major *lamyai* producing district, supplying both local and foreign markets. Villagers explained that they can earn more cash per *rai* from *lamyai* than other cash crops. Many households now own *lamyai* orchards and almost every compound has at least one *lamyai* tree growing in it. The crop is sold to buyers from Saraphi, many of whom buy for exporters in Bangkok, or travel from Bangkok themselves for the season. They settle the price while the flower is still on the tree, the risk factor is high and the market price fluctuates greatly from one year to the next. The fruit is picked by teams who are employed by the buyers for an average of 40 baht a day (15); during the picking season many Chompuu villagers take advantage of this source of cash income.

Other cash crops, including garlic, spring onion, soya bean and peanuts, are also grown in the village. Generally these crops are sold to middlemen for resale or export. Many farmers plant either soya beans or peanuts after the rice crop, some plant both. During the field study period many complained of the poor market price for peanuts but claimed that the price for soya beans was high. One wealthy village family owns several soya bean grinding machines and rents them out to neighbouring farmers.

The main non-agricultural occupation in the village is construction labouring; more men are employed in this manner than women although some women do work as labourers for part of the year. There are several arrangements which construction labourers are engaged in; a few are self-employed and work in the village and neighbouring villages, the majority work on a contract basis for builders in Saraphi or Chiang Mai, some are employed on a seasonal basis, engaging the remainder of their time in agricultural labour. Many women in the village work as labourers in the tobacco factories in Saraphi which are owned by Australian, American and Japanese companies. Again this is only seasonal labour, the factories close for several months each year when the tobacco leaves are unattainable. During this time, the workers must find another means of employment. In the past the tobacco factories were a greater source of employment for villagers than is the case today. Several in the area have closed down in the last ten to twenty years; an informant mentioned that one has recently changed from the production of tobacco to that of dried marigold leaves for export.

In the village there are ten shops, nine of which are privately owned and run, the other is a cooperative shop which serves as the headquarters of the *tambon* farmers' cooperative and credit union. The private shops are generally very small and are set up within the owners house, or in the area underneath the house. They sell mostly non-perishable goods and some fresh food from the market in Saraphi. The income from the family run shops is a supplementary source of income and all of the shopkeepers are also farmers or at least members of farming families. Chompuu village does not have its own market, villagers must buy directly from Saraphi market or from the village shops.

The Thai tourist industry which has recently expanded considerably, particularly in Chiang Mai province, has created some new job opportunities for Chompuu villagers. Today, when one visits the village, one finds that in almost every household the women are engaged in embroidery, particularly during the quiet periods of the agricultural cycle. They work for various shops and factories in San Kamphaeng and

Hang Dong districts, which are now centres of tourism due to their production of handicrafts. The shop or factory provides all the materials and pays the women from one to twenty baht per item. The cloth is already marked with the pattern and the women are told which colours to use where. The degree of artistic skill required is minimal, neatness and speed are the factors required to ensure a steady income from the work.

The women recognise that the pay, when calculated daily, is very low (5-20 baht a day), yet they consider it a valuable source of extra income for the family. They say that its main benefit is that it is very flexible, they can work when and where they like, neighbours, relatives or daughters can help to complete the work. Some informants also mentioned the social aspect of embroidery, many women often meet together during the day at one house to embroider. Young girls learn by helping their mothers, sisters or cousins and thereby obtain a skill which may be used at a later stage to supplement their own families' income. Yet the women themselves did not consider embroidery as a skill which needs to be taught, when asked who taught them most replied that they just learned by watching and that it is 'very easy' (*ngai dii*).

Another similar form of labour which Chompoo women engage in, is the weaving of bamboo strips to make hats, mats and so on. This is a less common occupation in the village than embroidery. Only eight women interviewed engaged in this activity, they do not make the finished products themselves, but work on a contract business for workshops where the hats and other articles are made. The tourist trade has also provided some village teenagers with jobs in the town or city in restaurants, hotels and guest houses.

These positions are generally only acquired by those who have at least a basic understanding of English. Improved roads, the prevalence of motorcycles as a means of private transport, and the frequent bus service, makes the journey into the city much quicker and easier than in the past. This has opened up many more wage earning opportunities.

Hours and pay in these urban based jobs are often poor. One nineteen year old high school graduate works in a video hire shop in Saraphi town. She works six days a week, for twelve or fourteen hours a day and earns only about 400 baht a month. She said that she continues with the job because it would be difficult for her to find another with better conditions close to home.

### 1.3 Religion in the Village.

Theravada Buddhism is the dominant Thai religion, professed by over ninety percent of Thai people. Almost every Thai village has a temple which serves as the focal point in the community. In Chompuu, the temple is situated on the main road through the village, next to the school, its grounds are surrounded by a high brick wall. Many villagers use the temple as a point of reference when talking about other locations. They speak of the houses north and south of the temple as 'north Chompuu' and 'south Chompuu'.

There are four main buildings in the temple grounds at Chompuu; the *bot* which is used for religious meetings, the *wihaan*, a meeting hall used for public events and festivals, also occasionally used to house visitors to the village such as the donors during the *kathin* festival in November. Thirdly, there is a hall which is used for preparing and cooking food for festivals, lastly an old two storey building where the monks (*phra*) and novices (*nen*) live.

There are presently two monks and six novices at the temple, one of the novices is from northeast Thailand, all the others are local men and boys. There is also a *dek wat* (temple boy) who lives at the temple, attending the needs of the *phra* and *nen*, and accompanying them on their morning alms collection. The *dek wat* is from a poor family within the village, his mother claims that when he finishes school (16) he will stay at the temple to become a novice.

Unlike the school, which is rarely used by villagers, the temple is a social meeting point for the older men and women of the village. It seems that the women regard it chiefly as a place for worship and secondly for socialising, whereas for the men there is also a political aspect in that those who are most active in the religious affairs of the village are also active in its political affairs. Temple meetings often double as village meetings, providing a valuable arena for the announcement of items of importance to the village and discussion of village affairs. The temple is an integral part of the village community, the school, on the other hand, rarely serves as a place for the discussion of matters of interest to the village (17).

On every 'Buddha Day' (once a calendar month) the village women rise early in the morning to prepare food, flowers and incense to take to the temple for the monks. Many then remain at the temple all morning to listen to the monks read stories about the life of Buddha. Although some older men also go to the temple on these days, younger people and children (other than infants) rarely attend. The demands of schooling and jobs on children and teenagers' time is one possible reason for their absence. Discussions with teenagers and other young people (under thirty) revealed that many do not feel the need, or the desire, to go to the temple except during special festivals. Then they participate by preparing flowers and food, or by performing dances at the festival.

#### 1.4 The Political Structure of Chompuu Village.

Although the political structure of the village is dealt with at length in Chapter Five, it is felt that it is necessary to give a brief outline of the political framework in the village here, in order that future references to the various local authorities are understood by the reader. At the village level the focus of political authority is in the position of headman (*phu yai baan* (CT) / *phq luang* (NT)) who is elected by both male and female villagers at a meeting. The headman remains

in office until he retires voluntarily, is dismissed (by the district officer) or reaches the retirement age of sixty. He receives a small monthly payment from the government but is not actually a civil servant. A *kamnan* (subdistrict head) is chosen from all of the headmen of the *tambon*; he presides at *tambon* meetings and serves as a go-between for the district office and the headmen. The present headman of Chompuu village is in his early thirties, he is the son of a farming family and continues to farm while acting as *pho luang* (NT) (headman). He was a *nen* and later a *phra* at the village temple for many years before being chosen as village head.

The political arena of the village is decidedly male; although women have been legally able to become village and *tambon* leaders since 1981 and may also join the various political groups in the village. There has never yet been a female village head in *tambon* Chompuu, and female membership of groups other than the 'womens group' is low, this is also the case elsewhere in the country. The most politically active members of the village are men in the 35-60 age group. One finds that the same small group of men tend to be, or have been in the past, active participants in the various village groups, and in the political activity of the village in general. This may simply indicate that these few men have the personal qualities which attracts them to positions of political activity and leadership. On the other hand, it may indicate that a limited number of factors, such as wealth, level of education and family background, determine who is chosen for these positions.

### 1.5 Chompuu Village School

In Thailand today there are two categories of primary schools (*rong rian prathom*), provincial and municipal (18). The '1980 Final Report on Education Statistics' produced by the National Statistics Office of Thailand, claims that government primary schools in Thailand may be divided into; 'elementary' and 'municipal'. The former are those under the jurisdiction of the Department of General Education, or under the

provisional authority. The latter are situated within the boundaries of a municipal area. Private schools are owned by an individual or group of individuals other than government agencies.

In Saraphi district there are 35 primary schools with a total of 4,500 students (2,400 boys / 2,100 girls), and 348 teachers (131 men / 217 women) 179 of whom have degrees. The average school size in the district is 128 pupils; Wehrewan school, which is situated close to the centre of the town, has 682 pupils and the smallest school, Ku Daeng (19), has only 41 pupils. Ku Daeng is the only school in Saraphi which still does not have a grade five and six class. Informants at the district primary education office explained that there is not enough demand to add the other two grades, the children on completing grade four attend a neighbouring village school for the final two years.

Chompuu school is one of four in the *tambon*; the largest is Ban Taa with 170 students and nine teachers (although the full quota is eleven) and the smallest is Bu Palaam with only 69 pupils and 9 teachers. Chompuu is the only school which has a caretaker, the others either hire villagers to do some of the caretaker's work or the teachers and pupils must do the work themselves. The caretaker at Chompuu has worked for the school for thirty years. As was mentioned in the Introduction, he and his wife live in a house within the school grounds. They open and close the school grounds each day, clean the school, do any minor repairs and prepare the school lunches. At two of the other schools in the *tambon* the teachers prepare the school lunches themselves at the third school, Ban Taa, village women are employed for that purpose. The Chompuu teachers explained that before the school lunch project was initiated a decade ago, they had to cook lunches and wash the dishes, they said that now they would not be able to find the time to do that extra work.

In terms of provision of equipment the most wealthy school is Ban Taa. The school grounds are divided in two by a road, the 'old' part of the school is occupied by the lower three grades and the 'new' part by the upper three grades. The school has a sealed basketball court which,

according to the headmaster cost 10,000 baht to build. He said that the school received money to build the court from donors in Bangkok. He made a point of explaining that neither government nor villagers' money was used.

Availability of funds appears to be the root of differences between the schools, and a major cause of grievance for both headmasters and teachers. Funds come from three sources; the government, private donors and parents of the pupils the proportion of each depends on the school, some rely heavily on private donors, others on the villagers. Teachers explained that small schools (with fewer than 100 pupils) receive proportionately less financial support from the government than larger schools. Bu Palaam school lacks a library, kitchen, store room and covered meeting area, which are considered standard at the other schools.

Much of the responsibility for the generation of private funds rests with the headmaster. If he is a dynamic character who has been successful in maintaining connections with past pupils who may now be working in Chiang Mai or Bangkok, he is likely to be able to call on their support in finding donors for the school. Finally the wealth of the parents of the pupils and their willingness to invest in the school is an important factor. All of the headmasters of the schools in *tambon* Chompuu explained that they rely less on support from the parents today than was common in the past. They were proud of this fact because they do not believe that the school should be a burden on the village.

Chompuu school is approximately sixty years old. One of the oldest women in the village, who attended the school in her youth said that when the school first opened, in the grounds of the village *wat* (temple), there were approximately 30 pupils and 2 teachers. Thirty or more years ago, the land adjoining the temple grounds was purchased and a special school building was constructed; it was a single-storey brick building with a verandah along the front. This building was later extended to form an 'L-shaped' building with the parade ground in the

front, a style used throughout the country. Five years ago a 'modern' two-storey building was completed, with four rooms upstairs and a space underneath for eating and playing. In 1985 a library and pre-school (*dek lek*) classroom were built underneath. The latest addition to the school was the conversion of a bicycle shed into a kindergarten (*anubaan*) classroom in 1986 (20).

In the space of thirty years the school has extended to include eight classrooms, a staffroom, meeting hall, library, first-aid room and store room. In terms of classroom space the school compares favourably with other schools in the *tambon*. However it has only a small playing ground and the area used for agriculture is also small. Ten years ago the school purchased the house opposite to use as teachers' accommodation, one of the female teachers now lives there (21). In the garden there are four *lamyai* trees and there is also a small space for planting vegetables. The *lamyai* are sold and the cash is used according to the schools most pressing need at the time. In 1987 the cash was used to pay for a rain water tank which was erected next to the new school building.

In 1987 the school had 149 pupils (85 boys / 64 girls), including those in the *anuban* class (22). The number of girls exceeded the number of boys until 1984 since when there have been 10-20 more boys than girls enrolled. As there is no evidence in Chompuu village of parents keeping school-aged children at home to help with chores as they might have done in the past, one can only suppose that the change is due to demographic fluctuations in the village population. There are eight teachers, a headmaster and an unqualified 'teacher' of the *anubaan* class. Since 1981 the school population has risen from 123.

#### 1.5i The School Teachers.

At Chompuu school there are eight classes, kindergarten, pre-school and grades one to six. Kindergarten and pre-school are not compulsory and the kindergarten teacher, as mentioned above, is not a qualified teacher. She is a young village woman who is employed and paid directly

by the school rather than by the state. There are nine qualified teachers at the school including the headmaster (five men and four women). Pre-school through to grade four are taught by one teacher per grade whereas grades five and six are taught by three teachers, plus the headmaster who teaches for four hours a week.

The ages of the teachers at the school range from 29 to 51 years. The headmaster is the oldest and is senior in terms of the total number of years he has taught. However he is not the longest serving teacher at Chompuu school itself. All teachers except that of the pre-school class are graduates of teacher training college (23), four also have Bachelors Degrees in Education. The headmaster has recently completed an external degree course at Sukhothai University. More highly qualified teachers begin on a higher salary scale but do not necessarily move up to a higher scale if they complete a course while in office (24).

The only teacher who did not attend teachers college is the pre-school teacher. She completed a vocational course at a college in Bangkok. Her lack of teaching qualifications may be a reason why she is on the lowest salary scale. However as she has already taught for fourteen years one might expect that there are other contributing factors. Some teachers claim that her low pay reflects her general lack of enthusiasm for the job and frequent absences from the school.

In Thailand, when teachers first graduate they are generally posted to remote rural area for at least two years. All of the teachers at Chompuu school have spent some time teaching in remote areas, some in hill-tribe schools. It is clear from their comments that they now value security in their work very highly. When asked about future plans and job prospects none expressed a desire to transfer to another school. All except two of the teachers are teaching close to home and there is little incentive to move to another area. The desire for security tends to have a negative effect on teachers' interest in promotion. Three of the young male teachers have passed the examination to become headmasters, yet say they do not wish to apply for the position, for to do so would almost inevitably mean having to move back to a remote

area. One of the teachers was actually headmaster in a small hill-tribe school some time ago. He accepted a demotion in order to move to Saraphi district.

Considering the fact that teachers act as 'role models' for their pupils; guiding judgement and behaviour, this lack of initiative among the teaching staff may have a negative influence on pupils' perception of their own future job prospects and social or geographic mobility. There is considerable prestige in holding a teaching post in an urban area, this added to the fact of convenience in terms of close proximity to the amenities of the city, means that the more remote posts are difficult to fill. One teacher at Chompuu explained that he was considering moving up to Fang district in the north of Chiang Mai province where he had worked in the past. He claimed that it would be easy to arrange because so many of the teachers in Fang are trying to transfer south, and are willing to pay large sums to any teacher who would transfer to fill their post.

All of the nine teachers at Chompuu are northern Thais, although three are from provinces other than Chiang Mai. One lives in Chiang Mai city, four in Saraphi town and the others live in villages of varying distances from the school. One teacher lives in the only teachers' accommodation in the village, her family home is in another province about eighty miles away. She spends most of her week-ends and almost all of the school holidays there. Even though none of the teachers are natives of the village and only one lives in the village during the term, most are from the local district and many are from rural areas. One might expect that this would ease communication with villagers and facilitate understanding of local needs; however in Chompuu this did not prove to be the case (for further discussion of this issue see Chapter Seven).

1.5ii The pupils.

The great majority of school-aged children in Chompuu attend the village school. Of the 215 families spoken to, three said that they send their children to primary school in Chiang Mai. Each of these families is relatively wealthy, one is involved in hiring out soya bean grinding machines to villagers, as well as farming their own land. The father of the second family works for a large private company in Chiang Mai and is one of the few villagers who has ever travelled overseas. The third is a wealthy farming family. Furthermore, two families send their children to the primary school in Saraphi town, Wehrewan school, and one family sends their son to a school in the village from which they have recently moved. It is more expensive to send a child to school in Chiang Mai or Saraphi than in the village. Firstly, transport costs are higher, secondly if the school is a private one there are fees to pay. Thirdly, uniforms and school equipment may be more costly, for instance the school may require that the pupils purchase a sports uniform. Lastly, there may be many other hidden costs such as snacks and lunches at the school, which would be more expensive than in the village.

Two main reasons were given for sending children to school in Chiang Mai; one was that the standard of education is 'better' (*sqn dii khwaa*), the other, that the children are taught English from an earlier age. One mother commented;

*"The teachers are better in Chiang Mai than in the village, they have better qualifications and more ideas about teaching. The children learn English from the first grade, when they go the high school their English is already good."*

Another case was of a couple who send their eight year old girl to one of the private schools in the city. Her grandfather is an ex headman of Chompuu and is currently the head of the village credit union. He and his son said that education in the city is better, the teachers are all qualified and they are more interested in the work than the village teachers. They feel that the Chompuu village teachers are apathetic and

lazy. At a later interview with the girl's mother it was revealed that her opinions did not coincide with those of her husband and father-in-law. She said that they would not be sending their son (at the time a baby) to school in the city. She said that she would prefer to have him close to home in the village school. When asked about the difference in levels of education she replied that it is not very important at the primary level, a bright child would learn well in any school.

The difference between the level of education in the city and the village was discussed by many parents. Most feel that the standard of education is 'better' in the city than in the village mainly because of the qualifications and attitudes of teachers. One mother said that a past teacher at the village school had said to her;

*"why should we try to teach properly?*

*We are teaching in the countryside."*

*(tamai tong sqn ċhing? rao sqn nai chunabot).*

On the other hand many parents feel that it is too expensive to send a child to the town or city for primary education, at the secondary level it is more important.

Chompuu school caters for children from Nong Pase, Sii Don Muun and Bu Palaam villages as well as Chompuu. The latter has its own school but eight years ago the school was moved from the temple grounds to another site at the other end of the village; therefore some families living close to the border with Chompuu send their children to Chompuu school which is nearer. Most children either walk or ride bicycles to school, depending on how far away they live and whether or not their family has a bicycle to spare during the day. Some parents take their children to school on bicycles or motor cycles.

Children now enter the first grade at six or seven years of age. An average of three or four pupils repeat the first grade each year (25). The first grade teacher said that this is generally due to poor reading and writing skills. She said that it is still too early to determine the influence of the school *anubaan* and *dek lek* classes on the pass rates as the latter has only been open for two years and the former for one.

The rate at which pupils complete the compulsory six years of primary schooling varies greatly because exams must be passed at the end of each year before carrying on to the next year. Last year there were four thirteen year olds in the grade six class at Chompuu, while the youngest pupil in that class was ten years old.

On completing *prathom* six approximately half of the pupils at Chompuu go on to attend high school (*rong rian matayom*) in Saraphi or Chiang Mai. In 1987 the figure was ten out of eighteen (seven girls and eleven boys) (26). Most primary school leavers help their parents to farm when they finish school, if there is no land to farm they may engage in wage labour: girls embroider or sew and boys help their fathers. Some boys become novices for a few years until they are old enough to work. This is also considered a way of extending their education which is less expensive than sending them to high school.

Many villagers commented that when the children first leave school they are too small to be able to help very much. Although young children help their parents with daily chores such as feeding animals and cooking, there was little evidence of widespread use of child labour in the village. During the fieldwork period few children were seen working in the rice fields even during the most labour-intensive periods of planting and harvesting. Some villagers mentioned that in the past school holidays coincided with the labour-intensive periods of the agricultural cycle, however today this is no longer the case.

### **Conclusion.**

This chapter has provided a brief outline of the socio-economic, religious and political framework of the village in which the fieldwork was conducted, as well as of the school itself. Many of the points touched on here will be dealt with in greater detail below. The distinctive features of the village chosen for the field study are: proximity to the urban centres of Chiang Mai city and Saraphi town,

ease of communication between village, town and city, a long history of secular primary education in the village and a diversified economy offering a variety of earning opportunities to its members.

Each of these features affects the school system, the form it takes, and the future promises it holds for its pupils. The fact that the village is situated close to the district town, and to the city, means that there are a variety of educational opportunities available to those in a position to take advantage of them. It is quite feasible (in terms of distance and convenience) for a Chompuu villager to choose to send his/her primary school aged child to study in the town or city. Furthermore, because the district high school is so close, the possibility of the child eventually attending high school is greater than it would be in a remote setting.

As the children currently attending Chompuu school are the third generation of villagers to receive a formal education, many of their parents, and even their grandparents, have preconceived ideas about schooling. This means that ideas formed in the days when the formal education took place in the temple grounds, and was taught by monks, may yet hold a great deal of weight and be slow to change. Thus the parents may be less receptive to new ideas regarding the education of their children than if they had never attended a school themselves. This fact is borne out by the manner in which some of the older villagers compare the school today to when they were children, often in a negative light.

On the other hand, this depth of experience of the older generation may have more positive effects on the education of their children. One woman remarked that it is easier for children today because they have the support of their parents. Parents have accepted the importance of education and most now strive to educate their children to the highest level within their means. The danger is that they may be doing so in the hope of their attaining some specific goal, such as a white-collar job in the city, which itself is a less realistic aim for a high school graduate than it was twenty or so years ago. This is a central theme

of Dore's (1976) analysis of the 'Diploma Disease' which he believes has become a major problem throughout the Third World.

With the incorporation of the village consumption and production process into the national economy, many new opportunities have recently become available to villagers. The village economy offers employment opportunities not only of farming rice, but farming cash crops such as *lamyai*, and of engaging in various non-agricultural activities - construction labouring, driving, craftsmanship and shopkeeping. Therefore it has become important for the village child to develop a range of skills, in order to take full advantage of his/her future opportunities.

Skills in literacy have become more important to the villager than ever before, in business dealings and in any interaction he/she may have with the bureaucracy. Some may argue that a command of the English language, although not a basic literacy skill, is becoming a valuable skill to the village child. However, English is of direct value only to the small minority who find employment in the urban sector, particularly within the tourist industry. A central theme of this thesis focuses on the fact that the village school develops skills, and fosters expectations, which are of little value to the majority of its pupils, whose futures lie in the rural village society. The emphasis of the formal school system continues to be on the preparation of young children for further education and urban employment. While this emphasis continues to dominate formal education policy and practice, the potential of the school for teaching and developing skills of direct value within the village cannot be realised.

NOTES;

- (1) The area of Saraphi district is only 128 square kilometres (Potter,1976).
- (2) The name Saraphi refers both to the town and the district. In order to distinguish one from the other I will use 'Saraphi town' to refer to the town itself.
- (3) See Map No.1 (*Amphoe Saraphi*)
- (4) See Map No. 2 (*Tambon Wat Payachompuu*)
- (5) The fourth village (Bu Palaam) is not represented because it has its own school and only a few children from the village attend Chompuu school each year.
- (6) There is some confusion as to the exact number of households in the village, as the administrative boundary in one particular area of the village does not coincide with the boundary which villagers recognise.
- (7) 'Traditional' and 'modern' are used cautiously here as it is recognised that the use of these terms, without qualification, may risk oversimplifying what is actually a very complex situation.
- (8) For detailed analysis see S.H.Potter 1977; J.Potter 1976; C.M.Mougne 1981.
- (9) Vaddhanaphuti (1984;246) uses the same four categories in classifying the villagers of Ban Chang in northern Thailand.
- (10) *pho khruu wan* is the father of my interpreter mentioned in the Introductory Chapter.
- (11) 1 acre = 2.5 *rai*.
- (12) In Chompuu, villagers simply used the phrase '*baeng khoeng*' (to divide in half) to explain this arrangement. Vaddhanaphuti (1984) explains that this system of *baeng khoeng* has long been in practice in northern Thailand as is still widely practiced today.
- (13) Of the remaining 26 households 16 are unclassified and 10 may be classified as non-agricultural.
- (14) See Anan,1976;168-250.
- (15) One pound sterling = approx 42 baht (1989).
- (16) He was in the sixth grade at the time.

{17} Parent/teacher meetings are held at the school and wider village affairs are occasionally discussed at these meetings. See Chapter 7.

{18} Until recently there was a third category of schools directly under the Ministry of Education.

{19} Ku Daeng is the site of the research conducted by Kingshill in the 1950's and Potter in the 1970's, see Introductory Chapter. It is interesting to note that Kingshill (1960) reported that at the time of his research, in 1953, the Ku Daeng school had 103 pupils, whereas in 1987 its population was only 41 pupils. In both years the school consisted of only four grades, The opening of other schools in the area in the past three decades is the most likely explanation of this decline in the school population.

{20} See Map No. 3. (*Rong Rian Wat Fayachompuu*)

{21} The teacher with whom I stayed for the first few weeks of the field study, refer to Introductory Chapter.

{22} See Appendix 1. (Chompuu School Population)

{23} Kingshill (1960) notes that in 1953 none of the teachers at Ku Daeng school were educated beyond the seventh grade, then the third year of high school, the equivalent of the first year of high school today. See also Appendix 2. (Primary School Teachers' Qualifications; Whole Nation)

{24} See Chapter 2, also refer to Appendix 3. (Teachers' Salary Scales; Saraphi District)

{25} See Appendix 4. (Pass/Fail Rates; Chompuu School)

{26} See Appendix 5. (High School Entrance Rates; Chompuu School)

The national figure for the percentage of primary school leavers entering high school in 1979-1980 was 47.5% ('1980 Final Report on Education Statistics' National Statistics Office, Bangkok, 1980) Therefore the percentage of Chompuu school leavers entering high school has been close to the national average in recent years.

CHAPTER TWO: THE THAI PRIMARY SCHOOL SYSTEM;  
SOME RECENT DEVELOPMENTS.

2.1 Introduction.

Until the end of the nineteenth century, the only form of 'schooling' for almost the entire Thai population, was that which took place in the temples where monks acted as teachers. There has always been a strong relationship between religion and education in Thailand. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the first elite secular school was established in Bangkok, the nation's capital. It was soon followed, first by other 'Royal Schools', and later by schools for 'commoners', both in Bangkok and in the provinces. During the past fifty years, formal education has expanded rapidly in both urban and rural areas, and today virtually every village is within access of a government primary school. Six years of primary education is compulsory and is offered in all but the smallest, or the most remote, schools.

While dealing briefly with the history of Thai education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this chapter concentrates on the development of Thai education during the past fifty years. The emphasis shall be on examining aspects of that history which relate to the issues to be discussed in the chapters which follow. The first section of the chapter looks at the origins of formal schooling in Thailand. The second section examines the historical link between formal education and public service employment. Thirdly the Thai primary curriculum, both past and present, is outlined.

## 2.2 The Origins of Formal Schooling in Thailand.

Prior to the establishment of the modern schooling, which began during the reign of King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910), but only became a widespread provision during the 1930's, boys were taught by monks in the temples. They were known as *dek wat* (temple children) (1) and attended the needs of the monks, in return for which they were taught to read and write and to recite prayers. Further education was obtainable after the age of twenty, when most men were ordained as *phra* (monks) for a limited period. They learnt the Pali script which was used in the holy scriptures (2), or apprenticed themselves to monks who were skilled in arts and crafts. (Bunnag, in Nathalang, 1970) Some reached full literacy through these teachings and others would have acquired at least a basic acquaintance with the alphabet. Girls were excluded from this early form of education as it is prohibited for the monks to teach members of the opposite sex, except in public.

During this time secular education was limited to royalty. During the reign of King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910), the spread of colonialism in the east began to have its effect on Thai education. European advisers were called upon to assist in the initiation of a western style education system. In 1871 the first secular school was established at the Royal Palace. During the 1880's the King sent his numerous sons abroad to study, to England, Denmark, America, Prussia and Russia, when they returned they filled senior administrative posts in the civil service.

Up to this time education remained the privilege of royalty and the children of noblemen; however King Chulalongkorn soon became interested in the education of the masses and began to extend schooling in Bangkok and also in the provinces. In 1887 the Department of Education was established and the government committed itself to a nationwide, centrally organised, education system.



One of the major problems confronted by the King, in expanding the school system, was the shortage of teachers. In 1892, in an attempt to alleviate the problem, monks were asked to teach. They received no official remuneration, but were rewarded in proportion to the number of their pupils who passed the examination at the end of each year. By the time of King Chulalongkorn's death, in 1910, all the foundations for future government control of education had been laid, and the belief that education was an instrument of political control and social change had been accepted by those in power. King Vajirawudh took many steps to change the education system established by his father, King Chulalongkorn. In 1913 he decreed new national goals for education which extended beyond the scope of literacy. He was concerned with the practical element of education and wished to encourage people to avail themselves of both general and vocational education at the primary level.

In 1921 four years of primary schooling became compulsory for children aged seven to fourteen years. For many years, however, this remained an ideal rather than reality, because of the lack of provision of schools in rural areas. Initially compulsory schooling applied to only about fifty percent of the nation's villages, schoolrooms were set up in temples and there remained severe shortages of teachers. The compulsory education system eventually incorporated every village in the nation in 1935.

The number of years of primary schooling, and the number of compulsory years, have changed several times in the history of modern Thai education. In 1932 there were four years of primary schooling, in 1952 this extended to become seven. The government was unable to expand seven years of compulsory schooling nationwide, therefore in 1960 it reverted to four, followed by three years of 'upper primary' which was not compulsory. In 1978 the system altered once more and since then six years of primary school have been made compulsory. In more remote areas many schools, particularly in hill-tribe villages still only provide four years of schooling.

During the twentieth century one significant aspect of secular schooling in Thailand is the manner in which it has been manipulated by those in power to suit their political needs. After the coup d'etat of 1932 the government set up an education committee to draft a new education plan. Education was seen as a means of furthering democracy, by developing an intelligent and literate electorate. It was a means of fostering nationalism, a pressing need for the government in the light of the growing economic power of the Chinese and an increasing fear of 'the communist threat'.

### 2.3 The Historical Link between Formal Education and Public Service Employment in Thailand.

Initially formal education in Thailand was for the elite; the royal family and the children of noblemen. It was established with the intention of furnishing the ranks of the rapidly expanding bureaucracy with literate, educated individuals. Once the demand for people to fill these government posts began to decline, the government turned its attentions to vocational and agricultural education, particularly in rural areas. Watson (1980) claims that there has been a growing gap between parental expectations of education, and government intentions. Thai people, he says;

*"have been prepared to send their children to school not because they have recognized the value of education per se...nor because they believe that what their children learn at school will enable them to become 'fully developed, whole individuals', nor even because they wish their children to be better equipped to play a more positive role in their country's economic and social development. They have done so because they realize that the examination certificates successfully obtained carry*

*social status and better job prospects,  
and because schooling helps to discipline  
children in obedience." (ibid;136)*

Thus parents' immediate concern is for the welfare of their children and their family. Discussions with Chompuu villagers about the school system revealed that this emphasis remains paramount. The advantages of schooling were spoken of in terms of the individual, and the family, rather than in terms of benefits to the entire community or the Thai nation.

Since the spread of formal secular education in rural areas, many Thai parents have seen the school as a means for their child to enter an occupational field which would otherwise be closed to them. In this respect the school is seen to function as a 'gatekeeper' to the more prized occupations (3). According to Chompuu villagers, the most desirable form of employment remains government service, non-government office jobs (clerical), or service (armed forces, policework, nursing). Although many informants spoke in general terms of 'office jobs', which include employment by both the government and the private sector, many continue to regard civil service employment as highly prestigious and remunerative, not only to the individual, but to the entire family.

Entrance to, and promotion within, the civil service reinforces this gatekeeping function of the school. Today all entrants to the civil service must now pass a written examination. Applicants must be Thai citizens, between eighteen and forty years of age. They must be physically and mentally fit, solvent, without criminal record or the record of a previous dismissal from the civil service. The retirement age is set at fifty-five years and pensions are granted to those who have served for at least twenty-five years.

Suwanagul (1963) explains that the word 'civil servant' (*kharatchakan*) (4), as defined by the Civil Service Act of 1928, means a member of the public service who draws a salary from the state budget. The service is divided into eight categories;

1. Political Officials.
2. Ordinary Civil Servants.
3. State Enterprise Officials. (Post & Telegraph)
4. Royal Household Officials.
5. Police Officials.
6. Teaching Officials.

*"This group includes teachers holding permanent posts at the educational institutions established by the Ministry of Education or other personnel in the Ministry of Education whose duties are outlined in a Royal Decree issued under the authority of the Teachers Act." (ibid;60)*

7. Special Foreign Service Officials.
8. Special Civil Servants.

There are five ranks in the Thai civil service, within each of the ranks are many different positions with varying duties and responsibilities, there are also salary scales within each rank which enables the promotion of salary without the promotion of rank.

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Official Status</u>	<u>Education Official</u>
Fourth Class	Clerks	District Clerks
Third Class	Officials of the Section	District Officials
Second Class	Section Heads	District Ed. Officer
First Class	Division Heads	Provincial Ed. Officer
Special Class	Directors	National Level Officials

Several aspects of this ranking system relate to the national education system. Firstly, new entrants are only taken into the fourth or third classes, the higher ranks recruit purely from within the service. Entrants to the fourth class must sit an examination which is comprised of three parts; oral, written and performance. Entrance to the third class is open to university graduates, and the examination is of the university level. Thus entrance is closely tied to the formal education system; even those who have worked in the fourth class for many years cannot (with very rare exceptions) move into the third class without passing the entrance exam. Many would be unable to pass because of the highly academic content, and the lack of emphasis placed on performance in the job.

Suchitra Punyaratabundhu Bhakdi (1979;41) comments;

*"By comparison with the rest of the population of Thailand, civil servants are an elite group with respect to educational attainment."*

He claims that educational attainment is directly related to rank in the civil service; his studies of the Ministry of Agriculture showed that fourth grade officials mostly had completed some kind of vocational training course. In the third grade the average educational achievement was one and a half years of college or another tertiary establishment, in the second grade the average was three years of tertiary education and in the first grade four years (Bachelors Degrees).

Entrance to the Thai civil service is highly competitive and it has become increasingly difficult for high school and even university graduates to obtain the positions they seek. Yet many young Thais, with the support of their parents, continue to strive towards this goal. This is partly because of the prestige of becoming a civil servant, prestige which relates to the days when the public servants were the 'Kings men' and were accorded great respect.

*"Until the last decade or so, the civil service was virtually the only career channel open to educated Thais. The business sector in Thailand has long been dominated*

*by the Chinese (or Thais of Chinese origin)  
and until recent times a somewhat negative  
association has attached to pursuing a career  
in the private sector." (ibid;56)*

Also, although civil service salaries are low compared with those offered in the private sector (5), many material benefits are available to civil servants.

Civil servants have security of tenure; after twenty-five years service they are entitled to a pension; if they die in office their heir/s receive gratuity amounting to the deceased's monthly salary multiplied by the number of years of service. Upon retirement civil servants receive a lump sum which is the result of a compulsory saving scheme. Other fringe benefits include housing, exemption from income tax, reduced rates for medical and hospital care, and for childrens' school tuition fees.

*"The short working hours, the very liberal  
allowances for leaves of absence with pay,  
the educational and medical care, and housing  
benefit are characteristic features of public  
employment in Thailand which tend to set public  
officials apart as a specially privileged group"*  
(Suwanagul 1963;174)

Civil service employment offers benefits for the entire family. This was stated by many Chompuu villagers as the reason they would like their children to attain civil service positions. It is a position of prestige and one which is secure and stable. The connection between schooling and the civil service which has existed since the beginnings of the modern school system, has greatly effected Thai people's views and expectations of the education system.

## 2.4 The Development of the Thai Primary Curriculum.

### 2.4i Concern for 'relevance'.

The Thai government primary curriculum has changed considerably during the past few decades. A frequent comment made by Chompuu villagers, with reference to the curriculum, was that they no longer understand it. They claim that it is now far broader than in the past, it includes new subjects which they were never taught and cannot grasp. Some saw this in an unfavourable light as it means that they are unable to help their children with school work. However others spoke with pride and admiration of their children, who now learn so much more at school than they themselves learned in the past.

Secular education in Thailand began in 1871 with the teaching of reading and writing. According to Jumsai;

*" the curriculum of the first school was confined to reading, writing, spelling, handwriting, copy work, letter writing, punctuation and grammar." (Jumsai,1951;20)*

In 1885 the curriculum extended to include arithmetic and book-keeping; nevertheless Wyatt (op.cit) points out that the broader curriculum, introduced at the end of the nineteenth century, was only available at the highest level of schooling. During the present century the curriculum has expanded a great deal, yet has retained its overriding emphasis on literacy and numeracy.

There were many early attempts to alter this situation by introducing a more 'relevant' practical curriculum in rural areas. In 1912, the government introduced vocational courses as a compulsory part of primary education. Four years of general education was followed by two years of vocational education. In 1916, when King Vajirawudh was preparing the Education Act of 1921, his concern was that if farm children were forced to attend school they might leave the land and turn to civil service work. The problem was how to encourage children to attend school yet not to leave the land. In the same year

agriculture was added to the curriculum. However neither vocational, nor practical, nor agricultural, classes proved very successful. They were generally used to teach academic subjects and in 1937 the compulsory classes were dropped. One reason why vocational education has not been a success, is that it has not had the support of parents, who continue to regard it as inferior to academic education.

Perhaps the prime consideration is that by the time the experiments with 'vocational' education began, the Thai people already associated academic schooling with civil service positions. This being the case, 'vocational' education was viewed as a less favourable option than 'mainstream' schooling. Thus, the introduction of more practical subjects to the rural school curriculum could be interpreted as a form of discrimination against rural dwellers, by reducing their opportunity of entering the favoured white-collar occupations.

The debate about the relative merits of vocational and formal schooling has received a great deal of attention from educationalists, sociologists and anthropologists alike. It is a problem faced throughout the Third World, as modern formal schooling becomes increasingly widely available. Watson (1980), writing about the situation in Thailand, emphasises the need for vocational education to provide 'much needed manpower'. He speaks of the 'irrelevance' of the curriculum to the lives of many pupils and the consequent waste of resources.

*"Unfortunately, no developing country can afford to have irrelevant curricula because it leads to the separation of <sup>the</sup> schools from the needs of the local community, it leads to wastage and drop-outs, it is wasteful of scarce economic resources...it produces personnel who are ill-equipped for a role in either the traditional or the modern sector of society." (ibid;62)*

Similarly, Charoenchai (1978) says that one of Thailand's main educational problems, is the lack of 'relevance' of the curricula to economic and social conditions.

*"The study of academic subjects without practice, or learning without consideration for practical application cannot provide a complete general education." (ibid;9)*

While this may well be the case, the problem goes far deeper than simply lack of provision of 'vocational' education, or of 'practical' subjects within the formal school curriculum. In Chompuu it was found that parental interest in, and enthusiasm for, 'practical' education (agriculture, handicrafts and so on) was limited. The majority of parents in the village see the school as a place where the child learns to read and write, learns about his/her country and something of the world outside. The teaching of agriculture, cookery, woodwork, sewing and other practical skills is not considered the responsibility of the school (see discussion below).

The 1950 curriculum modification demonstrated the Thai government's concern to extend the curriculum to include 'new' realms of knowledge. It included: morality and religious instruction; civics (duty toward King, country, school and family); Thai language; arithmetic; history and geography; nature studies; hygiene (health and first aid); drawing; singing; manual training (crafts and agriculture); physical education; scoutcraft for boys and Junior Red Cross Knowledge for the girls. While literacy and numeracy remained the central skills, the curriculum aimed to develop many other areas of the child's ability. One must realise that while such curriculum changes were made at the administrative level in that year, actual changes, particularly in rural schools, would have been slow. There must have been many schools which were unable to adopt the new subjects immediately, due to lack of textbooks or teaching expertise. The Chompuu villagers who attended school at that time, say that the curricula they studied was very narrow, concentrating mostly on Thai language, arithmetic and religion. Presumably many of the 'new' subjects were not taught.

In 1960 the national Thai curriculum consisted of four compulsory years of primary schooling, followed by three further primary years. Secondary schooling was divided into three years of lower and two years of upper. Miller (1968) claims that the aims of the National Education Scheme of 1960 were to educate people to become moral, responsible citizens with the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out an occupation useful to their country. Chongkol (in Nathalang 1970;81) says that through the 1960 policy:

*"The government aims at providing education for all people in accordance with their individual abilities. Education will be developed to bring about good citizens who are healthy, responsible minded, well disciplined, possessing democratic attitudes as well as being moral and cultured persons. The organization of education will be geared to satisfy individual and social needs as well as to harmonize it with the national economic development plans and the administrative policy."*

It aimed to put education in harmony with the country's economic and political system. The curriculum was to have four main components; moral, physical, intellectual and practical.

#### 2.4ii The present curriculum.

In 1978 the 1960 curriculum was replaced. The new structure became six compulsory years of primary schooling, followed by three years of lower secondary school and three years of upper, this pattern remains to the present day. Champaton (1984) explains that the overall objectives of the new formal curriculum aim at achieving permanent literacy and numeracy among pupils. As was the case with the earlier scheme, the intention is to produce law abiding citizens who possess skills, and knowledge, which enable them to earn a living 'commensurate with their age and capabilities'. Who is to decide what their capabilities are, and therefore which skills and which aspects of 'knowledge' are appropriate, remains highly problematic.

The content of the 1978 curriculum is divided into four subject groupings which correspond with the four main components of the 1960 curriculum. These are:

Skills - mathematics, Thai language, English (grades 5 & 6);

Life Experiences - health education, social studies, science, history, geography, religion;

Character Development - art, music, physical education, moral education;

Work Experience - home economics, agriculture, carpentry.

Several teachers at Chompoo school claimed that they do not feel confident in teaching the new subjects, in which they have not been adequately trained. They confessed that they must rely on the text books to a great extent, because their own lack of knowledge makes improvisation very difficult. Yet as Gray and Straughan (1971) point out:

*"Teachers are central to the consideration of every facet of Thai education. If the curriculum is revised, it is the teachers who must understand and put into practise the changes. If textbooks are produced, it is the teachers who must understand the books and assure their proper use."* (ibid;118)

The Thai government appears to have recognised the central importance of the teachers, in implementing a new national curriculum, and has increased the amount of in-service training available to teachers. The Chompoo school teachers are frequently required to attend seminars and meetings in the district town, many of which deal with curriculum content.

Of the four subject groupings 'skills' is perhaps the least controversial. The 'need' for children, urban and rural alike, to achieve at least basic literacy and numeracy is accepted by most parents, politicians and academics. Perhaps more controversial is the question of the degree of emphasis to be placed on literacy and numeracy and the extent to which it should take precedence over other subject areas.

Today basic literacy (that is the ability at least to be able to read and write their own name) is possessed by the majority of Chompuu villagers. Informants claimed that ten to twenty percent of villagers are illiterate and the majority of these are women and older people (over fifty years). Most of those who attended school claim that they can read and write their own name, and many said that they read newspapers regularly. Thus literacy (of varying degrees) has become the skill of the 'ordinary' village man and woman (6). As is explained below (Chapter 4, section 4.2) the school privileges the Central Thai language, by adopting it as the medium of instruction. On the whole, when one speaks of literacy in Thailand, one refers to literacy in Central Thai, literacy in regional languages is a skill which few possess.

In Chompuu village today there are many examples of ways in which literacy skills are used in daily village life. Newspapers are widely available for public reading in the village shops, many villagers from teenagers through to those in their fifties and sixties, read the newspapers on a regular basis. As well as being informative it is a social occasion which particularly the older men of the community enjoy. Some farmers now keep written records of their business, this may only be in the form of facts and figures scratched onto the side of a building, however it provides them with a solution to the problem of remembering the details of transactions, dates, quantities and prices. The village cooperative and credit union keep written records of their proceedings. Many packaged products are now available in the village, particularly since the co-operative shop opened, and this provides another important daily use of basic literacy.

While the English language cannot yet be seen as a 'basic' literacy skill in Thailand, it is becoming a valuable skill to those planning to go on to high school, or to enter jobs in the city where contact with 'westerners' is increasing rapidly. In many schools English is taught to children in grades five and six. The decision of whether or not to teach English is taken at the district level and is influenced by, among other factors, the availability of teachers capable of teaching the

subject. The advantages and disadvantages of including English in the rural primary curriculum are discussed below.

The manner in which both the Thai and English languages are taught in Chompuu school, remains very 'teacher-oriented' and 'old-fashioned' to the extent that teaching relies heavily on rote reading and memorizing. At every grade in the school the pattern was found to be the same; the teacher held up cards with letters, numbers or words on them which the children read in unison. Words were placed together to form sentences and in some cases the word order was rearranged and the pupils asked to correct it. A class reading session often followed, with one pupil at a time leading the entire class in reading from a text book. Emphasis was on accurate reading rather than expression or interpretation.

When teachers were questioned about this method of teaching they explained that the pressure to cover a large volume of material for the examinations, plus the shortage of advanced learning materials which might be used for group work, restricts the extent to which teachers can experiment with different methods of teaching.

The second subject area is 'Life Experiences' (*sangsoem prasopkaan chiwit*), which was introduced with the 1978 curriculum reform. It includes; health education, history, geography, science, social studies and religion. One might argue that the most significant point about 'Life Experiences', is that through learning subjects such as sociology, history and geography, the child's outlook on life is broadened. In a grade five sociology (*sangkhom*) lesson at Chompuu school, the class acted out a district meeting. Eight pupils constituted the committee (*kamakaan*), one boy acted as the district head (*nai amphoe*) two others were district officials a fourth was the *kamnan* (*tambon* head) and the remainder were village headmen (*phu yai baan*). The desks were arranged in a 'U-shape' and the members of the committee sat around, with the *nai amphoe* at the head and the district officials on either side of him.

The *nai amphoe* directed proceedings discussing several issues of concern the *tambon*. Irrigation of the rice fields was one topic discussed. There was some debate about the proposal to dig a new canal to direct water to the village with the poorest water supply. The class teacher interrupted proceedings to pose various problems which might arise in the imaginary situation. These were then discussed by the committee and questions were put to the *nai amphoe*. The other children in the class stood and listened. After half an hour the teacher asked the *nai amphoe* to close the meeting and the classroom was returned to its usual seating arrangement. The remainder of the lesson consisted of a class discussion of the matters raised at the meeting.

Through learning experiences such as this one, children are provided with an opportunity to discuss, and consider, the way in which their community is run and to understand situations which would normally be beyond their immediate concern. Considered in a more general sense, the study of sociology, history and geography opens up a new world to pupils. In doing so it may be said to broaden their horizons and, in turn, heighten their self-awareness and self-confidence as they form a picture of how their own world relates to the wider one about which they are learning. Parents in Chompuu village commented that children today 'think they know everything', they 'cannot be told'.

Another new subject which has a direct role to play in the pupil's personal and social development is '*chariya sukksaa*' or 'character development'. At the time of the field study it had only been taught 'properly' at Chompuu school for one year. That is, the school had only been in possession of the text books, on which the subject relies heavily, for that period of time. The headmaster explained that it was introduced as part of a curriculum programme aimed at assisting schools with a teacher shortage problem. Chompuu school does not fall into that category, therefore the subject is not taught to every grade but only grades three, five and six. The text books are elaborately set out, enabling minimal teacher supervision, and encouraging individual and group work.

The subject '*Āhariya sūksaa*' is extremely broad (or as one teacher stated, it is a very 'long' subject, '*pen wichaa yao*'). In one *Āhariya* lesson which the headmaster of Chompuu taught, the topics covered during the one hour period included; cleanliness, diet, religion, punctuality and conduct in the classroom. The headmaster spoke to the class, instructing them on first one topic then the next allowing minimal time for questions and discussion. Through the subject '*Āhariya*' children are taught 'good conduct', 'acceptable' forms of behaviour. For example they are taught the correct way to '*wai*' (7) their elders and superiors. It is interesting that the national curriculum has adopted this as a responsibility of the school. The '*wai*' has in fact existed a great deal longer than the modern school system itself. Therefore something that was once taught within the community has become part of the school teaching programme.

This is an example of the modern school encroaching upon the educational role of the family and community. Religion is another example; it is taught at the school as part of the formal curriculum and is also an integral part of the 'hidden' (8) curriculum. Many Chompuu parents now consider the teaching of religion to be the duty of the school. When asked whether they themselves teach their children about religion, most informants were surprised or confused by the question. Parents either responded that children are taught about religion at the school, or they learn by participation, that is they are not 'taught' specifically by anyone.

The fourth subject area is 'work experience' (*ngaan pradi*). The debate relating to this subject group, is that regarding the benefits or disadvantages, of incorporating vocational education into the formal primary curriculum. At Chompuu school, home economics (*ngaan baan* - literally 'work in the home') is taught for one hour a week as is agriculture (*kasaet*). The number of hours a week allocated to these subjects, in Thai primary schools, relates directly to whether or not English language is taught. In Saraphi district a decision was made, about eight years ago, to teach English in the upper two grades of primary school, provided a qualified teacher is available to teach the

subject. In other districts, English is not taught, and a greater number of hours are devoted to both agriculture and skills training. As agriculture is only allocated one hour a week, many of the older children devote a great deal of their spare time to tending crops, watering and weeding. They take great pride in their work, they speak of their plants, their seeds or the animals they tend, in a manner which indicates pride of ownership or of association.

In Chompuu both agriculture and 'skills' are taught from the first grade; the amount of practical work involved increases from one grade to the next as the childrens' skills in working with their hands and their physical strength, for completing such tasks as weeding, preparing and planting the vegetable plot, develop. Both *ngaan baan* on the whole, and agriculture in particular, have an important theoretical element. One *ngaan baan* lesson at Chompuu involved discussion about the home; the teacher asked pupils about the different rooms in the home, what they are used for and what one can expect to find in them. The pupils were then asked to write about their favourite room, several pupils were chosen to read their description to the class. Although the exercise was reminiscent of a western style of teaching, the descriptions and drawings in the text book were of 'typical' Thai homes. Thus the children had the opportunity to discuss a topic about which they all felt a degree of confidence.

The fact that English language and agriculture compete for time in the primary curriculum is interesting. Each represents a different class of knowledge, the importance of which, to the rural child, is highly controversial. On one hand English language represents a new foreign area of knowledge, '*farang*' knowledge, which, even before the rule of King Chulalongkorn, was deemed essential by many young princes and aspiring officials. It was one of the keys to a lucrative and prestigious position in the government service; it is part of a whole body of 'modern' knowledge, which many Thais feel is essential to learn if they are to be successful.

Therefore the English language has a value beyond its purely functional one; to have a knowledge of English signifies a degree of sophistication, of worldliness. Even young Thai children are eager to test out whatever small amount of English they know, if only to shout 'hello' to a passing *farang*. Older villagers who remember some English from school, or have picked some up through working in the tourist industry, are equally proud of their knowledge and eager to display it.

Many parents in Chompuu village, feel that their children should learn some English even at primary school level. The reasons they stated were varied; some said that it was essential for their children to learn English if they were going to go on to high school, where English is taught at a more advanced level. They explained that the children who attend primary school in the town or Chiang Mai city learn English from as early as the third grade. Other informants said that even if the child does not go to high school English is of value; it is being used an increasing amount in the city, town and even the village. Some labels on the food products which are now available locally are written in English, many English words are adopted into central Thai language; furthermore for the child to work in the expanding tourist industry some English is now essential (9).

On the other hand there were villagers who felt that it is not important for their children to learn English language in the primary school. They claim that most children forget the English they learnt when they leave school, particularly if they do not go on to high school. They said that they feel that the language is of little practical use to their children who are most likely to work as 'farmers' after leaving school. The differences in opinion on this question of whether or not English language should be taught in the rural primary school, can be related to the different expectations of parents for their children, whether or not they expect to be able to send their children to high school.

The incorporation of agriculture and manual skills in the primary curriculum demonstrates the governments' concern to reintroduce some more 'traditional', practical areas of knowledge. However, one wonders how great this concern really is, considering the fact that these subjects are often allocated only one or two hours a week in the curriculum. Ideally the curriculum at the fifth and sixth grades could be divided between those who study English and those who study agriculture. The teachers at Chompuu claimed that there were insufficient staff for such a degree of specialisation. At present three teachers share the responsibility of teaching these two upper grades.

The formal curriculum has a great emphasis on preparing children for high school and directing them towards office employment. This is in spite of the fact that few families can afford to send their children to high school and it is becoming increasingly difficult, even for those who do graduate at the secondary level, to acquire 'white-collar' jobs.

*"The paradox of the situation is that the worse the educated unemployment situation gets and the more useless educational certificates become, the stronger grows the pressure for educational facilities."*

(Dore,1976;4)

When the sixth grade children at Chompuu school were asked by a local high school representative, how many expected to be going on to high school, very few responded positively. When questioned about their future employment goals most girls reacted positively to 'housewife' and most boys to 'farmer'. One might argue that children do not have a realistic outlook on their future prospects, that they are restricted by their own limited knowledge of the options available and simply see themselves continuing in the paths of their parents and grandparents. The fact remains that most will follow those paths, becoming engaged in rural occupations, which require infrequent use of the academic skills acquired at the primary school.

## Conclusion.

This chapter has served as an introduction to the recent history of education in Thailand, as well as outlining recent changes to the national curriculum and exploring the persisting link between formal education and public service employment. Many of the issues raised here will be dealt with in the chapters which follow.

Until the late nineteenth century, the only 'formal' education in Thailand took place in the temples and was taught by monks. Formal schooling has long been based on religious standards and beliefs. Today this long standing relationship is demonstrated not only by the teaching of religion in the school, and the practice of religious rituals by teachers and pupils, but also in the reverence with which formal education and formal knowledge is treated. Symbolic of this reverence is the widespread belief among Thai people, that books are 'high' (sacred) objects (10) which should be kept in high places, on tables or shelves. One should not leave them on the floor and should never step over them.

Today one can see ways in which the sacred nature of education, the merit of learning and the virtue of knowledge, is utilised by the school to accord merit to that which occurs within the boundaries of the school. By maintaining a link between education and religion, the school retains a degree of sanctity which ensures that school affairs are largely beyond question. The involvement of monks as teachers (at one stage the only teachers) has had an effect on Thai peoples' perception, and expectations, of the secular teacher (11). The respect which many demonstrate towards the teachers, has its origins in the days when teachers were monks. Although the 'modern' school system has reduced dependence of Thai boys and men on the temple as a place for learning general academic skills, the temple still has an educational role to play in the community. Tambiah (in Goody,1968;94) comments that;

*"the traditional features of the temple as an  
institution inculcating religious education*

*for its novices and monks continues..."*

This remains the case today.

Another explanation why rural villagers treat teachers with a degree of respect and formality which they do not exercise towards one another, is that teachers are civil servants. As such, they occupy positions which demand respect regardless of the behaviour of the individuals who occupy these positions. Thus, the position of teacher is respected in Chompuu village, whereas individual teachers often are not. Furthermore, although respect is demonstrated toward teachers, by villagers, it is not necessarily felt.

The prestige accorded to the civil service offers an explanation for the Thai peoples' desire to educate their children, in formal institutes of education, to the highest level within their means. Although the attraction of a secure and regular salary, with fringe benefits is considerable, the attraction to 'white-collar' employment is not simply a materialistic one. The situation is best understood in terms of the enormous prestige which has long been attributed to the civil service in the eyes of the public. Civil servants are no longer servants of the crown but servants of the people, yet many continue to see them as 'Kings men', thus raising them above the level of the 'ordinary' citizen.

The third issue with which this chapter has dealt, is recent changes to the formal primary school curriculum. Changes to the curriculum since the beginnings of formal schooling have reflected the Thai governments' various concerns with education and expectations of how it can influence the nation as a whole. The Thai government, like other Third World governments, has looked to its school system for a solution to many social problems. Watson (op cit;13§) claims that;

*"During the 1930s education [in Thailand] was seen as an instrument for furthering democracy and developing a sense of Thai nationalism. The latter was extended during the 1940s. Since the Second World War ... education has become a key weapon in helping*

*to build up an independent economy and has  
been used as an instrument in overall social  
and economic planning..."*

A major concern of the government, reflected in its emphasis in educational policy, has been that of meeting employment needs. Initially the curriculum was almost entirely based on literacy and numeracy, due to the great demand for literates to fill government posts. As this objective was achieved, and education continued to expand, the desire to introduce a more practical curriculum in rural areas became of increasing concern. The struggle to encourage Thai youths to take an interest in vocational training, in order to supply the growing demand for skilled and semi-skilled manual labour in rural, as well as urban, areas continues. The orientation of the Thai school system towards higher education, and white-collar employment, is further demonstrated through analysis of the 'hidden' curriculum which is the concern of the following chapter.

NOTES:

(1) *dek wat* still exist in Thailand but their position in the temple has altered. Although they continue to assist the monks with their daily collection of alms and other tasks, they are no longer dependent on the monks for their education.

(2) Wyatt claims that the amount of Pali learnt by monks, and the length of time they persisted in the study of it must have varied greatly (Wyatt,1969;17). Some studied Pali all their lives, some might have specialised in certain parts of the religious text, others may have become professors of Pali. The Khmer script was also learned as a more specialised skill along with some of the religious decorative arts. today religious texts are mostly written in Pali, thus their exact meaning is not understood by 'ordinary' villagers (ie. those who have never attended the monkhood for long enough to learn some of the Pali script). Several of the male teachers at the school claim that they learnt some Pali during their period in the monkhood but had long since forgotten what they learnt.

(3) For a more detailed discussion see Chapter 7 Section 7.2ii

(4) *kharatchakan* literally means 'servants of the royal works' or 'king's men'.

(5) See Appendix 6 (Occupations and Salaries of the Thai Labour Force)

(6) See Appendix 7 (Literacy Rates; Whole Nation)

(7) The *wai* is a traditional Thai greeting and a sign of respect. It is performed by placing one's palms together in an upright position and holding them somewhere between the chest and the top of one's head, depending on the relationship with the recipient and the degree of respect to be demonstrated. At the same time one bows ones' head, or upper body (again the extent of the bow is determined by the relation between the person performing the *wai* and the person receiving it). The most extreme example of the *wai* being performed to emphasise great respect in the village which I witnessed was when it was performed for an ex-teacher (*pho khruu*) by his past pupils (*luuk sit*). They entered his presence stooping in a very low bow with palms held to the forehead. The inferior should always perform the *wai* before the superior who may or may not return it. He/she will perform a less

elaborate *wai* in return. Adults only ever *wai* children to teach them by example and do so only by raising their palms to the chest and without bowing.

(8) The 'hidden' curriculum or the informal curriculum are those elements of the curriculum which are either unintentional or the consequences of which are unrecognised by the pupils, teachers or education officials. See Chapter 3.

(9) The tourist industry is particularly significant in the Chiang Mai areas. Districts such as Saraphi, Hang Dong and Doi Saket have been greatly influenced by the recent increase in tourism because of their proximity to Chiang Mai city.

(10) 'High' objects are regarded as sacred according to Thai philosophy. This influences many aspect of daily Thai behaviour. Pupils at the school are expected to demonstrate respect to their teachers by ducking their heads as they pass the teacher. One ought never to stand when an elder or superior is sitting, rather one should crouch down, squat or sit. 'Low' object, such as shoes ought never to be placed up high, and 'high' objects such as books should never be left on the floor.

(11) For futher discussion of Chompuu villagers' expectations of teachers see Chapter 7.

CHAPTER THREE;      THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM.

3.1 Introduction.

Having outlined the formal curriculum of Thai primary schools in the preceding chapter, consideration can now be given to the aspect of schooling which, according to Illich;

*"constitutes the unalterable framework  
of the system, within which all changes  
in the curriculum are made". (Illich 1972;12)*

That is, the 'hidden' or 'latent' curriculum.

Considerable emphasis has been placed on the hidden curriculum, in school systems throughout the world, as a learning mechanism perhaps even more significant than the formal curriculum itself (1). Bowles (in Simmons 1980) claims that the hidden curriculum is a better indicator of what children learn in schools than the formal curriculum. It can also be seen as an indicator of what teachers 'learn', regarding their role in the school and in the hierarchy of relations within the education system.

While many writers agree on the importance of the hidden curriculum in the 'socialisation' of the child, there is confusion as to the exact meaning of the term. To say that the hidden curriculum represents elements of education which are not actually 'taught', in the sense of being communicated intentionally by a teacher, is too narrow. There are undoubtedly elements of the hidden curriculum which are conveyed intentionally, whether the intention is that of the teacher or of education authorities: as well as other elements which could perhaps be regarded as unintentional, the consequences of which the pupils, teacher and even the government is unaware.

Martin (1976;144) suggests that:

*"A hidden curriculum consists of those learning states of a setting which are either unintended or intended but not openly acknowledged to the learners."*

Thus the impact of the hidden curriculum is 'hidden' from the pupils, although not necessarily from their teachers (2).

The relationship between the 'hidden' and the 'formal' curriculum is also confusing. Nicholson (1968) suggests that the former is a product of, yet distinct from, direct learning. Reid (1986) maintains that this distinction is unclear. He is critical of the use of the term 'hidden curriculum', and of the concept on the whole. Reid claims that the only real value of the term is to draw attention to aspects which are not official or explicit. The term 'hidden' is unfortunate to the extent that it implies that there is a clear-cut dichotomy between that which is hidden and that which is visible. In fact many aspects of the hidden curriculum are closely related to the formal curriculum and may even overlap. For example, there are moral overtones in much of what is taught as part of the formal curriculum. The subject *Chariya*, taught in Thai primary schools, deals specifically with ethics and morality. It may be more accurate to view aspects of the hidden and the formal curriculum on a continuum rather than as two separate aspects of schooling.

Martin (1976) suggests that there are two degrees of 'hiddenness'; aspects which are deliberately hidden, and aspects which remain hidden because those involved are not aware of their consequences. The former suggest conscious inculcation by the government, through the teachers, of matters which are not necessarily included in the formal syllabus. The latter refers to 'accidental' learning which arises through teaching methods, the character of social relations in the school, and other factors which might be considered incidental to the teaching/learning process.

Both raise many interesting questions about the moral and political implications of schooling. The present chapter will deal specifically with those aspects of the hidden curriculum which relate to the wider consideration of the 'socialisation' of the child; his/her adaptation to 'the society' (or the many different societies) which he/she comes into contact with (3). The chapter will be divided into two sections in which the political and social aspects of the hidden curriculum will be considered.

Firstly, discussion of political aspects of the hidden curriculum again raises the question of intention. The question addressed, is whether or not intentional political aspects of the hidden curriculum can be considered a form of indoctrination of the pupil. Secondly, some social aspects of learning in the formal school situation are explored; most importantly the way in which children are 'taught' to adapt to a particular role within the network of social relations in the school. The point made is that, while the hidden curriculum places certain expectations of behaviour on the child, there is a contradiction with regards to the example of behaviour set by the teachers.

### **3.2 The Political Implications of the Hidden Curriculum.**

#### **3.2i Indoctrination and the hidden curriculum.**

That there is bias in the formal school setting is almost beyond dispute. Bias of sex, race, class, religious and political ideologies pervades the formal as well as the informal (or 'hidden') curriculum through the curriculum content and the manner in which it is taught. On the whole this may be regarded as an institutional bias, inherent in the system, as opposed to the personal bias of teachers or pupils. Bias in teaching and indoctrination are not synonymous, yet it is difficult to discern where one ends and the other begins. If a school, community or nation is biased towards (expresses a preference for) a particular political ideology, and therefore incorporates the teaching of that ideology in the national school curriculum to the exclusion of (or at

the expense of) other political ideologies, is that not in fact indoctrination? If one understands indoctrination to mean the deliberate limitation of the learner's awareness of other alternatives, whether they be political, religious or other, this may well be regarded as a form of indoctrination rather than biased teaching.

In Chompuu school two ideologies predominate - nationalism and democracy - these coincide with the dominant national political ideologies. Thus one might propose that the effect of teaching and practising these ideologies is intentional even if the effects are recognised only at the higher levels of administration.

#### Nationalism.

Since the 1932 coup d'etat, considerable impetus has been given to education in Thailand. It has been used as a tool for promoting national solidarity in the face of the increasing economic power of the Chinese in the country, and the threat of communist influence from neighbouring nations (4). The government has stressed the need for a literate populace to participate in electoral politics. In recent years the primary education system has begun to spread into the more remote hill-tribe villages in the north and north-east particularly in 'trouble spots' such as border areas.

One might assume that this has had an important impact on the identity of the hill-tribe people. They have been incorporated into the national education system, which involves the use of central Thai as the teaching medium, the teaching of Buddhism, singing of the national anthem and learning about Thai 'culture' (5). Exactly what effect the school system is having on hill-tribe populations is a complex matter and cannot be considered in detail here. Many of the hill-tribe schools offer only four years of schooling or even fewer; there are problems of poor student attendance, insufficient funds, shortage of teachers and teaching materials; as well as the more fundamental problem of cultural differences and difficulties of communication between the teachers and the villagers.

The most blatant display of nationalism at the Thai primary school each day is the morning parade. Before the lessons begin the children assemble on the parade ground in lines according to their grade and sex; at the front of the parade is a flagpole and a Buddha image. The size and beauty of the Buddha image varies from one school to the next, at some schools it is very elaborate and a source of pride of the school; at Chompuu there is only a small image on the parade ground, a more elaborate one is situated in the meeting hall.

Two pupils, a boy and a girl, raise the national flag as the anthem is sung (6). A boy then leads the Buddhist chants, reading from a book and pausing periodically while the other children repeat. While the raising of the flag is a duty shared by the sexes, leadership and control of the religious chanting remains a male domain. The daily singing of the national anthem and raising of the flag, as well as the performance of Buddhist chants, reinforce the central importance of the triad 'nation-religion-king' in Thai society (7). This is further emphasised by the presence in every classroom of pictures of the Thai flag, Buddha image and the king, above the blackboard or in a similar prominent position. In rural Thai households, pictures of the royal family and Buddha images are very common; the king and other members of the royal family are accorded a great deal of respect.

Hobsbawm (in Hobsbawm & Rangers (eds) 1983) has referred to such rituals and practices as 'invented tradition'. He claims that;

*"'traditions' which appear or claim to be old  
are often quite recent in origin and sometimes  
invented." (ibid;1)*

'Invented tradition' refers to a set of practices which;

*"seek to inculcate certain values and norms  
of behaviour by repetition, which automatically  
implies continuity with the past."(ibid.;1)*

The flag-raising, chanting of Buddhist prayers and singing of the national anthem, at Thai primary schools, are clear examples of this phenomena.

In reality, rather than belonging to the past, they are symptoms of a relatively recent phenomena - the nation state. They are expressions of nationalism, the practice and repetition of which reinforce nationalistic values, without specifically stating what these values are. Another example of 'invented tradition' in the Thai primary school system is the wearing of blue 'Thai farmers shirts' on Fridays. This practice was only introduced within the past decade, yet it has historical connotations as the shirt is a symbol of 'traditional' Thai peasantry, the farmers upon whom the nation greatly depends. Ironically, while the shirts are now worn by Thai school children, teachers and government workers, they are becoming a less common sight in the rural villages where 'western' styles of dress are increasingly apparent.

#### Democracy.

If democracy is taken to mean the involvement of 'the people' in the government of their country, then to some extent the ideals of democracy are reflected in certain aspects of the hidden curriculum at Chompuu school. The pupils elect their own school leaders each year, there is no stipulation that there must be a male and a female leader, the pupils may choose whomever they wish to act as head and deputy head from the upper two grades. These leaders undertake a number of daily responsibilities in the running of the school, as well as some less routine responsibilities, such as representing the pupils at a school meeting, or presenting prizes to pupils after competitions. Their daily duties are mainly those of control and basic leadership - keeping the pupils quiet at the morning assembly, leading the assembly, supervising the flag raising, leading the religious chanting, making announcements to pupils. They are also often requested to run small errands by the teachers during the day.

Thus the practice of electing, voting, and more generally of leadership, is facilitated in the school. The students are not, however, involved in the village education committee which consists of the headmaster, the headmen of each of the villages represented at the school, and a selection of villagers (8). The pupil's duties are limited to the routine affairs of the school rather than its overall management.

An example of the school actively encouraging the participation of pupils in decision making, on however small a scale, was that of a dispute which had to be settled during the fieldwork period. One boy was accused of stealing the shoes of another pupil. The boy whose shoes were stolen, and his older brother (who was the deputy head pupil at that time) felt certain that they knew who had committed the crime. Their difficulty was in proving that he was guilty; initially they approached the boy directly but he denied stealing the shoes. After some time he confessed that he had the shoes but said that one of the teachers had given them to him. The older brother then asked the teacher concerned who knew nothing of the shoes; finally he went to the headmaster.

After about a week of negotiations a meeting was held in one of the classrooms during the lunch period. The headmaster and five other teachers attended, the three boys concerned plus about ten other pupils from their respective classes were also present. One of the male teachers led the proceedings, asking each child in turn to tell his story. The boy who had stolen the shoes confessed that he had taken them because he did not have any shoes of his own. Having concluded that the boy was guilty, the teacher then asked all the pupils present to decide what should be done. The students made several suggestions, eventually it was decided that he should do some extra work in the school vegetable garden after school for a week. The shoes were returned and the offender appeared very ashamed and embarrassed.

Another example of the promotion of democratic practice in the school is the co-operative shop, which is a national government project. In a Ministry of Education magazine for teachers published in 1986, it was stated that the activities of the co-operative in the school were designed to give the children a basis on which to build the foundation for engaging in co-operative activities at a higher level. It was designed to facilitate the idea of the co-operative in the village. Members contribute funds which are used to purchase goods, the teachers and pupils then organise the accounts, and members have the

authority to decide which goods to stock. The Ministry of Education claims that the co-operative shop is a means of providing pupils with the knowledge of how to be frugal and to save money.

At Chompuu school a shop was set up in the library about two years ago. A teacher was nominated by the headmaster to organise the shop, to purchase supplies and supervise the pupils in the daily running of the shop. The teacher claims that the main reason he was chosen was because he owns a small van and also makes frequent trips to Chiang Mai, therefore he is able to purchase the supplies from the co-operative shop in the city (9). The school shop was first stocked using the membership money of 10 baht a head. It has since been self supporting, expanding as the number of members has increased, members include teachers, pupils and parents. At the end of the academic year each member is given a few baht profit as a form of interest; when they give up their membership, their 10 baht is also returned.

The shop is open to everyone, it is mostly used by the pupils themselves but some parents do go to the school to use it and teachers also make occasional purchases. Indeed the shop provides the villagers with their only reason (other than delivering and collecting pupils from school) of visiting the school on a regular and informal basis. During the fieldwork period village women were often seen visiting the school to make purchases from the shop, before or after school, or during the lunch break. This provided an opportunity for seeing the school in its 'natural' state rather than visiting it on a specific day for a meeting or to talk to the teachers.

The pupils run the shop under the supervision of the teacher responsible, there is a committee of five pupils from the upper two grades who are assisted by some younger pupils. A roster is drawn up to determine whose duty it is to supervise the opening, running and closing of the shop each day. It is open before school, during the lunch break and after school and stocks not only school equipment such as pens, exercise books and rulers, but also some household items and tinned or dried food. Through the co-operative shop the pupils learn

about buying and selling, bookkeeping and so on. Also they are learning how to cooperate with one another, how to delegate and accept responsibility. Whether or not the shop provides the basis on which children can engage in cooperative activities at a higher level is unclear, however it no doubt increases their understanding of the principles of the cooperative.

There are several ways, therefore, in which the ideals of 'democracy' are practiced in the school. Yet one wonders whether these are purely superficial. In reality, control of the school is highly bureaucratic and neither parents, nor pupils (nor indeed individual teachers), have any real control over it. Furthermore the ideology of democracy, stressed by the school in some respects, does not pervade the whole life of the school. My observations of lessons in Chompuu school, indicated that teachers rarely moved away from the 'teachers speaks, pupils listen' cliché of formal classroom. Some efforts to vary lessons with group work were made but the teacher did not relinquish his/her position as the 'dictator' of the classroom. General class 'discussions', if they could indeed be called discussions, consisted of the teacher talking about a topic and asking pupils occasionally asking pupils whether what he/she said was right or wrong. Or pausing while pupils gave an answer to a leading question. The idea that there is one correct answer to a question, and thus little room for discussion or debate, is fostered in this manner.

### 3.3 Social Aspects of the Hidden Curriculum.

Chompuu village children spend more time at school now than they did twenty or more years ago; punctuality and attendance are more strictly enforced and adhered to. Regular attendance is easier because transport is greatly improved, most children have bicycles or are taken to school by their parents on bicycles or motorcycles. Six years of primary school is now compulsory and all but one school in Saraphi district offers six years whereas in the past only four years were compulsory. Older

villagers say that forty years ago the school day began at nine in the morning and finished at two in the afternoon; today it begins at half past eight and the younger grades finish at three, while the upper two grades finish at half past three. Government primary schools have a five day week, from Monday to Friday.

In addition there are now three 'nurseries' or 'kindergartens' (*anubaan*) in the village, none of which existed twenty years ago (10). The oldest is on the grounds of the health care centre and was established by the government. Parents claim that in the past children did not learn to read or write at this nursery. Since some teaching has been introduced the fees have increased. Approximately fourteen years ago a woman opened a private nursery at the other end of the village. It is a day-care or child-minding centre, rather than a 'pre-school' in the educational sense of the word. The fees are low and most of the children who attend this nursery are from labouring families.

Thirdly there is an *anubaan* at the village school which opened in 1985. The children wear uniforms and participate in the daily routine of the school. Parents must pay fees which are lower than at the health centre nursery. The children are taught to read and write as well as some simple arithmetic. Equipment is better, and standards of teaching are higher, than at the other two nurseries.

Parents now have a choice of three pre-school centres in the village which their children can attend. According to informants approximately seventy to eighty percent of children between the ages of three and six attend one of these centres (11). Other than at the school nursery children may enter as young as two years old. Thus the burden of caring for young children has to some extent been shifted away from the family. Older children are under less pressure to care for younger siblings than they may have been in the past. The two nurseries outside the school cater specifically for working families, remaining open from 7am until as late as 7pm. The potential number of years a child attends school or a 'school-like' institution has been extended to ten (six years of compulsory primary schooling and a possible four years of

kindergarten). Many now begin the 'schooling-process' at the age of two years rather than eight or nine years as their grandparents did.

On the whole more Chompuu village children are spending more time at school than ever before. Therefore it is becoming increasingly important to understand what goes on in the classroom and the effect it is having on the child. Jackson (1968) who was the first to coin the phrase 'hidden curriculum', said that one of the main lessons the hidden curriculum 'teaches' the child is how to behave as part of a crowd. He explained that the school is unique in the way it draws together a group of individuals for so many hours each week, to work under such close conditions. Conformity among pupils is of paramount importance in the school; non-conformity, speaking 'out of turn', leaving one's seat and so on, is punished by the teachers.

In Thailand as the student-teacher ratio has improved, the problems of overcrowded classrooms has decreased; the situation in which one teacher teaches two grades together is now less common than in the past. Yet even in Chompuu school, where eight teachers are responsible for six classes, two of the classes have more than thirty pupils. This, added to the size of the classrooms, means that it is almost impossible for the teacher to arrange the classroom other than with all the pupils desks in rows facing the front of the room. There is not enough space to group the tables or arrange them in any other way (12). As mentioned above, this use of space dictates a unidirectional flow of information from the teacher to pupils and pupils to the teacher.

As Jackson points out, although the pupils are in constant close contact with one another, teaching methods and classroom rules often deny interaction and encourage isolation during learning. Pupils are told not to talk while completing an exercise, they are told not to look at their classmates work but to 'think for themselves'. 'Talking' is largely the privilege of the teacher in the classroom, pupils may talk or discuss only when given permission to do so.

This highly 'teacher-focused' method of teaching practised in Thai schools, no doubt has its origins in the days when insufficient materials and lack of experience on the part of the teachers, meant that group work would have been difficult to organise. Chompuu villagers relate that thirty or so years ago, children had slates and chalk but no exercise, or text, books. Therefore all teaching would have been done from the teacher's manual, via the blackboard.

One might argue that discussions can easily take place without teaching/learning materials. However the insecurity of teachers in their knowledge of 'new' subjects, and their lack of training in innovative teaching methods, means that they are unlikely to adopt more 'pupil-focussed' methods of teaching without the specific guideline of textbooks or teachers' handbooks, and the 'props' of special teaching equipment. For example one teacher, who teaches science as part of the 'Life Experiences' subject group, claimed that he cannot divide the class into groups to try out various experiments because, generally speaking, there is only one set of equipment. Therefore he demonstrates while the pupils watch. Recent attempts to instigate changes in teaching methods have begun to take place at the national level. Teachers' handbooks today emphasise pupil-focussed teaching methods; encouraging children to work from the textbooks either alone, in pairs or small groups. The textbook which accompanies the subject 'Chariya' (see Chapter Two) is largely based around this teaching method.

In 1968, Tambiah wrote of Thailand that;

*"judging from educational techniques in the village today, the method has not changed appreciably; children collectively read out loud in unison and memorize."*

(Tambiah in Goody,1968;95)

However, Champaton claims that since 1978 there have been changes in the method of teaching, pupils are encouraged to acquire knowledge through self-study and self-involvement.

*"Teaching-learning activities have become  
more pupil-focused than teacher-focused."*

(Champton,1984;17)

This may be the case in the more 'progressive' urban school but certainly in schools such as Chompuu the change has been very slow.

According to Jackson's analysis 'evaluation' is a second important factor of the hidden curriculum. Judgement and evaluation relate closely to the way in which the child adapts to being part of a crowd and to the formation of his/her personal identity. Before a child begins school he/she has already been subjected to the judgements of others; the praise or criticism of close friends or parents. On entering school such judgement is also passed by teachers, and not only by friends but other peers.

At Chompuu school there are certain ideals of behaviour against which pupils are constantly assessed. Discussions with teachers, and observation of their behaviour toward various pupils, indicated that they see the helpful, bright, cooperative child as the one conforming most closely to the 'ideal' pupil. The pupils who fitted this description were often singled out by teachers to run errands, or do other special chores. Conversely the duller, less cooperative children tended to receive less attention from the teachers, particularly outside the classroom.

It is the system of evaluation in the classroom and the school which teaches the child how to act in a socially and morally acceptable manner (at least a manner which is acceptable within the school). The system of evaluation does not work the same way for all pupils but varies according to the teachers' expectations of individual pupils. At Chompuu school there was one boy in the fifth grade who had repeated several years of school because he had failed the end of year examinations. Consequently he was much older and larger than the other children in his class. He was considered a bit 'stupid' by the teachers and, although they were never rude about him, they explained that his 'head is no good' (*hua mai dii*). Their expectations of his performance

in the classroom and outside it were much lower than for other pupils. He appeared to be aware of the fact that he could 'get away with' more than his classmates and tended to take advantage of this, to do as little work as possible and to play the fool and thus amuse his classmates.

Through the teacher's evaluation of pupils' behaviour in the classroom, and the employment of various mechanisms of reward and punishment (See Chapter Six), the child is encouraged to obey the school rules and the many unwritten rules of the classroom. Evaluation and judgement relate closely to the concept of authority, particularly the authority of the teacher over his/her pupils. As Jackson points out;

*"typically in most classrooms students  
come to know when things are right or wrong,  
good or bad, pretty or ugly, largely as a  
result of what the teacher tells them."*

(Jackson, 1968;20)

Perhaps more significantly, they come to learn when they are right or wrong, when their behaviour is considered good or bad. The judgement of one's peers can be equally effective in shaping behaviour (13).

The teacher's evaluation of a pupil's personal qualities, and that of the pupils' classmates, do not necessarily coincide. While the teacher's evaluation is likely to relate to conformity - helpfulness, cooperation, passivity; that of the classmates may be concerned with non-conformity - sense of humour, cheekiness, daring. The pupil learns how to deal with both sources of evaluation, each pupil reacts in a different way and thus fulfils a different role in the classroom. The very cooperative helpful pupil is often chosen by the teacher to run errands, yet may be scorned by his/her peers. At the other end of the behavioural spectrum is the rebellious pupil who challenges the teacher, to the extent that he/she may lose the approval of the teacher, yet amuses, and therefore gains the approval of, his/her classmates.

Pupils learn social and moral behaviour through the example of their teachers as well as through the judgements which teachers and peers impose upon them. To the pupil, the teacher by virtue of his/her position, stands as the exemplary of the moral ideal. Durkheim (1956;88) claims that;

*"moral authority is the dominant quality of the educator."*

The teacher is looked up to by his/her pupils and should, in theory, set an example of correct behaviour. This places a great deal of pressure on the rural school teacher particularly if he/she is a local, whose behaviour outside the school is subject to the evaluation of pupils and their parents. In the case of Chompuu school the teachers mix little with villagers outside the school, yet many villagers have formed firm impressions of the teachers' moral integrity. It was clear that the informants had high expectations of the teachers' behaviour at all times. While certain behaviour (discourtesy, aggressiveness, drunkenness) might be accepted in other people it would not be accepted in a teacher.

While the teacher's behaviour outside the school is open to the criticisms of the community, within the school his/her behaviour is largely hidden from view. The school serves as a sanctuary for the teacher. In the school, and more particularly in the classroom, the teacher sets his/her own standard of behaviour within the general framework of school rules and routine. This standard serves as an example for his/her pupils, an example which does not always reflect the teacher's expectations of individual pupils. One such case is that of 'time-keeping' or punctuality. In the school, unlike the village, time is of great significance; the school day is divided into many units of time, punctuated by bells or breaks. Schools have a 'modern', industrial concept of time where timetabling symbolises the finite, ordered, scarce resource of time. For the majority of pupils, school time is accepted without question, their personal timetables are subordinated to the school standard period, whether it is a lesson, day, week or term. (Ball et al, in Delamont, 1984).

In the Thai village, on the other hand, time is fluid. Even though more villagers have clocks, and wear watches, than in the past, the majority have a very flexible concept of time. Most villagers are self-employed or work on a labour exchange basis, man hours are counted in days, mornings and afternoons, rather than the more rigid time periods of minutes and hours. Although an increasing number of villagers are now working as wage labourers for whom time-keeping is essential, these remain the minority (14). Meetings are arranged for a particular time but the time is not strictly adhered to. Chompoo teachers and villagers joke about the Thai villager's lack of punctuality in attending meetings and appointments. Some compared this flexibility with the strict punctuality adhered to by 'westerners'.

While punctuality, on the whole, is an important aspect of the daily school routine, there is a dual system of acceptable time-keeping standards. Pupils are expected to be on time for class, whereas teachers are not. In the school time is the property of the teacher, the teacher controls time. This reflects the concept that the school is a vital institution in the process of social reproduction of the hierarchical division of labour in capitalist societies. This principle of 'correspondence' between the social relations of the school and of the work place, is central to Bowles & Gintis' (1976) theory of the role of the school in social reproduction. According to Bowles & Gintis, who wrote of the school system in capitalist America, the pattern of dominance and subordination inherent in the hierarchy of labour relations in capitalist society, are reinforced within the school system (see discussion in Chapter Four).

Thus the teachers' monopoly on school time, and the dual standards of time-keeping, punctuality, and general behaviour of teachers and pupils in Chompoo school, reflect unequal relations in the work place. Similarly, relations between the teachers and their headmaster, the headmaster and the education authorities (See Chapter Six), reflect this inequality and legitimate it in the eyes of the pupil.

Further parallels can be drawn between the school and work place in the teachers' emphasis on the efficient use of lesson time, and their appeal to pupils not to 'waste time', to hurry up with their work and so on. In Chompuu school, the teachers' attitudes towards lesson time is greatly influenced by the pressure of examinations. There is a tendency to stress only the specific curricula content which will be assessed in the examination at the end of the year. End results are stressed at the expense of discussion, questioning or challenging of the knowledge which is being 'taught'.

This emphasis on the appropriate use of various segments of time, was evident in comments which Chompuu teachers made regarding the 'Skills Training' subject. The teacher of *ngaan baan* ('home economics') complained;

*"there is never enough time to finish the  
ngaan baan tasks, time is wasted (sia welaa)  
at the beginning and the end of each lesson,  
preparing and clearing up."*

Similarly the headmaster commented;

*"we used to teach cooking at the school  
but we stopped because it wasted too much time.  
It began to take up the time of other lessons  
and teachers complained."*

The only time which might be regarded as that of the pupils, is during breaks and after school; even then the teacher demonstrates his/her command by the fact that he/she is able to detain pupils in their own time as punishment for misbehaviour or 'wasting time'. This reflects the teachers' position of authority over the pupils, school rules are less binding for them than for the pupils. As a result, teachers do not necessarily set a good example for the pupils to follow, children come to accept that the rules which apply to them do not necessarily apply to those in higher positions of authority. Whether this is to be seen as a conscious aspect of the hidden curriculum, or as a contradiction within it, is uncertain. The answer lies in the intention, or lack of

intention, on the part of the education authorities to create this dual standard of behaviour.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has considered several elements of the 'hidden' curriculum identified at Chompuu school. These have been divided into the two broad categories of 'political' and 'social' aspects. In many respects all aspects of the hidden curriculum are 'social' to the extent that they influence the reproduction of social norms of behaviour and personal relationships beyond the school. This is a matter which is discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

It has been argued here that the school, as well as teaching a 'formal' curriculum, inculcates a great deal in the child which is 'hidden' or latent, to the extent that the child (and possibly his/her parents) is unaware of its impact. Ideals of nationalism and democracy, which are central to the dominant Thai ideology, are inculcated in the child through the daily practice of various rituals such as the raising of the flag and singing the national anthem; as well as through the formal curriculum which teaches the children about their national history and geography, and emphasises the ideals of democracy.

Yet a contradiction arises in the classroom where the 'ideals' of democracy are 'taught' yet not necessarily practiced. The examples of the running of the cooperative shop, and the involvement of pupils in the settlement of their own disputes, have been cited as instances of practicing democracy in the school. Yet the teacher maintains his/her dictatorial position in the classroom where 'freedom of speech' and 'freedom of expression' are largely denied the child who, as a member of a group, is encouraged to conform to the ideals of that group. Emphasis on control of group and individual behaviour stifles individuality. The emphasis of the school system on examinations also has this effect, by the implication that there are right and wrong, good and bad, true and untrue answers to particular questions.

The emphasis on conformity, suppression of individuality of thought, expression and behaviour, is a central feature of the hidden curriculum in Chompoo school. The *doen dom klong* (slow meditative walk around the parade ground) which sometimes follows the morning parade, stresses the importance of quiet controlled behaviour and reflection. In some schools, children sit on the floor outside their classrooms for several minutes after the parade, during that time they are expected to 'meditate'. Through such rituals and the daily emphasis on what is 'good' or 'proper' behaviour, a moral code of behaviour is instilled in the children. Again a form of control is being exercised, in this case the internal, self-imposed control of behaviour.

Many of the 'social' aspects of the hidden curriculum will be discussed in the following chapter, in particular the way in which children learn, through the school, how to relate to peers and to people in positions of authority. The way in which the teacher communicates with his/her pupils (15), the extent to which he/she divides attention among the pupils, the ways in which praise and criticism are issued, may all influence the child's acceptance of, and ability to deal with, authority. The environment of the classroom in which children become part of a group and must learn to frequently 'wait their turn', to listen to others, to speak only when permitted to do so may also have significant effects on the initiation of the child into adult 'society'.

According to Reid (op.cit;61);

*"the content of a lesson, which can be seen as an information exchange, is quite secondary to the importance of a lesson in structuring behaviour and socializing children to function in a social system. In other words, its purpose is more to socialize than to educate."*

The classroom is an environment in which language is of critical importance. Thus, the way in which it is used to balance power and maintain control, as well as to convey thoughts and transmit information, is vital to the development of the child's communication skills.

It has been argued here that through the example of teachers, which often demonstrates that there is one set of rules for pupils and one for their superiors (teachers); and through the system of evaluation and judgement utilised within the school, the child comes to 'learn' what to expect of future social (and work) relations and of his/her position in the wider social network.

NOTES;

(1) Jackson 1968; Illich 1972; Herkovits in Ianni & Storey 1975; Dore 1976; Apple 1979.

(2) see G.Jones "The Hidden Curriculum." (198-?) (an unpublished paper held at the Institute of Education library, London University, for which no exact date is known), also Dreeben (1976;112)

(3) For further discussion see Chapter 4.

(4) See also Chapter 2, section 2.2.

(5) Whether they are simply learning about Thai culture and Thai ideology, or, more controversially, are having that dominant culture and ideology impressed upon them is a contentious issue.

(6) Several children expressed surprise when I showed them a photograph of flag raising at a school in Australia, in which two boys (rather than a boy and a girl) were raising the flag.

(7) See Chapter 5, section 5.2 Authority on a National Scale: the Monarchy and the Bureaucracy.

(8) The village education committee is discussed in Chapter 7.

(9) Most of the teachers at Chompuu school ride motorcycles, though they might own a car or van they do not usually use them for work.

(10) There was, however, a privately run nursery in one of the villager's homes which closed down more than a decade ago.

(11) Three Chompuu children, at the time of the field work, attended kindergartens outside the village, one in Chiang Mai and two in Saraphi town.

(12) The use of time and space in the school to instill certain forms of behaviour in the children is discussed in Chapter 6.

(13) See P.Willis (1971) "Learning to Labour. How working class kids get working class jobs." for discussion of peer group influence in the classroom.

(14) See Chapter 1. Section 1.2ii "The employment structure of the village.

(15) See Chapter 6 Section 6.3i 'Speech and behaviour codes.'

CHAPTER FOUR: SCHOOL, SOCIETY AND CULTURE.

4.1 Introduction.

The significance of the hidden curriculum (and indeed the formal curriculum) cannot be understood by examination within the context of the school alone. It is intricately related to the complex question of the role of the school in the wider 'society'. It is this role which will be discussed in the context of the present chapter. Exactly what the role involves depends on one's interpretation of the term 'education'. If one accepts that education today has greater implications than simply the acquisition of knowledge, one must ask what these implications are. The discussion of the hidden curriculum above, has indicated that much of what the school does is to inculcate 'appropriate' beliefs, and patterns of behaviour, in the child. That is, beliefs and behaviour patterns which are considered appropriate to the level of society which the school-leaver is expected to enter. Or, as many would argue, those considered appropriate by the dominant powers of society.

It was mentioned above, that Thai government schools demonstrate a concern to impress upon the child, the importance of the political ideologies of nationalism and democracy, religious beliefs, social and moral forms of behaviour, and to develop a certain kind of individual. Although the school is not an autonomous institution, it has tremendous power to influence the values and beliefs of the children who attend it. A power equalled only by that of the family. The question of whether the influence of the school is greater than that of the family in Thailand today is a difficult one to answer. The number of years of schooling attended may be an important determining factor, but perhaps the most significant point, is the extent to which the school openly challenges traditional beliefs held by the family. One might argue, that as long as the school presents values and beliefs in a manner which at least appears to conform with those of the family, its success in

influencing the child may be greater than if it presents open opposition.

The role of the primary school in Thailand has altered as secondary, and tertiary, education has become more widely available. In the past, very few children, particularly in rural areas, completed more than the compulsory four years of primary schooling. Today an increasing number are going on to high school, the emphasis of the primary school has become that of preparing children for further studies. The primary school has a dual role to play, preparing some children for high school and others for their role in the community. With limited resources and the inflexibility of a national curriculum this dual role is exceedingly difficult to perform.

In the first section of the chapter it is suggested that there are many different forms of knowledge, and that those which might be labelled 'modern' are privileged by the formal school system. That is, those forms of knowledge, and ideals of behaviour which are considered appropriate to the 'modern' urban sector of society. 'Traditional' forms of knowledge, on the other hand, are either ignored or elements of them are selected for reinterpretation in the school. In this section the complexity of the terms 'modern' and 'traditional', and the limitations in the use of these concepts, is addressed.

Secondly, we look at the dual theories of 'socialisation' and 'social reproduction' in relation to the role of the school in Thai 'society'. Both theories are explained briefly and considered in the context of Thai education. Schooling is seen as a form of 'initiation' into society, the difficulty being in determining the extent to which it is able to shape and alter social forces, or is itself shaped by them. Thirdly, the influence (or lack of influence) of schooling on the social mobility of the individual is discussed. We query the validity of the concept of the school as an enhancer of social 'equality', and then turn to the 'relevance' of schooling to the future opportunities of rural Thai youth.

#### 4.2 The Discrimination of 'Knowledge' in the School.

The Thai national school curriculum is made up of certain areas of knowledge deemed to be important by the Ministry of Education. One must recognise that the knowledge which the national school curriculum incorporates, does not exhaust the nations' knowledge, but is chosen from within that body of knowledge. Therefore, to know what is left out of the curriculum, is as significant as knowing what has been included. Both indicate the priorities of the government and the potential influence on the pupil. The knowledge which schools transmit is culturally and socially determined, it is chosen by those in positions of political and social power (government ministers and their senior officials) according to the social, cultural, political and economic 'needs' of the nation. As Pelz (1979) argues, knowledge is defined by its relation to the dominant rationality, which determines what is, and what is not, worth knowing.

According to Wax;

*"the process of formal schooling is,  
to a large degree, the struggle to substitute  
one kind of tradition (or knowledge) for  
another within the mind of the child."*

(Wax in Wax et al 1971;15)

In Thailand this is demonstrated by the omission of many 'traditional', or 'indigenous', forms of knowledge in the formal primary curriculum, and the emphasis on 'modern' forms of knowledge.

The parallel between 'traditional' and 'modern' knowledge must be made tentatively, as the concepts are themselves highly complex. In the context of Thai education it might be more accurate to describe certain aspects of the formal and 'hidden' curriculum as elements of 'selective tradition'. Williams (in Castell, Luke & Luke, 1989;58), writing about 'Hegemony and the Selective Tradition', explains that the view of tradition as an;

*"invert, historicized segment of a social structure: tradition as the surviving past"*

is a very weak version of tradition. He argues that what is often referred to as 'tradition' is better understood as;

*"selective tradition": an intentionally selective version of a shaping past and a pre-shaped present."*(*ibid.*;58)

Thus tradition is a dynamic force, it is not simply a remnant of the past but has an important role to play in the changing climate of the present. In Thailand, certain elements of 'traditional' knowledge are taught at the school, while others are not. These are deliberately selected by the Ministry of Education.

'Traditional' rural Thai knowledge includes; knowledge about folk medicine, traditional farming methods, crops, weather and folklore. Ambitious youths today may well be losing interest in these forms of knowledge which, to many, have come to symbolise stagnation, as opposed to 'modern' knowledge which symbolises progress and success. That is not to say that there is a single body of indigenous knowledge, for indeed there are many, and these are not without their own hierarchies and power relations. Hanks (1958) reports that traditionally there were many forms of indigenous knowledge in Thailand, yet only some were dignified with the term 'education' (*sukksaa*), which set them above the rest.

One might argue that some forms of traditional knowledge are no longer 'relevant' to the community, or beneficial to its development. Traditional farming methods, for example, are replaced with more recent ones, as machinery and new crops come into use. Traditional knowledge about medicines and spiritual healing are perhaps being rendered less significant to the community as a whole, as an understanding of, and trust in, modern medicine is strengthened. Yet some aspects of 'traditional' knowledge may be of considerable value to children growing up in the present period of change. Irvine (*op. cit.*;319) believes that in northern Thai villages, spirit medium;

*"...consultations are frequently related to*

*the recently internalised value of individual material achievement and to the needs, stresses and frustrations which this value creates."*

Thus 'traditional' forms of knowledge may have a significant role in helping young people to adjust to the changing world in which they are growing up. Language may offer the child a key to his/her cultural heritage while fostering respect for, and interest in, the history of his/her village and country.

There are many regional languages in Thailand. Some people may argue that these languages have become 'dialects' in recent years, as they have incorporated an increasing amount of the central Thai language (1). In northern Thailand today, two 'languages' exist side by side. In rural areas the northern Thai language (*kham muang* (NT)) prevails, it is the common everyday speech of rural villagers; yet central Thai (*kham thai* (NT)) has long been the medium of instruction in the schools, and the language of government officials and 'the educated' in general. Most villagers now know at least a little central Thai, though they may seldom use it. Knowledge of *kham thai* has been spread not only through the formal school but also the media - television, radios and newspapers - access to which is now widely available even in rural areas.

Children are taught *kham thai* in the school, they learn to read and write the central Thai alphabet and they use the spoken language as the medium of communication within the classroom. Even though northern Thai is a written, as well as spoken, language, it is not taught in the school. In its written form it is rapidly becoming obsolete, few people today are literate in the northern Thai script, those who are, are generally monks or ex-monks who learnt the language through religious study at the temple.

*Kham muang* is a form of traditional knowledge which has been omitted from the school timetable. Its absence from the curriculum indicates a number of points. Firstly, modern Thai governments, in their efforts to promote a sense of national unity among their citizens, have decided to

omit regional languages from the school curriculum, choosing instead to extend the use of the central Thai language. Secondly, by denying the importance of 'traditional local knowledge' such as local language, the government demonstrates a lack of concern for the preservation of local history, and an interest in 'progress', 'modernity' and the future; all of which are represented by the use of the central Thai language.

The '*wai*' (2), a 'traditional' form of greeting and sign of respect, is taught at the school both in lessons and outside them. Teachers demonstrate to their pupils how to perform the *wai* correctly from an early age, they are expected to *wai* teachers under certain circumstances (3) and thus practice a form of behaviour which has long been an important manner of demonstrating respect. The '*wai*' in the form taught in schools today is not, however, traditional to northern Thailand. Therefore its teaching further reflects the government's desire to promote national unity and uniformity through its schools.

It is interesting to consider why the Ministry of Education has chosen to include certain elements of 'traditional' knowledge in the curriculum, while ignoring others. This indicates, as mentioned above, that the state deliberately selects certain elements of traditional 'culture' and reinterprets them in the context of the school as "*the national tradition, the significant past.*" (Turton, in Turton & Tanabe, 1984; 49 : italics in original) It could be postulated that these elements coincide with the concepts of 'deference and demeanor' (Goffman 1967) which reinforce the norms of inequality in capitalist society (see discussion below). On the other hand, these traditional forms of behaviour date back to the *sakdina* period of Thai history and one might argue that they are remnants of that previous era, rather than being significant features of 'modern' Thai capitalist society. Perhaps it is not so much the elements of traditional knowledge which are incorporated in the curriculum that is important, but those which are omitted.

Traditional medicine and folklore are not taught in the school, nor, to this writer's knowledge, are they discussed in any detail as part of the curriculum. Rather they are taught in the traditional manner within the community, being passed down from one generation to the next. Again, 'traditional' medicine is not a single body of knowledge but has its own divisions. The Buddhist branch of knowledge is distinguished from, and widely regarded as superior to, that connected with spirit cults and knowledge (Irvine,op.cit;54). Irvine argues that spirit mediumship can be further classified as 'traditional' and 'modern', although he stresses that this concept is his own and he uses the distinction to simply mark the extreme poles on the continuum of various forms of spirit mediumship.

In Chompuu village there are a number of spirit doctors and specialists in the use of folk medicine. These are mostly older men, the exception being a woman in her late thirties who is a spirit medium. Although the traditional method of teaching these skills has perpetuated to this day, it may well break down, as the younger generation becomes increasingly alienated from the beliefs of their ancestors. Traditional healing may become discredited by the young as the predominance of modern scientific knowledge is stressed through the school system.

The school alone does not discredit such elements of 'traditional' knowledge and culture. Turton (op.cit) points out that it is possible to discern the people's own 'selective tradition' in religious and magical texts, proverbs and sayings, folk opera and so on. Some are forgotten, others reinterpreted. Thus 'the people', the villagers themselves, continue a process of selective tradition which is influenced, among other things, by the learning process incorporated in formal schooling. Within the next generation it will be interesting to see whether such ancient knowledge is again perpetuated in the younger generation, or passes away with the older.

The manner in which various types of knowledge, and ways of life, are ranked and graded, promoted or marginalised by the school system, indicates that the role of the school in 'society' goes beyond simply imparting knowledge on its pupils.

#### 4.3 Socialisation and Social Reproduction. The role of the school.

##### 4.3.1 Credentialism and the 'function' of schooling.

The school teacher does not simply impart his/her knowledge on the pupils for the sake of satisfying their inherent desire for knowledge. He/she has specific objectives in mind, perhaps the most apparent being to complete the curriculum within a given period of time, in order to prepare the children for examinations. Not only in Thailand, but throughout the Third World, there is a tendency for the preparation for exams to become the overriding consideration in the teaching-learning experience. Through the testing and grading system of the school, students learn to respond to the external rewards of grades, rather than knowledge for its own sake.

Khonkhai relates that in Thailand;

*"it [was] a long-established tradition  
that once the examinations were over,  
so was the business of education. The aim  
of education was the passing of exams.  
When the exams were held, half the job was  
done, and when the results had arrived it  
was complete. The responsibility of  
learning was over for the pupils,  
and for the teachers, that of teaching."  
(Khonkhai,1982;191)*

At Chompuu school examinations are held at the end of each term; the child must pass these examinations in order to move on to the next grade at the end of the year, and eventually to graduate from primary school. The 'success' of both pupil and teacher is judged most simply (though not most accurately) by the results of these examinations. Indeed the image of the whole school in the eyes of the district officials, the local high school and the community is dependent on these pass-fail rates.

In this manner the school operates as an agent of social control, by controlling pupils' occupational, or higher educational, fate (Bernstein 1973). Bernstein suggests that the school subordinates pupils' needs to the requirement of the division of labour, through the examination system. This system legitimates certain areas of 'knowledge' as well as conditioning pupils' future occupational and educational expectations. Furthermore the exam system legitimates inequalities in later life by;

*"...making social hierarchies and the reproduction of these hierarchies appear to be based upon the hierarchy of 'gifts', merits, or skills established and ratified by its sanctions, or, in a word, by converting social hierarchies into academic hierarchies."*

(Bourdieu in Brown,1973;84)

The implication of a school system which is oriented towards passing examinations is that education must have a specific function in society; it is not enough that it should simply aim at broadening an individuals' knowledge. This, at least, is the belief held widely by educationalists, sociologists and philosophers of education alike. Not only is the school dependent on 'society', but the school has a significant part to play in the social order itself. The emphasis on the functional aspect of schooling becomes greater in the case of Third World countries in which only the elite can afford the 'luxury' of education for its own sake.

#### 4.3ii Schooling as initiation.

The role of the school in preparing the child for adult life in his/her culture and society (or cultures and societies), has been referred to by many academics as 'socialisation' or 'enculturation' (4). Others have discussed this role in terms of 'social reproduction' (5). The theories of socialisation and social reproduction are by no means mutually exclusive, in fact, to a certain extent, the latter attempts to incorporate the former.

Both enculturation and socialisation have a similar long-term goal; to prepare the child for adult life by teaching him/her the skills, and developing the understanding, necessary to make sense of the world in which he/she lives. In this sense one might view education, or the learning process, as a form of initiation rather than enlightenment.

*"Education, from the point of view of those being educated, often appears as something which has to be gone through, in order that some desirable outcome will ensue."*

(Peters, in Archambault, 1965; 91)

At school, the child goes through a process of learning, which equips him/her with the various cognitive skills which develop his/her ability to communicate and to reason. Through the hidden curriculum he/she learns how to behave towards various individuals, those in positions of authority as well as his/her peers. At the same time, the child's expectations of life are formed.

The concepts of enculturation and socialisation are confusing in that, as has been indicated above, it is misleading to speak of one 'culture' and one 'society'. These theories are concerned with the 'dominant culture' and the 'dominant society' ; the culture and society of the powerful, the educated, the wealthy, in short - the elite.

The most common categorisation of both culture and society, made with reference to Third World countries, is 'modern' and 'traditional' which are often paralleled with 'urban' and 'rural'. Although such a division ought not be over-emphasized, the modern/urban, traditional/rural parallel proved a useful point for analysis in the case of Chompuu village. Villagers themselves spoke of 'modern' (*tan samai*) and 'traditional' (*samai kao*) when relating the changes which have occurred in the village during their lifetime. When discussing 'modernity' many informants referred to physical changes which have taken place - the installation of electricity, improved roads and drainage, introduction of pumped water - and other factors usually associated with an urban way of life. Mostly these changes were discussed in a positive light, as if informants see 'modernisation' and 'urbanisation' as a form of progress (see discussion in Chapter Seven).

The term 'enculturation' refers to the development of an understanding of the values and beliefs of the dominant culture. Through education the child is made aware of the culture to which he/she belongs (or into which he/she is being initiated), and learns how to behave in a manner which is culturally acceptable in various situations. He/she is taught about the dominant religion (or religions) in the community; about various cultural values such as (in the case of Thailand) respect for seniority, obedience toward parents and humility in the presence of 'superiors'.

The process of 'enculturation' extends beyond the school, as indeed does the process of 'education' itself. Parents, and other members of the community, have a great influence on the values and beliefs of the child. Before entering school the Thai child has already begun to learn appropriate behaviour and begun to have impressed upon him/her the religious and moral values of his/her community. Thai village children are taken to the temple with their mothers on 'Buddha days' (6), they participate in festivals and other cultural events, they are taught to wai elders as a means of greeting or thanking them and so on.

'Socialisation' may be seen as a process of reinforcing existing social rules and practices. Johnson (in Bell & Stub,1968;83) claims that;

*"'socialization' is learning that enables  
the learner to perform social roles.  
Thus, not all learning is socialization,  
since presumably some learning is irrelevant  
to the motivation and ability necessary for  
participation in social systems."*

If education has an influence on the socialisation process its influence must be one of stability, supporting rather than challenging existing norms. It might be argued that in its ideal sense the term education means a broadening of the mind, extension of individual knowledge and understanding of the world around. If education is to stimulate new ideas surely it must conflict, to a certain degree, with the old. If, on the other hand, the major influence of education is one of stability rather than change, is this really education in its ideal form?

The limitation of the theory of 'socialisation' is that it implies that the school is a passive vehicle for instilling the values of the dominant ideology. Bell and Stub (ibid;183), for example, state that;

*"the school, as a part of society, is in  
many respects a reflection of the  
overall society."*

The school is seen as a place where the socialisation role of the family is reinforced and perpetuated, where social relations are 'mirrored'. The contradictions which exist between values impressed upon the child at home and in the school, are overlooked. This is a common criticism of the socialisation theory, made by followers of the theory of 'social reproduction', who see the school as having an active role to play in reproducing the values and social relations of the dominant society.

It was illustrated in Chapter Three that in the case of Chompuu, there are contradictions between the ideology inculcated in the school and the popular ideology of the village. The focus of the school is on the wider national culture and society, rather than the village culture and

society. Thus, national history, rather than local history is given priority in the school, the national religion (Buddhism) is emphasised whereas local beliefs in spirits are not. Children are made aware of modern medicines and are taught how to use them whereas 'traditional' medicines are not sanctioned by the formal school curriculum. Much of these local, 'traditional' areas of knowledge continue to be learned in the village, by observation and participation.

Contradictions may arise in the mind of the Chompuu village child whose teacher scolds him/her for being 'dirty' or 'untidy', but whose parents, relations and neighbours (who serve as role models for the child), are farmers and rarely dress in the neat tidy manner which teachers encourage pupils to adopt. Similarly, teachers might tell their pupils not to be afraid of ghosts and might even ridicule their belief in ghosts; yet in the child's family reverence and fear of the spirits might be a highly important aspect of family spiritual life.

These contradictory forces do not simply arise between the school and the village, between teachers and family. The media has an increasingly significant part to play in emphasising particular life-styles and the beliefs and practices on which these are based. Most Chompuu households now have television sets and a great deal of leisure time (of both children and adults) is spent watching them. Thus children are exposed to programmes made in Bangkok, to some foreign films (mainly Chinese) and to national news broadcasts as well as to advertisements which have a strong urban bias. All of these display lifestyles, customs and practices which the village child might otherwise be ignorant of.

Bourdieu, in expounding the theory of cultural reproduction, remarks:

*"Institutional education, as much as politics  
or the mass media or religion, is an attempt  
to initiate students into the rituals of a  
dominant culture, as such it is the prerogative  
of a controlling elite." (Bourdieu op.cit;334)*

Social, and cultural, reproduction imply that the role of the school is not simply in reflecting social and cultural norms, but intentionally reproducing these norms. The education system, as an instrument of the state (which in Thai society represents the wealthy, the powerful and the 'educated') reproduces the relations of production which maintain the political and socio-economic system of the capitalist society.

Vaddhanaphuti (1984;10-12) claims to have subscribed to the 'social reproduction' approach, rather than that of 'socialisation', because he believes that the latter is far removed from, and thus incapable of explaining, social reality in northern Thailand. He explains that in Thailand the state has played an important role in shaping development, generating modernisation and securing popular support by coercive means. He concludes that conflicts and contradictions, largely ignored by the socialisation theory, are of central importance to the Thai situation.

In discussing the role of the school Vaddhanaphuti (ibid;58) claims that schooling has an active role in reproducing;

*"on the one hand, knowledge and skills demanded by the economy, and, on the other hand, relations of production necessary for the dominant mode of production."*

Yet the school not only reproduces the skills and knowledge necessary for the reproduction of the hierarchical division of labour, but also the ideology upon which that hierarchy is dependant.

*"The reproduction of labour power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation so that they, too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class."(Althusser,1971;127-128)*

In this manner, schools are able to create and recreate certain kinds of consciousness (Freire, 1973). In Thailand today, the 'dominant' culture (or that which is rapidly acquiring pre-eminence) is the 'modern', urban culture of the educated, the powerful and the wealthy. The kind of consciousness which is being reproduced is that which coincides with the values of this culture. Bourdieu introduces the notion of cultural capital in explaining cultural reproduction; the reproduction of relations of force between social classes (Vaddhanaphuti,op.cit;73). Bourdieu claims that the cultural rift created by separation between school and home, academic and everyday knowledge, becomes the source of differentiation and reproduction. Critics of Bourdieu (Giroux,1981; Carnoy,1982) argue that he overlooks the possibility of resistance of pupils to the ideology which is impressed upon them in the school. Willis (1977) on the other hand, shows how ideology is lived, produced and negotiated at the individual level by pupils.

In Thailand one of the central focuses of the dominant ideology is on national unity, therefore various national beliefs and values are emphasised at the school (Buddhism as the national religion, the supremacy of the king and the royal family, the ideals of democracy). Many of the values and beliefs impressed upon the child at school are not those traditionally held in the village community but are imposed by the government in the interests of the nation (7).

If schools are teaching children to accept and respect the existing order of things, rather than to question and challenge, this is perhaps a form of training or initiation rather than enlightenment (8). Whether the school reinforces existing social inequalities, or fosters greater equality, is a question which has long fascinated sociologists of education. Advocates of the latter view are fewer and, one might argue, less convincing as they tend to ignore, or minimise, the importance of other social factors such as family wealth and social standing. The equality theory of schooling assumes that there is equal access to education, that educational opportunity is equal, which clearly it is not.

#### 4.4 Schooling and Social Mobility.

##### 4.4i The question of equality.

Of vital significance, in understanding the role of the school in society, is discovering what actually becomes of graduates of the formal school system. Not only those who are 'successful' in obtaining positions in institutes of higher education, or in the type of employment which they seek, but also those who are not judged as 'successful' by these criteria, those who drop out of school or leave after the number of years made compulsory by law. In Chompuu village approximately half of those pupils who have graduated from primary school in recent years have gone on to study at high school (9). Discussions with villagers revealed that the main factor determining whether or not children attend high school is family wealth. Academic achievement is the other main consideration, pupils must pass the primary school leaving examination before they receive their certificate, and are able to take a place at high school.

One family in the village, which rears dairy cattle as well as owning many *rai* of *lamyai* and rice, said that they have made plans for their eldest son 'aee', who was in grade six, and deputy head pupil of the school, at the time. They intend to send him to high school in Saraphi for three years and then to live with his uncle in another province to attend college, in order to learn about dairy cattle. His mother spoke of their desire to send 'aee' abroad to gain further experience. When asked whether she would be anxious about him living so far from home she replied that they are more concerned with what is best for his future.

Most village families did not discuss their plans for their children in such a positive manner. The majority are not in a position to plan ahead in this way, because of the nature of their family income, which demands that they live from one day to the next. Parents said that they would like to send their children to high school if they have the money ('*taa mii ngoen*') and if the child studies well ('*taa rian dii*').

From the time that Chompuu village children leave primary school the divisions (of wealth, education and social standing) between them become increasingly apparent. The main division is between those who attend high school and those who do not. One informant said that their fourteen year old girl had difficulty, for a year or so after leaving primary school, because many of her friends went to the district high school, whereas she did not. Her mother claims that, in time, the problem resolved itself, the daughter and her old school friends began to play together as before.

The majority of teenagers who finished primary school, and did not go on to high school, now help their parents in the village by working as agricultural labourers or engaging in another form of wage earning employment such as construction work or dressmaking. If the child's parents own or rent land, he/she might be at least partly employed on that land (depending on the extent of the land owned or rented).

According to informants, teenage marriages are most common, in the village, among primary, rather than secondary, school graduates. They explained that primary school leavers enter the work force earlier, and tend to settle down to adult life more quickly, than their more highly educated contemporaries. Thus there is a concept of education extending one's childhood or adolescence, delaying the adoption of adult responsibilities (a job and a family).

Divisions exist not only between those who do, and those who do not, attend secondary school. There are also divisions between those who complete only the lower level of high school and those who complete the entire five years; those who attend private or public schools, schools in the city or local town. After graduation there are further divisions into those who attend tertiary institutions and those who do not, whether they attend a university or vocational college, whether the school-leavers find employment 'suited' to their qualifications and so on. To speak of education fostering equality in such a situation is highly misleading.

To comment, as Psacharapoulous (1983;65) does, that;

*"the provision of universal primary education  
has important egalitarian effects, it pushes  
people from the illiterate low-income class  
into a higher-income class"*

treats the school as an autonomous institution, capable of altering the individual's social standing, regardless of the socio-economic and political forces operating at the time. The assumption that higher levels of education lead to higher paid jobs, and thus result in a move to the higher-income class, rests on the availability of these higher paid jobs and on the intensity of competition in the labour market for such positions.

#### 4.4ii The 'relevance' of schooling.

The villagers of Chompuu are mostly farmers, many are self-employed at least to some extent. A farmer may rent some, if not all, of the land he farms and as a tenant he is responsible for making many of the decisions regarding the management of the land. The nature of the society is such that most people are engaged in more than one form of employment throughout the year (10). Many villagers work as agricultural labourers for part of the year, and factory or construction workers for the remainder. Some farmers must work as labourers, as well as tending their own crops, because of a shortage of land or low yield. In such a community, flexibility, initiative and motivation are of central importance.

The 'knowledge' which most villagers share is that of practical agriculture, how to plant and harvest rice and various cash crops. Some specialise in animal husbandry, others in fruit growing; farming of one kind or another is the main occupation of the village. Other occupations include manual work such as carpentry, construction, needlework and dressmaking. Each of these require specific skills and areas of knowledge which may be taught within the community or at school.

Firstly, basic literacy and numeracy are becoming increasingly important, as written communication is fast becoming the medium for business transactions of all kinds. Secondly, the practical skills of agriculture, knowledge of various crops and their different requirements, skill in the use of machinery, knowledge of the benefits of breeding different animals; are of great importance in the village, particularly as change is taking place more rapidly today than ever before. 'Traditional' means of transmitting agricultural and other local knowledge, from one generation to the next, are no longer adequate. Due to the increasing shortages of land in rural Thailand, intensification of farming practices is highly important. If intensification is to be profitable for rural farmers, knowledge of fertilizers, new machinery and new methods of cropping is essential. Such knowledge may be referred to as 'modern' or 'new' knowledge. It cannot be acquired from the older generation.

As (in theory) every rural Thai child attends primary school for a minimum of six years, and the majority eventually seek a living within their community (or find it there although they may seek it elsewhere), the primary school might appear to be the most obvious place for the transmission of agricultural knowledge. Watson (op.cit;178) remarks;

*"Because the majority of the population is made up of peasant farmers and because the bulk of those enrolled in schools return to the land after a minimum of schooling, it is essential that knowledge and information about agricultural techniques and crop husbandry should be introduced from an early age if patterns of farming, irrigation and animal husbandry are to be changed and improved."*

However, most Chompuu village parents do not consider the teaching of agriculture and manual skills in the school important. When asked whether or not they felt that there was enough emphasis on teaching agriculture at the school, few felt strongly one way or the other. It

was clearly not a matter of concern for the majority of informants. Some parents do believe that agriculture and skills training ought to be accorded more time in the primary curriculum. One man, who is a leading figure on the village social and political scene, said;

*"If children learn practical skills at primary school they can use them when they leave. Maybe they can help their parents or even begin their own trade. It is a good thing to learn because it means they can always find work to do."*

This man runs a small family business with the help of his wife and two teenage children. The children are expected to help even though they both engage in additional employment at some stage during the year. The son is skilled at mending small machinery, such as radios and televisions, he works part-time for an electrical shop where he learnt the skills. The daughter picks *lamyai* fruit during the picking season. Their father believes that there is little need for village children to learn English at primary school. He, as well as some other villagers, claims that it is not a skill which will benefit the children unless they go to high school and eventually work in the city.

Although some informants, like the man quoted above, claimed that they see vocational training and manual labour as a more reliable alternative for their children than the academic mainstream; the majority continue to regard government positions as most desirable, even though many now realise that these are difficult to obtain. Others did not specify that they considered government positions the most desirable but spoke of white-collar jobs in general (*tham ngaan nai opfit* - lit. work in office). The lack of interest in manual positions among informants appeared to stem from a feeling that this form of employment is less prestigious than white-collar work, rather than unawareness of the availability of these positions.

Some villagers spoke with regret of the fact that today parents struggle to educate their children to the highest level within their means, yet often do not see the benefits of doing so. Their children either cannot obtain the jobs they seek or they must move far from home to find them. Today many Chompoo youths who cannot find employment suitable to their needs in Chiang Mai, travel to Bangkok to work; many then lose contact with their families and some do not return. Other rural youths, two from Chompoo village at the time of research, go further afield to America or Britain, lured by higher pay and potential job prospects. No doubt the greater the financial need of the family, the greater the hardship this causes, except in rare cases in which the offspring continues to send money home to help with expenses, such as the education of younger siblings.

Villagers who spoke of this problem, indicated that parents make a sacrifice to send their child to high school; thus studying 'too high' (*rian sǔng koen pai*) was seen as a problem by some informants. The trap of focusing on higher and higher levels of education in the hope of securing socially and financially more remunerative jobs is slowly being recognised. Yet one can expect little change in the current bias toward 'white-collar' occupations as long as conditions and salary levels remain vastly superior to those of manual labour.

### Conclusion.

The role of the school in the initiation of youths into society is a contradictory and confusing one. This is so because of the very nature of 'society' which is itself wrought with inequalities and contradictions. In the case of Thailand, like many other Third World countries, the school represents a 'new' or 'modern' form of knowledge and culture, which is often far removed from that of the community in which it exists. Thus while the schools could be said to have a socialising role, it is one which adapts children to a particular image of society, a particular cultural milieu often alien to that represented by their parents and grandparents. Furthermore, as the school system is slow to change, this socialising role may not even be in tune with national social and cultural changes.

There is not one culture and one society but many; that of the school, family, village and the world beyond the village - the modern, urban society - each represented by different social norms, values and beliefs. Rather than exposing the child to a variety of cultural and social experiences, the school reproduces the ideology of a particular level of society and interpretation of culture. Thus the school narrows the child's perception by promoting a standardised 'national culture' and 'national society', which undermines the importance of other 'societies' and 'cultures'.

A further contradiction in the school's role as an initiation ground is that it prepares children for particular occupational groups, regardless of the availability of positions within those groups. Thus the supply and demand of skilled and semi-skilled workers is unbalanced. Although both parents and youths are beginning to realise that access to the white-collar occupational group is now severely restricted, they continue to strive toward it. Discussions with many Chompoo villagers revealed that parents and children are not aware of the alternatives available to them. Only a few families mentioned that because of the difficulty of securing jobs in the government, or in the private

business sector, they feel it is more beneficial for their children to attend vocational college and prepare for skilled manual labour.

The fact that the possession of knowledge (or the certificates which have come to represent it) is of such great importance in determining a youth's future, indicates that knowledge is a great potential source of power; particularly if access to it is restricted in some manner. Knowledge may provide power for others, such as within the work place, or the power to control one's own destination. Within the school those who have knowledge (the teachers) have power over those who do not (the pupils). Similarly, in the village those who possess knowledge have power over those who do not; many positions of authority derive their power from the knowledge which the holder is assumed to possess. Nevertheless, as is pointed out in the following chapter, knowledge is not the only source of power and authority in the village, but is one of several factors determining the structure of power and authority.

One example of the relationship between knowledge and power in rural Thai society is the position of the monks (and former monks) who, until recently, were virtually the only members of the community who possessed the skill of literacy; knowledge of language in its written form. Today they remain the holders of the religious knowledge upon which the community greatly depends, yet to which access is by no means open. As formal secular education has spread throughout the country and more children are being educated to higher levels than ever before, one might wonder whether this is having an effect on the authority of the monks and other figures of authority within the village. This question will be a central issue of the following chapter which deals with authority in the village.

NOTES;

{1} Nevertheless in this paper they will be referred to as languages.

{2} See Chapter 2. NOTE {1}.

{3} Pupils are expected to *wai* the teachers at the school when entering or leaving their presence. For example when entering and leaving the staffroom.

{4} Johnson in Bell & Stub 1968; Cohen in Wax et al 1971; Hall in Dale et al 1981.

{5} The theory of social reproduction, and an outline of various authors' ideas on the subject, is discussed in detail by Vaddhanaphuti (1984).

{6} 'Buddha days' occur once every calendar month. see Chapter 1, section 1.3. 'Religion in the Village.'

{7} See discussion of 'invented tradition' in Chapter 3, section 3.2i 'Indoctrination and the hidden curriculum'.

{8} See Chapter 3 section 3.2i.

{9} Approximately 40% of graduates from Chompuu school enter high school each year, most of whom attend the government high school in Saraphi town. (See Appendix 5) Whether they complete the first three years of high school or the entire five years depends largely on their parents continued ability to support them and pay the yearly fees.

{10} See Chapter 1. section 1.2 "The Socio-Economic Structure of Chompuu Village."

CHAPTER FIVE: KNOWLEDGE AND POWER IN THE VILLAGE.

5.1 Introduction.

*"To link power and authority with knowledge is to invite analysis of the way in which knowledge is, wittingly and unwittingly, 'made to order' or produced in such a way as to preserve and reproduce the social structure." (Pusey & Young 1979;1)*

As indicated in the preceding chapter, the present identification of 'knowledge' with formal education, provides a key to the way in which knowledge can be controlled and manipulated, to serve the interests of those in power. Yet, at the same time, formal schooling may challenge both power and authority, by opening access to knowledge, which is most powerful when it is tightly controlled.

For example the 'power' of the monks in previous times resulted partly from the monopoly they held on literacy (literacy in Pali, the language of the religious texts as well as in central Thai). Today literacy in central Thai is a skill possessed by many lay scholars or past students. Yet as the monopoly on some forms of knowledge breaks down, through their incorporation into the school system, other forms remain, or become even more, exclusive and thus retain their position of power. Literacy in the language of religious texts has remained an exclusive area of knowledge, possessed only by those who attend the monastery for long enough to acquire and retain that knowledge. In this manner the key to understanding the religious texts read and chanted in the temples remains tightly in the hands of the monks and ex-monks.

Knowledge in itself does not result in power, nor is education (or the distribution of knowledge) necessarily a challenge to authority; both depend on the content of 'education' and the manner in which knowledge and educational achievements are put to use by those who possess them. The relation between power and authority is a complex one, although the two terms are often used interchangeably, they are by no means the same. Authority may be vested in an individual by 'right' of his birth, by his/her position in the socio-political organisation (whether secular or religious), or by personal achievements. There may be cases in which those in positions of authority exercise little actual power, and conversely where power is exercised by those who do not hold officially recognised positions of authority.

Authority provides a legitimate basis for power. According to Sennett (1980;165);

*"The work of authority has a goal;  
to convert power into images of strength."*

In Thailand the ultimate figure of authority is the king; the nature of his authority has changed significantly in recent years and shall be discussed briefly below. The monarchy, while politically less powerful than in the past, has remained a symbol of power and authority within 'the national ideology' (1). Reverence toward the king and the royal family provides a focus for the 'ordinary' Thai's perception of their national identity. Beneath the king stand the relations of power and authority which constitute the Thai bureaucracy. Many sociologists and anthropologists (2) have discussed these relations in terms of patron-clientage. Kemp (in Brummelhuis & Kemp 1984;55) claims that the patron-client relationships;

*"are considered by some to be the key to  
the overall analysis of Thai society."*

The superior-inferior relationship, characteristic of patron-clientage, has been used to attempt to understand Thai inter-personal relations in both official and non-official spheres. According to Evers & Silcock (in Silcock 1967;85);

*"there is [thus] an attitude to authority based on traditional respect, fear and desire for patronage which underlies the whole power of the Thai government."*

Outside this web of bureaucratic relations stands the other great Thai institution, the *Sangha*, or Buddhist monkhood, which again is structured by relations of domination and subordination. The monks possess a religious authority which has influence not only within the *Sangha*, but also in the community, and thus depends largely on the beliefs of the lay community.

These three spheres of authority; monarchical, bureaucratic and religious, will be discussed here in relation to education. The question to be considered is; "to what extent has schooling affected these traditional relations of power and authority?" The discussion of local authority shall include authority within the family. "Is the traditional position of men being challenged by women, or of parents by their more highly educated children?" Or indeed, "Is the government placing the policing of families within the hands of the teachers through their role in the school?" Authority within the school and the authority of the teachers within the community will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

## 5.2 Authority on a National Scale: the Monarchy and the Bureaucracy.

In the predominant and officially encouraged view, the foundation of Thai society is based on three pillars: nation (*chaat*), religion (*satsana*) and the monarchy (*phra mahakasat*) (Suksamran 1982). At school these three are represented in every classroom by pictures of Buddha, the flag and the king; in almost all villagers' homes one finds pictures of Buddha and the king placed in a prominent position on the wall of the main room. The king and the royal family in general are held in high esteem by Thai people; loyalty to the king and country are of utmost importance.

This phenomena relates to that described by Hobsbawm (op.cit) as 'invented' or 'reconstituted' tradition. The emphasis placed on these three 'pillars' in the school, serves as a means to foster and legitimate feelings of nationalism, to develop a strong national identity. Thus Buddhism becomes the national religion to the extent that to follow another religion might almost be considered 'non-Thai'. A clearer demonstration of the way in which these 'pillars' are promoted to reinforce national unity, is the 'repeated prosecutions for the crime of *lese-majeste*' (Turton, in Turton & Tanabe, 1984; 49-50).

The main influence of the king over his people today is a moral influence; he is the moral symbol and protector of Thai society and 'tradition' (Jacobs 1971). During the past century his political power has declined greatly, today real political power is in the hands of the prime minister and his government. The king no longer has the power to appoint senior members of the civil service, although he is still called to approve their appointment. Jacobs (ibid) writes that even before 1932, but increasingly since then, the 'kings men' (3) were being converted into a civil service of grades, promotions and discipline. Although the nature of the relations of political authority were not necessarily changing, they were moving into a new bureaucratic realm.

Turton (op.cit;21) claims that;

*"For fifty years the military has,  
for nearly all periods, been the controlling  
factor in national politics; and political  
parties are weakly developed nationally.  
These factors have led to a weak institutional  
development of 'civil society' and a close  
identification of bureaucracy, (military led)  
government, state, nation, monarchy and religion.  
This gives the state, and associated institutions,  
a monopoly of legitimacy rarely found  
to such a degree."*

Evers and Silcock (op.cit) claim that there is an absence of a sharp break in continuity from the days of absolute monarchy, which still greatly influences the relation between the elites and ordinary people in Thai society. Bureaucrats have been trained to carry out the orders of their superiors, without question; power remains highly centralised. An alternative view stresses discontinuities with the past, and sees the monarchy as having undergone considerable transformation. These two interpretations of recent Thai social formation are documented elsewhere (Turton,op.cit). Whichever approach one favours, some elements of the former era of absolute monarchy remain evident in Thai society today.

According to Terwiel (in Brummelhuis & Kemp, 1984), in present day Thailand 'most' traditional hierarchical role play is effectively banned from government offices and agencies. Nevertheless, if one looks closely at the customary interaction between individuals of different rank, it soon becomes clear that in some ways, this traditional role play has not been so much relinquished, as found new modes of expression. This can be witnessed on a daily basis, in offices and even in local banks. Clearly Thai people continue to regard rank as important in structuring their relationships, and determining their behaviour towards one another.

Since 'modern' secular education began to be established in Thailand during the reign of King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910), it has had an important role to play in filling the ranks of the government service. Emphasis on this role has continued even as supply has surpassed the demand for graduates to fill these positions. The level of education required to enter various grades in the civil service have consequently been pushed higher, and the expectations of many school leavers remain unfulfilled.

It was mentioned above (4) that the need to supply the civil service with a literate and numerate workforce has had a long-lasting effect on the nature of the education system, which has retained a great emphasis on literacy and numeracy. What is equally important to consider, is how 'modern' education may have influenced the civil service, and the relations of power and authority within it.

Although this matter is largely beyond the scope of this thesis, one could postulate that authority of rank and status within the Thai bureaucracy have not been greatly altered by modern schooling. The formal education system in Thailand is itself highly elitist; positions at secondary and tertiary levels are generally open only to the children of the wealthy and/or the powerful. As higher education serves as the only path to civil service positions, it is only the more privileged members of the society who have the opportunity to enter the government service. The potential ability of formal schooling to provide the 'average' Thai with an 'avenue' by which to enter the bureaucracy, and thus the schools' ability to alter the balance of power in society, is limited, in reality, by the restriction of access to knowledge and education certificates through the school system.

### 5.3 Power structure at the district and village levels.

Thailand is divided administratively into provinces (*changwat*), districts (*amphoe*), 'communes' or sub-districts (*tambon*) and villages (*mubaan*) (5). Kanachanachitra (1976) explains that the provincial administration came into existence in 1955 as a legal unit of self government. In theory, each provincial administrative organisation has a series of administrative service units, managed by its specific staff at provincial (*changwat*) and district (*amphoe*) levels. The sub-district (*tambon*) administrative organisation was established in 1956 to provide public welfare to the people of the *tambon*.

At the district and local levels, political power centres around three figures, each supported by his own body of assistants; the district officer (*nai amphoe*), 'commune' head (*kamnan*) and the headman (*phu yai baan/pho luang* (NT)). The district officer is the most senior government official based at the district level of administration.

The *nai amphoe* is a civil servant, today he must have completed at least a secondary level of education, an increasing number have graduated at the tertiary level. The *nai amphoe* is supported by district level officials who represent various ministries of the government, agriculture, education and so on. In Saraphi the district level official with whom all headmasters must deal is the primary education officer; he in turn is supported by a body of lesser officials. The *nai amphoe* administers the villages in his district through the *kamnan*, each of whom represents several villages (in the case of Chompoo the 'sub-district' consists of seven villages).

The *kamnan* is elected by the headmen of the villages in the *tambon* from among their own numbers. According to Jacobs (op.cit) the *kamnan's* duties include helping to keep the peace, promoting local welfare and reporting local affairs to the district authorities. Turton (1987) claims that the office of *kamnan* carries considerable power and responsibility; he is likely to be a much wealthier and more powerful

man than the village headman. In Chompoo village two ex-*kamnan* have retained active roles in the daily village political life. One is particularly active in organising and coordinating village affairs such as temple festivities, he is well liked and respected by his fellow villagers. He was educated at one of the most prestigious private high schools in Chiang Mai and remains proud of the fact. When he met me he was eager to display his limited knowledge of English. The other ex-*kamnan* is less active due to his age, but is highly esteemed by other villagers. He was once the only teacher of a neighbouring village school and then became headman and *kamnan*. Today he is known affectionately as *khruu* or *pho khruu* (teacher or lit. 'father teacher'). It is interesting to note that his status of 'teacher' has outlasted that of either headman or *kamnan*.

The *kamnan* and district officials set themselves apart from the headmen and villagers by the manner in which they dress, speak and behave. The district officer, and other officials, are likely to wear urban-style dress; at meetings and on other formal occasions they usually wear uniforms with epaulets and badges. At a *prachum saphaa tambon* (tambon committee meeting) held during the fieldwork period, the *kamnan*, agricultural officer (*phatanaakon kesae*t), health officer (*satanasuk*), six headmasters and eight headmen were present. The *kamnan* sat at the head of the table and controlled the meeting, his secretary sat on his right hand side. Although discussion was informal there was a considerable difference in the manner of the officials and that of the farmers. The former were more confident and outspoken, they wore uniforms, expensive watches and other symbols of their authority and wealth.

The highest figure of political authority in the village is the headman. Tambiah (in Goody 1968) remarks that village headmen are traditional to Thailand, yet it was only in 1947 that village government was firmly integrated with district government, and the agencies of the central government. The headmen were brought under closer government control by awarding them a small monthly stipend and by increasing contact

between them and the *kamnan* and district officer, who are civil servants.

The headman is the elected representative of the village and is responsible for the coordination of village affairs. He is mediator between the villagers, of whom he is one, the *kamnan* and local authorities. The government expects the headman to maintain law and order, to prepare certain statistical data for the local records, to act as a vehicle for the introduction of certain government projects into the village. The headman is able to derive considerable economic advantage (as a landowner, trader, moneylender) from the prestige of his position and the potential sanctions inherent in his office.

The villagers hold the headman responsible for the 'prosperity' (*khwaam Charoen*) of the village, or the lack of it. Several villagers in Chompuu claimed that village development depends on strong leadership; if leadership is strong there will be signs of progress, if not the village will suffer. One Chompuu village man in his late fifties remarked;

*"the village is like the school, it needs  
a good leader, if it has a good leader it  
will prosper."*

Villagers also turn to the headman for boosting village morale, organising and participating in local festivities. He is not only expected to fulfil the role of political leadership but also of moral, social and cultural guidance. Chompuu villagers' expectations of their headman are many, when he fails to fulfil them adequately they are quick to voice their complaints in private, if not openly.

In Chompuu village the headman during the field study was a man in his mid-thirties who had held the position for little more than three years. Having completed the four years of primary schooling which was compulsory at the time, he became a novice and later a monk until the age of twenty-seven. Some villagers claimed that his experience as a monk was the main factor determining his nomination and election to the position of headman. Many villagers were disconcerted with his leadership; some accused him of small-scale corruption. Others simply

claimed that he is a poor leader, is lazy, drinks too much and is generally unmotivated. During the fieldwork period certain other villagers appeared to play a more active, and perhaps even more influential, role in village affairs than the headman.

The position of headman carries a great deal of authority; yet without the support of the villagers he is powerless. He cannot instigate reforms in the village without their cooperation. A vital criterion is, therefore, the headman's effectiveness in acting as a 'broker' in negotiations with the higher authorities, his effectiveness in accomplishing the tasks which the villagers expect him to do. If other villagers prove themselves to live up to the ideal of a strong and moral leader, or prove themselves to be effective as 'brokers'; they are more likely to win support, and thus gain power, than the headman in whom political power is officially vested. Thus villagers may passively comply with the wishes of the headman because of the position he holds, yet actively support other members of the community, who have won favour and support not by the positions they hold, but by their personal achievements. These achievements are not necessarily dependant on the 'knowledge' taught by the formal school system. Other forms of knowledge; of people, of ways of dealing with authorities, of the bureaucratic system and how to benefit from it, may be more important in influencing one's position of authority within the village community.

As Jacobs (op.cit;59) explains;

*"as far as the villagers are concerned,  
neither the headman nor the commune  
head exhaust natural village leadership,  
and in some cases they are not even  
associated with it."*

According to Jacobs, villagers increasingly view formal leaders as mere appendages of the district authorities; they accept the charade of deferring to formal leadership while carrying on with the informal. Therefore there is a sense in which the headman is not so much the village 'leader' but the front man, the man who represents the village

to the authorities although his real power may be rivalled by other individuals.

Chompuu village is divided into political 'factions' which appear to be determined partly by geographical proximity (neighbours), and partly by affiliation to a particular individual. According to Turton (in Turton & Tanabe 1984) in many villages five or ten per cent of villagers possess a certain degree of power, wealth and prestige which sets them apart from the rest. Furthermore;

*"the higher degree of education, involving better knowledge of Central Thai language and orientation towards urban culture, of the upper stratum of villagers gives them a strategic advantage in relations with these official levels."*

(ibid;31)

Again the role of 'brokers' or patrons is highly significant. Formal education itself does not necessarily provide power, it supports and strengthens power with its influence.

The importance of education at the district, sub-district and village level of authority is becoming increasingly apparent. The district officer is a civil servant and is likely to be educated to at least the level of *matayom* (secondary) 5, many today have Bachelors degrees. No such academic stipulations exist for the position of either *kamnan* or headman. Yet there is a pressing need for both figures of local authority to have a command of the central Thai language (6) and to possess skills in both literacy and numeracy. The recording of disputes, collection of statistics and transmission of government orders which fall within their duty, all demand literacy skills.

The Chompuu village headman frequently mentioned the importance of the written element of his job, and the amount of time that it demands. He said that a headman could not prepare all the records required by the district authorities without the help of his two assistants (*phu chuai*). Even at the village level of leadership, schooling has become of central importance. Nevertheless, there was no indication that village leaders

are chosen because of their academic achievements. Informants tended to emphasise religious experience to a greater extent than academic.

The implication is that the moral integrity of a leader is considered more important than his secular knowledge or skills. Indeed a popular topic of conversation among Chompuu villagers, with regards to their current headman, was his drinking habits. The headman, like the teacher or headmaster, is expected to be a moral exemplar. Therefore his piety, measured by past religious experience and present moral integrity, is of central importance.

#### 5.3i The 'informal' village hierarchy.

In Chompuu village there is a hierarchy of wealth and authority which, while overlapping one another in certain instances, are not necessarily mutually supportive. The outline of four villagers below, indicates that the relationship between knowledge, wealth and power in the village is highly complex.

Among the wealthiest men in Chompuu is a man who is referred to by other villagers as 'the doctor' (*mɔ*). His house and compound is markedly different from all others in the village. Not only is it large and very grand but it is surrounded by a high brick wall with a large iron gate and is guarded by two Alsatian dogs. The 'doctor' has made every effort to isolate himself physically from the village; no doubt he feels little in common with his fellow villagers as he has spent many years away from the village. His highly visible concern for security demonstrates a lack of trust in his fellow villagers and may also be interpreted as a statement of his wealth, and therefore as a status symbol in itself. Within his 'compound' is only one house, that which he shares with his mother, he said that he only lives at this house 'during the day'. Other villagers mentioned that he has several wives in other villages and districts. Two servant boys live in the house with the mother for security purposes.

A large garden surrounds the house and behind it is a *lamyai* orchard, together about 20 *rai*. Beyond that is a yard where the 'doctor' rears two dozen or more pigs, three village boys work and live in the yard. The 'doctor' has 50 *rai* of rice fields and *lamyai* orchards in Chompuu and a further 50 in other areas. He did not study beyond the primary level but learned about traditional medicine while he was a soldier and, although he is not a registered doctor, some older villagers continue to see him for treatment. He claims that he is too old to practice much now but he administers drugs to patients when requested to do so.

Although a very wealthy man with contacts beyond the village, the 'doctor' does not play an active role in village politics. It is possible that he is more active in one of the other villages which he also calls his home; he perhaps feels that there is little to gain from engaging in politics at the local level. In spite of his wealth, therefore, his influence in the village is minimal. He does not belong to any of the village groups such as the temple committee or the development committee, around which the political relations in the village are structured.

The maternal uncle of my interpreter and research assistant is in a similar position. He is the most highly educated man in the village, having obtained a Masters degree from a university in Bangkok. He claims to have been one of two students in his year, of the secondary school which he attended in Saraphi, to have gone to Bangkok to study. The subject he studied was agriculture and he is now the head of the village farmers' cooperative; however on a daily basis he is less active than other members. He was rather negative about the potential of the farmers' cooperative to implement changes, and believes that a major reason why the farmers of the village are poor, is that they do not utilise their time to maximum efficiency. He said that they do not work for enough months each year to be able to improve their financial situations. Nevertheless the majority of informants said that they practice either double or triple cropping which leaves them 'free' for only three months each year, the majority engage in another form of employment during this time.

Like the 'doctor', my interpreter's uncle is physically isolated from the village. His house is close to the rice fields, it is not surrounded by a wall but by the barrier of his own private land. He lives there with his wife and his son who is studying at Chiang Mai University. They have many *rai* of rice fields and also have several large fish ponds close to their house which villagers pay to fish.

These two villagers occupy the highest positions of the village hierarchy of wealth, but not necessarily of power. Their potential power, due to their wealth and the prestige accorded to it, and the latter by his academic achievements, is enormous; yet their actual power is minimal, due to limited involvement in daily village affairs. Their 'success' has resulted in a degree of alienation; one which appears to have been self-imposed.

Another villager known as *aai sɔn* is far less wealthy and yet occupies a position of considerable influence among his fellow villagers. His position may be attributed to two factors; firstly his previous experience as a monk, he spent several years studying at a temple in Lamphun; secondly his personal charisma and skills of communication, he is the village *a'chaan wat*, literally meaning 'teacher of the temple'. The position of *a'chaan wat* is held by a villager who was once a monk and is well versed in the Buddhist scriptures. It involves acting as a kind of master of ceremonies at temple meetings and festivals.

*Aai sɔn* is well liked by many villagers and is considered to be a good speaker. He plays a central role at most village gatherings, particularly those in his own neighbourhood. He is a businessman, with the help of his wife and children he runs a small workshop, where they make watering cans and guttering to sell locally or in Saraphi town. He does not own rice land but participates in the planting and harvesting of rice as a wage labourer. He believes that the reason why Thailand is still 'developing' (*kamlang phatanaa*) is because Thais enjoy freedom (*chɔp isala*) and are not generally a hardworking race. He does not feel that this is a major problem and emphasised the quality of life which

rural Thais enjoy, the two factors which he stressed were independence and self-sufficiency.

A fourth villager who stood out from the 'average' villager due to his wealth and prestige was the father of my interpreter, known as *phq khruu wan* (7). He was a native of a neighbouring village and moved to Chompuu when he was married. He completed six years of primary school and then attended a Christian school for four months. Later he studied externally and eventually passed the examination of the *matayom* three level. Having done so he applied for a teaching position and began at the lowest level of the salary scale. He taught at what was then the only high school in Saraphi district, a private school. After some time he became the school supervisor and then accepted the inferior position of headmaster when there was no one available to fill that post. He explained that the position of school supervisor is the highest in the school, it is concerned more with administration than the daily supervision of school affairs. When the school closed in 1979 he was sent to teach in Nan province (in the northeast of the country) for three years. During that time he lived in teachers' accommodation and his wife remained at Chompuu with their children.

He then retired and lived in Chompuu with his wife and unmarried daughters until his death in 1988. Up to the time of his death he was a popular and respected figure; villagers continued to use the title 'teacher' to address him as a customary sign of respect. He owned rice land and *lsmyai* orchards in excess of the average village holding. (Although he explained that in an effort to finance his children's education beyond the primary level he had sold many *rai*). His most notable contribution to village concerns was in the Credit Union, which was initially established in the area under his house; it now occupies a brick building on land at the front of his house, which he rented to the Union.

Profiles of these four villagers demonstrate that three main factors appear to determine an individual's position in Chompuu village social and political hierarchy; wealth, family background and personal

achievements. The importance of each is likely to vary from one case to the next. Personal achievements which are of importance include; experience as a monk or novice, educational achievements, work experience and personal qualities. Therefore educational achievements do not necessarily stand out from other achievements, in terms of determining one's position in the hierarchy of authority; rather there is an interplay of various factors.

### 5.3ii Religious authority - the role of the village monks.

A discussion of the relationship between local power hierarchies and education would be incomplete without an analysis of the role of the Thai monks in the village. In the past the monks, and those who had passed through the monkhood, were the only members of the village community who were 'educated' in the formal sense (8).

The question to be considered here is whether or not the recent expansion of secular schooling has constituted a challenge to the authority of the monks. As mentioned in Chapter Two, when the Thai government first began to establish schools in rural areas, there was a severe shortage of lay teachers, therefore monks were used to teach in place of (and sometimes alongside) lay teachers in many areas. At Chompuu school monks continued to help with the teaching until twenty or so years ago. Older villagers explain that the relationship between the school and the temple, between teachers and monks was very close. It was mentioned in Chapter One that the full name of the village school (*rong rian wat phayachompuu*) includes the word *wat*, or 'temple', which underlines the historical importance of this relationship.

In the past, the school communicated with the village through the monks, and in this manner received the support of the community. From the beginnings of modern education in Thailand the government attempted to utilise the link between religion and education. Through the monks, education was presented as something worthy of respect, even meritorious; support of the school was likened to support of the temple and was therefore an act of merit in itself.

Today this link remains, but it is much less apparent than in the past. Monks no longer teach at the school; religion is taught by lay teachers along with the secular subjects, in both its practical and theoretical form. The headman, rather than the village monks, mediates between the school and the village. Yet teachers continue to demonstrate their respect for the monks by sending food to the temple whenever there is a special meal at the school or when the pupils have had a cooking lesson. While the monks are no longer engaged in teaching at the school the educational role of the temple remains important.

Vaddhanaphuti (1984) comments that in the Thai village the chief task of the temple is to teach Buddhist ideology to the villagers. The task is carried out by the monks and novices through regular temple meets and seasonal festivals, as well as the daily activity of merit-making, giving food to the monks and novices. Thus the monks transmit essential religious knowledge to the community, as well as providing opportunities for making merit. The monks are vital to the spiritual well-being of the community and it is due to this fact that they are able to retain their power and social standing in the village today.

The monks and novices themselves, learn both the theoretical and practical aspects of Buddhism through the temple. They can go on to study the religion further, by spending a few years at a temple in the city, where formal Buddhist schooling is available.

*"For monks and novices, a temple is, then,  
a place where they are educated and where  
they internalize Buddhist ideology,  
the Pali language (9) and, in some cases,  
the traditional Northern Thai scripts."*

(Vaddhanaphuti,op.cit;486)

By acquiring this level of religious knowledge, the monk attains a position of respect and prestige in the community, which he often retains even after disrobing.

As has been the case throughout recent Thai history, the temple is the place where young men and boys can improve their literacy skills while acquiring religious knowledge. Today some villagers choose to send their sons to the temple once they have completed the compulsory number of years in the school, either for the specific intention of extending their education or, more generally, to occupy them in a meritorious manner until they are old enough to earn a living. In Chompuu three informants discussed their intention of sending their school-aged child to the *wat*, on completion of grade six at the primary school.

One family which has four young children had planned to send their oldest son (then in grade 6) to a 'temple school' in Lamphun province, where he would learn not only religious ideology but also mathematics, Thai and English. His mother remarked that they would rather send him to the high school in Saraphi, but that it is less expensive to attend the temple school where transport, food and clothing costs are minimal and books are heavily subsidised.

Similarly another village couple said that their son would attend a temple school rather than secondary school because it is less costly. They claimed that they did not want to send him to the secondary school because he does not study well (the implication being that it would not be a wise investment). The third family was that of the *dek wat* (temple boy) who currently lives at the temple, his mother said that she wants him to stay at the temple and become a novice. In a small number of cases religious education offers an alternative to secular education at the secondary level; informants claim that fewer parents choose this alternative than in the past.

Monks are generally not politically active; yet they do hold positions of great potential power and influence, due to the respect they are accorded by lay members of the community. Whether or not they use this potential power and whether they use it for personal or community gain, is a complex question. In some cases they may address the village on a matter which is not directly related to religion, thus becoming involved

in secular politics. At a temple meeting held in Chompuu village during the fieldwork period the head monk addressed the villagers about the plan to establish a *tambon* library in the village. He took the opportunity to ask the villagers to donate money toward the purchase of books thus strengthening the link between community development and merit-making. By adopting the establishment of the *tambon* library and asking for donations for it, the monk portrayed the activity as a meritorious one.

In some villages monks may be well-off and may constitute a considerable force in village politics. Turton comments that;

*"Some temples have become small capitalist enterprises in their own right, and some monks are individual entrepreneurs."*

(Turton in Turton & Tanabe, 1984; 41)

In one village in *tambon* Chompuu the monks are said to be very wealthy, the temple is a source of pride for the whole *tambon*, it has beautiful grounds and is very well kept. However several informants believe that the monks are engaged in some illegal activities which are the main source of their wealth. The doubt as to the legitimacy of their activities appears to have resulted in the division of support.

One finds in Chompuu village that the experience of having been a monk is considered an important prerequisite for becoming headman. The one factor which all recent village headmen have (apart from being male) is that they have all served as monks at some stage in their lives. The number of years of schooling attended varies from one to the next, as does age on becoming headman, however the experience of having been a monk remains constant. Thus religious experience and religious knowledge are at least on a par with secular knowledge, acquired at the school, with regards to political leadership.

As well as the monks there are other village specialists such as the *mɔ̄ khwan (NT)* or *praam (NT)* (officiant at *khwan* rites), *mɔ̄ yaa (NT)* (physician), *mɔ̄ duu (NT)* ('astrologer') all of whom can read texts in traditional northern Thai and central Thai alphabets with varying

degrees of competence. Tambiah (in Goody 1968) maintains that the art of lay ritual experts depends on reading and consulting ritual texts. On the other hand practitioners who deal with spirits do not require reading ability in any script.

*"In the light of this, it is understandable that in the village, <sup>the</sup> ritual specialists who are literate have higher prestige than those who are not literate; partly because Buddhism and its allied rituals are ethically superior and opposed to the spirit cults; partly because the former's art is associated with specially valued learning and literacy per se." (ibid;92/93)*

This distinction is not only a matter of prestige but also impinges upon leadership; the most important village elders are those who are *a'haan wat, mq khwan* and *mq yaa*.

#### 5.4 Authority in the Family and the Influence of Education

It is clear from the above account that authority in Thailand remains a male domain. Thai society has often been labelled 'paternalistic'. Sennett (1980) explains that a paternalistic society is one in which males dominate the socio-political scene; their dominance is based on their role as fathers/protectors. The king of Thailand is the ultimate father, the father of the nation; in northern Thailand the headman is called *phq luang*, he is the father of the village. The image of the father is exploited in both the social and political spheres of Thai society.

While the father is the head of the nuclear family; the maternal grandfather is head of the extended family; a 'typical' village household consists of the nuclear family plus one or more extended family members (10). Within the same compound may live one or more related families; the daughters of the extended family, their husbands and children. Traditionally there has been a tendency toward matrilocal residence and today this remains the most common form.

Potter (1976) claims that, during the early years of marriage, a Thai woman and her husband live in, or close to, her parents house and she remains loyal to her parents and under the authority of her father (ibid;124-125). The woman and her husband may enter into the labour exchange system of the village on behalf of her parental family. Traditionally the youngest daughter remains in the family home to care for the parents in their old age. Today, however, any child may take on this responsibility depending on their marital situation and the proximity of employment opportunities.

Family authority is by no means a purely male affair, for in some cases the wife may play a more active role. The situation varies from one family to the next. In reality, women have considerable power within the family. Women control a great deal of their families' cash income; most market sellers are women, women are involved in all manner of cash earning activities such as embroidery, drying banana leaves for cigarettes and wrapping sweets, growing and selling cash-crops such as garlic and chilli. This places them in a strong position in the family. Haas (1979;16) states that Thai...

*"women have more power in their families than  
their overt deference would seem to indicate."*

Another key to the strength of women within their family and household is that...

*"descent through women is the family's  
thread of structural continuity from one  
generation to another. The house, the garden,  
part of the family rice land, and the*

*matrilineal spirits pass down from  
grandmother to mother to daughter and then  
to granddaughter, in a direct<sup>and</sup> unbroken line  
of succession." (Potter,op.cit;125)*

In this manner women are also able to contribute to the non-monetary wealth of their families. Turton (1976) claims that the authority of the head is undermined when there is no land to withhold. Thus a major key to the authority of the father (or more generally of the parents) is the possession of land and the childrens' dependence on it for their own futures.

The ownership of land, or the possession of tenancy, enables the parents to maintain control over their daughters and sons in law, even after marriage. Control of the family depends on retention of the land until death. Although the daughter and son in law are able to gain some independence by working as agricultural labourers, or engaging in some other form of employment, they are tied to the authority of the maternal parents as long as they are dependent on the land for their livelihood.

Therefore, in theory at least, the hold which parents have over their children decreases as the latter receive higher levels of formal education, and are released from the necessity of dependance on the land for their livelihood. Although parents maintain control over children while they are in formal education, when they leave the control diminishes, particularly if they find the employment outside the village which the majority of them seek. In Chompuu village the question of authority within the family is further complicated by the fact that there is a high incidence of divorce, separation, adoption and other 'untypical' family arrangements. Perhaps it is best to deal with the issue by outlining several specific families rather than attempting to make generalizations which are inevitably highly tentative.

The household in which I lived for three months consisted of grandparents (11), two of their unmarried adult daughters, and the son of one of their sons who lives in another province. Of the two daughters only one was in full-time employment during the fieldwork period. The other daughter, although older, was responsible for most of the household duties including caring for her parents and nephew.

In terms of level of formal education the husband and wife were worlds apart, while he completed *matayom* three (a rare achievement for a rural youth at that time), she attended the village school for the compulsory four years. This distance was expressed frequently in their daily conversations and behaviour toward one another. She said that she is 'not clever' (*mai chalaat*) and generally kept quiet during conversations of even a remotely intellectual nature; regarding such discussions as his concern rather than hers. She clearly felt herself to be out of her depth in such situations and acknowledged his superior wisdom and experience.

While his areas of concern were business, education, politics and agriculture; hers revolved around the kitchen and household in general. Both had a role to play in rearing their grandson, though each exercised their authority in a different manner. Her main concern was with the child's behaviour and manners, his diet and appearance; the grandfather concerned himself with the child's education and took great pride and pleasure in helping the boy with his homework.

In the case of the second family with whom I stayed during the field study, both mother and father share agricultural and household work. The household consists of a nuclear family; parents and two children, with the grandparents living in a house in the same compound. The father buys and sells cattle for a living, as well as working rented rice land and orchards. Both he and his wife finished four years of schooling, she at the local village school and he in the school in his native village. Although they share most agricultural work, the trading of cattle is his own affair, and is a matter in which he is recognised

amongst other villagers to have a great deal of knowledge and experience.

Child-rearing is another area of responsibility which the couple shares; both supervise the children, seeing that they complete various chores, go to school on time, bathe each day and so on. The wife once said that when there are meetings to attend at either the high school or primary school, her husband goes rather than she. Her explanation was that he is better at expressing himself (*uu dii(NT)*), he is not shy as she is. Again there was evidence of the wife bowing to her husband's superiority, in a matter which demands good communicative skills and ability to grasp matters beyond the realm of daily household and work concerns.

Neither of these families could be considered 'typical', nor can their examples be used to generalise about the male/female roles in the family in relation to authority. Rather they demonstrate the ways in which some families organise their different roles and take responsibility for different domestic concerns. These examples illustrate the ways in which personal qualities, such as academic achievement and communication skills, influence authority in the family as well as in the village as a whole.

The role of education in the authority of the family is twofold. Firstly, the level of education of the parents may determine the roles they play, and the authority they hold, in representing the family at village meetings. In both cases cited above this was a male concern; although there is no bar on women becoming members of various committees, nor even of being elected to the position of head of the village.

Secondly, parents' authority over their children may be challenged by the childrens' higher levels of education. Turton (1976) claims that the ideological support for the elders (aged 40-60) has been undermined. There are new sources of literacy, new ideas of causality, new types of sanction and new sources of legitimacy. To the extent that knowledge

and wisdom are associated with schooling this implies that children, or 'youths' might be considered more 'knowledgeable' than their parents despite their lack of experience.

This matter was discussed indirectly by several informants; some commented on the children's self-importance and reluctance to take their parents word as final. Others mentioned the parents inability to help their children with homework; this indicated the recognition of the fact that children are in possession of a 'knowledge' if not superior to that of their parents, then alien to it.

Evidence of this can be seen in the relations between the under 30 age group and their parents. It is particularly marked among those who have attended high school or even university. The distance between them and their parents, in terms of intellect, beliefs and understanding, is greater now than ever before. Modern education has;

*"had the effect of raising the status  
of younger members of the community  
who begin to know more than their elders."*

(Kaufman 1976;215)

Chompoo children do not, except on very rare occasions, speak central Thai to their parents. It is recognised that, just as northern Thai is an inappropriate form of speech to use when addressing teachers, central Thai is inappropriate when addressing one's parents. Indeed many children may be unaware of their parents' ability to speak the central language because they only hear it spoken by teachers, officials and other town-dwellers. Central Thai has become the new knowledge of the young, a knowledge over which youths are likely to have greater command than their parents. Yet this knowledge is not displayed or used to any obvious advantage within the village. Rather its benefits lie beyond the village in the world of work, politics and bureaucracy.

## Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with power and authority in Thai society and its relationship with education. My hypothesis has been that modern secular education may have begun to present a challenge to 'traditional' structures of power and authority, based on the possession of certain forms of knowledge.

'Knowledge' has 'traditionally' rested in the hands of the older men of the community. Before the expansion of formal secular education, knowledge was acquired through experience, over time. Therefore seniority was an important means of ordering authority in the village, both within the family and outside it. To a certain extent this remains the case today, yet if the basis of the authority of seniority is knowledge, its influence may well be increasingly threatened by the presence of younger members of the community, who are acquiring a 'new' 'scientific' knowledge through the school. This new knowledge is the property of the young rather than the old, and of female as well as male members of the village.

Furthermore, the monopoly which monks once held over literacy skills, has been effected by the spread of schooling in rural areas. Thus authority and power once enjoyed by the monks as a result of their literacy skills has diminished. Nevertheless they have retained the key to literacy in the language of religious texts; Pali and northern Thai scripts. While one area of knowledge has opened up to the community, another has remained closed except to those who enter the monkhood.

Evidence in Chompuu village indicated that although 'traditional' authority and power is being challenged by schooling, there appears to be little conflict. Political power remains in the hands of the older men of the village, religious power in the hands of the monks and ex monks, familial power in the hands of the elders. The strength of the moral precept of deference to elders ensures that this structure is perpetuated from one generation to the next regardless of the potential

challenge of 'new' knowledge acquired by the young through formal schooling.

Although high school and tertiary level graduates are esteemed in the village, educational achievements are not the only key to power and authority in the internal affairs of the village, rather they are one of several determinants of the distribution of power. Nevertheless the village is less autonomous than in the past, its links with the 'outside' world are becoming increasingly important and it is in this respect that education, and the knowledge of central Thai language, may have an increasing role to play.

'Educated' young graduates may increasingly find themselves playing the role of 'broker', or 'gatekeeper' between members of the village community and the bureaucracy. The present generation of village 'elders' (the over 45 age group) are largely undifferentiated by educational achievement. The great majority completed the minimum four years of schooling which was compulsory when they were children. Only five men, and no women, in this age group, have graduated from a higher level of education than *prathom* four. The present generation of teenagers, on the other hand, are more differentiated by academic achievement. Therefore it will be interesting to see, when they are the village 'elders', the extent to which these differences in educational level influences their socio-political standing in the village.

The following chapter considers the use of authority in the school. It will be demonstrated that several of the 'ideals' on which the power/authority hierarchy of the village is based, are reproduced in the school. Yet the school is by no means considered a mirror of the village community in this respect. Indeed some of the 'ideals' relate more closely to those of the wider capitalist society into which the village is increasingly being drawn, than of the village itself.

NOTES;

- (1) For a discussion of 'ideology' and 'ideologies' see Althusser 1971.
- (2) Jacobs,1971; Rubin,1973 & Kemp in Brummelhuis & Kemp,1984.
- (3) See Chapter 2, Note (4).
- (4) The relationship between formal schooling and the civil service in Thailand is discussed in detail in Chapter 2 section 2.3. 'The Historical Link Between Formal Education and Public Service Employment in Thailand.'
- (5) See Chapter 1 'Introduction'.
- (6) See Chapter 4. Section 4.2 'Discrimination of knowledge in the school'.
- (7) *Pho khruu wan* is mentioned in several places above, see introductory chapter.
- (8) See Chapter 2 Section 2.2 'The origins of formal schooling in Thailand.'
- (9) See Chapter 2 'Note' (1).
- (10) See discussion in Chapter 1, section 1.2i 'Family and Household in Chompuu'.
- (11) The 'grandfather' of this family has since died and the youngest daughter has married and left home, therefore I refer to the household in the past tense.

CHAPTER SIX: SCHOOLING AND CONTROL.

6.1 Introduction.

In the preceding chapter the influence of 'knowledge', particularly of that incorporated in the formal school system, on the 'traditional' structure of authority in the village, was examined. The present chapter looks at relations of power and authority in the school itself. Of particular interest is the ways in which power relations in the school may influence pupils' future acceptance of, or resistance to, authority. Although the village and the school are dealt with separately in these two chapters, interrelations between the two are explored in the final chapter.

That a degree of control of pupils by their teachers is necessary for the school to function, is of little doubt. The question is how much control is necessary and how it should be established and maintained. The present chapter aims to throw light on these issues, dealing with them in the context of Chompuu school. In the first part of the chapter we will look at the means by which control is established; through the bureaucratic, institutionalised nature of the education system, and by the physical structure of the school itself. In the second part we will explore the ways in which control is maintained in Chompuu school; through behaviour and speech codes (deference and demeanor), by the exercise of authority and the use of reward and punishment.

## 6.2 Establishing Control.

6.2i The bureaucratic hierarchy of the school system in northern Thailand.

The village school is incorporated into the same network of bureaucratic relations as the village itself. Thai education officials are civil servants who work within the Ministry of Education. In Thailand schooling in rural areas is administered by district education officials, who report to the provincial office (1). In the case of Saraphi district, the education authorities are situated on the grounds of Wehrewan school in Saraphi town. The office accommodates various clerks, secretaries and administrators of every level, headed by the district education officer.

Teachers' contact with these officials takes place mainly at the district office at meetings or seminars, or at social events. Education officials visit the schools only once or twice a year. The headmaster of Chompuu explained that the officials visit a school more frequently if a special project is being carried out.

Generally education officials and teachers meet in formal situations; situations which demand the greatest display of deference and respect. The extent to which deference is demonstrated, is determined by the occupational distance between the official and the teacher. A minor teacher (*khruu noi*) would be expected to display greater deference toward an official than would a headmaster (*khruu yai*). The degree of respect demanded by the district education officer is far greater than by one of his officials. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the headmaster occupies a position which is superior in status to that of some minor officials. Gender appears to be significant only in that few women occupy the higher ranks of the official hierarchy which demand the greatest display of respect.

Goffman (1967) explains that one of the many forms which deference can take is that of 'avoidance rituals'; not only physical avoidance but also demonstrating regard for privacy, such as by using formal terms of address. The superior may exercise familiarity which would be considered improper for the inferior to reciprocate. In Thailand when teachers speak to officials they speak the central Thai language and use many polite terms of address. If the official is known well to the teacher he/she may be addressed as *phii* (older brother/sister), if not the polite term *khun* followed by their first name must be used. The *wai* is used when meeting or leaving an official; such formalities are dropped between teachers and minor officials, particularly those who know one another personally.

As Chompuu school is only a few kilometres away from Saraphi district office, and as meetings and seminars are held at least once a month, there is considerable contact between the teachers and officials. The headmaster, as the representative of his school, attends monthly meetings with other headmasters and the district education officer. In northern Thailand each village school belongs to a group of seven or eight schools; one of the headmasters is elected as head of the group and may hold the position for a maximum of two years. The group may share teaching or sporting equipment; the group of which Chompuu school is a member possesses a collection of library books which it circulates among its members.

Many teachers and educational administrators move in the same social circles and personal friendships between members of the two groups are common. They frequently meet at retirement dinners, funerals and other social occasions. Although it is not compulsory for either officials or teachers to attend these events there is considerable social pressure to do so. At Chompuu school if there is an event which the headmaster feels the teachers ought to attend, he advises them of it and they often go as a group.

particularly if the event takes place on a working day after school.

The higher officials are less likely to be known locally than minor officials; they may be residents of another district, or previously have lived in another district from which they were transferred. In Saraphi the district education officer, who had held the position for three years, was recently moved to another district and his replacement was an 'outsider' known only to a few of the officials and teachers.

The relationship between education officials and teachers is one of authority and power. The officials perhaps feel themselves to be in a position of greater control over the education process than the teachers, to the extent that they are closer to the heart of the administration and policy making process. Relations vary according to the status of the officials, his/her age and the presence or absence of a relationship beyond the official one.

In considering the relations between teachers and officials, one is reminded of the fact that teachers are also civil servants. In terms of both pay and status theirs is a lowly position within the civil service. Within the education system itself, teachers have little power to exercise control or implement changes. The domain of their power is within the school, yet that domain cannot be isolated from the wider realm of the education system and the civil service of which it is part. Thus the teacher's role can be construed as a frustrating one, his/her power is very limited, yet he/she is in close contact with the pupils and is well placed to identify their needs.

This frustration was voiced by the few teachers at Chompuu school who took me into their confidence and were willing to discuss, and even criticise, the education system and the running of their school. In many cases this feeling manifested itself in apathy, and

a degree of cynicism, regarding the ability of the teacher to shape the school, or the education system.

One teacher commented;

*"When Thai teachers leave teacher training college they have many good ideas about how to help their pupils and how to change the school. But after several years of teaching they realise that they can do little. They become concerned with their own job and their own security. They do not want to risk their jobs by arguing with the authorities."*

#### 6.2ii Hierarchical relations within the school.

In theory, the headteacher is the 'supreme authority' in the school (Becker, in Bell & Stub, 1968) irrespective of the teachers' personal opinions of him/her. The position he/she holds contains the authority rather than his/her individual character, teachers must show their headteacher respect despite their feelings toward him/her. Certainly this appears to be the case in Thailand.

Teachers do not *wai* the headmaster (2); when they meet him in the morning, they exchange a few words of informal greeting rather than performing the *wai* or using any formal greetings. When teachers address the headmaster they call him *khruu yai* (literally 'big' teacher), they use this respectful term of address whether they meet him at the school or socially. Teachers only use his name when referring to him in the third person, then they call him *khruu yai somchit* (the title followed by his name) in order to distinguish him from other headmasters.

When the teachers of Chompoo school speak to their headmaster they use either central or northern Thai, depending on the formality of the occasion. Informally they speak the local language although

they use the polite terms *khrap* and *khao* or *kha* (used by men and women respectively), which are often omitted from informal speech between 'equals'. The headmaster calls the teachers by their names or nicknames without any additional terms of address.

The headmaster of Chompuu generally eats his lunch at the school with the teachers. That is the only regular occasion for informal interaction between staff. The fact that he eats with the other teachers rather than travelling to the town to eat; and the manner in which he participates in the informal discussions, reduces the appearance of social distance between him and the other teachers. The headmaster has a great deal more freedom at the school than the teachers. He may leave the school during the day without obtaining permission from any higher authority, no-one in the school questions his absences or his time-keeping.

Vaddhanaphuti (1984:375) comments that;

*"There was an impressive lack of supervision of the Ban Chang school."*

He claims that classroom teaching was not adequately supervised because of the principal's frequent absences from the school. This was also the case in Chompuu school, where there was no close check on how the headmaster used his time. On one occasion a teacher commented that the two 'officials' who had visited the headmaster the previous day and had occupied most of his afternoon, were not visiting on school business, but on personal business. The headmaster's position of authority within the school facilitates such freedom.

The freedom of the teachers, on the other hand, is circumscribed by the presence of the headmaster who is their immediate superior and who is able to exercise considerable power over them. While the headmaster himself does not make decisions with regard to promotions, or salary increases, of the teachers under him (these decisions are made at the district level), his recommendation has a significant influence.

The behaviour of the teachers at Chompuu school toward one another differs from their behaviour toward the headmaster, they are less formal in the terms of address they use and the way they speak. At the school there are eight '*khruu noi*' (minor teachers); although their salaries and their number of years of teaching experience (3) vary considerably, there is no apparent 'pecking-order' between them. Teachers call one another by their first names or nicknames, preceded by the familiar '*phii*' or '*aai*' (4) (meaning older), or '*nong*' (younger); they speak in northern Thai omitting polite terms of address.

There is little apparent division between male and female teachers at the school; both men and women teach all subjects and women can now become headmistresses of the school. The only division which was witnessed during the fieldwork period was in the teachers' social behaviour and affiliations. At lunchtime male and female teachers often sit and talk in separate groups, although this is by no means the rule. The teachers at the school tend to form friendships with teachers of their own sex more readily than with the opposite sex. Nevertheless, the small groups which form among the teachers at the school, are not purely along the lines of sex. The pre-school teacher who associates least with other teachers, and the kindergarten 'teacher', associate more with the male members of the teaching staff than the female. On the whole, the role of the female teacher appears to have been completely accepted in Chompuu school.

The lunchtime break provides a stage for informal discussion of school related matters, and education in general. Perhaps half of the teachers' conversation is related to education, even if it is simply a matter of discussing personal news of mutual friends (teachers). One might surmise that the teachers who do not participate in this daily discourse, are demonstrating their lack of interest in the school, or in 'education' beyond their limited concern of classroom teaching. On the other hand they may feel reluctant to enter into conversations which might threaten or

challenge their positions. One teacher explained that because the teaching circle in the district is very close knit, one must always be careful what one says, even in an informal setting. He commented;

*"Saraphi district is very small, most of the teachers and education officials know one another. You have to be careful what you say to other teachers."*

The teachers of Chompuu school rarely meet socially as a group, they do so only when etiquette demands it; at funerals, dinners and other events to which they are invited as a school. Generally, only half of the teachers attend and these are usually the same ones each time. The reasons for attendance may vary from a sense of duty to the desire to make a good impression on other teachers and, more importantly, education officials, or purely enjoyment of the social aspect of such gatherings, meeting ex-colleagues and friends who may work in distant areas. During the few social events which took place during the field study, the teachers tended to socialise more with teachers from other schools, particularly those with whom they may have worked in the past, than the teachers from their own school. Most Chompuu teachers clearly do not feel the need to socialise together, only the unmarried female teacher expressed regret that the other teachers are apathetic in this regard.

6.2iii The physical structure of the school and its influence on establishing control.

Control, or discipline, proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space. Foucault (1977) in 'Discipline and Punish', refers to the means by which control is established and maintained, in prisons and other institutions, by the use of space. He mentions two features of this utilisation of space which are of interest here; enclosure and rank.

The physical boundary of the school itself creates the first area of enclosure for the school child, and to some extent the teachers (5). It is the area which students and teachers are expected to occupy during the school day. Reid (1986) points out that schools are places where the general public are kept out and teachers and pupils are kept in. At Chompuu school this boundary is not rigid, during the lunch break children are permitted to leave the school grounds to return home to eat or to buy food from a nearby village shop. Generally speaking, however, the pupils should not leave the school during the day without the permission of a teacher or the headmaster.

After school hours the school is used little by the pupils, the rooms are locked by the caretaker who lives on the premises. Twice during the field study the teacher who lives in the village held informal lessons at the weekend. After school, and occasionally at weekends, children play in the playground. It was interesting, however, that pupils would not willingly enter the classrooms after school, several girls explained that they were afraid of ghosts (*kluu pii*) in the empty classrooms.

While pupils are closed out of the classrooms after school, during the school day they become areas of enclosure. In this case for the enclosure of a smaller group (a class) for a shorter period of time (a lesson). Between lessons the children may leave the classroom to drink water or go to the lavatory, however during the lesson permission must first be obtained from the teacher. In Chompuu school, as in many other schools, the most clearly marked and stoutly defended space is the staffroom. Reid (ibid) suggests that this space serves to indicate the status/authority difference between adult and child in the school. Indeed in Chompuu pupils may only enter the staffroom with permission from a teacher. They must stop at the door and *wai* on entering and leaving the room.

As Foucault argues, the principle of enclosure is not constant nor indispensable. Enclosure might not necessarily mean confinement to a particular space but assignment to it; association with it as an individual or a group. Thus the school is the assigned area for the teacher-pupil body; in Chompuu each grade is then assigned a classroom which remains theirs throughout the school year. Within the classroom each pupil then has his or her own desk which remains his/her place to study throughout the term or the academic year.

An association is established between individuals and particular spaces, individuals and groups are separated and identified within the student mass. Foucault (op.cit) claims that such partitioning aims to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to be able at a moment to supervise the conduct of each individual. In the school this mechanism greatly assists the teacher in his/her role in establishing and maintaining control in the classroom. Similarly Reid (op.cit) says that partitioning of the student body into classrooms implies or implores, a level of privacy to the act of teaching. It gives the teacher a level of autonomy which is often jealously guarded.

Another aspect of the distribution of space which Foucault mentions is rank. He claims that the unit of importance in establishing discipline is neither territory (unit of domination), nor the place (unit of residence), but the rank, the place one occupies in a classification. In the school this is achieved by the division of pupils into 'grades'; grades are divided according to age, in Chompuu they are also structured by intellectual ability since each child must pass examinations before continuing on to the next grade.

Not only is space partitioned in the school in order to establish basic control, the division of time into the school year, term, week and day also achieves this effect. During the school day certain times are set aside for eating and playing and others for study. Thus the education authorities demonstrate a recognition

that children require rest as well as study; physical as well as mental exercise. In order that a balance is maintained and that time periods allocated to certain subjects in the curriculum are adhered to, the day is divided into units of time punctuated by breaks.

The divisions are made by the education authorities through the school timetable, and administered by the headmaster and his teaching staff. Thus 'knowledge', or the transmission of knowledge, is divided neatly into different time slots. At the end of a lesson the pupils are told to close one set of books and open another. They might then be 'told off' for continuing to work on material which, ten minutes ago, the teacher was actively encouraging them to complete. A fundamental assumption underlying the school timetable, not only in Chompuu school but formal schools everywhere;

*"...is that teaching and learning fit  
into given time and space." (Reid op.cit;67)*

Timetabling reduces spontaneity for activities and the linking of one area of knowledge to another. Although Thai teachers are able to make minor changes to the timetable, they are restricted by the fact that the Ministry of Education dictates the number of hours a day to be devoted to teaching, and the numbers of hours per week to be allocated to each subject for each grade.

Thirdly, control is established through the use of various symbols in the school, the most obvious of these being the uniform. In Thailand there is a national uniform which primary children are expected to wear. At Chompuu school most children wear the uniform every day. The boys wear khaki, or blue, shorts and the girls blue skirts, with white shirts with the name of the school embroidered on the shirt pocket. On Fridays all Thai school children are expected to wear the 'traditional' Thai farmers shirt with their uniform. Teachers are also expected to wear the shirts (or more tailored versions of them) as are various officials, bank clerks

and other 'white collar' workers. This practice has only been introduced within the past decade (6).

The uniform distinguishes school children from other children in the village, and also distinguishes the pupils of one school from another. Within the school it enhances conformity; individual differences of taste, style or family wealth are diminished by the uniform. It could be interpreted as a way of stating that all children are equal in the eyes of the school.

Furthermore, the uniform serves as a simple means of laying down minimum standards of dress, for the pupils, which are easier for the teachers to police than if there was no uniform at all. Teachers not only reprimand children for not wearing the uniform, but also, on occasion, for being dirty or untidy. Thus, school children are disciplined in a matter which is of importance to their future employment prospects (particularly 'white-collar' employment), that they must learn to present themselves in a manner which is considered appropriate by their superiors.

### 6.3 The Maintenance of Control in the School.

#### 6.3i Speech and behaviour codes.

In Thailand there is a wide variety of behavioural codes appropriate for different social situations. The school serves as a place where the child has the opportunity to make sense of this complex situation, and to learn when he/she must use certain forms of speech and behaviour.

As has been mentioned above (7), in northern Thai lowland communities two languages exist side by side; northern Thai (*kham muang*) and central Thai (*kham thai*). The latter is the official national language; it is taught to children in school and is spoken widely in towns and cities by the educated, officials, the elite.

It has become the key to conducting all business of an official nature, even in rural areas, in the north.

The teaching of central Thai in northern schools has not, however, resulted in *kham muang* being made obsolete. Rather this regional language has remained the informal language used at home, with friends and family, particularly in rural areas. Two codes of speech are used side by side; in the towns there may be many northern Thais who speak only central Thai even at home. However in rural areas, central Thai is only spoken in official situations or with strangers, particularly those of a superior social status. Language is thus used to express social status, to delineate social relations. In the school the way in which these two forms of speech are used is demonstrated remarkably well.

At school children learn how to interact with the teachers, they learn the norms of social interaction. They are taught to respect and listen to school authorities; the headmaster and the teachers, and to behave similarly to authorities outside the school (Vaddhanaphuti, op.cit). The question is how are particular attitudes encouraged and others discouraged ?

One answer lies in the nature of the teachers' behaviour towards the pupils and the behaviour expected of the pupils in return. Thai school children must demonstrate a great deal of respect towards their teachers and headmaster. Pupils address teachers with the formal term *khruu* or teacher, before the teachers first name. (Surnames are very rarely used as terms of address in Thai society). The headmaster is addressed as *khruu yai*; *khun*, although a polite term of address in general society, is only used to address teachers when followed by the word *khruu*. When talking to teachers children should use the personal pronoun *nuu* or *phom* (8). The polite terms *kha* (used by girls) and *khrap* (used by boys) indicate respect (9).

As well as following a code of speech, there is a behavioural code which children must adopt in the presence of their teachers. The *wai* is the central feature of the code, at the school children have the opportunity to learn and practice how to *wai* correctly. Boys often simply bow their heads with their hands by their sides, rather than *wai*. However girls must *wai*, and at the same time bend their knees in a simple curtsy. In Thailand children must bow or *wai* when entering the teachers staff room or when entering a room in which a teacher is teaching; generally speaking they must do so whenever they enter or leave the teacher's presence.

Such behaviour, while in accordance with the traditional Thai behavioural norms, is highly exaggerated. In the village the child is rarely required to *wai*. Thus the school is a training ground for behaviour which is rarely practised in the village but which is essential for adult life in dealing with officials and other superiors. Although differences in social status in the village demand some displays of respect, these are less apparent than those demanded by officials and other town dwellers. Villagers do not *wai* the headman, or other figures of authority in the village, yet many will *wai* a bank teller when attempting to arrange a loan or some other transaction. As villagers' contact with the town and their dependence on bureaucratic proceedings increase, it is important for them to learn the 'appropriate' way of approaching the officials whose cooperation is essential.

Northern Thai language (*kham muang*) is not regarded as an acceptable means for students to communicate with their teachers, either inside or outside the school. There are some exceptions, such as teachers who speak to pupils in *kham muang* when they meet outside school. Whether or not teachers choose to minimise formalities with their pupils when they meet socially, depends largely on the individual character of the teacher, and his/her general attitude towards the children. This matter is not of great concern to the majority of Chompoo teachers because they rarely

meet the children except at the school. Several teachers do, however, occasionally meet pupils at their homes, the temple, or at a social event in the village. One teacher was anxious to adopt a casual friendly approach towards the pupils and their parents in these situations. By addressing them on their own terms, in their own language, the teacher emphasises the common ground they share rather than their differences.

Despite the formal language and terms of address used by children when speaking to their teachers, communication is relatively open. The children appear to regard certain teachers as approachable rather than holding them in awe. This depends partly on the individual personalities of the teachers, some of whom are more open and therefore easier to approach. The fact that all except one of the teachers live outside the village, and very rarely participate in village affairs, means that on the whole, children only associate with their teachers at school. They do not have the opportunity to meet with them in a less formal situation, and therefore the social distance between pupils and teachers is maintained.

The 'teacher' of the kindergarten class at the school is a woman in her early twenties. She is a native of the village. She is not a qualified teacher and is paid out of school funds rather than directly by the government. Her salary is a fraction of that of the qualified teachers. Her situation at the school is ambiguous, she is a member of staff and is included in some school affairs. However she does not attend school meetings, eat, or generally associate, with the teachers.

Her unique situation at the school is highlighted by the pupils' behaviour toward her. They speak to her informally and in northern Thai; in her case this is not considered disrespectful since they know her chiefly as a member of their village community rather than as a teacher. The older children address her as 'aunt' rather than 'teacher' and in doing so identify her with the social framework of the village rather than the school. Only the younger children address her as 'teacher' Even though she speaks northern Thai with the children she

must teach them in central Thai. She is an important person in the first step of the child's introduction into the school system. In her class the children first learn which forms of communication are appropriate in which circumstances.

The manner in which children communicate with each other is consistent both inside and outside the school except when a teacher is present. They use the terms *phii* (older) and *nong* (younger) to address one another. In this way the kinship system of reference used in the village is extended into the school. It does not, however, extend as far as the teachers, who are never called uncle or aunt as are other adults in the community, except by children who are related to them or know them particularly well.

Children in the same grade of the same age do not use either *phii* or *nong* when addressing one another, they simply use one another's nicknames (*chuu len*). Every child and adult in the community has a nickname or an abbreviated form of their first name, which are used by fellow villagers and others in close association with them. By using nicknames the intimacy of a relationship is indicated; by using *phii* or *nong* with the nickname respect is also demonstrated. Children of different ages, however well they know one another, do not refer to themselves as friends but as *phii-nong* (lit. older brother/sister and younger brother/sister), ('*how pen phii nong kan*'(NT)). Age is highly important in structuring social relations even from an early age.

At school children speak to each other in northern Thai, as they do at home. They only use central Thai when a teacher is present. It is remarkable how quickly and effortlessly they change from one to the other as required. When referring to teachers the children use the teachers name as they would if he, or she, were present. I saw no evidence of children using the teachers' nicknames when speaking about them, nor of inventing nicknames of their own.

Patterns of speech and behaviour indicate the structure of social relations; they demonstrate social differences, status relations and degrees of respect within relationships. In the school language is used to establish and emphasise social and status differences between teachers and pupils; at the same time it accentuates the closeness of childrens' relations with each other. Chompuu school is reinforcing a wider social situation, in which various officials and business people are regarded as superior, and must be addressed in a manner which demonstrates respect. At the school children learn many lessons about power and authority, which are essential if they are to be able to deal with those in authority in their adult lives.

#### 6.3ii Authority and the maintenance of control.

In the school authority is employed to ensure control, to maintain discipline. The way in which it is employed depends largely upon the 'authorities' who possess the power to exert such an influence; the headmaster and the teachers of the school. The 'need' for the exercise of authority in the school to maintain discipline, and the extent to which it should be employed is a highly controversial matter. As Kleinig (1982) explains; on one hand it is argued that the exercise of authority in teaching stifles creativity and the development of autonomy, it substitutes relations of mutual respect with those of domination and subservience. On the other hand it can be argued that the use of authority can be an educational experience in itself.

*"The need for authority is basic. Children  
need authority to guide and reassure them."*

(Sennett 1980;15)

If the role of the school is to provide guidance for future life then authority may be important in this respect. Yet it raises the question of "guidance toward, and reassurance of, what?" The supposition that the school is responsible for creating particular kinds of consciousness (10), incurs huge moral responsibility on the school, the teachers and the education authorities, particularly as curricula are imposed without any input from the parents, or villagers in general.

In a more general sense the role of authority in the school may be seen as part of the process of 'socialisation'; of preparing individuals for life in the wider society. Children are taught to recognise and respect authorities at school, in order that they might know how to deal with people in positions of authority, when faced with them in adult life. Although children learn about authority in the family, the lesson of the school differs in that;

*"the school ... emphasizes a new type of unequal and official relationship between children and adults - the latter of whom represent the state and possess legitimate knowledge which the former must learn."*  
(Vaddhanaphuti op.cit;511)

As well as playing a part in the 'socialisation' of the child, authority in the school has a more specific role to play. That is to maintain a level of discipline, a level of control, so that the teaching-learning process might carry on with minimal disturbances. The 'authorities' in the school are the headmaster and the teachers; the teaching staff. Their authority is an institutionalised one, held as a result of their positions rather than a direct attribute to their personal achievements. Kleinig (op.cit;212) claims that;

*"a person is said to be in authority by virtue of holding an office or a position within an institutionalised structure."*

The teaching staff is authorised to act in a limited number of ways within a particular socially defined context; the school.

The authority the teachers and headmaster hold is supported by a multitude of rules, regulations and traditions of the bureaucratic structure to which they belong. In Thailand it also has a religious element; it is argued above (Chapter Two) that the traditional religious association of teachers has resulted in even present-day lay teachers being accorded a great deal of respect.

This is symbolised in the annual 'Teachers Day' ceremony in which;

*"are found not only Buddhist elements but also  
the idea of 'paying respects to teachers'  
(wai khruu) contained in traditional ritual  
of deference to supernatural authorities which  
enhanced the secular authority of the elder."  
(Turton 1975;282)*

The authority of the teachers is also greatly influenced by individual credibility within the bureaucratic structure of the school system and the ability to win the support of others and influence their actions. Acting on authority must be distinguished from having authority; if a headmaster's directives are ignored by his staff and students, it could be said that in spite of his acting on authority, he lacks it.

The headmaster of Chompuu school is in theory the 'ultimate authority' of the school, yet in the same way the power of the village headman is limited by his villagers' support, the headmasters' authority is limited by the teachers' attitudes toward him. While the teachers were highly reluctant to express their views about the headmaster in public, many were keen to do so privately, once they had established a degree of trust in me. Several teachers felt that the headmaster is not interested in the school or the pupils beyond the narrowest confines of his role. He does not encourage projects and activities which might help to improve the school, nor does he encourage the teachers to attend village festivities, or otherwise become involved in the pupils' affairs outside the school.

As villagers spoke of the need of a good headman to lead the village, teachers emphasised the importance of a headmaster who is not only a strong personality, but is flexible enough to be receptive to the ideas of his teaching staff, as the leader of the school. They claim that although teachers may themselves have ideas for improving the school in some way, they would find it almost impossible to implement them without the headmaster's full support.

The teachers feel stymied in their efforts to introduce changes or improvements to the school, due to their anticipation of a negative or indifferent response from the headmaster. It seems that the headmaster's position on such matters is rarely challenged. It must be realised that the headmaster occupies one tier of a hierarchy of authority and responsibility. He, in turn, is responsible to the district education officials and may feel reluctant to attempt to implement changes which may meet with disapproval. The headmaster is relatively powerless without the support of the district authorities, just as the teachers are powerless without his support.

One example of the restriction of power, felt at each level of the educational bureaucratic hierarchy, was the matter of the annual school sports day held in Saraphi district. Teachers explained that a district sports day is held every year, in the grounds of the school adjoining the education office, however in 1987 the sports did not take place.

One Chompuu teacher said;

*"This district education officer does not like sports he is not interested in them. He says that the sports day is too expensive to organise. There are transport costs for schools further away from the town, also the expense of providing coloured shirts for the children. He also says that it takes up a lot of time, the children must practice."*

The headmaster has little strength to oppose such rulings if even he wished to. The response at Chompuu school was that it was 'a pity' (*sia dai*) that the sports would not take place but there was little that could be done. Neither the teachers, nor the headmaster, were willing to organise their own local sports day, against the wishes of the district education officer. The teachers claimed that if they did so without the headmaster's consent, it would cause friction, and they could not work together. On the other hand, if the headmaster supported the event, and the district head became aware of it, there would be conflict between

the two. Rather than risk such upsets, both the headmaster and the teachers would prefer to comply with the district head.

The confines of these hierarchical relations are not clearly outlined; therefore one finds that teachers (certainly at Chompuu school) tend toward conservatism for the sake of safety. They are not prepared to make suggestions, implement changes, initiate projects which may upset their 'superiors' and hence jeopardise their career. As was mentioned above, security of one's job is of great importance to the teachers of Chompuu school. This consideration undermines concern for the way in which the school is being run, and interest in making changes or improvements. Thus the authority structure of the school system acts as an inbuilt mechanism, for ensuring the reproduction of the relations of authority within the school, and restricting the possibility of resistance to that structure.

Moeller (in Bell & Stub op.cit;236) writing about 'bureaucracy and the teachers' sense of power', explains that;

*"there seems little doubt that in matters that really count the popularly ascribed role of the teacher, more often than not, is one of impotence to shape his social environment."*

Teachers feel themselves to be surrounded by restrictions imposed by the policy structure of the school system. This results in a feeling that they are limited in their ability to help the children who may need their support. Several teachers spoke of a desire to help the pupils in more ways than simply teaching them; there was considerable concern for the welfare of the pupils. This was tempered by the realisation that, other than by reaching into their own pockets, there is little they can do. At Chompuu school, teachers' comments reflected that a degree of apathy arises from this feeling of impotence to influence their social environment.

Another factor influencing teachers attitudes toward the school and their pupils is the great stress, inherent in the formal education system, on the preparation of pupils for examinations. The overriding emphasis on the role of the teachers in preparing pupils for their examinations restricts the time and effort which teachers are able (or willing) to devote to activities which may be of more general, long-term, value to the children's learning experience.

#### 6.3iii Reward and punishment.

Although the emphasis of the Thai primary school system on examinations circumscribes the behaviour of teachers and pupils, awareness of, or even fear of failing, forthcoming examinations, does not in itself serve as a means of maintaining order in the classroom. In Chompuu school the children were not sufficiently motivated to continue working when the teacher was out of the classroom. Control in the classroom was maintained by the presence of the teacher, and the constant use of various methods of reward and punishment.

The headmaster's relations with his pupils, the manner in which he deals with them, inevitably influences his image in the eyes of the teachers and parents. The methods of punishment he employs is a major factor in determining the headmaster's image in the eyes of teachers, parents and pupils. The headmaster of Chompuu school is not the 'ultimate authority' in the school in terms of discipline and punishment; teachers rarely send pupils to the headmaster, rather they deal with the child themselves.

The child's proximity with his/her class teacher facilitates means by which to defy this authority and thus mitigate the impact of the punishment. In such a situation the threat of an ultimate punishment of being sent to the headmaster could reinforce the teacher's authority. Where such a sanction does not exist, the teacher lacks support and is under greater pressure in the classroom. Teachers at Chompuu school complained that the headmaster was not strict enough with the pupils,

that the pupils did not fear him and therefore he had minimal control over them.

A teacher's sense of power or lack of it may greatly affect his/her attitude towards his/her job, peers and pupils. The teacher's authority over his/her pupils is unquestionable, yet the effect of this authority depends greatly on the teachers manner of dealing with the children and the general image he/she portrays to the pupils and their parents, as well as to the other teachers. At Chompuu school the teachers' manner of dealing with their pupils varied from informal friendliness to the rigid discipline.

In the school there are many controls a teacher can exercise over a child other than direct punishment. In theory the school system operates on both reward and punishment; the degree to which the teacher exercises either determines the nature of the pupils' response. In the Chompuu classrooms a simple method of reward employed on a daily basis by many of the teachers was for fellow pupils, and the teacher, to applaud a child who has answered a question correctly or read a piece of work to the class.

Thus the acceptance, and recognition, of one's peers, as well as one's teacher, is utilised to encourage the child in his/her work; or to punish him/her (by not applauding) when his/her work is sub-standard (that is below the standard expected of him/her by the teacher). More subtle ways of rewarding the child include, the teacher's manner of speech, tone of voice and behaviour. Some teachers tend to rely more on punishment than reward to exercise their authority and vice versa. The result is that some teachers are feared more than others. Johnson (in Bell & Stub op.cit) claims that there is no doubt that reward can be very effective and less likely to produce undesirable side-effects than punishment.

One of the male teachers who shares the teaching of grades five and six, claims that he prefers the casual friendly approach to his pupils. He says that he is more like one of the children than one of the teachers ("*phom muan pen dek mai muan pen khruu*"). He realises that as a result of this approach his class is often noisier and more unruly than other classes and that he sometimes has trouble maintaining control. Nevertheless his point was that strict control is not always necessary in the classroom. It could be said that a casual relaxed atmosphere is more likely to facilitate learning, than an atmosphere in which children may be reluctant to express themselves, due to their fear of ridicule or of the teacher's disapproval. On the other hand, such an atmosphere may enable lazy children or slow learners to fall behind in their work, unnoticed by their teacher. This teacher was popular among his pupils who claimed that his lessons were '*sanuk*' (fun).

At the other end of the scale is a female teacher whom many of the children fear and few actually claim to like. The discipline she enforces in the classroom is very rigid by comparison with the male teacher mentioned above. She may well have greater control over her pupils than other teachers have. Whether or not this creates an atmosphere conducive to learning, open discussion and questioning, is uncertain. The pupils try very hard to please this teacher, she related that an eleven year old girl had recently said to her;

*"Please Miss, will you smile for me before  
I go home? I haven't seen you smile all day."*

Childrens' fear of this teacher's disapproval, and the desire to obtain approval, is perhaps the most pervasive aspect of her pupils' learning experience. Sennett (op.cit), with reference to western societies, points out that shame has become stronger than violence as an everyday tool of discipline. This tool was employed far more frequently by Chompuu teachers in the exercise of their authority than the use of actual violence. Even when 'violence' (11) is used it is generally the shame, rather than pain itself, which has the disciplinary effect.

Discussions with parents about individual teachers, and their methods of teaching, indicated that many expect teachers to be strict with the pupils, and some actually applauded the use of punishments to instil discipline in the children. They claimed that in the past teachers hit the children more. Not all parents approve of physical punishments, however. Several informants related that parents had complained to the headmaster when they felt that their child should not have been hit.

One past pupil of Chompuu school, now in her late teens, named several male teachers who '*chop tii nakrian*' (liked to hit pupils) when she was at school. When asked whether this was still the case she replied that they had stopped because some parents had complained. When I told her that I had witnessed several teachers hit the pupils on the hand with rulers, and pull their ears, she was surprised. Another villager told the story of one of the male teachers, who was still at the school at the time of the field study, who once picked up an eight year old boy and dropped him on the ground as a punishment. She said that the boy was badly hurt and his parents were very angry. Since then the teacher has been more careful in his use of physical punishments.

### Conclusion

Control or discipline is a highly important aspect of schooling. It may be considered a significant aspect of social learning itself, or important from the point of view that it facilitates, or even motivates, academic and practical learning. Yet on the other hand one could argue that it mitigates 'true' education because of the tendency to emphasise conformity and thus to stifle individuality.

The formal state school system depends upon control in order to function. Due to its bureaucratic nature it is not sufficiently flexible to cater for the many different needs, aspirations, desires, in short the different personalities, of its pupils. It must deal with them *en masse*, and does so by making attendance compulsory, assigning uniforms,

prescribing the architecture of the school, the physical layout of the classroom, and the teaching methods employed.

The result is a sense of 'de-personalisation', children become associated with a group - a class, grade or school - and their behaviour is judged according to the 'norm' of that group, as perceived by the teachers. The 'norms' which teachers perceive are generated by their own experience within the education system. It is the education system itself which outlines how a child should behave and how he/she should be treated if he/she deviates from that behaviour. As mentioned above the treatment may be a physical punishment or a more subtle form of humiliation or rejection by the teaching staff. On the other hand pupils who correspond to the anticipated 'norm' of pupil behaviour are rewarded by favouritism in the form of trust and friendliness (12).

*"Teachers [also] treated students who were diligent and attentive differently from those who were not. These students were often given a warm personal relationship, allowed to go outside the classroom earlier, or entrusted to do personal errands for the teacher. Those who did not conform to the teachers' norms tended to be treated coldly and sometimes even ridiculed." (Vaddhanaphuti op.cit;517-518)*

In establishing and maintaining control in the school, relations of power and authority are essential. The headmaster's relations with his teachers determines the behaviour among the teaching staff, affecting the enthusiasm or reluctance for change. In turn teacher-pupil relations determine the pupils' behaviour, either facilitating, or stifling the learning experience depending largely how authoritarian the relationship is. Pupils' attitudes toward their teachers depend greatly on the respect the teachers have within the community as a whole, particularly in the eyes of their parents. In the following chapter the relationship between teachers and villagers is explored in view of the role often ascribed to education in village or community development in the Third World.

NOTES:

(1) See Chapter 1 section 1.5 'Chompuu Village School'.

(2) As headmistresses are still a rare phenomenon in Thailand I will use the term 'headmaster' rather than 'headteacher' in the Thai context

(3) See Appendix 3 ('Teachers' Salaries - Saraphi District')

(4) *phii* and *asi* both mean 'older' the former is used for both men and women in the central Thai language, the latter is a northern Thai term and is used only for men, meaning 'older brother'.

(5) Parents' access to the school is discussed in Chapter Seven.

(6) See discussion of 'invented' traditions, Chapter Three.

(7) See Chapter 4 Section 4.2 'Discrimination of knowledge in the school'.

(8) *nuu* is a term used to address both young boys and girls, it is also a personal pronoun used by boys and girls, it is more common, however among girls, and one often hears young boys use the personal pronoun *phom* or simply their nickname.

(9) *kha* and *chao* are both polite terms of address used by women, the former is a central Thai term and the latter northern Thai.

(10) See Friere 1973 "Education for Critical Consciousness."

(11) The forms of 'violence' used as punishment in Chompuu school vary according to the severity of the offence and the nature of the teacher, I witnessed both male and female members of the teaching staff twisting boys' ears and slapping both boys' and girls' hands with a ruler.

(12) This point has also been made in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER SEVEN: SCHOOL/VILLAGE RELATIONS IN CHOMPUU.

7.1 Introduction.

The relationship which teachers have with their pupils and the degree of control they are able to command in the school depends, to a great extent, on the image of the teachers, school and education, in the wider community. In Thailand, as in many other Third World countries, the role of the school in the rural village has recently received a great deal of attention. Governments, officials, academics and the public, have all had different expectations of the form which this relationship should take.

The controversy relates closely to the question of whether or not education has a role to play in rural village 'development' and, if so, what this role is. The literature is confusing and contradictory, there is little consensus on the meaning of the terms 'education' and 'development'. The present chapter will begin with an analysis of recent theories, and interpretations of the concept of development, and a discussion of what the Chompuu villagers themselves understand by 'development'. I will then go on to consider village/school relations by focussing firstly on the role of the teacher as the teachers themselves perceive it, their attitudes toward the school and their opinions of what form their relations with the villagers should take. Secondly, the parents' views on the role of the school in the village will be explored.

## 7.2 The Concept of Development.

Since the 1950s, 'development' has been the subject of much debate within academic and bureaucratic circles. Yet, even today, there is little agreement of the meaning of the term, the many different interpretations and theories of development indicate its complexity. The limited concept of economic development, discussed in monetary terms, using GNP (Gross National Product) and per capita income as indicators of development, has lost popularity (at least among academics) in the past two decades. Rather, an understanding of development which embraces economic, political and social factors, is favoured.

Writers have differed in their emphasis on specific aspects of development. Some have stressed the importance of involving 'the target group' in development efforts. Fremery (1983) speaks of 'motivation' of the recipients of development efforts, Chambers (1983) similarly stresses the importance of 'putting the last first', Schwartz (1981) writes of the value of 'grass roots self-help' in development efforts. These, and many other, approaches have been well documented elsewhere (1).

The terms 'developed', 'developing', 'underdeveloped', and 'less developed', add to the confusion surrounding the issue. The terms tend to portray the image of a process which has a beginning and an end, yet in reality the process is open ended. Even the so-called 'developed' nations continue to develop (in the sense of expanding, increasing efficiency and so on) their economies, as well as their political and social structures.

Two approaches to development are of particular interest here, in light of the findings in Chompuu village. The first is the 'project approach' and the second the 'community development' approach. These are considered of particular value in helping to make sense of 'development', as it is perceived by Chompuu villagers.

The project approach has come into use with the recent emphasis on national development plans in Third World countries. This approach to development facilitates planning, funding and evaluation by its organisation of activities into projects, which link to programmes of development, with specific but limited objectives in view (Banga 1981). Examples of development projects operating within the Thai primary school system include the school lunch project and co-operative shop project.

Among the many limitations of the project approach, is the fact that it tends to restrict one's understanding of development. It implies that development is that which occurs within the framework of project activity whereas whatever goes on outside (though it may be contributing to the progress, well-being or material gain of the community or individuals within it) is not 'development'. This interpretation (or misinterpretation) was apparent in Chompuu village. Villagers tended to speak of development in terms of specific activities, projects and organised groups (see below). Banga (ibid) points out that there is a tendency, among project designers, to look at rural society as being unorganised and therefore requiring 'restructuring' to achieve the aims of rural development which are decided elsewhere.

The second approach to development of interest here, is the community development approach. Throughout the thesis I have argued that, in many respects, parents of Chompuu school children are more concerned with the way in which education can benefit their child, or their family (individual or family development), rather than 'the community' on the whole (community development).

This finding demonstrates the limitation of the community development approach; it tends to subordinate the 'needs' of the individual and the family, to those of 'the community'. Yet the concept of 'the community' is in itself problematic. While the approach emphasises the importance of looking to the community itself for definition of its needs (Schwartz,1981), it is in danger of oversimplifying the 'needs' of

the community.

Schwartz (ibid;315) claims that;

*"felt needs are shared - even uniformly shared -  
by the members of a community, as are the values  
and attitudes in which they rest."*

However anthropologists are increasingly questioning the validity of this homogeneous notion of 'the community' and are giving more attention to intracommunity stratification. Once the existence and significance of such stratification is recognised, one can begin to understand that the felt needs of a community are in fact very varied.

In Thailand, a Community Development Department was established in 1962 under the Ministry of the Interior. When the Community Development was first established its objectives included; promoting formal and informal education, promoting 'culture', traditional welfare and recreation and democratic local government. Activities initiated in order to achieve these objectives were; area coverage projects, training of community development personnel, improvement of self-help public facilities, implementation of community development work through women's and youth groups and supporting 'community education'.

During what Banga (op.cit) refers to as the 'second period' of Community Development in Thailand (since 1972), the approach has been modified. Kanchanachitra (1976) claims that community development has received unprecedented attention in Thailand during the past two decades. Recently the creation of a 'community dynamic', before performing and development tasks, has become central to development efforts. Specific villages are chosen as core villages from which various activities are organised. By the end of the 1970's 7,000 villages were covered by the department (Watson,op.cit). Even in the case of villages which are not incorporated into the project, one sees evidence of community development programmes which are initiated at the provincial or district, rather than the village, level.

In *tambon* Chompoo a Community Development worker attends *tambon* committee meetings (See Chapter Five), he and the headmaster of the school are recent additions to *tambon* committees in Thailand. Kanchanachitra (op.cit) explains that Community development workers serve as advisors to *tambon* committees. As well as being responsible for the administration of the *tambon*, the committees duties include, the consideration of projects and matters relating to the development of the *tambon*, and publicising government development activities in order to 'keep the public informed'. Further evidence of the Community Development programme in Chompoo is the relatively recent formation (or restructuring) of various village groups, the 'development group, agricultural group, women's group and youth group.

#### 7.2i 'Development' in the eyes of Chompoo villagers.

In Chompoo the concept of development (*kaan phatanaa*) was often discussed by villagers, yet it was difficult to determine exactly what they meant by this term. Several informants commented that Thailand is a developing country (*kamlang phatanaa*), they spoke of the fact that many Thai people are poor (*yak chon*) and contrasted this fact with their image of life in 'the West' where they did not believe that any considerable poverty exists.

Some informants referred to their village as being 'less prosperous' than other neighbouring villages. Several claimed that Ban Taa, an adjoining village within the same *tambon*, is 'more prosperous' (*Charoen khwaa*) than Chompoo. One woman said that Ban Taa villagers are hard working; many own large plots of land which they work themselves, some people also have seasonal jobs such as working in the tobacco factories in Saraphi. She feels that Ban Taa villagers know how to make the most of money earning opportunities. There is a large market in the village which attracts people from surrounding villages, she believes that this is a useful way to make cash, even if a family is very poor it will be able to make food, or gather fruit or vegetables from their garden, to sell. When asked whether a market had ever existed in Chompoo she said there was one once but it was small and ultimately it failed because

there were more people selling than buying (*mii khon khaa nak, khon su noi* (NT)).

Therefore among some villagers, there was an understanding of 'development' as a phenomena which is relative to both time and place. They spoke of the village today being more developed than a decade or so ago, yet not as developed as other villages. Discussions also revealed that many people believe that development is determined by the opportunities open to people, and the extent to which they take advantage of those opportunities. For instance the most highly educated, and one of the wealthiest villagers (2), commented that Chompuu farmers are poor because they do not utilise their time as effectively as they might.

Many informants spoke about development in terms of the various groups established in the village such as the village development committee, the womens' group and the youth group. The development group is a group of influential village men (though women are not barred from membership), who support the headman of the village in the 'development work' assigned to him by the district officer, through the *kamnan*. These groups were established by the Community Development Department, through local administration; district and *tambon* level officials.

In Chompuu the group has nine members, the headman his two 'helpers' (*phu chuai*), five other men and one woman, the head (*phatan*) of the women's group. When asked what the group actually does, members explained that if there is a special project to be carried out in the village, it is directed through the development committee. During the fieldwork period, however, no such project was underway, informants explained that the group was responsible for the general neatness and tidiness (*khwaam rabiab riabroi*) of the village at all times.

Once a year the group directs all male household members to supervise the clearing up of land between their houses and the road. Small posts are placed in the ground along the road, with the names of the male household members responsible for clearing that particular land. In this

manner no land along the road is neglected. One feels that such 'development' efforts are rather superficial in that only the land seen from the road is of concern (3). It is done because it is a government directive and in order to put on a good show, rather than for reasons which will benefit the villagers in a more direct way such as improved hygiene around the home. These efforts reflect a concern to police the population, rather than a concern for 'development' except in the rather limited sense of 'development as physical, tangible, improvements' to the village.

Women's groups (*klum mae baan*) are a national phenomenon in Thailand. In Chompuu it was difficult to determine the purpose of the group, or rather to understand that purpose in the eyes of the members and of other villagers. One informant said that the group was established by the present headman of the village; another explained that it existed before the present head took office, but was not active. The headman re-formed the group and tried to encourage activity. *pho luang* (headman), and other informants said that the main purpose of both the womens' group and the youth group is to prepare food and flowers for the village ceremonies.

Therefore, the group does not have any specific role to play in 'development', if 'development' is understood to mean progress or change. Rather it is concerned with upholding tradition - the tradition of women preparing the decorations for village meetings. Yet in practice this work is mainly carried out by elderly women (who say they are too old to belong to the women's group), and some youths. People contribute time when they are able to, rather than because they belong to a particular group within the village. One middle aged woman commented that in Chompuu the groups 'don't stick' (*klum mai tit kan* (NT)), meaning that the groups are formed, but they do not necessarily function as they ought. She spoke of the low level of cooperation in Chompuu village and the villagers' love of 'freedom' (*isala*) which she believes hinders development (4).

The youth group (*klum num sao*) is also a national phenomena which has been incorporated into Community Development efforts. Discussions with members of the group and other young people (the group does not cater for a specific age group but for the unmarried), revealed that the activities of the group in Chompuu had little to do with 'development'. The group is not involved in any kind of educational, training or employment activities. Meetings appear to be purely recreational, organising the occasional sports event, or helping to prepare for village festivals. Several informants mentioned that there is a second 'youth group' (*klum yawachon*), which caters for fifteen to twenty-five year olds, organised at the *tambon* level. This group organises training in skills such as sewing, cooking and woodwork as well as arranging sports and social events.

In discussing the youth group and the women's group with informants one felt that such groups were rather alien notions to the villagers, there was a sense of imposition of ideas from outside (the district and *tambon* offices) rather than a growth of ideas from within the village itself. The government, through its local level offices, is giving structure to a system of cooperation which has existed in an unstructured form for generations.

The majority of informants did not see the groups as having an educational role in the village. There were some isolated examples such as one young woman in her mid-twenties who explained that the co-operative arranges for some of its younger members to attend meetings and seminars which are of educational value. Only one village man spoke of the role of these various groups in the general 'education' (*sukksaa*) of the villagers. He commented;

*"In the village there are many sources of education; parents, school, temple and also group membership and meetings. Young children learn from their parents, later they go to school and learn from their teachers, but some do not listen or they forget and they must learn again (tong rian iik). Some people*

*continue to learn from the temple, but not everyone because it is not compulsory to go. The village groups teach villagers to be good people (khon dii), to work together and help each other."*

### 7.3 Education and Development.

That there is a relationship between education and development is almost beyond dispute. It is disagreement over the expectations of this relationship which continues to fire academic debate on the subject. As Champaton (1984;19) explains;

*"That educational progress and national socio-economic development are but two sides of the same coin can hardly be disputed. Whether the former is the determinant of the latter or the latter of the former has long been the preoccupation of socio-economic and educational experts and policy-makers."*

Much of the debate centres around question of the 'relevance' of formal academic education to the rural communities of the Third World. Academics since the 1960's have questioned the importance of teaching an academic curriculum to the children of rural farmers, the majority of whose futures' lie in the rural community, at the expense of a more 'practical' curriculum content. The implication is that education should be functional within the community; it is not enough that education should increase knowledge, schooling should provide children with knowledge and skills which are relevant to their futures' as adults in the community.

The potential of the school which, due to its bureaucratic nature, is slow to respond to felt needs, to meet the changing requirements of dynamic Third World communities, is limited. Furthermore, the suggestion that the school ought to play a role in meeting the 'needs' of the community, creates another problem: that of defining and interpreting the 'needs' of a given community. Who is to decide what these needs are? How is the urgency of various needs to be qualified? .

7.3i Can the village school promote 'development' within the community?

Most Chompuu villagers spoke little of the relationship between education and development, they did so only when prompted by specific questions, rather than in the general course of discussion. As mentioned above, almost all informants spoke in terms of personal (or family), rather than community, development. They expressed the hope that by sending their children to school they may improve their chances of obtaining much sought after 'white-collar' positions.

It was suggested above (5) that one reason why this remains a very important consideration for rural families is that the family itself can hope to reap benefits if their child becomes a nurse, doctor, teacher or general government official. These positions include benefits such as subsidised schooling or hospital care for the entire family. If the child becomes a policeman or another kind of official he/she will be able to provide assistance in the complicated bureaucracy which surrounds business transactions, such as the sale or purchase of land, or obtaining a loan. Thus he/she performs the role of 'gatekeeper' of the valuable knowledge of how to deal most effectively with people in positions of authority and with bureaucratic proceedings. The fact that education itself, in terms of acquiring literacy and numeracy, can also be of great help was not mentioned by informants. Education is seen as a means to an end, rather than something valued in its own right.

In Chompuu village many parents see education as a form of investment for their children. Most expressed the desire to educate their children for as many years as possible. Nevertheless less than half of primary school graduates continue their academic studies to the secondary level. Some parents differentiate between the importance of sending boys and girls to high school. A report about northeastern Thai mother's educational expectations of their children (Chongratana & Manaspaibul,1985), found that rural women place higher expectations on their sons to complete secondary and tertiary levels of education, than their daughters. The report revealed that 20% of those surveyed expected their son to complete university and 17% expected their daughters to finish university. This contrasts with 40% and 38% of urban women's expectations for their sons and daughters.

In Chompuu village one mother commented;

*"It is better for boys to go to high school  
than girls because girls will marry and then  
do not need to work except at home, then their  
studies are wasted."*

This comment reflects the attitude that education is an investment for the child; there is an underlying assumption that the purpose of a child attending high school is in order to secure a well paid job.

Parents feel that by sending a child to high school they are safeguarding the child's future as well as their own future (old age). As land shortages become increasingly severe and fewer youths are able to rest their futures on the land, the importance of higher education as an investment is becoming more significant. Provision of education is a form of investment comparable with investment in land. Discussions revealed that parents do not expect 'repayment' (in monetary form or in kind) for this investment. Informants said that they would be happy if their children sent money home once they had found jobs in the city, but their observation of other families in the village taught them not to expect them to do so.

The concept of sending a child to high school in order to broaden his/her knowledge, is a luxury which few villagers could afford; the consideration of obtaining a job remains primary. Indeed many villagers expressed the view that for a child to be highly educated, and then either to be unemployed or employed in a position 'unsuited' to his/her academic qualification, is a waste of time and money (*sia welaa sia ngoen*). A point commonly made was that higher education makes a child choosier and lazier, one woman commented;

*"when children study too high (rian sung  
koen pai) their parents must give them money  
and look after them for many years. Even when  
they are adults they cannot help themselves  
because they have never had to do so in  
the past."*

Furthermore, villagers recognise that the higher educated a child is, the less enthusiasm he/she is liable to have for farming and other manual occupations. Fremery (1983;37) states;

*"In most Third World countries school and  
university education promotes rejection and  
ignorance of the fundamental problems of  
development, particularly in the rural areas  
of the students' countries."*

By investing in higher education for their children, parents are automatically encouraging them to turn away from the 'traditional' occupations of the community and, by implication, to seek occupations outside the community.

One unusual case in Chompuu was that of a young man who graduated as a student of law, from a university in Bangkok and, having failed to find employment, returned to the village to establish his own small business. With the help of his wife and siblings he now makes mesh window screens to sell in the town or city (few villagers could afford the product). Informants discussed this young man's case as an example of the fact that higher education is often a waste of time and money. They respected the fact that, in spite of his education, he had made a

success of a form of employment within the village, rather than turning away from it.

#### 7.4 The Role of the School Teachers in the Village Community.

If the school is to contribute in any manner to the well-being or 'progress' of the village; or indeed if the villagers are to support the 'growth' and 'development' of the school, there must be a degree of understanding between the two groups. Traditionally in rural Thailand the teacher has held a position of respect and prestige in the community.

*"Owing to the tradition of the teaching profession being associated with the sacred priests, the present generation of lay teachers hold a very respected position in society and have unquestioned authority over their students who obey them implicitly. The word 'teacher' is sacred and, consequently, teachers are much respected." (Jumsai op.cit;14)*

In the past the teacher was an outsider who came to work, and occasionally live, in the village. He/she was more highly educated than the farmer. He represented the 'new knowledge' which the farmer knew little or nothing about. In 1954 Cowen & McClean wrote;

*"In a large number of Thailand's rural communities the teacher may well be the only educated outsider, and if these communities are to develop along the desired path it is necessary for the teacher not only to be effective in the classroom, but also as an agent of change in the community at large." (Cowen & McLean 1954;535)*

The question is; "what is the 'desired path' along which communities

should develop?" "How is the teacher to assist communities along that path?"

Clearly some feel that the teachers' role, at least in rural communities of the Third World, involves more than simply teaching. The teacher is expected to contribute to the affairs of the village and thus to support the village on the path to development. Yet, in many respects, the teachers and the villagers belong to different groups and there is little common understanding between them. Teachers are civil servants and it is this official status which separates them most clearly from the villagers, the majority of whom are small farmers.

As an increasing number of youths throughout the country have attended high school, college and university; the teachers are no longer the only highly educated members of rural communities. In 1960 Tambiah wrote that the prime representative of the 'new' literacy in the central Thai language were the village school teachers. Today many villagers are partially literate in central Thai, if even only to the point of being able to write their own name (6). The aura of the teacher has no doubt been diminished as a result of their decreased monopoly on the 'new' literacy.

Teachers maintain an ambiguous position in the rural village. Most, particularly in areas close to district or provincial centres, do not live in the village, and in this sense are 'outsiders' to the community. Teachers mediate between the Ministry of Education, from whom they receive their specific instructions on how and what to teach, and the members of the community in which they work. As Hanks (op.cit) points out, the teacher must satisfy both groups without antagonising either. As educators of the farmers' children, the teachers play a major role in influencing the village childrens' attitudes, behaviour and beliefs.

#### 7.4i Teachers' attitudes toward the school and the village.

Initially it was difficult to determine Chompuu teachers' attitudes toward the village in which they teach, and understanding of their role within it, due to general lack of interest in the issue and confusion over some of the questions which were asked. This appeared to result from the low importance attributed to teacher-parent and school-village relations and the relatively low profile these relations take in Chompuu village. Some teachers who had experienced rather different situations in other villages were more outspoken in their views. In time many of the teachers' attitudes were inferred from their more general comments about teaching, the school and the village. Furthermore, observation of their participation (or lack of participation) in village affairs, as well as their behaviour toward the parents of their pupils, gave strong indications as to how they viewed their relationship with the villagers.

There was a general feeling among the teachers, that many of the school's problems relate to shortage of funds from the government, and the inability of the school to depend on the financial support of the villagers, due to their meagre incomes. The headmaster made a point of explaining that, whereas in the past the school sometimes appealed to villagers for financial assistance, they no longer do so. The teachers regard many of the Chompuu school children as poor, they claim that this causes problems in the school such as poor nutrition and low level of hygiene. During a lesson about health, the third grade teacher treated some sores on the feet and legs of one of the pupils, while doing so he pointed out that if the children wore proper shoes their feet would not get into such a bad condition. He later explained to me that many of the children's parents cannot afford to buy them shoes, most wear slip on rubber sandals and some do not wear any shoes at all.

One teacher also related poverty to the behaviour of pupils, she stressed the importance of parental support with regards to childrens' behaviour. With regards to the role of the school in influencing pupils' behaviour she said the the subject 'chariya' helps to develop

good manners in the pupils. Other problems which teachers related to poverty were, shortage of basic learning equipment (books, pens and so on) and lack of interest in learning, particularly in the upper grades, because of the knowledge that they will not be going to high school.

Thus, in discussing village/school relations, the teachers tended to emphasise the effect of the village on the school, rather than the school's impact within the village. The emphasis was on the village's obligations to the school (to present the children in a clean and tidy form, dressed in the correct uniform and equipped with at least the basic learning materials), rather than vice versa.

The school's obligations to the village often take the form of welfare provision; subsidised health care, lunches, uniforms and equipment, to needy pupils. For example, school lunches are provided at Chompuu as part of a national 'School Lunch Project' (*kaan chat ahaan klang wan*) aimed to provide school children with a cheap nourishing midday meal. In 1977 the project was included in the Fourth NEDP (National Economic Development Plan) (1977-1981). When it was initiated, each school in which the project was to operate was given a lump sum by the government. The project was an experiment to introduce a self-sustaining, built-in system to ensure self-reliance in the provision of school lunches in the future (Champaton 1984). The project relies on the ability of the schools to perpetuate their own school lunch funds and, if possible, to grow food to supplement the lunches as part of the practical agricultural lessons.

At some schools vegetables or rice are grown as part of the practical agricultural lessons, these are then used in the school lunches. At Chompuu school, however, the land available for agriculture is insufficient for this purpose. During the fieldwork period sweetcorn was grown, when it was ripe it was sold at the school to parents, pupils and teachers, the cash was pooled in the school lunch project funds. Teachers reported that sweetcorn has been grown by the pupils for the last three or four years, because it is quick and easy to grow, and is popular with both the pupils and their parents.

As Chompuu school lunches are not supplemented by agricultural produce grown by the pupils, and as the profit margin is minimal, no free lunches are provided. One teacher said that she, and some of the other teachers, generally keep an eye on certain children who are known to be from poor families and who often do not have any lunch; they sometimes give the children money to buy lunch. This is not done systematically and the teachers pay out of their own funds rather than those of the school.

Another teacher commented that it is very difficult to provide free lunches not only because of lack of funds, but also because it may embarrass the child by drawing attention to his/her family's poverty. He said that he sometimes offers to buy lunch for the poorer students but they are often too embarrassed to accept. In general, the Chompuu teachers did not feel strongly that there was a need for the school to provide free lunches for some of the pupils, although there was concern that many could not afford to pay. They believed that on the days when the parents did not have the cash to give their child for lunch, even the poorest family would be able to provide the child with some rice. The problem is not one of a lack of food but poor nutrition.

Another government project which aims to reach needy children through the school is the provision of free uniforms. In the Fifth NEDP (1982-1986) it is stated that the aim would be to provide uniforms and lunches for needy pupils. The government provides a number of free school uniforms to certain schools each year, these are to be distributed to poor students. In 1987 Chompuu school was given five uniforms; the teacher who mentioned this said that he believes it is a good idea for the government to provide some free uniforms, but the school does not receive enough. Also it does not necessarily receive the sizes required for the poorest students, uniforms are issued without consideration of the number of each size and sex required.

7.4ii Participation in village affairs.

The question of the extent to which teachers participate in local affairs, and the interest they show in their pupils' home lives, was of major interest to the field study. In Chompuu school even the teacher who lives in the village during the term does not visit families or mix with other villagers. Her social life tends to lean toward other teachers and therefore beyond the village rather than within it. The reason for such alienation lies partly in the social order which distances the teachers from the village community because of the position they hold. The way in which they are spoken to, and the manner of behaviour conducted toward them, sets them apart from other members of the community. Yet some teachers are able to minimise this distance, by the way in which they speak to villagers, and the way they behave. Some teachers are naturally less formal in their manner than others and therefore more approachable.

During the fieldwork period only one teacher was ever seen at a village ceremony. Several claimed to have attended a large funeral in the village but none of the villagers questioned had seen the teachers there. This was puzzling, either the teachers claimed to have attended in order to save face, or they attended very briefly and few villagers were aware of their presence. The headmaster discussed the matter of attendance of village ceremonies at one of the monthly teachers meetings. He said that it was the teachers' responsibility to attend at least the major ceremonies. One teacher then made the point that the school caters for three villages, he asked whether this meant that teachers would attend ceremonies at all of the villages; if so this would be very time consuming.

Vaddhanaphuti found a similar situation in Ban Chang village, he claims that:

*"The Ban Chang teachers were not involved with the community, either in regular activities such as rice planting and harvesting, or in special events such*

*as community development work.  
Their attitude was that their  
responsibility was only to teach school  
children, and their expectation was that  
they would be in the village only temporarily."*  
(Vaddhanaphuti,op.cit;379)

Unlike in Ban Chang, the Chompuu teachers do not, on the whole, feel that they will only be in the village for a limited time, most hope to remain there for many years, if not until retirement. A strong similarity between Vaddhanaphuti's findings and my own, is the fact that the teachers' involvement in the community was minimal and that teachers appeared to regard their role in the village to be purely one of teaching, rather than contributing to the 'development' of the village in a more general sense.

The majority of teachers at the school clearly do not regard visiting parents, or attending village ceremonies, as part of their duty. Some expressed the idea that such careful nurturing of school-village relations was only necessary in more remote areas, where there are few educated villagers and the teacher's position as an educated 'outsider' is more influential. This idea is partially fostered by the government itself which has designated certain 'poor areas' in the countryside, in which the role of the school in community development is greatly stressed. There is a government project called the 'project for education for development of villages in poor rural areas' (*klong kaan kaan-suksaa phatanaa mubaan nai chunabot yak Chon*). Outside the project area the role of the school in village development receives less emphasis. When asked why the school was not involved in any development projects in Chompuu village the headmaster laughed and explained that Saraphi district is not one of the poorest rural areas (*'amphoe Saraphi mai yak Chon*).

Some teachers blamed poor village-school relations on the headmaster and the teaching staff in general. The teacher of the pre-school class commented;

*"Chompuu school does not have any 'activities' (kitchakan). The teachers don't like activities, they only like to teach (chop song nangsd). I don't like to teach but I enjoy activities."*

Other teachers said that relations between teachers and villagers would only be improved if the headmaster were willing. There must be a general school policy on participation in local affairs and a strong leader is required to ensure that it is carried out. One of the male teachers who lives in Mae Salaap, a neighbouring village, said that the headmaster of Mae Salaap school is a good example of a headmaster who shows concern for the villagers and becomes involved in all major village events. Indeed during the '*loi katon*' festival in November he was actively involved; the school participated in the parade which visits several villages on the night of the festival, the children were dressed in costume and some played instruments. Chompuu school, on the other hand, did not participate in the festivities at all.

The teachers at Chompuu school were divided between those who considered strong teacher-villager relations important and those who had little to say on the matter. The former had many reasons, explanations, and excuses, for the poor relations at Chompuu. All expressed a desire to improve the situation, but saw lack of consensus among teachers, lack of support from the headmaster and lack of time and resources, as the major obstacles. The latter group did not regard involvement in village affairs as one of their responsibilities, although some did show considerable concern for the family situations of particular pupils.

### 7.5 Villagers' Perception of the Role of the School in the Village.

The villagers when speaking about teachers, do not distinguish between male and female. The role of the female teacher appears to have been accepted. In fact less than a decade ago there was a female head teacher at Chompuu school. She related that having received good grades at high school her parents encouraged her to become either a policewoman or a teacher and she chose to become a teacher. She claims that it was more difficult for her to obtain the position of head teacher than for a man. However she said that she did not suffer discrimination while acting as head. Hanks said that in Bang Chan village the people were glad to know that some of the teachers had formerly taught as priests in the temple schools,

*"but they raised no questions when women  
later came in to instruct their sons."*

(Hanks 1958;11)

Today almost half of all primary teachers in Thailand are women (7).

Cowen and McLean (op.cit) maintain that teachers in rural areas are still highly respected. Yet in Chompuu, while villagers demonstrated respect in their manner of speech and behaviour towards the teachers; many claimed that the teachers are lazy, others that they are not interested in the pupils' lives beyond the school. One man said that teachers who pass through the village each day on motorcycles on their way to the school do not even make the effort to exchange a few words of greeting with villagers. Many people claim that they know only the teachers who have taught at the school for many years; yet other informants said that they know more of the teachers than they would have done in the past, because of the increase in the frequency of meetings held at the school. Teacher-parent communication takes place almost entirely at the school, in formal situations; at meetings or 'open days'. As teachers and parents do not meet in the village on a regular basis there is little opportunity for informal discussion of school affairs.

During the six month field period there were two parent/teacher meetings at the school. The first was a celebration of 'mother's day' (*wan mae*) in August. All of the mothers were invited by the headmaster, via the pupils, to attend a small ceremony at the school. About sixty (less than half) of the mothers went to the school, this was considered a good turn out by the teachers, particularly as the rice planting had not yet been completed and demands on labour at that time were consequently high. The ceremony was held in the meeting hall. Chairs were set up at the front of the hall, facing the back, for the teachers, and rows of chairs were set out for the parents. Pupils sat on the floor in front of the mothers.

The headmaster was absent, attending a meeting at the district office, therefore one of the male teachers led the proceedings. The longest serving teacher (a woman) spoke to the group about the importance of mothers. The mothers were then invited to come to the front, row by row, to sit as their children knelt before them, with their hands on their feet while the male teacher read a passage about the relationship between mother and child. The children then gave their mother a paper jasmine flower which had been made the day before at school (8).

After the ceremony prizes were awarded to pupils whose essays and drawings had won a competition judged by the teachers on the previous day. The prizes were pencils and books. Milk was served (9) to mothers and the children by teachers and some of the older pupils. The mothers then left and many pupils went home early with them. The occasion was highly emotional, some teachers explained that they were moved to tears by the passage which was read while the children knelt at their mother's feet. Many children wept because their mothers could not attend, or because they were separated from their mothers. An interesting point was that there was minimal communication between teachers and the mothers. Although some teachers made the effort to speak to the mothers, on the whole the two groups remained separate.

On another occasion, in September, all of the parents were invited to the school for a meeting as well as to talk to teachers and visit their children's classrooms. About eighty people turned up, most were pupils' mothers, there were some fathers as well as grandparents and other relatives who act as guardians to the children (see Chapter One). The headmaster chaired the meeting, which again was held in the hall. He spoke about the village health centre and introduced one of the nurses who had gone to the school to speak to parents.

She explained a new scheme which was to be introduced, whereby villagers would purchase a card which would entitle them, and members of their family, to various injections and treatments. She also spoke more generally about the importance of health care, of cleanliness and hygiene and so on. Her manner was open and friendly and many parents interrupted her to make comments and ask questions. One of the male teachers then spoke of the school cooperative shop. He explained that parents should feel free to use the shop, which may be closer to their homes than other village shops, and which has subsidised prices. He gave examples of prices for various items.

This was an example of the manner in which the school can be used as the arena for the discussion, and introduction, of changes in the wider community. This meeting illustrated that the school, like the village temple, can be a vehicle for local government schemes (in this case health care, and the cooperative movement) which are not necessarily directly related to schooling. After the meeting some parents took the opportunity to visit the classrooms and talk to teachers about their children's work.

Some informants claim that in the past teacher-parent relations were much closer than today. They say that teachers and villagers worked together, teachers could rely on the villagers to help at the school, and when a meeting was held there was a genuine exchange of ideas. An elderly village man greatly concerned with the 'prosperity' of the village said;

*"In the past the school and the village  
'joined hands' (Chap md), today they  
don't join hands, the two groups  
are far apart. If they join together  
they can help each other."*

Thus his interpretation of 'prosperity' or 'well-being' of the community incorporates a sense of unity and cooperation. Other villagers also believe that there is a great distance between teachers and villagers today, and that this prevents them from working effectively together. If communications were better, development of both the school and the village would be facilitated.

Reasons postulated for this change also varied; according to some villagers, the teachers today have a heavier work load than in the past, they have to prepare statistics for the district office and also have to attend meeting and seminars regularly. Other informants were less sympathetic and blamed teachers for their lack of interest in the village's affairs. They said that the teachers of today are highly educated and qualified, they have all attended college and many also have university degrees. The implication was that teachers feel themselves to be 'above' the villagers and their affairs. Thus the teachers' lack of involvement in the village may be an indication of a wider feeling of uneasiness between teachers and the village community.

For the past decade or so there has been an 'education committee' (*kamakaan kaansdkksaa*) in the village. It consists of the school head, who acts as chairman, the headmen of the three villages whose children attend the school, and elected members from the three village populations. The committee has seventeen members, three of whom are women. Members were reluctant to give much information regarding the activities of the education committee. Many suggested that the headmaster was the person to talk to. Some even claimed that they rarely attend meetings and could not say when the last one was or what was discussed. The general feeling communicated was that the committee is the concern of the headmaster not the villagers.

These education committees have their origins in the early twentieth century. In 1909 all of the provincial administrators, governors and district officers were instructed to set up public education committees in every village in which there was a school. The local committees consisted of the head monk, headman of the village and the doctor (Sukontarangsi 1961); they were not very successful in their work and soon became inactive. From 1935 the provincial governor and the district officer had the power to appoint and discharge the school committee for each local school. At Chompuu one felt that the committee, having been established on the initiative of the district office, rather than the villagers themselves, has met with little enthusiasm.

Discussions with Chompuu villagers indicated certain expectations of the teacher's role; one is that they make themselves known to the villagers. This leads from the second and third expectations; that there should be at least minimal communication between teachers and villagers, and that the teachers ought to attend some village ceremonies and occasionally visit pupils' houses. This third point was disputed by some informants, who maintain that the teachers cannot be expected to devote their spare time to the villagers, as they have their own families to look after. Finally, others made it clear that they expect teachers to be examples of moral integrity and generally to set an example of good conduct for the pupils. This was demonstrated by the extent to which some villagers voiced their disapproval of teachers' behaviour on specific occasions.

Several villagers related an occasion on which one of the male teachers quarrelled with a villager at a temple gathering several years before the fieldwork period. The details of the story varied, but the fact that the teacher had been drinking, and that his behaviour had set a poor example to his pupils, were considered of primary significance. Generally speaking informants discussing teachers' behaviour outside the school, said that the male teachers drink to excess at social gatherings.

In a paper written by the Ministry of Education of Thailand, in 1975, it was stated that teachers are expected to be more than instructors, transferers of knowledge and models of respectability. The teacher is also expected to be an adviser, a substitute parent, a registrar of students' academic records and social backgrounds. He/she is a student welfare officer, a social worker, school building construction overseer and community development leader. It states that the report recognises that many of these duties are incompatible with the teacher's qualifications.

It fails to note, however, that the expectations are also unrealistic on the grounds of insufficient reward for these many 'extra-curricular' duties, lack of time and general lack of incentive. Pressure on the teacher to produce increasing quantities of statistical records, to attend meetings and in-service training programmes, means that they have less time to indulge in the more 'human' aspects of their job. In any case they are primarily assessed and monitored according to criteria such as examination performance rates and involvement in in-service training programmes, by the education authorities and even the villagers themselves. The main problem seems to be a lack of consensus between teachers, villagers and the government on the duties of the teacher outside the classroom.

#### Conclusion.

In order for the school to play a significant role in village development in rural Thailand, there must be a certain degree of communication and understanding between the teachers and the villagers. This is not easy to achieve because in terms of educational background, wealth and social standing, the teachers stand apart from the majority of the villagers. One finds that even when there is discourse between teachers and villagers, it tends to be directed through the villagers whose educational background, or position of authority, distinguishes them from their neighbours. Several teachers commented that they find

it difficult to talk to villagers they do not know, and that when they attend village events they tend to talk to the headman of the village, or members of the education committee, with whom they are familiar. Thus there is a bias toward the wealthier, more politically powerful, and more highly educated members of the village, the poor 'have no voice' (*khon con mai mii siang*) (Turton, Turton & Tanabe, 1984:48 (original author's transliteration)).

The question is whether or not the concept of the school assisting in the development of the village, is actually plausible and if so how it is to be managed. There are many small practical ways in which the school can contribute to village life other than purely by 'educating' its youth. *Phu khruu wan* (10) said that when he taught in Nan province the school used its agricultural plot as a nursery for the village. Children tried to grow different crops or adopt different methods on a small scale and if these were successful they adopted them at home on the land their parents rented or owned. He said that the agricultural plot belonging to the school was small but that sometimes the school used land belonging to a villager and repaid him/her with some of the crop.

A teacher in a village in *amphoe* Fang, north of Chiang Mai, explained that the school where he teaches has a mushroom growing project. It is part of the practical teaching of agriculture but its benefits extend to the youths from the village who help to look after the mushrooms, and are paid from the money which the mushrooms bring at the market each morning. He said that there has been a great problem with drugs among the village youth. He feels that projects such as this one which employ the labour of local youth can help to solve such problems.

Another way in which the school can make a contribution to the village is through involvement in the recreation of cultural wealth in the village, by teaching local history, practising 'traditional' dances and songs and playing 'traditional' instruments. Unless schools make efforts to teach children about their traditional local heritage much is in danger of being forgotten. If the school participates in festivals at

which the children can dance or play music these skills are given an importance in village life today rather than being learnt as an ancient skill. One might argue that there is a paradox in my stress on the importance of the re-creation of 'traditional' cultural wealth and on the role of the school in village 'development'. That is because the popular notion of development is often understood to be synonymous with westernisation, urbanisation - 'modernisation'. In fact 'development' may be seen in a more general sense, as the process of realising all the resources of a particular individual, or group of individuals. In this respect both 'modern' and 'traditional' knowledge, beliefs and practices are significant.

The importance of fostering school-village relations lies not only in the specific purpose of 'developing' the village, but also in the dependance of the school on the support of parents, if not financial support then the moral support which they give their children. Many villagers at Chompuu expressed the desire for greater communication with teachers, and spoke with regret about the fact that they understand little of what is taught today, in the school which they attended twenty or more years ago. Modern schooling has alienated parents from the education of their children, a matter which in the past was almost wholly their concern. Undoubtedly some now feel the desire to become more involved. Several parents mentioned that they cannot even help their children with their homework because they are not familiar with the new subjects. Adult literacy classes were once held in Saraphi town, however today they are no longer available and villagers must travel to Chiang Mai to attend classes.

Closer school-village relations could be beneficial to the school, in terms of making greater use of the resources available in the local area. Although the school has recently established a co-operative shop the children have never been taken to visit the much larger village co-operative shop and taught about the way in which it is run. The villagers who mentioned this, said that they believe it demonstrates a complete lack of interest in the village, on the part of the school. Another example of lack of initiative in this area is the fact that the

school has never taken the children to visit the dairy in the village, to learn about dairy cows and to practice feeding and milking. The woman whose parents own the dairy cattle said that she felt that it would be very interesting for the pupils to visit the farm and she was surprised at the school's lack of enthusiasm. It is such apparent disinterest which has cost the school, and the teachers, the respect of many villagers.

NOTES:

(1) Cohen & Uphoff, 1980; Meher & Hannan, 1979.

(2) See Chapter 5 Section 5.31 'The informal village hierarchy'.

(3) & (4) For an interesting account of discourse about development in northern Thailand see P.Hirsch Phd thesis SOAS 1987.

(5) See Chapter 2.

(6) See Appendix 7 (Literacy Rates - Whole Nation)

(7) See Appendix 8 (The Number of Male and Female Primary School Teachers in Thailand.)

(8) The flowers were mostly made by one of the female teachers, although some of the older girls helped, the flowers were too difficult for most pupils to make. The teacher explained that they could not change the style to make it easier for pupils because that style of flower is made by every school in the country for mother's day.

(9) Cows' milk is rarely drunk in the village, although two families keep dairy cattle they sell the milk to a cooperative in Chiang Mai. It was served after the mother's day ceremony as a symbol of the bond between mother and child.

(10) Phq khruu wan was the father of my interpreter mentioned in several places above, see Introduction, also Chapter 5 section 5.31. 'The 'informal' village hierarchy.'

CONCLUSION: CHOMPUU SCHOOL AND THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY - CONFLICTS AND CONTRADICTIONS.

The nature of the field study on which the thesis is based, was research into the school system in a single village, rather than a broad assessment of education in Thailand. 'Conclusions' drawn from the research are therefore limited to the specific circumstances of Chompuu village and school. My intention is to conclude with a discussion of four central themes of the thesis, and to examine their wider socio-economic implications. These are: social mobility; stability and change; alienation; socialisation and social reproduction.

I. Schooling and Social Mobility.

The concern for schooling as a means of advancing an individual's socio-economic standing, proved highly important in the case of Chompuu villagers. It was argued in Chapter Two that the historical connection between schooling and public sector employment in Thailand, served to whet the Thai peoples' appetite for formal schooling, as a means of acquiring a position in the public sector. Today the incorporation of the village into the wider capitalist system, has resulted in many more opportunities becoming available to graduates. Clerical positions in banks, private companies and factories, are available not only in Chiang Mai but also in Saraphi town. Within the village itself, entrepreneurial opportunities including buying and selling of various commodities, craftsmanship, and services such as renting out machinery or driving, have been opened up by recent 'development' (in the sense of urbanisation and westernisation) of the area. Nevertheless many villagers continue to regard public sector employment as the most prestigious occupation for their children.

In recent years, entrance requirements for the public sector have been pushed increasingly higher by the spread of compulsory schooling in both urban and rural areas, and the increased number of graduates at every level of the education system. Today a tertiary level of education is required for higher level civil service positions and *matayom* five for the lower positions. Yet the ultimate goal of entering the public sector, or obtaining another form of 'white-collar' employment, influences attitudes towards even the primary level of schooling.

Thus the situation faced in Thailand relates very closely to that described by Dore (op.cit) as the 'Diploma Disease'. He explains that, in spite of the growing numbers of educated unemployed, there is a relentless and growing pressure for secondary and tertiary institutions in order to widen opportunity. The impact of this pressure on the primary school is increased competition for secondary school places. Thus;

*"each stage of education quite clearly becomes  
a preparation for the stage that follows."*

(Ball,1981;303)

At the apex of the pyramid are a few highly sought after jobs for the few, and the possibility of unemployment (or 'underemployment') for the majority.

Evidence in Chompuu indicated that, although the emphasis on public sector employment remains, there is a desire, among villagers, for their children to obtain 'white collar' positions whether in the public, or the private, sector. The expression *yak tham ngaan nai opfit*, 'I would like to work in an office' (or *yak hai luuk tham ngaan nai opfit* 'I would like my child to work in an office), reflects the fact that the chief distinction made by the majority of villagers, is between manual and mental work, rather than public and private sectors. The implication is that any job would do as long as it is in an office - a 'white-collar' job.

Some informants mentioned specific jobs they would like their children to do such as teaching, nursing or policework. The reasons for seeking these forms of employment included; salary (the fact the such jobs offer a regular monthly salary is as important as the amount of the salary), comfortable working conditions, regular hours and perks, (such as the subsidised schooling, housing and hospitalisation available to the families of civil servants). The majority of informants were not particular about the type of job they would like their children to do as long as some, if not all, of these working conditions applied.

Salary alone is unlikely to serve as sufficient incentive for Thai youths to seek white-collar jobs. In many cases they must move away from home to pursue job opportunities; many Chompuu villagers have children who have gone to Chiang Mai city, to other provinces and to Bangkok in search of work. Expenses are higher in the city than the village, unless accomodation is provided with the job (as is the case with some teachers, armed forces and other service workers), they must pay rent as well as buying food, clothes, and other necessities. Informants claim that it is difficult to save any money under such circumstances and often impossible to send money home to one's parents.

As well as there being a number of 'pull' factors pertaining to the jobs themselves there is also a significant 'push' factor - the desire of many youths to leave the rural community. Many villagers, in expressing their wish to send their children to high school, and to find urban employment (or their regret of their inability to do so), spoke in terms of escape from rural village life. They explained that they do not want their children to farm because it is hot, dirty hard work. The small farmer is subject to influences beyond his control, such as the weather and fluctuating market prices.

Recognition of the problems of agriculture today, fuels the will to find an alternative for their children. Shortage of land is another contributing factor; equal division of land between all children on the death of the parents has resulted in severe fragmentation. Schooling is a means of providing for one's children without giving them land. In

some cases villagers who have been educated to the secondary and tertiary levels, and have found jobs outside the agricultural sector, have received less land from their parents than other siblings. This might be interpreted as a strategy of diversification of employment within the family, which reduces dependence on land as the chief means of support (see discussion in Chapter One).

Quite apart from the purely material aspect of rural villagers seeking social mobility through higher education, is the consideration of prestige. Chompuu villagers spoke with great pride of children, nephews, nieces, brothers, sisters and other relations who have become teachers, policemen, bank clerks and so on. There is a social status attributed to these positions which is not attributed to agricultural or other manual work. Today entrance to these occupations is only possible through the formal education system. Even though vocational training is required for policemen and other skilled workers, many courses can only be entered after completion of the third year of high school (*matayom* three).

The fact that villagers see the primary school as the first step towards realising these goals, was demonstrated by their comments about the school and education in general. Most were interested in the school primarily as a means for their child to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills, and secondly as the channel for the child to progress to secondary and tertiary levels of education. The majority expressed a wish to send their children to high school, regardless of their actual ability to do so. Only small minority of informants expressed a preference for their children to finish their education at the primary level. This finding contrasts sharply with that of Kingshill who, writing about research conducted Ku Daeng in 1953, claimed that:

*"In general, there seemed not to be much desire on the part of the parents of the children or the children themselves to pursue education to a very advanced level."*

(Kingshill op.cit;66)

No doubt increased opportunity for higher education, in the form of a district government high school (1), and the higher academic qualifications required for various 'white-collar' positions, has influenced parents' determination to educate their children to higher levels.

The implications of this search for the path to upward social mobility through the school are many. Firstly, it effects the parents' attitudes towards, and their expectations of, the school. As I shall explain below, parents wishing to find a means by which their child can escape from a future in rural village life, have little interest in the teaching of agriculture and other practical skills in the school. Secondly, the emphasis on primary schooling as a means of going on to higher education, and the employment prospects it promises, has resulted in a great emphasis on credentialism within the school system. Teachers and pupils feel that, at the end of the day, it is the examination results which are important to their respective futures. Therefore concern for the acquisition of knowledge as an end in itself is not fully realised or appreciated.

Furthermore, there are implications beyond the school, as youths continue to strive towards limited positions at secondary and tertiary educational establishments, and in urban employment. It will be argued below that this emphasis on higher education and urban employment has a tendency to alienate youths from their native village environment. Yet the system does not necessarily provide them with the place in the urban community which its curriculum, both formal and 'hidden, prepares them for.

## II. Stability and Change.

Education may serve as a stabilising force in the community, by passing on the knowledge of one generation to the next, and in doing so maintaining traditional beliefs and practices; or it may act as a catalyst of change. In Chompuu, the school is undoubtedly acting chiefly as a catalyst of change. Yet it is important to note that the two forces of stability and change are not mutually exclusive, rather they exist side by side as potential sources of conflict. The 'modern' Thai school, with its secular curriculum, has challenged religious instruction, which was once the only formal instruction available to the vast majority of the Thai boys and men. Yet it has appropriated elements of that religious instruction and incorporated them within its own formal and hidden curriculum. The 'modern' secular school has provided instruction for girls, who were previously excluded from formal education. In Chapter Three it was argued that the Thai school system has rejected many traditional forms of knowledge and introduced many 'new' forms; science, history, geography, English language. Although such knowledge had long been taught in the royal courts, it is only in the past fifty years or so, that it has found its way into rural villages.

In Chompuu older villagers are unfamiliar with such 'new' forms of knowledge, and find themselves in a position in which their more 'traditional' knowledge is (potentially at least) challenged by the young. Thus the very order of traditional rural society - that which lends authority to elders and those who possess religious knowledge - may be perceived to be under threat. In fact there is little evidence of conflict resulting from this apparent contradiction of interests in Chompuu village. A few informants mentioned that young people are more confident and self-assertive than in the past; however on the whole older villagers did not feel themselves threatened by the 'new' order of knowledge represented by the young.

One reason for the lack of conflict might be the persistence of the 'traditional' respect which youngers have for their elders. Even in the school itself, this central aspect of Thai ideology is stressed. Thus, although youths possess 'new' knowledge and may be sceptical of some of the 'old' beliefs and practices of their elders, they are reluctant to antagonise their elders by non-compliance. Another explanation is the receptivity of the Thais to 'new' forces, their flexibility in times of change.

In Chompuu village I found that, far from opposing the introduction of these 'new' forms of knowledge, many older villagers welcome them as enabling their children to compete for positions in high school, on an 'equal' basis with children in urban areas. Several informants argued that it is important for Chompuu school children to learn English, so that they will be able to keep up with pupils educated at urban schools, once they enter high school. In the city, English language is often taught from the third grade (*prathom* three).

Discussions with parents of Chompuu school children indicated that they are not greatly concerned with the 'relevance' of the primary school curriculum to the village community. They hope that schooling can provide their children with opportunities outside the village, rather than a means for adaption within it. This emphasis may alter as the awareness of poor employment prospects for high school graduates increases among parents. At the moment the prestige, and increased earning potential, associated with 'white-collar' employment is the most pervasive influence on parental attitudes towards schooling and curricular content. Thus the villagers continue to support a form of education which promotes change within their community; that which is replacing 'traditional' knowledge with 'modern' forms of knowledge, which reinforces the dominance of the central Thai language and culture, at the expense of local language and culture, that which tends to draw graduates to the urban centres.

### III. 'Alienation'.

Rural primary school leavers, with their hopes and expectations of finding jobs outside the village and the agricultural sector, may find themselves alienated from the community into which they were born, even though this 'community', or pockets within it (family and friends), may have helped to raise these hopes and expectations. The school promises escape from the village, without actually guaranteeing it. The primary school graduate, armed with his/her primary leaving certificate, may be denied the opportunity to attend high school due to the unwillingness, or lack of financial ability, of their parents. Similarly, the high school graduate may be disappointed in his/her attempt to enter a tertiary institution or 'white-collar' employment.

The primary school leaver is in a position to find employment within the village, starting with an informal apprenticeship with his/her parents or relatives, helping with farming, dressmaking, embroidery, construction work or other semi-skilled labour. Thus he/she might easily find a niche in the village community. This may not be so easy for the high school graduate; who has been increasingly distanced from the village by the demands of the school on his/her time. He/she is likely to have participated little in the affairs of the village during his/her studies, due to time spent travelling to and from school, participating in 'extra-curricular' activities such as sport, and studying for exams. Some informants claimed that high school students in the village have little interest in their parents' work, and contribute little to it. Naturally this is not always the case, a child who has a particular interest in agriculture, or whose parents demand his/her help at weekends and during vacations, may maintain strong ties within the village. Nevertheless, there appears to be a tendency for students to lose contact with the village affairs during their studies.

Once they have graduated they might then have little interest in agriculture or other 'traditional' village occupations. As the emphasis of the formal school system (particularly at higher levels) is on training for 'white-collar' work, they may feel that it is unsuitable for

them to engage in manual occupations. This belief is reinforced by the belief of villagers on the whole, that manual labour is unsuitable for high school or college graduates. However some villagers boasted of the fact that they, their husband or their son, had engaged in construction work or another form of manual labour, while continuing to search for a job in the city.

The school is at the centre of two other sources of alienation in the village. Firstly, the alienation of the parents from the education of their children. As was demonstrated in the final chapter of this paper, parents in Chompuu have little involvement in school affairs. Open days are held infrequently and, although there is a village education committee, this involves a very small minority of parents, many of whom do not have children currently attending the school. Furthermore, as the curriculum changes, and methods of teaching, progress, parents are less able to grasp what is being taught in the schools, and more likely to feel alienated through their lack of understanding.

Secondly, the teachers are alienated from the village community. Whereas in the past monks taught in the temples, and later in the secular schools, today's teachers are lay members of society, generally natives of another village, *tambon* or even district. In the case of Chompuu only one of the teachers resides in the village. As a group they have little involvement in village affairs beyond the concerns of the school. The school and the village have become two isolated entities, meeting infrequently under formal circumstances. This makes communication between the two very difficult, and stifles cooperation which might otherwise take place.

#### IV. Socialisation and Social Reproduction.

The view of schooling held by many academics today, is that the school should not only increase the knowledge of the child, but also help him/her to adapt to the society into which he/she will be initiated as an adult member. Yet if, as has been proposed, there is more than one 'society', one must ask whether the school can cater for the different requirements of these societies. That is, if the school is 'socialising' the child toward the 'urban society', even though only the small minority will eventually live or work in urban areas, is this not a dilemma for the majority of the school population?

Socialisation implies the channelling of thought, and understanding, toward a particular end. Is it not the case that 'true' education develops the mind in a way which transcends the shackles of social and moral constraints? Thus, a form of schooling which has a major role to play in 'socialising' the individual, is perhaps not education in its true sense, but a form of initiation.

The question is, what is the school initiating the children into? In the case of Chompoo, and rural schools all over Thailand, it seems reasonable to suggest that the socialising role of the school tends more towards the 'modern/urban' than the 'traditional/rural' society. This dichotomy is a very real one in the case of Chompoo, one which is discussed by villagers themselves. Many now recognise that the school prepares the children for urban life, and speak of the fact that the more highly educated they become, the more difficult they find it to settle into rural society (see discussion in Chapter Seven).

Another interpretation, of the relationship between school and society is that the school acts as an agent of reproduction of the relations of production in the wider society. Thus, in Chompoo one finds that children are not simply being prepared for the position in society which they are expected to occupy, but are being divided, from the time that they graduate from the primary school into un-skilled and semi-

skilled manual workers, trainees for skilled labour, candidates for further education and so on. The school does not simply mirror the wider society, but is actively involved in reproducing the relations which ensure its perpetuation. As has been argued throughout this thesis, the education system in Thailand privileges academic knowledge and white collar employment. At the secondary level, academic and non-academic (vocational) education are streamed after the third year. Thus teenagers are divided into those who train as policemen (or women), soldiers, agricultural 'experts' (of varying levels) and other skilled workers; and those who complete *matayom* five to enter the work force to compete for lower level clerical and administrative positions, or continue their education at university or college and compete for white collar positions of a higher level. In this way the credentialism of the school system reproduces hierarchical relations within the capitalist production process.

Clearly a single village study cannot be taken to represent the situation in the nation as a whole; indeed during the field study I visited, and heard accounts of, villages in which the role of the school was markedly different from that of Chompuu. In some villages the relationship between the village and the school is more dynamic; projects are initiated which coordinate the efforts of teachers, pupils and parents. Often the difference between such villages and Chompuu village was explained by the fact that these villages are isolated from the district centre and that the teachers reside in the village.

One Chompuu woman teaches in a village in the far north of the country, in Chiang Rai province. The school is larger than Chompuu, with 300 pupils from seven neighbouring villages. There are fifteen or so teachers, all of whom live in teachers' accommodation in the village. The informant explained that after school, and at weekends, the teachers are available to help the children with various projects, such as the planting of vegetables or improving the appearance of the school. Furthermore, because the teachers live in the village they attend village ceremonies and gatherings, thus enabling villagers to socialise with them on an 'equal' basis.

Nevertheless, the fundamental problems of the 'irrelevance' of the curriculum to the childrens' needs, and the social distance between teachers and villagers, which effects their communication with one another remain. English is taught every day at the school as at Chompuu. Yet the opportunities for studying English to a higher level, or of making practical use of the language, are less for these children than the pupils of Chompuu school, due to their isolation from the district and provincial centres. Teachers feel that the time spent teaching English would be better spent teaching more practical subjects such as agriculture, woodwork and cooking. Perhaps parents in this village, as in Chompuu, welcome any form of teaching which increases their childrens' opportunity of advancing to higher levels of education and future employment.

Although this study does not relate to all rural primary schools in Thailand; it is felt that many of the issues of importance in Chompuu would also be significant to other schools throughout the country. In particular those whose proximity to a large urban centre, and subsequent possibilities of educational and employment opportunities within that centre, has resulted in a situation of great potential conflict and contradiction. The form of education being practised in rural Thai villages such as Chompuu, does not appear to be concerned with the village community but with life beyond that community. The focus is 'outward' facing, rather than 'inward' facing; the curriculum (hidden and formal) of the school promises a future outside the village rather than within it. By emphasising the importance of academic subjects, supporting or promoting 'urban' ideals about authority, time-keeping, speech and behaviour, the school is alienating itself from the rural community. In doing so, it is reducing the possibility of the school and the villagers working together, to ensure a more stable future for their children.

NOTE:

(1) In the past, the only high school in Saraphi was a privately owned one, where fees are likely to have been higher than at the government schools.

GLOSSARY

<i>aai</i> (NT)	older brother
<i>a<sup>h</sup>chaan</i>	teacher - a more respectful term than <i>khruu</i> , used to address, or refer to University teachers or teachers with University degrees.
<i>a<sup>h</sup>chaan wat</i>	lit. temple teacher - title given to an ex-monk who acts as a 'master of ceremonies' at temple meetings.
<i>amphoe</i>	district
<i>anubaan</i>	kindergarten
<i>ao mu ao wan</i>	agricultural labour exchange system
<i>baeng khoeng</i>	lit. divide in half
<i>baht</i>	Thai currency, 1b = approx 40B (1989)
<i>bam naan</i>	bonus salary payment (See Chi note(6))
<i>bam net</i>	25 year salary bonus ( " " " " )
<i>bqt</i>	<i>temple building</i>
<i>chaat</i>	nation
<i>chang pen wan</i> /	
<i>chang rai wan</i>	to hire on a daily basis
<i>Changwat</i>	province
<i>chao naa</i>	farmer
<i>'Chap mu'</i>	to join hands
<i>Chariya suk<sup>s</sup>aa</i>	'Character Development' a subject of the Thai primary curriculum.
<i>Charoen khwa<sup>s</sup></i>	more developed
<i>chqp isala</i>	to enjoy freedom
<i>Chao(NT)</i>	pcelite term used by women and girls in northern Thailand, the central Thai equivalent is ' <i>kha</i> '.

<i>dek lek</i>	collec. pre-school class, the more formal term ' <i>triem</i> ' (lit. to prepare) is sometimes used.
<i>dek wat</i>	temple boy (lit. temple child)
<i>doen dom klong</i>	slow meditative walk (See p67)
<i>farang/falang</i>	foreigner - term used specifically for 'westerners', Asian foreigners are called ' <i>khaek</i> ' lit. guest.
<i>isala</i>	freedom
<i>kaan chat ahaan klang wan</i>	School Lunch Project
<i>kaan phatanaa</i>	development
<i>kamakamkan</i>	committee
<i>kamakamkan kaansuksaa</i>	Education Committee
<i>kamlang phatanaa</i>	developing
<i>kamnan</i>	head of sub-district
<i>kesaet</i>	agriculture
<i>kha(CT)</i>	polite term used by women and girls
<i>kham muang (NT)</i>	northern Thai language
<i>kham thai (NT)</i>	central Thai language
<i>khao niec</i>	glutinous rice
<i>khao thao</i>	non-glutinous rice
<i>kharatchakan</i>	civil servant
<i>khathin</i>	a festival held in November during which donors from Bangkok or other provinces visit the village and make donations to the temple.
<i>klua pii</i>	to be afraid of ghosts
<i>khrap</i>	'yes' or polite term spoken by men
<i>khruu</i>	teacher or ex-teacher
<i>khruu noi</i>	teacher lit. little teacher
<i>khruu yai</i>	headmaster lit. big teacher

<i>khun</i> (CT)	polite term of address used when speaking to elders or superiors
<i>khwaam tharoen</i>	development
<i>klum mae baan</i>	womens' group
<i>klum num sao</i>	youth group (comprised of unmarried men and women)
<i>klum yawachon</i>	youth group (comprised of 'youths' aged 15 - 25 years)
<i>klongkaan</i>	programme
<i>kuaitieo</i>	noodles
<i>laap</i>	a popular nothern and northeastern Thai dish of spicy minced meat
<i>lamyai</i>	longan fruit
<i>loi katon</i>	Thai festival which takes place in November
<i>luuk sit</i>	pupil or former pupil
<i>mai chalaat</i>	not clever/intellegent
<i>matayom/rong rian matayom</i>	Secondary School
<i>mɔ̄</i>	doctor
<i>mɔ̄ duu</i> (NT)	astrologer
<i>mɔ̄ khwan</i> (NT)	efficiant at <i>khwan</i> rites (See p107)
<i>mɔ̄ yaa</i> (NT)	physician lit. medicine doctor
<i>miang</i>	fermented tea leaves chewed by elder villagers
<i>mubaan</i>	village
<i>nakrian</i>	pupil, student
<i>nai amphoe</i>	district officer
<i>nen</i>	novice to the Buddhist monkhood
<i>ngaan baan</i>	'Home Economics' a subject of the Thai primary curriculum
<i>ngaan pradiit</i>	'Work Experience' a subject of the Thai primary curriculum
<i>ngai dii</i>	very easy

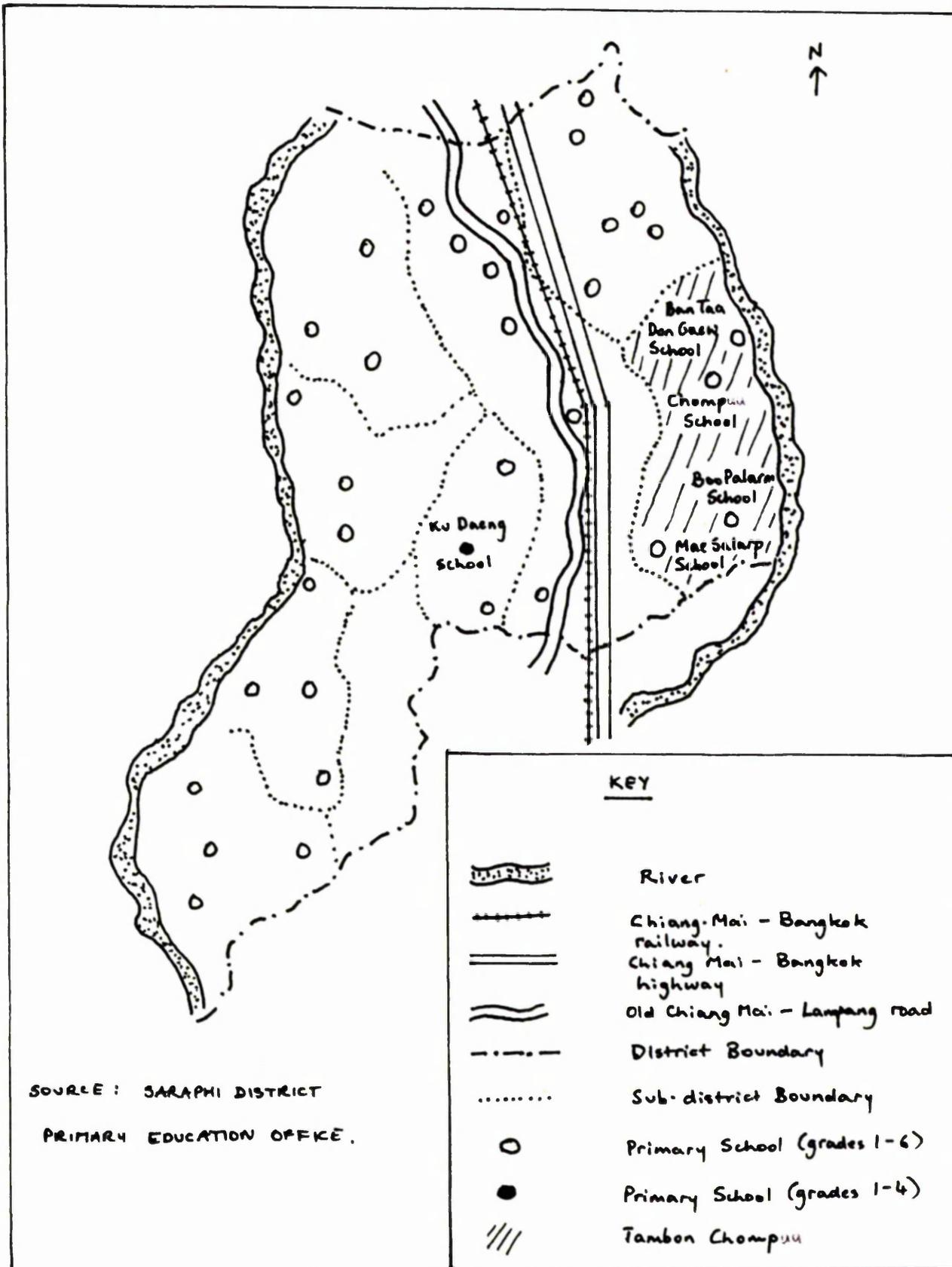
<i>nong</i>	younger brother/sister, also 'I' spoken by a younger person to an older.
<i>nuu</i>	'I' spoken by child (usually girl) to an older person.
<i>phatan</i>	leader
<i>phatanakon kesaset</i>	agricultural officer
<i>phii</i>	older sister (NT) or older brother or sister (CT) used as friendly term of address.
<i>phq</i>	father
<i>phq khruu</i>	respectful term of address used for elderly men who are former teachers
<i>phq luang (NT)</i>	village headman
<i>phom</i>	'I' spoken by men
<i>phra</i>	Buddhist monk
<i>phra mahakasat</i>	the monarchy
<i>phu chuai</i>	headmans assistants, lit. helpers
<i>phu yai baan</i>	village headman
<i>phuan baan</i>	neighbours
<i>prachum saphaa tambon</i>	sub-district committee meeting
<i>prathom/rong rian prathom</i>	primary school
<i>rai</i>	Thai measurement of land 1 acre = 2.5 <i>rai</i>
<i>rian dii</i>	to study well
<i>rian sung koen pai</i>	to study 'too high'
<i>rong rian</i>	school
<i>samai kao</i>	traditional, old fashioned
<i>sangha</i>	the Buddhist monkhood
<i>sangkhom</i>	'Sociology', society
<i>sangsoem prasopkaan chiwit</i>	'Life Experiences', a subject introduced into the Thai primary curriculum with the 1978 reforms.
<i>satsana</i>	religion

<i>satsanasuk</i>	health officer
<i>sia dai</i>	'it's a pity'
<i>sia ngoen</i>	to waste money
<i>sia wclaa</i>	to waste time
<i>tham ngaan nai opfit</i>	to work in an office
<i>tambon</i>	sub-district
<i>tan samai</i>	'modern', current
<i>waang</i>	to be free, unemployed
<i>wai</i>	Thai greeting and display of respect
<i>wai khruu</i>	to show respect to teachers
<i>wan mae</i>	mother's day
<i>wat</i>	temple
<i>wihaan</i>	meeting hall within the temple grounds
<i>yak chon</i>	poor
<i>yia na pha khoeng</i>	to divide the rice crop, sharecropping

MAP OF SARAPHI DISTRICT

(Not to Scale)

MAP 1

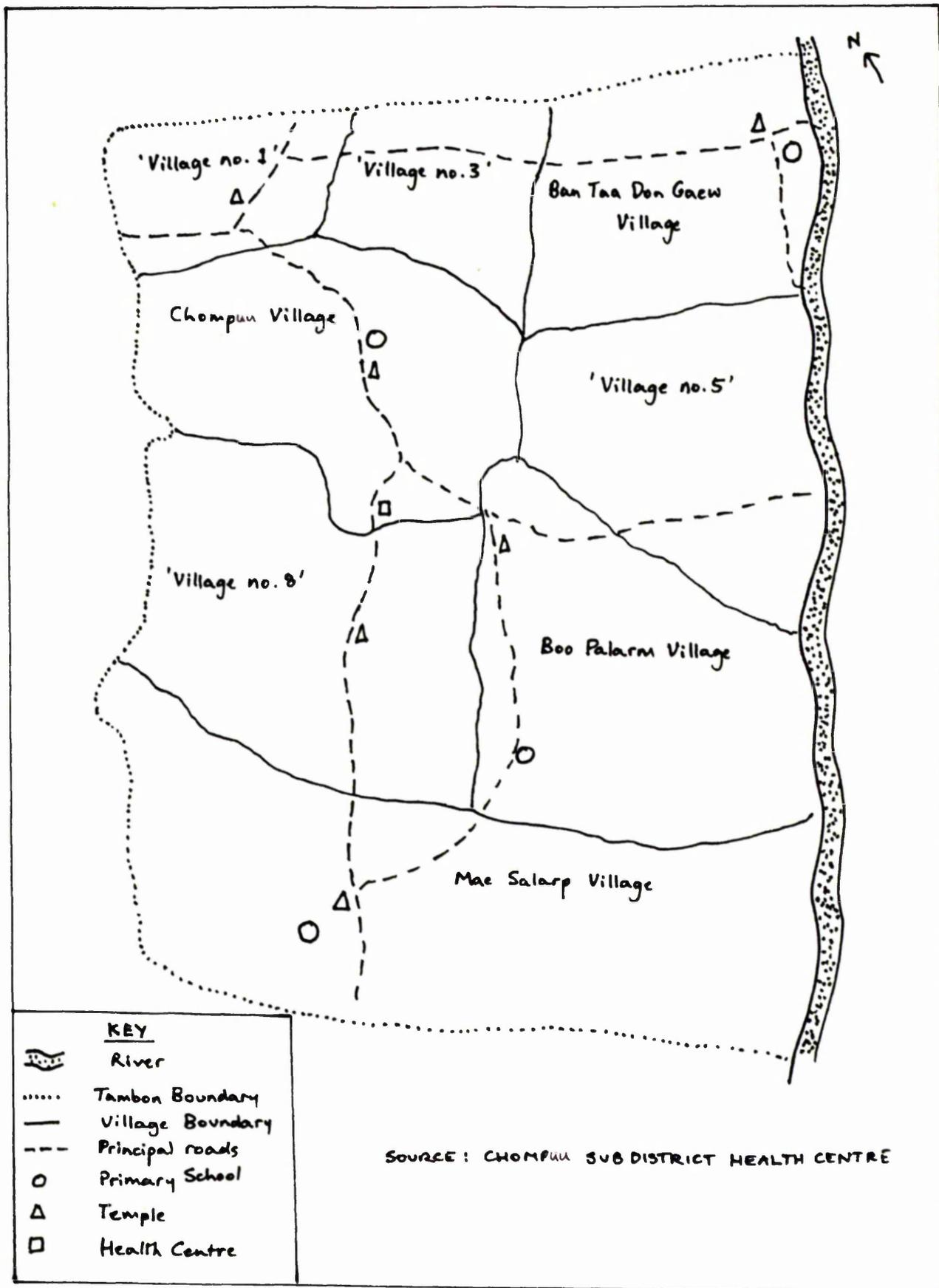


MAP OF TAMBON WAT PANACHOMPUN

(CHOMPUN SUB-DISTRICT)

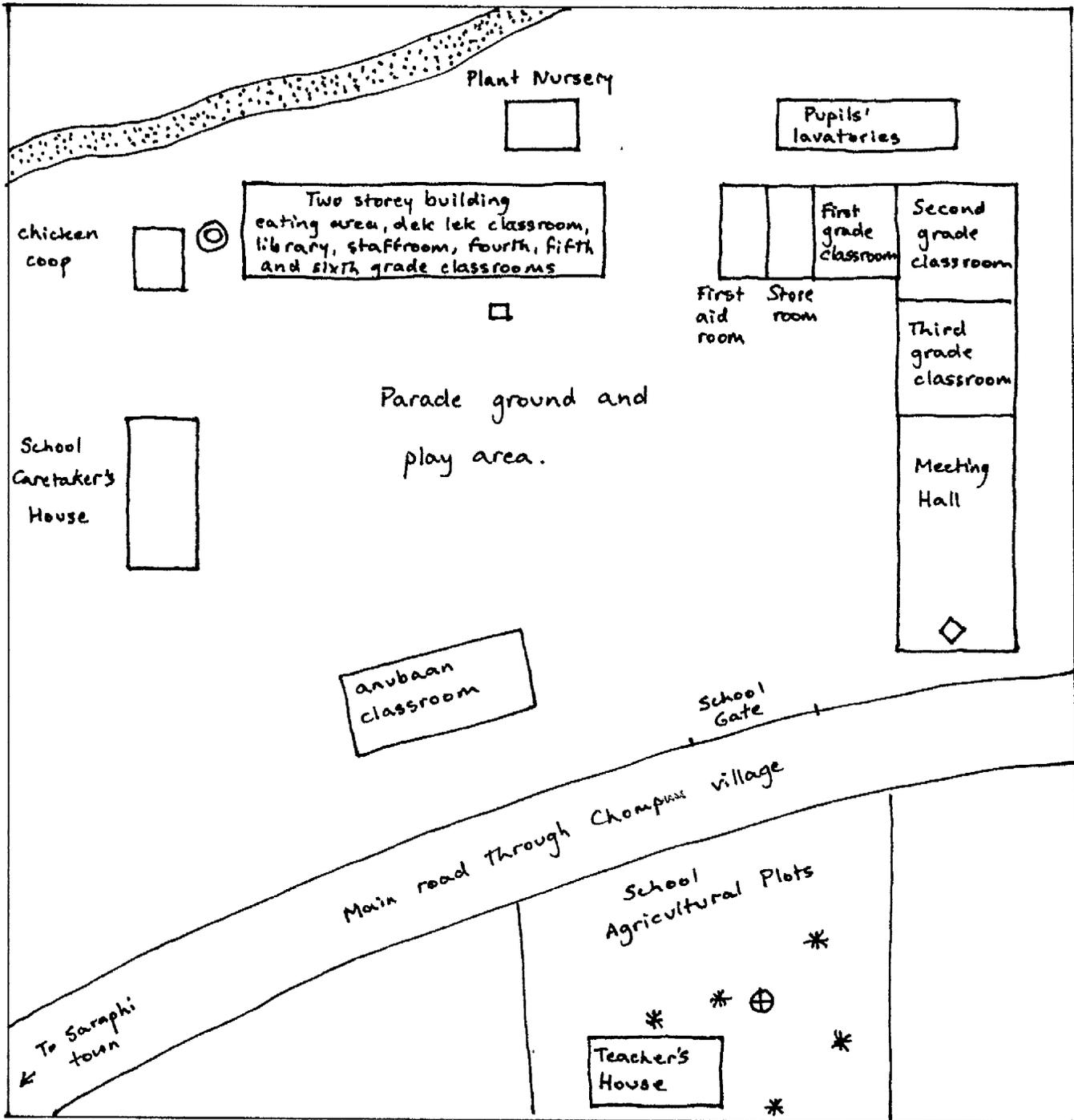
(Not to Scale)

MAP 2



MAP OF RONG RIAN WAT PAYACHOMP  
(CHOMPUN SCHOOL)  
(not to scale)

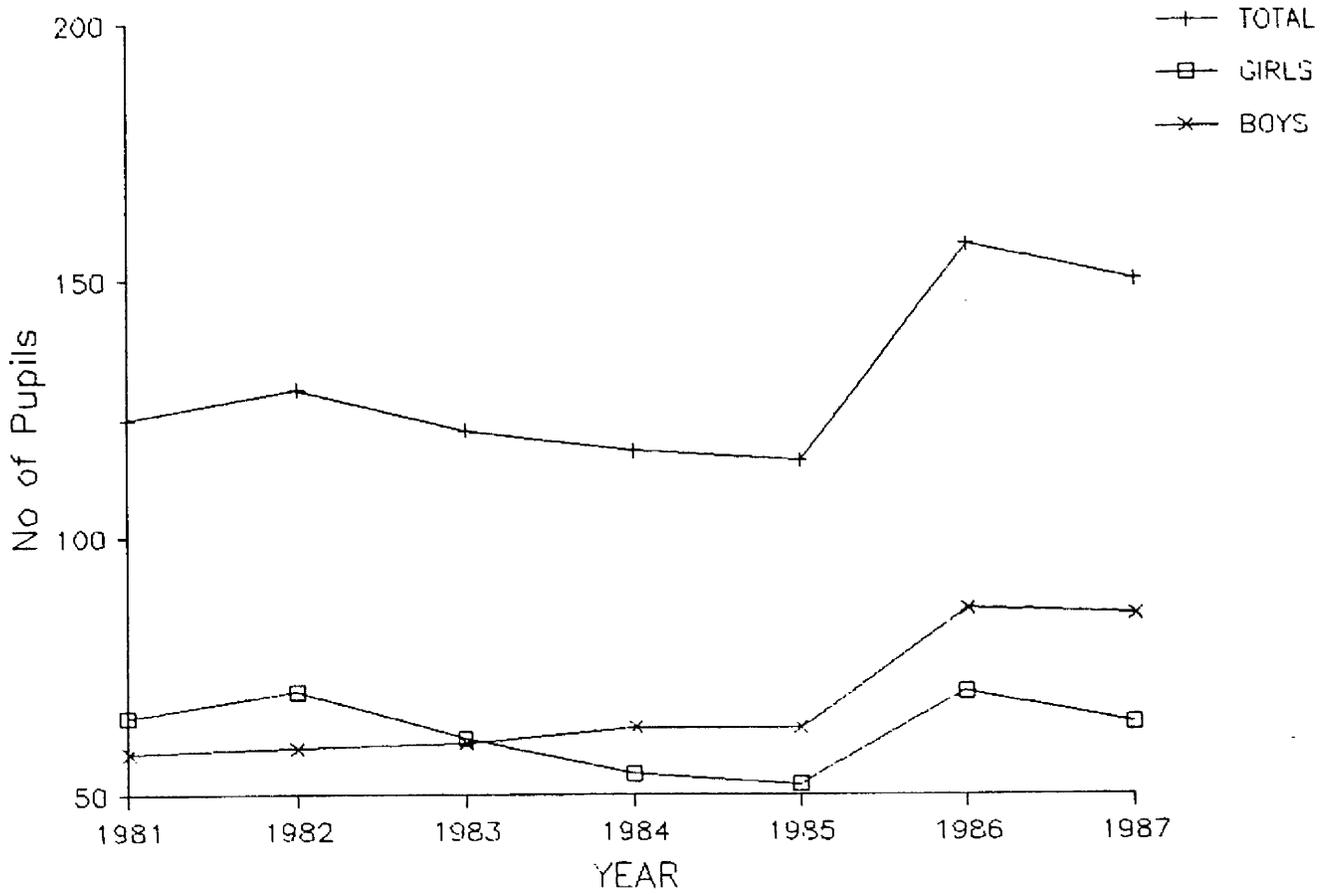
MAP 3.



KEY	
	Irrigation Canal
*	Lamyai trees
⊕	Well
⊙	Rain water storage tank
◻	Flagpole
◊	Buddha Image

APPENDIX NO. 1.

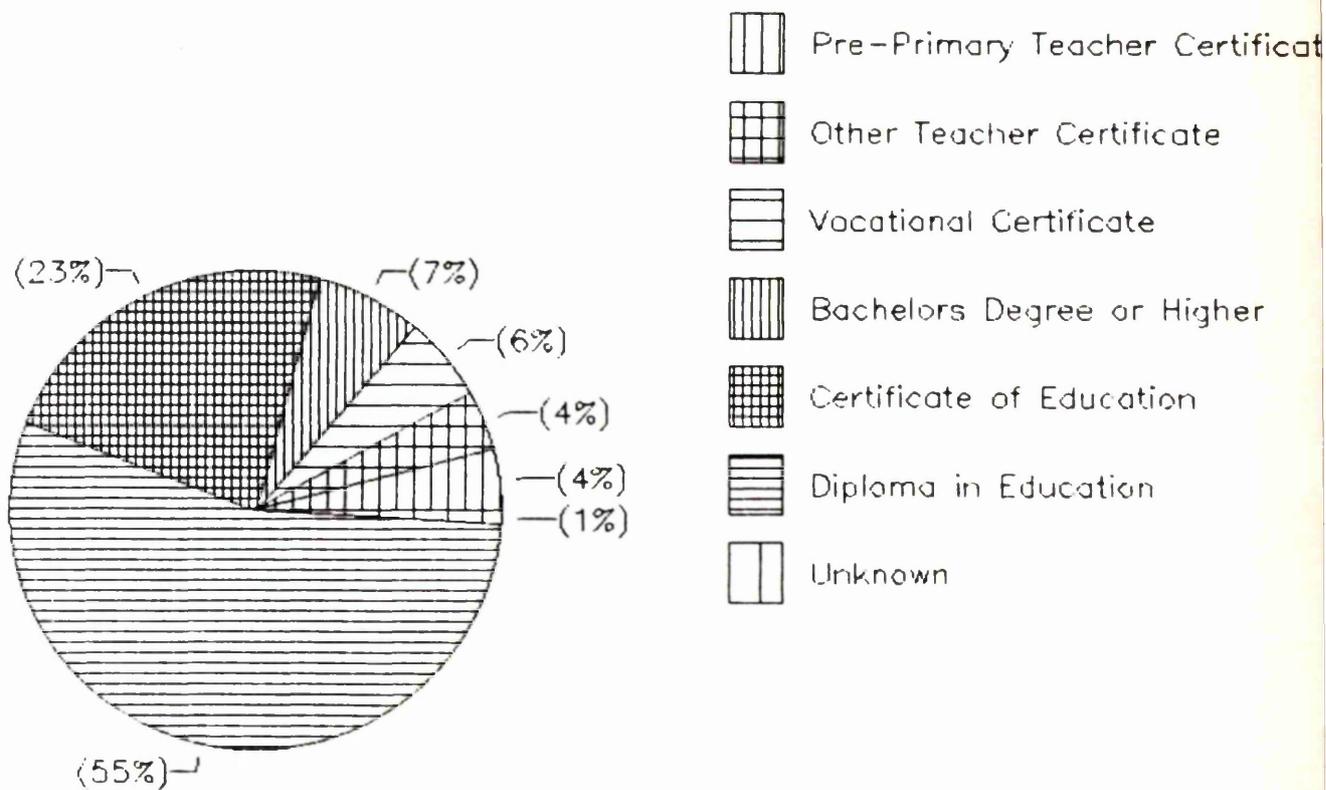
SCHOOL POPULATION - CHOMPUU SCHOOL



SOURCE ; CHOMPUII SCHOOL RECORDS

APPENDIX NO. 2

KINDERGARTEN & ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL TEACHERS QUALIFICATIONS - WHOLE NATION 1980



SOURCE; '1980 FINAL REPORT ON EDUCATION STATISTICS'  
NATIONAL STATISTICS OFFICE  
BANGKOK.

APPENDIX NO. 3

PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS MONTHLY SALARIES (in Thai Baht)  
SARAPHI DISTRICT

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
1	1 255	2 765
2	2 205	4 685
3	2 765	5 745
4	3 745	7 285
5	4 945	9 385
6	6 935	12 535
7	8 475	13 095
8	9 385	14 295
9	10 365	15 575
10	11 415	16 965

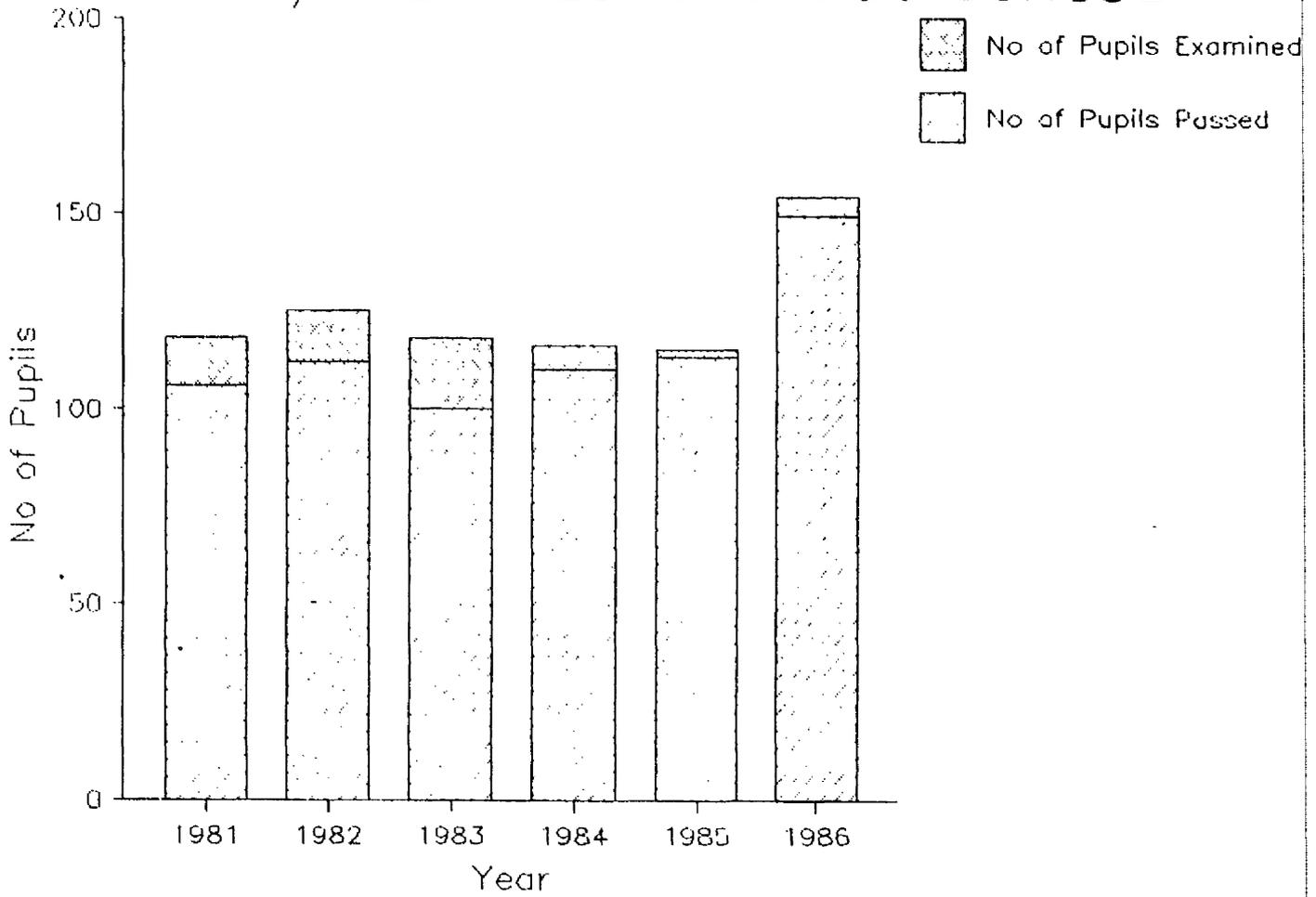
Notes:

1. The majority of teachers in the district are in the third, fourth, fifth and sixth grades.
2. Graduates of teachers college or university enter the profession at the third salary grade.
3. Attainment of higher qualifications, or promotion to the position of headmaster, does not necessarily result in a pay increase.
4. The grades overlap because, in some cases, the teachers' salary increases without the teacher actually being promoted to a higher salary grade.

SOURCE: THE DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION OFFICE, SARAPHI.

APPENDIX NO. 4

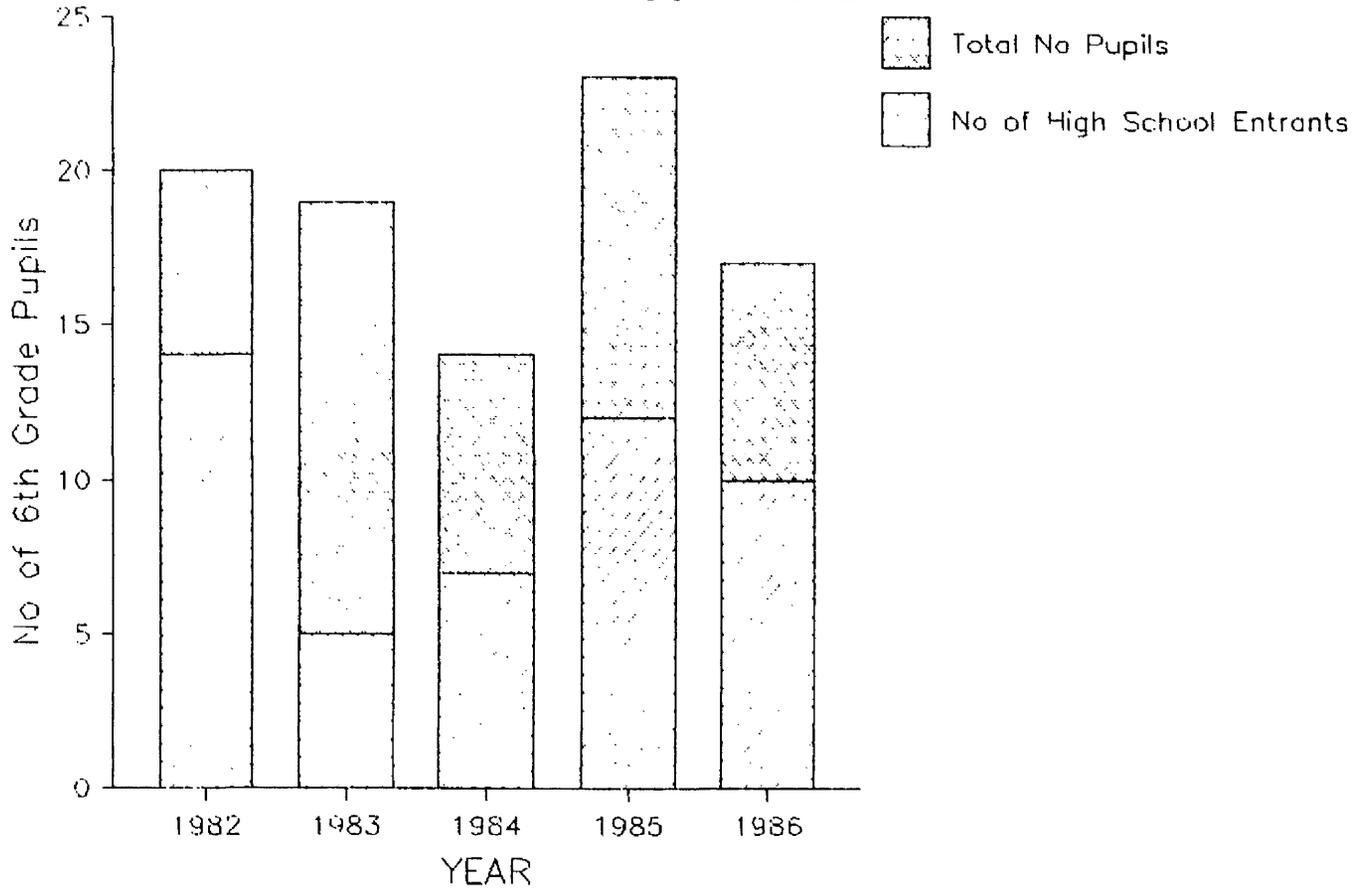
PASS/FAIL RATES—CHOMPUU SCHOOL



SOURCE ;  
CHOMPUU SCHOOL RECORDS.

APPENDIX NO. 5

HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE RATES  
CHOMPUU SCHOOL

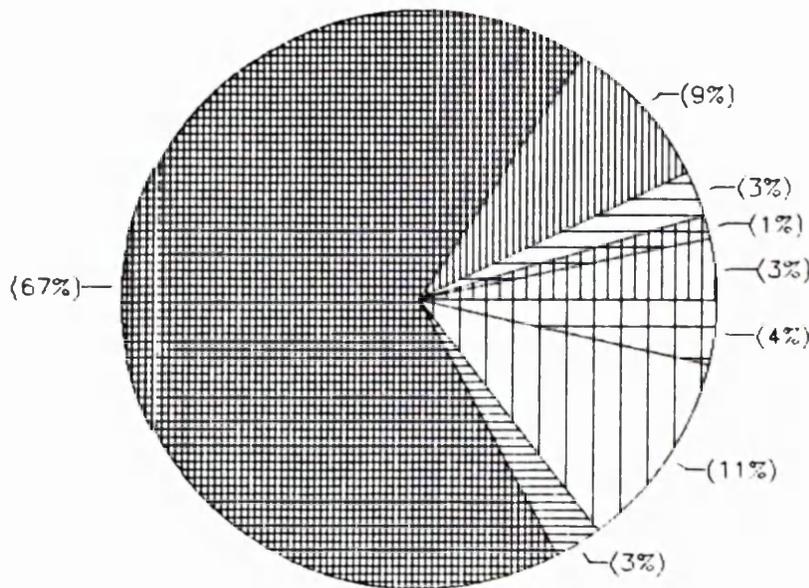


SOURCE ;

CHOMPUU SCHOOL RECORDS .

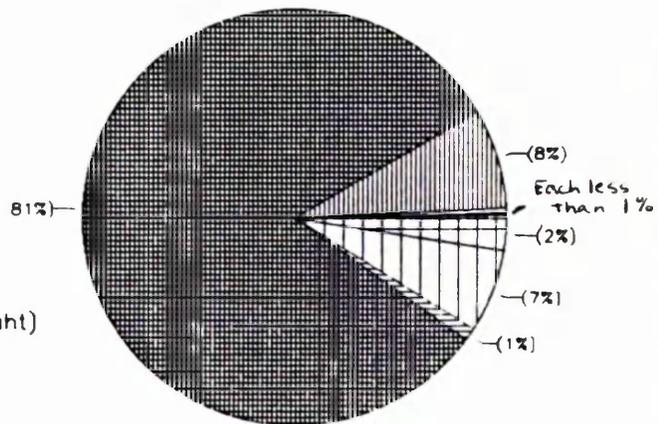
Population by Occupation - Whole Nation

-  Professional
-  Administrative
-  Clerical
-  Sales
-  Farmers
-  Communication
-  Manufacturing
-  Services

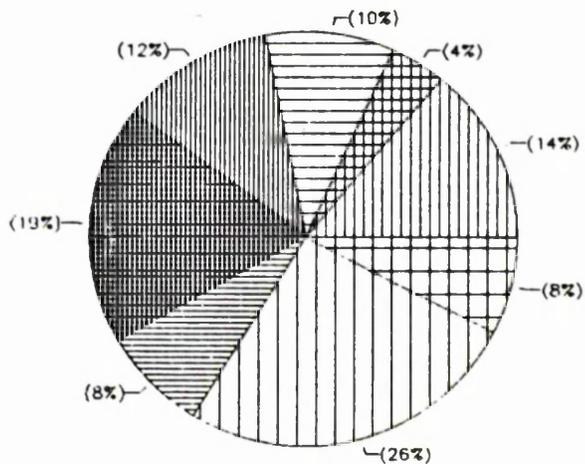


Income Range 0 - 1,500 (Thai Baht)

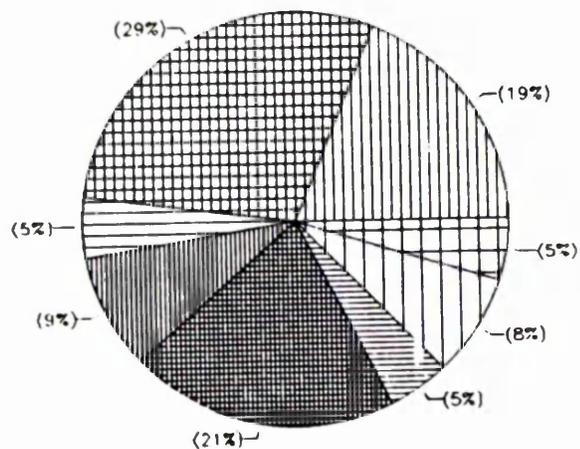
Total



Income Range 1,500 - 10,000 (Thai Baht)



Income Range 10,000 + (Thai Baht)



SOURCE ;

" STATISTICAL YEARBOOK , THAILAND  
NO. 34 1985 - 1986 "

NATIONAL STATISTICS OFFICE  
BANGKOK

APPENDIX NO. 7

PERCENTAGE OF LITERATES (AGED 7 YEARS AND OVER)  
BY SEX & AGE GROUP

AGE GROUP	TOTAL POPULATION		% OF LITERATES	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
7 - 10	3 023 730	2 962 880	74	73
11- 14	2 507 530	2 420 280	97	98
15- 19	3 095 650	2 979 240	98	97
20- 24	2 592 020	2 527 910	97	95
25- 29	2 168 280	2 120 840	96	94
30- 34	1 865 790	1 824 630	96	92
35- 39	1 555 680	1 511 490	94	88
40- 49	2 024 260	2 077 140	91	83
50- 59	1 419 910	1 544 960	89	73
60+	1 234 920	1 483 900	69	27
<hr/>				
Total	21 487 770	21 453 270	91	84

SOURCE: 'STATISTICAL HANDBOOK OF THAILAND 1988'  
National Statistics Office.  
Office of the Prime Minister.  
Bangkok.

APPENDIX NO. 8

NUMBER OF MALE AND FEMALE TEACHERS OF ELEMENTARY

EDUCATION: WHOLE NATION

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
	296 403	153 158	143 245
<u>Ministry</u> <u>of Education</u>	7 160	2 496	4 664
<u>Provincial</u>	267 755	144 205	123 550
<u>Municipal</u>	21 488	6 457	15 031

Note; Today all primary schools are administered by either the Municipal or the Provincial authorities.

SOURCE: '1980 FINAL REPORT ON EDUCATION STATISTICS.'

National Statistics Office.

Office of the Prime Minister. Bangkok.

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