

Family Life in the Khmer Village in Thailand

— Survey in No. 1 of Kwashinarin Village in
Kwashinarin District, Surin Province —

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Introduction

The community studies have not been greatly researched in the southern area of the northeastern region (*Isan Tai*) in Thailand. Not many Tai ethnic groups but Khmers, Kuies, and others reside in *Isan Tai*. The area was dangerously near the Thai-Cambodia border and communists had hidden here until the 1970s. There was little data available about the Khmer community and family.¹ This paper aims to provide basic data on the Khmer family life in No. 1 of Kwashinarin village (administrative village is called *uban* in Thai, the abbreviation is Mu) of Surin province through the author's field work in 1998. Since I wrote the community study of this village (Sato 1999a), I consider in this paper the Khmer family in Thailand with the concept of European family.

First I here explain an indigenous idea of the Thai-Khmer family. The idea of family is expressed by the word of *maklow*, or *krop kru* in Khmer, or *krop krua* in Thai. Then, the house itself is called *patia* in Khmer. The meaning of *maklow* is to share meals, or using the kitchen. The villagers do not distinguish a family from a household, or *krop krua* from *krua rwang* in Thai. Even if some households separately dwelt by parents and children, it could be called *maklow* when they share meals, or they cook together. I affirm that the European concept of family could not be equated with that of *maklow* in Khmer, *krop krua* in Thai. But I will here provide the surveyed data with the

European concept of family. The word of *krua rwang* had been borrowed from Thai word. As for the Khmer indigenous idea of family, I have reported it in the other paper and have investigated these concepts in the case of Ban Pluang of Prasat District in Surin province (Sato 1999b, 2000a, 2000b). I supposed that a household is a group, whose housekeeping is the same, or a unit that consists of a village.

1 Purpose and Method of Research

I surveyed the Khmer family life in Kwashinarin Mu 1 in Surin province. After obtaining knowledge on villager's life beforehand by the author's staying in the village concerned, the survey had been prepared with a questionnaire. With respect to family life, number of family member, place of birth, size of land inherited, cooperative method of cultivation of parents' and children's households, ownership of water buffaloes, cultivators, motorcycles, implementation of worship ceremonies such as *sakkapoi* (*pom chu* in Thai, a ceremony that a front part of hair have not been cut out in age of child), *kratom ta kratom yai* (*san puta* in Thai, a guardian spirit of village), *donta donyai* (*phi pu ya* in Thai, a spirit of ancestor), (*mae posop* in Thai, a spirit of rice), *hao prung surao* (*su khwang kao* in Thai called a spirit of rice), etc. and amounts of loan had been surveyed in each household.

The questionnaire had been prepared in Thai language, but the meaning in Khmer had beforehand been discussed in case that it was unable to be understood in Thai. The villagers would talk in Khmer to each other, but they could communicate in Thai with villagers who came from other places since they recently settled in the village. In considering such background, it is needless to say that there were circumstances of learning Thai in education of school. The village life has been dynamically changed by urbanization as the village concerned situated near the City of Surin.

According to the report of the deputy village headman presenting to the district office, the number of households of Kwashinarin Mu1 was 246. There

were 27 households that actually were unable to be found in spite of registration, except that two persons had the same house-number. Besides them, there were cases attached to the same house-number, even if they are not relatives. And only two rental houses had been omitted in the survey.

There were, then, 5 cases I was unable to survey because they had actually moved, and two households had moved to Bangkok, and four households could not be surveyed since they were frequently out from their houses. Contrary to these, there were included two households of the same house-number, even if the house-number was not officially reported to the district office, and there were included seven houses that had the same house-number as their parents in spite of building their houses. As a result, 217 households could be surveyed. Like the above, a family registration was vague, it was very difficult to grasp the correct number of houses.

Isan is very well known as a place from which many people could go to work to Bangkok. In this respect, there were lots of cases where a husband went to work to Bangkok alone, or some cases he went with his wife and children. They often did not move the family registration. Furthermore, there were cases difficult to confirm a family member in such that the registration had not been finished following the marriage; cases that a lover stays only on Saturday and Sunday, and relatives stay for a long time. As for these cases, they could be regarded as a member of family, if ceremonies of family have been done in the village even if it was not registered. But the other cases could not be included in a member of family in this research.

2 Family Life

2.1 Constitutions of Family Types

How many people live in one house together? In another word, how many people form one household?

In this respect, according to an officer in the public health center of Washinarin district, family planning has been introduced since the 1970s.

Since family planning has been implemented since the 1970s, number of children was examined by dividing by the age of males more and less than 50 years old for convenience. As a result, the case of males over 50 years old was totally 89 cases with 354 people of children, and cases of males under 50 years old were totally 109 with 246 people of children. Average per household was about 3.98 in the cases of males over 50 years old, and about 2.26 in the cases of males under 50 years old.

According to the author's survey, the population was 791 as a whole and an average about per household was 3.65. In data of the district public health center, the number of population and households was close to the author's survey result. As for the population at the time of 1996, 380 were males, 369 were female and the total was 749. There were 657 people and 217 households at 1998 according to the assistant village headman, but we could find that these numbers were not correct if these were compared with the author's data.

To regard with couple's age, most husbands were older than their wives, but the cases that a wife was older shared 27% as a whole. Even in a case that a wife is older than a husband, there was a case that the gap of age was more than 10 years old. Several aged females never married in their lives, and divorces and remarriages can be often found. This indicates that marriages are really done *laeo tae* (up to you).

Regarding the number of generations living together in a household, there were 21 households of one generation including single household, 161 households of two generations, 25 households of three generations, and 5 households of others except 5 cases unknown. Rate of cases of two generations living together is the highest 75.9%, namely about $\frac{3}{4}$. Following to family cycle, a last child takes care of old parents after her marriage; in particular a last daughter is preferred. And parents built their house and children build their houses after the marriage if they have spare place in their site. Such tendency represents the following; the number of stem family type is fewer and that of nuclear family type is more.

As for a size of land, there was a total of 2,629 rai. It was about 12.0 rai as an average of a household. Table 1 shows number and percent of households classified by the size of cultivating area. The households owned land was 67 in number, 30.8%. Since this category includes that children's households did not yet inherit a cultivated land from parents, the figure does not distinguish children's households legally without land. However, in taking a consideration for that household of tenant farming was 29 in number, 13.5% as we will look at later, it may be needless to say that about a half of them were peasants without legally possessing land.

Table 1 Number of Households Classified by the Size of Cultivating

Size of cultivating area	Number	Percent
0	67	30.8%
1-4 rai	5	2.3%
5-9 rai	35	16.1%
10-19 rai	54	24.9%
20-29 rai	27	12.4%
30-39 rai	16	7.4%
40-49 rai	5	2.3%
50-59 rai	6	2.8%
60-69 rai	2	1.0%
Total	217	100.0%

Note: Unit is household, and 1 rai is equal to 0.16 hectare.

Source: Author's survey

According to Table 1, the number of group in size of 1-4 rai was 5 and shared 2.3%, that in size of 5-9 rai was 35 and 16.1%, and that in size of 10-19 rai was 54 and 24.9%, and that in size of 20-29 rai was 27 and 12.4%, that in size of 1-29 rai shared about 55% in total. If the number of the above group was added to households of landless people, the percent may be approximately 80%.

Now, in the case that four persons form one household, they will sufficiently eat rice by cultivating in 4-5 rai per annum since they can cultivate an unhulled rice of about 20 liter (*tang*) in 1 rai. Most villagers can eat rice in self-sufficient style except about 15% of the landless. Even if peasants were tenants, they will be able to be self-sufficient.

2.2 Family Types

In classification of family types, the number of stem family was 26, that of compound family was 19, that of nuclear family was 164, and that of unknown was 8. I can see that nuclear family type shares very high rate as 78.5% in Table 1.

In most of these cases where children's households separated from that of their parent, "to work and eat together (*thu sare si ruam kania* in Khmer)" could be cultivating among parents' household and children's ones. It seems to me that such cases show that children's households are not fully independent from parents'. But these cases were only 6, and most of children's households were independent. Like the above, it was outstanding that children's households were independent from parents' one.

In considering such family life style, a further consideration has to be given to a way of residence. There were some cases where children's households build their houses nearby their parents' one. As children separately reside in each house, each of them is seen to be a nuclear family. These, in effect, form one household that could be practically regarded as a compound family. For parents' and brother's households help each other to work and eat together. The people called the domestic household composed of parents' household and children's ones, *maklow* in Khmer. The concept of *maklow* signifies single household on condition that even if houses separate among parents' one and children's ones, they share to work and eat.

The custom that a last daughter lives with her parents after a marriage to take care of them can be commonly seen in northern and northeastern

Thailand. However, against those, the Khmer does not have an ideal that a last daughter must take care of parents.

The studies on a way of residence suggest in either side of wife's parents or that of husband's one. Upon the observation of rate of residence either on wife's side or on husband's side, it was calculated that cases of wife's side were 69.3%, 122 households, and husband's side were 30.7%, 54 households, except unknown. It can be accordingly understood that the residence of wife's side occupies majority at the rate of about 70%. The figure is a little higher compared with about 60% in Ban Pluang. This trend may be caused by the urbanized life style.

As far as I had a chance to observe, new couple used to live in a residence of wife's parents after a marriage. The survey on couple's residence after a marriage showed that 65 cases were at 39.9% within Mu1, 28 cases were at 17.2% within Kwashinarin sub-district, 20 cases were at 12.3% within the Kwashinarin district, 14 cases were at 9.2% within Surin district, 13 cases were at 8.0% in Surin province, 13 cases were at 8.0% in northeastern Thailand except for Surin province, 7 cases were at 4.6% in provinces other than northeast area and 3 cases were immigrated.

In investigation of relation between marriage circle and age, it was revealed that the aged married both from same village or district while young people married with persons far from home town at high rate. By the way, two marriage ceremonies I had attended were those brides marry with bridegrooms of Laotian males from the northeast.

In addition, inheritance of land by male and female will have to be examined. Inheritance mostly followed a death of a partner, but there were, at present, prevailing cases that it was made before deaths of parents, because households of children are already independent from that of parents. Except 51 households without inheritance, the study on inheritance revealed that number of inheritance by husband was 48.2%, 82 households, that by wife was 37.2%, 64, and that of both was 14.6%, 25. Consequently, cases inherited by only husband with no inheritance of wife were 57 households and those

inherited by only wife with no inheritance of husband were 39. There were, furthermore, several households where either a husband or a wife inherited 30-40 rai and another side did not inherit. Cases where couples evenly inherited were few and there is no case that couples evenly inherited cultivated land. Such difference in size of inheritance between couples suggests that people have not been married in the same class.

The area of land that husbands inherited totaled 999 rai and that of wives was 950 rai in total. According to the figure, the average was 12.2 rai per a head for a husband and that was 14.8 rai for a wife. The number inherited by male was larger than that by female. However, the average area inherited by male was not larger than that by female. Remarkable case among them was a household comes from Bangkok, where the wife inherited 98 rai and the husband did none. This is the case that as the wife's birth place was in an adjacent district, the couple bought land to open restaurant in 1996 in Kwashinarin Mu1, which has been more or less industrialized. The wife inherited 98 rai evenly divided among 3 sisters after death of her father. Except this case, there were no case of inheritance in such large size.

Then, we here review size of cultivated lands inherited between siblings. Generalization of this case is difficult since a reference data is scarce. It is judged the actual equalization between siblings seemed to be intended. For example, if the person expects his spouse to inherit fair amount of cultivated land after marriage, as a real circumstance, there is a possibility that his share of inheritance is lower than ones in previous times. In actual inheritance case, almost equal allotment was intended among siblings as a result.

2.3 Cooperative Types of Family Farming

Rice is cultivated only in rainy season once a year. Cultivation starts from end of June to July and planting is done from July to August. Villagers do not weed different from Japan, and harvest from November to December. Except this period, namely in dry season villagers do not cultivate rice, only

vegetables.

It can be said that Thai villagers do family farming to cultivate. In other words, household is a unit, and households among siblings sometimes help each other. In comparison with other regions of Thailand, as for the method of rice cultivation, the number of households of farming by oneself was 117 among 215 households and shared 51.4%. While the proportion of landlords was 16.7%, 36 households in number, that of tenant farmers was 13.5%, 29 households. Therefore, children's households cultivate parents' farm land not doing tenant farming even not owning land. In case of children's households, even if not owning land at present, they cannot be called as farming households without land due to prospects for ownership sooner or later. In this respect, the class engage tenant farming is considered that they cannot expect to own land any more.

Then, as for cooperative farming among households, first *thu sare si kania* in Khmer (to work and eat together) between parents' household and children's households, which is widely seen in northeastern and northern Thailand, was only 6 cases in this village. This figure is said to be very small when compared with other regions such as northern and northeastern Thailand. And *oi tu si* in Khmer (*hai tham kin* in Thai, *ben hai kin* in Isan) is also scarce, and there were only 3 cases of 215 households. This form signifies that parents entrust children's households to cultivate land. This figure is also very little, which suggests that villagers intend to be independence of household.

Others are all farming by oneself. However, there are cases that landlords made tenant cultivate while landlords farm by oneself. Contrary to this, being enough hands within the household for farming, they made tenant cultivate. Even many family farming managed to hire to plow, plant, and harvest, because there were not enough hands within one household. Popularity of machines of cultivators is considered to be less to be compared with the northern and northeastern Thailand. And as to all parts of cultivating, it is normal practice to hire (*rap chanor* in Khmer). This was, I guess, caused by that Kwashinarin Mu1 has been urbanized.

138 households own rice storage at the rate of 63.6%, and there were cases that 10 households among them owned 2 rice storage. In such cases owning 2 rice storage, most cases are that children's households borrow parents' rice storage, but they are generally households with land of large scale.

To turn our eyes to the case of landlords, there were cases of farming by oneself to entrust tenant in size of land being not so large because any family member cannot cultivate. And, in the case that children go to work out, they do not come to help parents' household. This trend can hardly be found in other regions.

2.4 Consumer Life

TV and refrigerator are in further popular status for people of all regions. Most of farming households tend to have a motorcycle. In Thai villages, capitalism has been penetrated to anywhere since the 1960s, which Thai government had started national developmental policy. TV, refrigerator and motorcycle, nowadays, became to be three basic commodity goods for people to live in everyday life.

Then, if possessing conditions of domestic animals and cultivators are examined, any households raised water buffalo in old days, but households raising them have become rather less. As a result of the survey, households raising water buffaloes became to as little as $\frac{72}{217}$ of households at 33.2%, total heads was 114 in number. And although cultivators are taking place of water buffaloes, only 28 households own them; it shared 12.9%. This was caused by the fact that the village had been industrialized. The case that water buffaloes and cows were raised under floor of house decreased because they encounter traffic accidents, and they came to be raised in rice paddy or pasture from four years ago. Cultivators were introduced about four years ago. Certain Villager who sold cultivator said that as cultivator gave vibrations to body, the body became out of condition. This may have been extended since some villagers had said the like matter in the northeast.

Although a motorcycle costs about 50,000 baht, many people used to buy it on credit. As motorcycles are handy and not so expensive unlike prices of cars, they are fairly popular anywhere. In this village, 132 households had one at 60.8% and 25 households among them had two motorcycles.

As mentioned before, rice farming can be done only once a year. Young males and female used to go to work out of village except the season for planting and harvesting. However, in 1998, many people returned from Bangkok due to the economic crisis in Thailand that occurred in 1997, and 60 people have returned according to the author's survey. As a result, the number of villagers who went away for work was very little at the time of survey. Owing to the survey, the destinations for persons who went away for work were as follows; 21 persons for Bangkok, 6 for Phuket, 2 for Ayuthaya, and one person respectively for Pattaya, Shirapakon, Samut Purakan, Phrachin Buri, above all for Cambodia and Laos, unknown 2, to overseas. The villagers went to Phuket for raising and training of elephants, and their siblings. Many male returnees of this year were doing nothing.

There is a problem of debt for villagers in the northeastern which have been making political groups active.² It has not been surveyed enough until now because it is very difficult to study. Since it could be referable at some degree, I introduce the results of the author's survey as follows.

According to the author's survey, the number of people who borrowed from Surin Agricultural Cooperative Bank was 87 of the greatest, and the total amount was 3.74 million baht, at average about 43,000 baht per household. Following which a greater number was 43 households borrowed from *nai thun* (rich persons) in the village, and total amount was 2.63 million baht, the average was about 61,200 baht per household. The interest of loan from *nai thun* was 5% per month. One of the reasons why people borrowed money of high interest from *nai thun* was that he return of the loan was flexible without regard to whenever they will be able to return as the villagers indicated. The Credit Union was then provided at low interest of 2% or 3% per month. If they become intimate each other through usually given help, only interest can

be commonly permitted to pay every month.

The third number is 38 households that borrowed it from bank, which total amount reaches 6.481 million baht. Average per household is over 170,000 baht. In case of bank, although interest is relatively higher than agricultural cooperative bank and others, many people may borrow because usage is free. In the village of greatest amount of debt, he borrows it to purchase house to open store, and the total amount of 1 million baht including interest will be planned to pay in 20 years period. Since his business is going well, the repayment is said to be possible at present. The fourth number was the cases that borrowed from Surin Agricultural Cooperative, and the total amount of debt was 2,143 million baht of 29 households. The average was a little less than 74,000 baht per household. Surin Agricultural Cooperative is not so big in both budget and number of members. The fifth number was 14 households borrowed from close kinship, the total 140,000 baht, at average 10,000 baht per household. As for a characteristic of loan from siblings, the total amount of loan tends to be small. For example, there were several people had borrowed 1,000 baht with a tendency that cannot be seen in other cases. This inclination may be caused by the urbanization.

The sixth case was 9 households from Credit Union, total amount 229,000 baht, at average a little over 25,000 baht per household. The Credit Union has been organized by villagers of administrative Mu1 and Mu2, and it was organized under a guidance of the famous NGO, which has a nationwide network in Thailand. Besides those, there were 5 households that borrowed from consumer cooperative group that teachers had set up, and 3 households borrowed from Bank of Social Welfare (tanakan akan songkro) of government line bank.

As a rare example, there was the case of one household that had debt from the company for a set of material to open the store. The total amount of loan for this case was about 1.37 million baht. This case is not expected the loan to be returned. There were moreover many cases of loan from the shop to purchase motorcycles. This is practically a debt in spite of that most of

villagers do not recognize it as a debt.

3 Belief System

The Khmer's belief system is very similar to that of Thai. According to Prof. Anuman basic structure of belief systems were the same despite of difference of language between Tai and Khmer (Anuman 1968 [1988]). There is however indigenous religious ceremony of the Khmer that Tai does not have. It is remarkably represented by ancestor, namely *donta*. Furthermore, it is not built the shrine called *san chao* in a site in old times. But people recently tend to build *san chao* in a site, and in that case there is a pair of dolls of grandfather and grandmother without fail. In the northern or the northeast, it is often called as *chao thi*, and there is nothing inside it in case of the northern or the northeast. It was, however, found in Kwashinarin Mu1 that there was no shrine of house to protect the house and its site from evil spirits. But there is recently built the shrine of house called *san phra phum* in a site.

Then, I asked people either the shrine of house exists or not in a site. According to the survey, except 2 households given no reply, the house has no shrine in a site was 137 and shared 63.7%. There were cases that old house does not have the shrine in a site and it can be accordingly taken a mistake that old house has it and new house does not have it. Including surrounding villages, there were several houses built a tomb in a site. It is said that these houses were very old one. This point is worthwhile to notice. Further study on this aspect will be conducted later.

As I mentioned before, the shrine of both Mu1 and Mu2 is called *kratom ta*. It is a custom for people to go for worship once a year. This god is called *kratom ta* and said to be the ancestor of entire villagers, and it is not the ancestor for each house. It corresponds to the shrine called *pu ta* in case of Thai or Lao. The *pu* and *ta* are names of grandfather of both lines in Thai, but the Khmer's *ta* and *yai* are grandfather and grandmother of both lines. This characteristic

signifies that the Khmer regards male and female to be equal from old times.

To regard with the worship to *kratom ta*, 142 households did the worship at the rate of 65.7%. There are many cases that people do not go for worship in cases of children's households or households immigrated from outside. This means no necessary for children to go for worship if parents go.

Ritual of *donta donyai* was done by most of households, namely 203 households, 94.4%. As people come from Bangkok or other provinces are not the Khmer, they do not worship. The questionnaire was made on *pom chu* (*kor so* in Khmer), *mae trani* (*cho sare* in Khmer) and *riak kwan kao* (*hao phurung kao* in Khmer) which are the same rituals as Thai. The ritual of *kor so* is to shave off hair of children leaving only front part to cure sick or to control the naughty, its ritual is usually done at 9 or 11 years old. Children with *sakkapoi* (*pom chu*) was seen so much in old days, but very few nowadays. Among all pupils of Kwashinarin primary school, there were two: one girl in the kindergarten and one boy in third grade of primary school.

The ritual of *mae trani* was done in 139 households, 64.7%, and the ritual of *riak kwan kao* was done in 168 households, 78.1%. Regarding to such rituals related to rice farming, they have not inherited land from their parents, and even if parents do such rituals, as children's households have no necessity to do them by themselves, then they usually do not. Moreover, in the case of that households manage shop and are short of hands, they hardly do it to worship by themselves. In this case, there are not a few that do not the ritual of *mae trani* but only ritual of *kwan kao* when they store an unhulled rice in the storage. The gap between the numeral of *mae trani* and that of *kwan kao* is caused by this point.

It can be, thus, found a previous high rate of that most of households do the ritual of ancestor of *donta donyai* once a year. If the villagers are sick, they usually visit to a *mo du*, who is female in fifty years old; incidentally in such case that clients cannot be cured, even if they visit the hospital. She is called *mo du* in this village, but what she does is the same as *kao son* in Thai. The *mo du* is inspired by a spirit, and she tells clients where evil spirits came from and

how it can be removed. It was said that many villagers visited her to cure illness in 1997. If a sickness was healed, clients had over ten thousand or several thousand baht to the *mo du* as appreciation, but the appreciation is not necessary if it is not.

Moreover, in the morning of *wan phra*, flowers and joss sticks in addition to rice and side dishes are offered and worship is given to the shrine in a site (*san chao*) protected a house from evil spirit. Dolls in *san chao* of any house are called *donta donyai*. There, however, appeared a few houses that dedicate *san piang ta* instead of *san chao*. As the shrine in a site can be only found a little in Ban Pluang, very old village, I think it a extremely new style of worship as a spirit of house. It is sure that the *san chao* is indeed recently built. People, who have been living since old days, generally do such rituals, though they have been simplified nowadays.

In 1997, in northeastern Thailand, straw effigies of *hunraika* had been put at a gate of site to prevent invasion of evils (Sato 1998). But at Kwashinarin Mu1, it was said that none made effigy to drive away evils in that year. They said that none lately make it. In comparison with the author's survey in last year, simplification of rituals makes a progress more or less.

Such belief can be, at present, seen even in the central region and it is not completely drop out to visit a witch. For example, there is the custom that infants are called ugly instead of pretty, because their souls tend to be robbed by evils. This custom invariably remains even in Bangkok. Besides, the custom that people do not cut nails and hair on Wednesday also remains. For that reason the customs cannot be simply discarded as a superstition. As most believers join new sects of Buddhism, it is significant to understand Thai people more and more.

4 Summary

As for the family type, there are many nuclear families. To regard with way of residence, there are many cases of wife's side residence. And parents

have been mostly resided and supported with a last daughter. As to the inheritance, an area of land inherited by children was not distinguished by gender, which is also considered as a recent trend.

Regarding to family farming, there was even in close kinship that cultivating or farming was separately done. For instance, if brothers and sisters finished to plant rice earlier, they usually helped other brothers and sisters who do not finish yet. I could observe here and there lots of cases that children did not go to help parents' household, even if their farming lands were small. The meaning of this affair is necessary to be considered because I could not observe it very much in other regions. I can hear the following proverb from the villagers of Ban Pluang; parents can foster ten children and ten children cannot take care of parents.

"To work and eat together" of cooperative farming between parents' household and children's ones were observed only in 6 cases, about 2.8%. In case that the size of land was so large, the cooperative farming between parents' and children's cannot be found.

In such cases, houses were separated, but some households between parents' and children's remained to be inseparable each other among them. The separation between parents' household and children's ones were gradually completed starting from separation of kitchen utensils to constructing rice storage. When separation of children's households from that of parents progresses in this way, the "to work and eat together" relations ceased, and each become an independent unit of livelihood.

To entrust land to children's households instead of inheritance of land appears during this transition of family cycle, but it is almost none here. It is noted that lacking of this process is seen very few in other areas. As to this, a further progress of study is necessary, if it is due to close distance to the City of Surin. The above is considered that nature of independence of each household is comparatively higher than other areas of Thailand.

As for a problem of debt in peasants, the problem has been taken up in newspapers and TV, many peasants have a lot of debt. As for normal

peasants, they have to borrow money for buying motorcycle, or children proceeding to school.

With regard to beliefs of villagers, although rituals of cultivating, ceremonies for village, rituals for ancestor of family, and others have been simplified, most of rituals have been still conserved. Contrary to that of Ban Pluang, I can understand that some parts of rituals had disappeared in Kwashinarin Mu1. Among them, *donta donyai* which is significant ritual for family's ancestor, was done by more than 90%. This means that ritual of *donta donyai* is very significant for the Khmer.

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Notes

- 1 Iwata, Keiji had only researched in *Isan Tai* in the 1960s (Iwata 1969).
- 2 See Thai newspaper, *Matichon* dated 26th June, 1998; the northeastern Thai farmers made a protest demonstration to demand the government to solve debt problem and Thai government took counter policy of the repayment to *To Ko So* (Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Co-operatives) to be frozen for one year, etc.

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