

Government Policy: Highland Ethnic Minorities.

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This Chapter provides an interpretation and summary of Government policy towards the *chao khao* or hill tribes, the highland ethnic minorities, most of whom live in the north of Thailand. I will not include refugees from Laos and Burma who fall under a special policy package made up of measures passed by Orders in Council of Ministers to deal with refugees. Under these Orders, enacted in 1975 for Laos and 1976 for Burma, illegal immigrants were to be either arrested or repatriated. Many ethnic highlanders who became refugees are subject to this legislation. There are other minorities like the Yunnanese and Han Chinese who reside in government approved locations in the hill country of Mae Hong Son, Chiang Rai, and Chiang Mai close to the Thai-Burmese border. These people are the former Nationalist Kuomintang Army units (KMT) and civilian refugees (see Hill, 1983: 123-134) who moved from Burma into Thailand in the early 1950's. They are called *chin haw* by the Northern Thai. Some of these people have been granted Thai citizenship. Most are registered aliens. These people fall under a different legal status and strictly speaking do not belong within a discussion addressed to ethnic minority groups well established in Thailand. Taking these qualifications into account I will now outline Royal Thai Government policy towards those people who are designated under the term "hill tribe".

First let me identify the ethnic hill tribes under discussion and provide an account of their historical background and some relevant socio-cultural aspects of their way of life. Finally, I shall review past policies and present a detailed report on present policy.

'Hill tribe': what's in a name?

The term *chao khao* or in English "hill tribe", is used throughout this paper as a collective name and has been in official use since 1959 when the Government set up the Central Hill Tribe Committee (CHTC), previously called the Hill Tribe Welfare Committee. Since then no one has attempted an official definition. Indeed, the term "hill tribe" is not accepted by some anthropologists, such as Peter Kunstadter, who prefer upland people, highlander or hill peasants to the term "hill tribe" (Kunstadter, 1969).

For all practical purposes the term provides a clear label for the Hill Tribe Development and Welfare Programme of the Department of Public Welfare. Since 1959 this agency has taken sole responsibility for hill tribe affairs, and the officially recognised ethnic groups which fall under this classification include the Lua (Lawa), Htin (H'tin, Mal, or Prai), Khamu, Meo (Miao, Hmong), Yao (Iu Mien, Mien), Akha (Ekaw), Lahu (Mussur), Lisu (Lisaw) and Karen (Kariang, Yang). Thus, among the 23 tribal ethnic groups found in Thailand, only nine tribal groups are currently included on the official list. The Hill Tribe Welfare Division and the Tribal Research Institute of the Department of Public Welfare are not empowered to handle the affairs of many of the highland ethnic minorities.

Seventy six percent of all hill tribes live in North Thailand. If viewed from the point of view of the indigenous Thai Northerners of *khon muang* as they call themselves, Northern Thailand is made up of eight provinces: Chiang Rai, Mae Hong Son, Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phayao, Phrae and Nan. The indigenous population of these eight provinces speak

the same northern Thai dialect called *kham muang*. Some 24 percent of highlanders live in provinces to the south. Karen settlements are located as far south as Prachuab Khiri Khan in peninsular Thailand.

Ethno-linguistic groups.

According to Matisoff (1983: 65-66) the hill tribes of Thailand can be classified into what he calls three major linguistic superstocks. These are:

1.0 Sino-Tibetan.

This superstock includes two linguistic branches relevant to our interests:

1.1 **Karen.** The speakers of this language are called *kariang* in central Thai, or *yang* by northern Thai. The Karen call themselves according to their subgroups, Skaw, Pwo and so forth.

1.2 **Tibeto-Burman.** The Loloish speakers of this branch of the Sino-Tibetan family comprise the Lahu the Lisu and the Akha.

2.0 Austro-Asiatic.

Only one major branch of this family is found in Thailand, the **Mon-Khmer**. Speakers of this branch include: the Lawa or Lua as they are generally called; the Htin who call themselves either Mal of Prai according to their subgrouping; and The Khamu. A few Mlabri known in Thai as the *phi tong luang*, meaning "Spirits of the Yellow Leaves", live in Thailand but have no legal status as hill tribe people.

3.0 Austro-Thai.

Following the linguist Benedict this superstock makes up a very diverse group which includes not only the languages of

the indigenous people of the Pacific but also the **Tai-Kadai** and **Meo-Yao**. The ethnic minorities who concern us here belong to the last named group. The Meo (Miao) call themselves Hmong, and the Yao call themselves Iu Mien or Mien.

Population.

Up to the present, there has been no detailed comprehensive census survey of the hill tribe population. Five years ago, the most widely accepted estimate stated a figure of 350,000. In the absence of a proper survey, five government agencies, including the Department of Public Welfare acting as coordinator have agreed to cooperate in a two year population survey which commenced at the beginning of the 1985 fiscal year (October) and was supposed to be completed on the same date in 1987. At the moment the best figures available are those collected in the course of this survey and presented in Appendix I at the back of this book.

According to latest (September, 1988) Tribal Research Institute data, the nine officially listed tribal groups live in 21 provinces with a total population of 530,299 people. According to these figures, the hill tribe population makes up approximately one percent of the national population of Thailand (approximately 53 million in 1987).

Historical Background

There is general agreement among anthropologists that Austro-Asiatic language speakers belonging to the Mon-Khmer branch were resident in northern South-East Asia before the arrival, about a thousand years ago, of the first tribal Thai people (Mannedorff, 1966: 5; Kunstadter, 1965: 2; Walker, 1979: 6). When the Thai established political control over the lowlands between 1200 and 1350 (Wyatt, 1985: 65-80) by extending the influence of their earlier city-states like Fang (860), they were following a pattern set down earlier by the Mon in Lamphun who founded the Haripunjaya kingdom in 769 (Penth, 1984: 5).

Many legends survive from the Mon period which indicate that the Lua had a close relationship with Haripunjaya. At this time the Lua appear to have been the largest ethnic group in the north. Some scattered settlements of these early inhabitants can still be found in the hills but if we follow Bradley (1983), we can assume that most Lua, following the rise of Thai influence, lost their separate ethnic identity and became Thai. This process of cultural-linguistic transformation has been much speeded up in modern times.

The other two principal Austro-Asiatic, Mon-Khmer speaking people are the Htin and Khamu. These people are found in both Thailand and Laos. The Htin are more numerous in Thailand than Laos, whereas the Khamu are found in greater numbers in Laos than Thailand (Walker 1979: 7). According to some evidence most Htin and Khamu, although they can be considered as ancient residents of the general region, are in fact recent immigrants from Laos. (LeBar, Hickey, Musgrav, 1967). However, David Fibecka Htin specialist argues that Htin have resided in Nan Province as long as the Lua (Lawa) have resided in the north of present day Thailand (Personal Communication, 9 August, 1985).

The Karen of the Sino-Tibetan linguistic superstock are recognized as having been resident in some parts of the country for a long time. A document written in Pali entitled *cam-thewiwong phongsawadan haripunchai* (or *Camadevi Dynasty Chronicle of Haripunjaya*) mentions that some Karen resided in the vicinity of the ancient city of Chiang Mai as early as the eighth century A.D. (Coedes, 1925: 12-13). However, according to other sources, these people began moving to Thailand in appreciable numbers from areas under Burmese domination in about the middle of the eighteenth century (Stern, 1968: 299; Hinton, 1975: 17; Marlowe, 1969: 1).

The remaining highlander groups such as the Lahu, Lisu and Akha who are part of the Sino-Tibetan linguistic family,

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and the Miao-Yao, classified under the Austro-Thai linguistic supergroup are, in general, relatively recent arrivals in Thai territory. The migrations of these peoples into Northern Thailand can be summarised as follows:

- Meo** - for the first time during 1840-1870
(Mottang, 1977: 52).
- Yao** - about 95 years ago or in the 1890's,
- Lahu** - about 1857 (DAP No. 550-107, 1970: 365),
- Lisu** - During 1919-1921 (Prasert Chaipiguist, personal communication)
- Akha** - about 1915 (Wanat Bhruksasri, 1985).

Agriculture is the hill tribes' most important activity. It can be said that in former days they were self-sufficient in food production. Rice, corn, vegetables, chillies and livestock were produced mostly for home consumption (Chantaboon, this volume). Today few villages are self-sufficient in food and the marketing of produce has become increasingly important. For some 30 percent, opium is the main cash crop. This is especially true for recently arrived migrants such as the Meo, Yao, Lahu, Lisu and Akha. For several reasons discussed by Chupinit in this volume these people brought opium cultivation with them into Thailand. Generally speaking the Austro-Asiatic people such as the Lua, Htin, Khamu as well as the Sino-Tibetan-Karennic speakers had no tradition of growing opium poppy before their recent association with poppy growing Loloish and Miao-Yao speakers.

Most highlanders employ slash-and-burn or shifting cultivation (swiddening). This involves the felling of forests either on a rotation or pioneer system. Following exhaustion of the soil and weed invasion the opium growers especially, prefer to move their settlements and pioneer new villages in forested land. However, the pattern of land use under shifting cultivation differs quite markedly depending on whether it is practised by opium growers or non-opium growers. The former generally

practise primary or pioneer swiddening; the latter use a field-rotation system or, what is called by some anthropologists, a system of cyclical bush fallow which results in rather fixed village boundaries because the rotational system does not so rapidly exhaust the soil (Miles, 1969: 1).

Many of the cyclical swidders like the Lua and Karen, wherever possible, construct paddy or wet rice fields.

Animal husbandry is practised by every ethnic group mainly for the purpose of keeping pigs, cattle, buffalo and chickens for sacrifice and food consumption. Ponies are still used for transport in some locations, but pick-up trucks are seen everywhere.

Forest products are also gathered for household consumption and sale such as bamboo shoots, grass for thatching, mushrooms and so forth.

In traditional hill tribe cultures there are two corporate structures which constitute the institutional foundation of their society: the village and the household. Normally a village is formed of a main settlement with one or more small hamlets scattered around it. The village's most important resident is the headman who is selected by the adult male members of the community on the basis of a wide set of criteria: his popularity and skill, his leadership and knowledge and his wealth. The Akha and Karen headmen inherit the job.

The headman is in charge of administering village affairs, maintaining public peace, adjudicating disputes, accommodating visitors and so on. In carrying out his duties, especially those that affect community life, an informal council of elders and some local specialists in the community such as the religious leader or shaman are called in to assist. The headman also acts as a go-between in any village affairs which must be negotiated with Government agencies.

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With this background in mind it is now possible to develop a better understanding of Government policy. Let me continue the assignment.

Government Policy Concerning the Hill Tribes.

As mentioned earlier the Government of Thailand first set up the Hill Tribe Welfare Committee (HTWC) in 1959. However, this does not mean that prior to 1959 Thailand did not have a policy towards these people. Although the historical literature on the subject is scanty, short accounts prepared by American anthropologists on the relationship of the Karen and Lawa to the Princes of Chiang Mai provide an indication of early policy. Marlowe says of the situation 200 years ago that, "As best as can be determined, the relationship between the newly settled Karen and the representatives of the Princes of Chiang Mai were essentially those of indirect rule...(and)..It would appear that the Karen were at first a semi-autonomous, tributary, dependent people under the protection of the Princes of Chiang Mai" (Marlowe, 1969: 2). A similar arrangement operated with the Lawa or Lua under which, "the Prince recognized the local authority of the hereditary Lua' leaders, known by the Thai title of Khun, and the Lua' title *samang*" (Kunstadter, 1969: 4).

This describes what can best be called a *laissez faire* policy. As long as the ethnic minority groups did not cause trouble or challenge the suzerainty of the Prince they were left alone. They enjoyed sufficient autonomy to administer their own affairs and traditions.

This policy of non-interference remained in force up to the late 1950s. In 1951 the Government set up a Committee for the Welfare of People in Remote Areas (Ministry of Interior, Order No.653/2499, 7 August, 1951). This Committee's activities were directed at solving the urgent problems faced by all those living in isolated regions of Thailand. The term "hill tribe" was not yet in widespread use. This Committee however was successful in generating an increased interest and concern for highland

people. The government's 1958 ban on the sale and consumption of opium also contributed to the growing interest (Proclamation of the Revolutionary Party, No. 37, 9 December, 1958).

The real reasons behind the Government's change of policy from that of non-interference to one of involvement were indicated at the time by General Prapas Charusathira, the former Minister of the Interior and the first chairman of HTW Committee, who said that,

Because of their inefficient method of cultivation the tribes have been steadily despoiling the land of the region. Parts of it have been permanently ruined for agriculture. The removal of the forest cover has not only depleted timber resources but has interfered with the watershed of the rivers which irrigate the rice plains on which the economy of the national depends. Also, in the case of several of the largest tribes, their income has been derived from the cultivation of the opium poppy and the Government is determined to suppress opium growing for the sake of welfare of its own people and of others in the world.

The third reason for the change from a relatively passive policy towards the hill tribes to one of active development brings us back to the security aspect. In their efforts to create disturbance in Thailand the foreign Communists are seeking to arouse dissatisfaction amongst the tribes. By radio propaganda and attempts to infiltrate agitators, they try to present our past tolerant policy as one of deliberate neglect, to create a sense of deprivation amongst the tribal peoples and to allure them with impractical promises.

(Gen. Prapas Charusathira 1967: 3-4).

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On the same day the HTW Committee was established (3 June, 1959) the Council of Ministers also approved and empowered the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) to set up four Self-help Settlement Projects in Northern Thailand.

Soon after establishing the Doi Mussur (Tak Province) and Doi Chiang Dao (Chiang Mai Province) Settlement Projects, DPW felt a need for more reliable information on the hill tribes so that both planning and field operations under its responsibility could be made more effective. The first socio-economic survey of hill tribes in Northern Thailand was conducted between October 1961 and March 1962. The Department of Public Welfare in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Border Patrol Police participated in the field survey. The services of an anthropologist, Dr. Hans Manndorff, were secured through the United Nations Narcotic Drugs Division to help in field work and write up the final report.

Several recommendations presented in this report were adopted by the Council of Ministers. Perhaps the most important recommendation was that which led to the establishment of Provincial Hill Tribe Development and Welfare Centres under the DPW. The first centre was set up in Tak province at what had been planned as a resettlement site. On the basis of another recommendation the Tribal Research Centre (now the Tribal Research Institute) was established (1964) as a joint project between DPW and Chiang Mai University (CMU). The Centre was built on the university campus.

The second socio-economic survey of the hill tribes was conducted by a United Nations team in 1967. The results of this survey led to the establishment of the Opium Crop Replacement and Community Development Programme under the assistance of a United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC), launched in 1973.

Since 1959, many modifications have been made to the committee, its subcommittees and the policy itself. I shall outline only some of these modifications which will serve to show the direction of policy development and allow me to keep my paper within a reasonable length.

Late in 1967 Thailand witnessed its first outbreak of active insurgency at a Meo village in the district of Thoeng, Chiang Rai. Communist influence spread quickly in response to punitive raids by government forces and acts of terrorism increased. These incidents aroused the concern of both Bangkok and field agencies. Military, police and civilians were deeply disturbed by the aggressive response of some of the hill tribes. At this time (1969), His Majesty the King initiated what has become the most important of all voluntary services in the highlands, the Royal (Northern) Project. Just before the King took this initiative the government acting on advice of the planning committee of the National Economic Development Board, sanctioned by the National Security Council, agreed to change the name of the Hill Tribe Welfare Committee to the Hill Tribe Committee (1968) to acknowledge the wide range of problems and public agencies called into action in the highlands. This Committee is now called the Central Hill Tribe Committee. Policy modifications were made with the approval of the Council of Ministers on 15 December, 1969 (Letter from the Secretariate of the Council of Ministers, No. 0403/18577, 4). The policy which emerged is informally known as the Short-and Long-term policy.

The **Short-term Policy** was to arrange as soon as possible for government officials to work with hill tribes in vulnerable areas by providing civic action services to gain their confidence and encourage them to make a commitment of loyalty. The Government also mobilised their support in a defence effort to resist infiltration.

Where the armed forces undertook operations to suppress terrorism, all government units fell under the unified command

of the military. In areas which were considered to be susceptible to infiltration, DPW was made responsible for quickly dispatching development and welfare teams to work with the people.

The Long-term Policy was to provide development and welfare services to highlanders to stabilize their residence and livelihood, discourage them from growing opium poppy and replace opium with other crops, cease deforestation and contribute to the nation in a manner expected of citizens. All this was to be implemented as part of the First Five Year Economic Plan prepared by the National Economic Development Board. In order to carry out his policy, four operational methods were laid down.

First, if communities were living in scattered hamlets rather than proper villages, or if these villages were difficult for government officials to reach, the hill tribes were to be persuaded to group together at suitable locations, as arranged by the authorities.

Second, communities already suitably located were to be given support to enable them to maintain their livelihood. DPW mobile teams were to provide various development and welfare services.

Third, those communities that did not wish to stay in the hills, or whose inhabitants had run away in fear of injury and who did not wish to live in the hills again, were to be grouped in evacuee centres. Welfare services would then be made available to enable them to integrate into lowland society.

Fourth, as an adjunct to the policy a general rider was made that all contact was to promote national security, encourage hill people to identify with Thai society and give their loyalty to the nation.

This Short-and Long-term policy was pursued until 1976 at which time the Government declared a general policy of integration.

Prior to this declaration, the composition of the CHT Committee was modified following submissions from the Ministry of the Interior. Under these modifications, designed to improve efficiency, the number of members was reduced and the Permanent Under-Secretary to the Minister of the Interior took the place of the Minister as the head of the Committee. All sub-committees in various fields such as education, health, vocation and etc., were dissolved.

Following this change, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives submitted and was granted (4 March, 1976) by the Council of Ministers, approval to form a Committee to Consider Ways and Means to Protect and Maintain the Forest and Watershed (Letter from the Secretariate of the Council of Ministers, No. 0202/3451, 4 March, 1976). This Committee is chaired by the Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives and includes representatives of the Royal (Northern) Project. It is responsible for preparing projects to help:

- 1) broaden hill tribe employment opportunities, especially in agriculture and reforestation schemes mounted to replace damaged forests; and,

- 2) train the highlanders in new occupations such as land conservation development and the maintenance of local watersheds.

Following on these changes, the year 1979 also saw the establishment of the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) appointed under the Act for the Prevention and Suppression of Narcotic Drugs which had become law on November

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16, 1976. This Board is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, and is charged with responsibility for minimising disruptions to work on the suppression of narcotics. Prior to this, work was often interrupted following changes of government.

Now, let's return once more to the policy of integration. This policy, originally prepared by DPW was submitted to the Ministry of the Interior and received the Cabinet's approval on 6 July, 1976 (Letter from the Secretariate of the Council of Ministers, No. 0202/11511, 13 July, 1976). This policy outlines the Government's intention to integrate the hill tribes into Thai society whilst respecting their rights to practise their own religions and maintain their cultures.

The objectives of this policy are stated quite clearly and precisely. They commit the Royal Thai Government to a policy under which assistance is given to the hill tribes for the express purpose of helping them to become first class, self-reliant Thai citizens. The policy is, especially in the last point, subject to the Ministry of the Interior's Regulations on Considerations for Granting Thai Nationality to the Hill Tribes involving Housing Registration Cards (1974). It also states the necessity to reduce the highlander population growth rate by promoting family planning. As for development approaches, the policy outlines three guidelines:

First, areas or zones for integrated development should be specified and the development task clearly entrusted to DPW, Ministry of Interior as the principal agency to carry out the work in cooperation and co-ordination with other line agencies.

Second, where hill tribe villages are not yet officially identified as belonging to development zones, mobile teams will be sent to work in these villages to build up a good relationship, gather baseline survey data for preparing plans, and assist with urgent problems.

Third, Thais who happen to live in highland areas will also receive services similar to those provided to hill people. It should be noted that this last guideline acknowledged for the first time the presence of Thai "lowlanders" living in the hills.

This **Integration Policy** as I have called it was modified again six year later in 1982. At that time, General Prem Tinsulanonda, who was Prime Minister until September 1988, appointed the Board of the Directorate for the Solution of Security Problems in Relation to the Hill-Tribes and Opium Cultivation. General Prachuab Suntarangkul was appointed the first Chairman and as Deputy Prime Minister was assigned the task of improving the administration of affairs dealing with highlanders and opium related problems by reviewing policies and measures undertaken in field operations, administration and development, including overall coordination between the project and agencies involved. It was expected that improvements would eventually enhance efficiency, and more quickly achieve objectives set down by the government. The Council of Ministers adopted resolutions which modified the policy on 7 December, 1982 and this revised policy remains in use up to the present time.

The present hill tribe policy of the Government in fact retains the accumulated intentions and wishes of all preceding policies, namely, to promote the welfare of the hill tribes as well as to solve problems relating to destruction of watershed and forests, opium poppy cultivation and security problems. The policy is quite precise and covers a wide set of objectives and measures to achieve these aims. It provides suggestions for improving administrative procedures and basic guidelines for the organization of committee planning, staffing, and evaluation. Criteria are given for the selection of development zones and sources of budgetary support. In recent months however there has been increasingly determined talk of resettlement on a large scale.

To present detailed information on all of these topics would take more space than I am allowed but it is worth while

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to summarize the principal policy objectives and measures, and the organization of the committees at different levels. Readers interested in the issue of resettlement should read my other chapter in this book "Problem Solving Through Understanding" (Chapter 9).

The policy objectives and measures can be divided into three categories: administration, eradication of opium production and consumption, and socio-economic development.

Administration. There are two objectives in this category.

The **first** aims to enable the hill tribes to live peacefully within Thai society and to enjoy a sense of belonging; to be good citizens, loyal to the nation; not to cause security problems and not place political or socio-economic burdens on the government.

The **second** aims at reorganizing the life-style of both hill tribes and Thai lowlanders resident in the highlands to secure a livelihood in a manner consistent with the law and local regulations.

The measures recommended as guidelines to administrative agencies responsible for achieving these objectives state that they must:

1. Create amongst the hill people a mutual understanding and a sense of belonging to the nation through the promotion of non-formal education, public relations and other related project activities provided specially for hill tribes.

Further, to ensure effectiveness implementing agencies should:

- 1.1 See that the hill tribes be made fully aware of their place in Thai society, conscious of their right to maintain their way of life as Thai citizens.

1.2 Make sure that all rules and regulations are strictly followed particularly those relating to forest destruction, the depletion of watersheds and other natural resources. Also that every possible effort be made to promote self-reliance among the hill tribes and encourage them to participate actively in development activities.

2. Specify areas suitable for administrative and security control, natural conservation, and socio-economic development in order to settle people permanently ("settle" has come to increasingly mean "resettle").

3. Promote better ways of living and accelerate the carrying out of complete population and agricultural census surveys. Here again this includes Thai lowlanders resident in the highlands and making their living there.

4. Check immigration and push new migrants out of Thailand.

Policy papers also discuss the need to identify measures to discourage and if necessary punish new immigrants and those who assist them and that this be done in association with efforts to permanently settle those who qualify for citizenship. It is thought that such settlements will make it easier to distinguish between established residents and newcomers.

Eradication of Opium Production & Consumption. There are two principal objectives:

1. Reducing and eventually eliminating opium production and consumption among the hill tribes by encouraging them to engage in alternative activities which provide sufficient income.

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2. Freeing the hill tribes from the influence of armed minority groups and disarming groups like the *chin haw* or Chinese Yunnanese (KMT).

The measures to be taken to achieve these two objectives are:

1. To decrease opium poppy cultivation and opium consumption by promoting the:

1.1 Extension of substitute cash-crops;

1.2 Elaboration of alternative occupations, which provide high, permanent incomes, supported by an established infrastructure for marketing, transport and processing of agricultural produce. Ethnic handicrafts are also to be promoted.

1.3 Maintenance of public relations and educational programmes which identify the dangers of using narcotics and dissuade people from growing opium.

2. To minimize the influence of both ethnic minority pressure groups and the communists by means of staff efficiency, performance and morale should be improved to enable field workers to carry out their tasks competently.

3. To seek assistance from external sources to increase national effectiveness in solving problems related to hill tribe land use and opium production. This will be based on the support and control of key organizations whose responsibility is to monitor field work and make sure it is compatible with overall policy goals. Assistance should be given to Thai lowlanders as deemed appropriate.

Socio-Economic Development. There are two main goals:

1. To develop the productive capabilities of highlanders so that they are able to not only maintain their way of life, but also improve their standard of living.

2. To bring the hill tribe population growth rate down to 1.5% by the year 1986.

Other specific objectives laid down include the need to:

1. Improve the socio-economic status of hill tribe society by promoting a wide range of activities that will generate sufficient income, especially to promote economic development in the field of agriculture as well as other occupations. The emphasis should be on home industries. The promotion of, and training in, appropriate production technology should be in accord with the needs of the market and their culture. The private sector must also be allowed to participate in development efforts.

2. Make available primary health care services including advice on nutrition, health education, and also other useful public health information.

3. Intervene directly to slow the increasing rate of population growth in hill tribe and Thai communities located in the highlands.

4. Promote public relations and educational programmes as a way of creating a better understanding among the highlanders of the wide range of services provided by various government agencies.

Under this policy (1982) a three tiered organization of committees has been set up.

The **first tier** is the national level committee, called The Board of Directorate for the Solution of Security Problems Relating to Hill Tribes and Opium Cultivation. This Board is entrusted with considering and making policy recommendations to the Council of Ministers. It also has executive authority to promote and coordinate inter-ministerial cooperation and direct

specific operations, as well as screen plans prepared at the provincial level. This Committee is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister with the National Security Council acting in the capacity of the Committee's Secretariat.

The **second tier** committee is the earlier established Central Hill Tribe Committee. It is the inter-ministerial level committee headed by the Minister of the Interior. The Director-General of DPW acts as the secretary. This Committee is responsible for making policy and planning recommendations at the ministerial level consistent with national level policy. This Central Hill Tribe Committee coordinates the work of government implementing agencies that also carry out monitoring and evaluation tasks.

The **third tier** committee is the Provincial Hill Tribe Committee in each province headed by the provincial governor. This Committee is responsible for coordinating and preparing plans for solving practical problems relating to poppy cultivation and the like. Work includes directing, following-up and evaluating the results of all operations and projects. The head of the Provincial Office is the Committee's secretary assisted by the chief of each of the Provincial Hill Tribe Development and Welfare Centres.

To recapitulate, present government policy towards the hill tribes covers three matters, namely: administration; eradication of opium cultivation and consumption; and socio-economic development. For the sake of brevity I call this policy the **Policy of Three Aspects** to distinguish it from all preceding policies. It is implemented through a **three tiered** administrative hierarchy.

If the move towards resettlement is strengthened the policy may well have to be renamed. A change from current tolerance to forced resettlement would make it misleading to name a policy after the administrative arrangement under which it is implemented.

Concluding Remarks

Both the older **Integration Policy** and the current **Policy of Three Aspects** deserve fuller discussion but here I will offer only a few relevant remarks.

First, I am of the opinion that the **Policy of Three Aspects** is comprehensive, carefully thought out and its goals and objectives clearly identified. The long term or ultimate goal is clearly that of integration: the integration of hill people into the Thai state. This is an objective which presupposes that the path followed will “enable the hill tribes to become first class, self-reliant citizens”.

In my experience, this policy has not always been popular with overseas anthropologists who tend to view its aim as incorporation by cultural assimilation. I have always argued strongly against this criticism on the grounds that Thai society is much more open than most and those who share this culture freely accept both miscegenation and cultural mixing. This mixing has occurred spontaneously without force and by the free will of those involved. Thus, if such mixing results in a diverse but unified population it seems more appropriate to call the process spontaneous or natural integration rather than assimilation with the overtone of force which that word conveys. It has always seemed unfair to me that anthropologists antagonistic to its use judge only the policy objectives without taking into account the nature of Thai society, culture and behaviour.

I myself believe that the objective of the 1976 Government policy implemented with tolerance and understanding truly reflects national ideology and the aspiration to form a united people linked in a common purpose for the national good as articulated in Article 1 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand. This Article states that the Kingdom is a unitary state and shall remain “undivided”. This aspiration can be achieved only if the hill tribes are encouraged to become citizens.

The Department of Public Welfare in fact contributes a large part of its resources and manpower to integrate highlanders so that they can become full and equal citizens of the country. The number of hill people in contact with DPW mobile teams in 1986 amounted to 278,858; those whose names were recorded on official housing registration cards 166,759; as well as 67,663 with ID cards and 157,431 persons granted Thai citizenship. The DPW annual report (1984) indicates that the Department is administering 13 provincial Development and Welfare Centres in 18 provinces. In that year, 259 mobile teams were working in 1,155 villages with 40,832 households consisting of 48,548 families or 205,835 people.

Secondly, let me comment on programmes and projects based on the measures outlined in the **Policy of Three Aspects**. What activities are undertaken in pursuit of policy objectives? I have some suggestions for improvement. Some of these suggestions have been prepared in anticipation of a tougher government policy and are discussed in a separate paper (Chapter 9 this volume).

Then there is the matter of the administrative aspect of the policy. If we are to know how many people we are dealing with we need to carry out census and registration surveys. The census and registration surveys launched in 1985 will not tell us all we need to know. By the time this book is in print the survey of the highland population will nearly be complete (1988). This survey can not be called a census but the final figures will still provide valuable planning information for many agencies.

The **third** point I would like to make here concerns opium related problems and the ways and means by which a reduction of production and consumption by the hill tribes can be achieved. This issue remains a matter of central concern to which all government policies since 1959 have directed their attention. The opium problem is also of international interest and, as I said earlier, Thailand's request for UN assistance in the 1966/67 survey, and the manner in which it later welcomed the UN assisted

establishment of a crop replacement and community development programme in 1973, demonstrated the government's concern for this matter. These efforts, together with the results of socio-economic development in such fields as education, health, agricultural extension, promotion of other employment opportunities, public relations on the danger of opium as well as the continuing suppression of opium trafficking, etc., have brought about a great drop in opium production from approximately 150 tons in the 1965/66 season to 25 tons in 1986/87. This may lead to other problems.

In 1983 the TRI estimated the hill tribe consumption by calculating the ONCB rate of addiction (6.8 percent) for 400,000 people requiring a daily intake of 3.2 g. and came up with the total for annual demand as 31,956 kg. As the figures for supply and demand are so close further problems may be generated if suppression of production is too successful. As has been observed by Gammelgaard "A one-sided approach emphasizing only eradication of cultivation may have unwanted side-effects which are so common in the history of drug abuse control. One is to convert Thailand into an opium importing country. Another possible effect may be to pave the way for heroin dependence in the hill tribe villages" (Gammelgaard, 1985). To avoid this situation it is absolutely necessary to reduce the incidence of opium addiction among hill tribe populations.

The **fourth** and last point I would like to make here is given more thorough treatment in my Chapter, "Problem Solving Through Understanding": that is the question of how to solve the problem of destruction of the watersheds and forests brought about by shifting cultivation. At present there is a conflict of opinion between the advocates of human resource development and of natural resource conservation. This contradiction is likely to adversely influence the allocation of land to the hill tribes but the matter is such an important aspect of policy that it cannot be treated lightly. Support for administrative goals, security control as well as conserving natural resources appear to hinge

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on it. Through land grants, permanent settlements can be established in areas suited to sustainable cultivation practices. Ecologically informed and economically viable modes of production can only help achieve national goals. It would be a shame if the rhetoric on both sides precludes the possibility of a good outcome. I am confident that with the participation of the people, the hill tribes themselves, the goals of integration and the objectives of the **Policy of Three Aspects** are more likely to be achieved with a greater degree of success and with less pain than in other countries with a similar ethnic minority situation.



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