

Relatedness and Belonging: The Tai Lue Community in Nan

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ABSTRACT

The three villages of Tai-Lue people in Thawanpha district, Nan province, migrated from Muang La, Sipsong Panna, Yunnan, China, around 200 years ago. They have since that time celebrated their guardian spirits which originated in their home place, Muang La, in Sipsong Panna.

In the current rural development movement in Tai Lue villages in Thawanpha, 'Tai-Lue' as an ethnic label shows a connection with their original place, Sipsong Panna, and has become the label indicating the special features of the community. Now the guardian spirit ritual not only provides the opportunity for retaining the Tai-Lue people's identity connected with their history of migration, but even more important it designates an occasion for a gathering of the people who scattered to other provinces for work or study. The label 'Tai Lue' has become a mark to confirm the sense of belonging to the village, both for those who live in the village and those who have a connection to the village, though living in other provinces.

Beyond the community as a bounded territory unit, there are mutual aid networks that maintain communal sentiment, of which their guardian spirit, *Chao Luang Muang La* as is a symbol of their historical memory of migration from Sipsong Panna. Through examination of this case, I will discuss the characteristics of the Tai community.

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1. Introduction

Until now, I have studied the culture and society of the Tai-Lue people, a branch of the Tai-speaking group, which is dispersed across mainland Southeast Asia. Tai-Lue formed the Sipsong Panna chiefdom in Southwestern China, now in Yunnan province. Most of the Tai-Lue in Northern Thailand migrated from Sipsong Panna, their original place, in the nineteenth century. Since the migration, they have assimilated with their neighboring Tai groups, especially Tai-Yuan, the majority group of Northern Thailand, who share linguistic and cultural similarities.

I have continued to conduct research especially in three Tai-Lue villages (N, T and D) in Thawangpha district, Nan province in Northern Thailand. The original place of Tai-Lue of these villages is Muang La in Sipsong Panna.

In this paper, I focus especially on N village and examine the characteristics of community. Beyond the community as a bounded territory unit, there are mutual aid networks that have communal sentiment, which their guardian spirit, *Chao Luang Muang La*, who is a symbol of their historical memory of migration from Sipsong Panna, creates. I examine this point in the context of rural development and changing rural society.

2. Changing Ritual and the changing meaning of label of Tai Lue

My main concern in researching Tai-Lue culture is the guardian spirit ritual, which is called *Chao Luang Muang La* in three Tai-Lue villages in Thawangpha. Since the Tai Lue people migrated to Thawangpha, they have celebrated this ritual together for three days every three years⁽¹⁾.

This guardian spirit ritual in Tai-Lue villages has undergone changes, particularly since the Movement for Cultural Revival, connected with the rural development program started in the early 1990s. In the 1990s, the government

promoted cultural decentralization as part of its broader policy of democratization, and declared that local wisdom was now to be considered a significant part of the “National Culture.” Government officials claimed that the disruption of traditional communities had led to a loss of their function of transmitting tradition.

In my former paper (Baba 2011), I referred to the performing arts in the ritual, which have seen considerable innovations in the changing process in the 1990’s. Traditional performing arts such as the Tai-Lue folksong, *Khap Lue*, have declined; instead, so much of the revival and newly created performing arts have appeared in the ritual.

In the changing process of ritual in the ’90s, “reconstruction of tradition” was stressed. It is reflected in the following performing arts in the ritual: the elderly traditional Northern Thai traditional music group, young people’s Northern Thai traditional music group, newly created villagers’ drama presenting the migration history of the Tai-Lue, and a quiz program about the traditional culture in N village. What is the aim of stressing the tradition? Both of the elderly Northern Thai traditional music group and young people’s Northern Thai traditional music group play Northern Thai traditional music but not Tai-Lue traditional music. In the night stage show, several performing arts which are not related to tradition are performed. These express the idea that the performing arts in the guardian spirit ritual are never compelled to keep traditional Tai-Lue style.

The pantheon of *Chao Lang Muang La* consists of many spirits under the control of the main spirit, *Chao Lang Muang La*⁽²⁾. It recounts the story of the army troop who escaped from the original place. The villagers inherited some spirits of the pantheon as their ancestral spirits along both paternal and maternal lines, so each villager connected the spirit as a member of the imagined army troop which commemorates their migration history from Sipsong Panna. However, young people are less particular about their own guardian spirit, and some of them do not know their own spirit. Therefore it can be said that now the role of the guardian spirit ritual has become an opportunity to confirm that they are village members, rather than the commemoration of their original place, Sipsong Panna, Yunnan, China as before. This is the important reason that Tai-Lue authenticity is not necessary in the performing arts in the contemporary guardian spirit ritual.

Stressing the tradition in the ritual is not only following the government policy of rethinking local tradition. Nowadays the culture of Tai-Lue villages is

assimilated into the culture of the Tai-Yuan, the majority people of Northern Thailand, and influenced by national culture. The villagers do not need to care whether they are Tai-Lue or not in their daily life. So stressing “Being Lue” as presented in some stage programs such as a quiz program about traditional culture; and the Tai-Lue migration drama in the ritual is actually “Performing as a Lue” in the context of the rural development program which is stressed as a special feature of the village for differentiating it from other villages. “Being Lue” is no longer ethnic identity at the individual level in daily life, but a strategic label at the village level.

In the night stage show, there are programs performed by villagers who live in other provinces. For example, the Ram Wiphon (celebration) was performed by a girl who lived in Bangkok, and a CMU (Chiang Mai University) dance was performed by two students of the Faculty of Medicine, Chiang Mai University. Recently people live in other provinces for work or schooling, so the guardian spirit ritual is one of the few occasions when villagers who live in other provinces come back to their birth place. The villagers who live in other provinces make sure they are recognized as members of N village by joining the night stage show. Northeastern dance, one of the stage programs, was arranged by a village woman who studied in Uttaradit Teachers College. Uttaradit is situated at the junction of Northern Thailand and Northeastern Thailand, so she could study Northeastern dance. This is an example of presenting the experience in other provinces in the stage program. The night stage show reflects that people of N village connect with the outside world in various ways.

Each Village member belongs to one of 5 divisions (*Muok*). Villagers’ performances on the night stage are held as a competition of performance among divisions. The ideas of villagers’ performance are presented by each division (*Muok*). The members of each division include not only people living in the village but also their relatives who live outside of the village, so this stage performance by villagers is a good opportunity for gathering and cooperating between those living both inside and outside of the village.

3. Village for villagers living outside of village

As mentioned previously, recently people live in other provinces for work or schooling. In this chapter, I focus on the meaning of village for migrants from N village.

From 2004 to 2006, The Project of Making a Strong Family was carried out in several villages in Nan including N village as a pilot project of government policy (Baba 2012). This Project promoted the importance of family but did not lead to the creation of a modern or paternal family. The concept of “strong family” as a government policy is so vague that it can be perhaps assumed that the flexible interpretation is possible based on the local context.

In N villagers’ daily life, they don’t use the word *kropkhrua* (family), but rather the word *yat* (relatives). In the village, there is also a mutual support system beyond the individual living unit. Unmarried individuals can bring up the child of a relative. Some live with their unmarried relatives to receive their support. As the number of workers emigrating increased, so did the divorce rate. However there are several cases where children are brought up by a divorced partner and his/her new partner. The concept of *yat* (relatives) for a relationship that extends beyond the living unit is more realistic for the villagers. It extends beyond the village community as an administrative unit to connect villagers living outside of village.

Some migrant workers leave their child in the care of their parents, who live in their home place. In N village, the number of households with migrant workers is 66, (230 households and 638 persons living in N village), and among them are ten cases where grandparents are bringing up a grandchild. The number of single migrant workers is more than half of the total number.

The migrant worker’s custom of leaving a child with their parents has to be considered in the recent mutual aid function among relatives, along with bringing up the child with a divorced partner, leaving a child with an uncle, giving a child to relatives as an adopted child. These mutual aid functions of relatives are not limited to Tai Lue people. In N village, intermarriage with Non-Tai Lue has recently increased. Because the number of workers migrating to other provinces has increased, the chance of meeting a Non-Tai Lue partner have also increased, as has the divorce rate.

I collected information from a questionnaire distributed for migrants from N village in Bangkok about the contact situation with their village and about the feeling of affinity for the Tai-Lue culture with the information about bringing up a child by parents living in their home place. I obtained only a few examples, but an interesting

tendency appears here (Research in 2007). Most of the migrants from N village in Bangkok leave their children with their parents in their home place in order to save expenses; while some don't do it because they think after having grown up the role of the parent is important for a child. The latter are public employees who earn relatively high income, which is enough to bring up a child.

There are many migrants from N village who often return to N village once a year and give some donation in various opportunities. When migrants from N village return to N village, they join the village activity such as *Chao Luang Muang La* ritual, *Sonkran* Festival (New Year Festival) and ceremonies conducted by relatives such as a wedding ceremony, a house building ceremony, a funeral etc. Even if migrants from N village can only make a remittance and can't participate in the activity of the village, it is said that they can keep their identity as N villagers⁽³⁾.

In addition, when a big religious event such as the temple restoration (monks' living quarters' new construction, wall surface refurbishing etc.) is held, the chief monk sends a letter to migrant villagers to collect donations. A monk of the N temple tells that they send a donation for the N temple with pleasure because "it is our temple".

In the case of a single woman in Bangkok, who is a respondent of my questionnaire, she contacts N village through a remittance, but does not have feelings of affinity about Tai Lue culture unlike other examples. Most respondents feel it is a pity if their child cannot speak the Tai Lue language, but she does not feel like that even in such a case. She does not remember her own guardian spirit under the control of *Chao Luang Muang La* which inherited along both paternal and maternal lines. Although she thinks she will leave her child with her parents after marriage, it seems that her purpose of leaving her child with her parents is just for economic reasons; she seems not to have a will to contact the village with feelings of affinity about Tai Lue culture. Such a case may show one of the directions of the future of the migrants from N village.

Figure 1 expresses that people who are located around a family tree have a tendency of not contacting N village and of not speaking Tai Lue language. Some were born outside of village and did not have a chance to speak Tai Lue language.

The increase of migrants from N village made mutual aid networks extend to outside the village as an administrative unit and which are not limited to Tai Lue people because of the increasing inter-marriage with non-Tai Lue people.

The migrants from N village who connect a relative mutual network with N village can be classified into 3 types: people who contact N village with feelings of affinity about Tai Lue culture, people who contact N village without a feeling of affinity about Tai Lue culture (including Non-Tai Lue people), people without a feeling of affinity about Tai Lue culture who don't contact N village so much. People who are losing the Tai Lue consciousness and sentiment of belonging to N village form the periphery of the relative mutual aid network.

4. Tai Lue Networks for social security

In the last chapter, I focus on the case of one village. However there is a mutual aid network for Tai Lue at the national level.

An event called the *Subsan Tamnan Tai Lue* (Tai Lue traditional culture festival) has been carried out mainly in Chiang Kham in Phayao province every year since 1994, and many Tai Lue villages have participated from throughout the country. As for this, an organization of the Tai Lue cultural revival called the *Chomrom Tai Lue Chiang Kham* played a key role, and based on it, *Samakhom Tai Lue Haeng Phrathet Thai* (National Tai Lue Association) was established. Ladawan Wongsriwong, who is one of Tai Lue in Chiang Kham, a local member of Parliament and vice-minister of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, became the sponsor of it, so it became an organization of the national level. National Tai Lue Association has branches in Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai, Lampan, Lampun, and Nan province. In 2004 and 2008, *Subsan Tamnan Tai Lue* was held in Maesai where the Chiang Rai branch office is situated, and in 2007, it was held in Doi Saket where the Chiang Mai branch office is situated. In 2005, the Tai Lue from Sipsong Panna, Laos, and Myanmar were invited to Chiang Kham and "*Subsan Tamnan Tai Lue Lok* (International Festival of Tai Lue traditional culture)" was held, but it is basically the opportunity when Tai Lue people in Thailand gather as well as the annual festival, *Subsan Tamnan Tai Lue*.

Ladawan Wongsriwong who was the leader of the National Tai Lue Association said that she was anxious about a big change in the Tai Lue culture due to globalization, and felt the need to preserve the traditional way of life. The *Subsan Tamnan Tai Lue* has been carried out with such a purpose, but it is also with the

purpose that is important to being connected between Tai Lue living in Thailand together with the promotion of regional tourism, preservation of the traditional culture (raising awareness of the traditional culture by showing traditional culture) as Nithima pointed out (Nithima 2009). Ladawan announced "it is good opportunity when Tai Lue people scattered all over the country who left their own village and emigrate to the other prefectures including Bangkok by labor meet each other " (in March, 2002 at *Subsan Tamnan Tai Lue*). In this statement, it is expressed that the mutual aid network is necessary for the Tai Lue people scattered all over the country.

Ayabe proposes a concept called "ethnic security" and argues about the relationship among three levels - national, human and ethnic, exemplifying the case of the Lisu, one of the mountainous ethnic groups in northern Thailand. Security here is a principle to ensure the safety of people. National security means the security that is carried out at a national level, and Human security means security beyond the national level including the relief of the people under the dispute based on a concept of "the human security" of the United Nations. For minority ethnic groups in the multiracial nation, these securities which are external factors are not enough to ensure their safety. Therefore a principle of the inherent security to supplement it is necessary and it can be called "ethnic security".

Ayabe explains "ethnic security" exemplifying a Lisu case as follows (Ayabe 2008): after World War II, the Thai government needed strong centralization for correspondence of anti-government powers, including communism. Under such situation, the hill people including the Lisu who scattered in the border zone were treated as a nuisance with a grant of nationality being shelved. Under a situation that could not guarantee National security, the Lisu began to grope for various solidarities such as various kinds of NGOs in the '90s. It was connected with the problem of the rights of ethnic minorities including cooperation with the international movement. Lacking a national security system, the Lisu people need not only "human security" but also an inherent security system, because when only physical security - food, clothing and shelter - is guaranteed, this is not sufficient: psychological security is also necessary to keep values that people respects.

The act of keeping values is enabled by a strong sense of belonging. For keeping inherent security, self-consistency of the identity created by both a host to protect and a protected host belong to the same category is needed, whereas the host to protect both the national security and the human security is on the outside. The

current issue of the ethnic identity of the hill peoples has a deep connection with the problem of such a security. The ethnic security theory explains that maintenance of the ethnic identity should be coupled with effective means to enable a simultaneous security both physically and psychologically and with a security safety net. Ethnic identity may be strengthened and reorganized as long as such security problems exist.

However, the Tai Lue do not suffer a disadvantage in the nation as do the hill people, because Tai minorities are considered a part of Tai family as majority of Thai nation. They don't need to worry about the security problem such as the hill peoples have; however, they need a social protection mechanism to keep livelihood security for the society especially after the Economic Crisis of 1997. For this purpose, the Government used family and community as an unofficial social protection mechanism to keep social security after the Economic Crisis of 1997.

N village has been a model for rural development since the ex-village headman was honored as the best model leader for rural development in all of the country in 1982. Most of the villagers are proud of being a member of a model village, so they automatically try to behave as model citizens. N villagers hold this model up as exemplary when talking to each other. If not for this mechanism, the villagers would feel that it was too difficult to stay in the village ⁽⁴⁾. It is, so to speak, a mutual surveillance system among villagers. This is a villager's spontaneous movement, which government did not expect, responding to the government village development policy.

Aside from the government's village development policy, there is also a method of village problem resolution that is rooted in traditional culture. In N village, there is a ritual for reforming the bad behavior of a child. If a child behaves poorly, the parents bring a paper with the name of the child and the child's picture to the temple, and the monk performs a ritual for them ⁽⁵⁾.

Children and young people are proud to be members of a model village; thus there is a tendency for bad behavior to take place only outside of the village, in neighboring villages. Both government policy direction and traditional culture co-exist as the method of solving village problems, and we can see from this how villagers interpret policy in the context of their living culture.

Although the government tried to use family and community as an unofficial social protection mechanism to keep social security after the Economic Crisis, they ignored these inherent security systems of Tai Lue people, and ignored

the mutual aid networks not only for villagers inside but outside of village, who often returned to the village. It is beyond the community as a bounded territory and an administrative unit, and is a local inherent security system which is different from the security system encouraged by government policy.

Most of the villagers living both inside and outside of the village connecting this mutual aid and security network feel the sense of belonging to the village and have communal sentiment by sharing the community symbol, guardian spirit *Chao Luang Muang La*, which commemorates their original place. As mentioned before, the label of Tai Lue functions as a community label rather than an ethnic label, but it still must be to connect their historical memory of migration from their original place, Sipsong Panna, though the detail of memory is in the process of becoming lost. This security networks beyond the community as an administrative unit is an inherent security system and has an ethnic symbol for giving communal sentiment to villagers, so it can be said that it has a similar characteristic to 'ethnic security' Ayabe proposes that the consciousness of the Tai Lue exists together with a sentiment of belonging to the village with their mutual aid networks, though problems they confront are different from of hill peoples. Such local Tai Lue own security system links to the Tai Lue mutual aid networks on the national level by the National Tai Lue Association. The leader of the National Tai Lue Association is a government official but it is created based on local inherent security networks.

In the Tai Lue community in Nan, the connection with their original place is expressed as a memory of migration history in the guardian spirit ritual but a real connection with their original place is not strong. On the other hand, after the Cold War, the network beyond the border was formed among the border area of Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and China, and the commercial activity became brisk there⁽⁶⁾. In addition, there exists the network such as the Tai Lue which emigrated to the United States as Lao refugees contributing to a temple of the original place in Laos⁽⁷⁾.

The National Tai Lue Association put the connection with the original place of Tai Lue, Sipsong Panna, into the field of vision, but the more important activity is a connection between dispersed Tai Lue people in a nation.

In addition, there is a conflict between the influence of the Nation State and the crossing border Tai community formed in the border area. In Sipsong Panna, the Tai Lue new generation point to big Chinese cities including Shanghai than the connection with the Tai Lue people beyond the border (Diana 2009).

The Tai communal networks, which exists beyond the border is challenged by the Nation State's power.

As mentioned previously, the local mutual aid network with communal sense intersects with or challenges the bounded administrative unit created by national policy, but, on the other hand, Nation State power challenges the local network with communal sense beyond the border.

5. Concluding Remarks: Tai Lue community as Tai Community

Here I summarize the characteristics of the communal network of Tai Lue villagers beyond the village, related to the concept of the Tai community Walker proposed (Walker 2009).

As I described, in N village, stressing the tradition in the ritual, especially their stage performance is actually "Performing as a Lue" in the context of the rural development program which is stressed as a special feature of the village for differentiating it from other villages. "Being Lue" is no longer ethnic identity at the individual level in daily life but a strategic label at the village level in the process of rural development.

However Tai Lue as a strategic label is not only limited to villagers inside the village but also outside. Some migrants from N village feel the sense of belonging to the village but some does not feel it. For migrants from N village who have a connection with a relative living in the village and who often visit the village, a village is not a place of the everyday life but is one of "the places to belong". For such people, the label of the Tai Lue is a mark of a connection with the community known as Tai Lue village and of the confirmation of the sense of belonging to village, rather than a connection with their original place, Sipsong Pannna. The guardian spirit, *Chao Luang Muang La*, ritual is the special symbol to connect and gather the scattered villagers, rather than the opportunity to express Tai-Lue ethnic identity. However some migrants from N village who feel the sense of belonging to the village but don't have feelings of affinity about Tai Lue culture, and there are some who don't contact N village so much. People who are losing the Tai Lue consciousness and sense of belonging to N village form the periphery of the relative mutual aid network.

For examination of this case, I refer to the concept of “modern Tai community” Walker proposes.

The book, “Tai Land and Thailand: Community and State in Southeast Asia”, which Walker edits aims to provide an alternative view of the rapid social and economic changes taking place in the Tai world that differs from the conventional discussion about community, which concludes that the traditional community is undermined “by the modern forces of state incorporation and market penetration”. The authors describe modern forms of community, which they refer to as “modern Tai community” or “modern community”, emphasizing how state power intersects with the market, livelihoods and aspirations

“Modern Tai community” is not a bounded territorial unit but rather an unbounded network that has communal sentiment, which is not opposed to state power and market economy ⁽⁸⁾. This point is relevant to the case of the Tai Lue in this paper.

As Walker states in referring to Cohen’s studies (Cohen 1985), the symbolic construction of community, the sentiment of community often focuses on cultural and social components that do not necessarily serve boundary-making functions. The key components can often be seen as a symbol for creating a sense of belonging in the community which is not a bounded unit ⁽⁹⁾.

However, Walker points out that there are risks in overstating the symbolic dimensions of community. In relation to this argument, Walker refers to Amit’s concept of “realizing community” in which community is not so much imagined through symbols as realized through patterns of day-to-day interaction and communication.

The Puta ritual community described in Walker’s book is a good example of such new modes of communal belonging (High 2009). This community is based on the personal orientation which has an unbounded network that intersects with the artificial community created by the Lao government for development as a bounded territorial unit. These communal networks are used by members to reduce poverty instead of the community created by Lao government.

In the case of Tai Lue of N village, they have also personal orientation which has unbounded networks as mutual aid networks that intersects with the artificial community as a bounded territorial unit created by the Thai government for development. Their livelihood security is achieved via personalized and dispersed

networks of family, friends and kin, which is close to the concept of “relatedness” Carsten proposes (Carsten 1997) ⁽¹⁰⁾, not only via policy for community and family. Communal sentiment for these personalized and dispersed networks is created by their historical symbol, *Chao Luang Muang La*. However their historical memory and sense of belonging to village of people at periphery of this network is in the process of becoming lost. This mutual aid networks that has communal sentiment is now in the process of changing, continuing to make periphery of the networks means that the network is continuing to change. This is another dimension of the process of constructing and realizing community. It is not enough to consider this point in the concept of Modern Tai community Walker proposes

The meaning of the historical symbol of N village, *Chao Luang Muang La* who created communal sentiment for N villagers has changed during recent decades. It was the symbol of historical memory of migration from Sipsong Panna, but now it is the symbol of community label differentiating from other villages in the context rural development competition rather than the consciousness of connecting with their original place. Although they still keep the memory of their migration history, now they don’t care about Tai Lue authenticity such as expressed in the performance at the guardian spirit ritual, and don’t care about historical truth with evidence in the meaning of historical studies ⁽¹¹⁾. There is the reality of the history in a thing giving communal sentiment in the network of their mutual aid via their relatedness (personalized and dispersed networks of family, friends and kin) for the local people, and by this, as far as it exists, they can keep the sense of belonging to the village.

The future of this movement, however, is uncertain. Many villagers are scattering to other provinces, especially to Bangkok. Most young people do not wish to stay in the village to engage in farming. Parents don’t want their children to be farmers. Although young people who are interested in the traditional culture appeared in the process of reconstructing the traditional culture movement, such young people, mostly model and high-achieving students, tend to quit their village to study in the big city. There is a contradiction between the school education system and the village’s development policy. It must be stressed that the future of the farmer’s life must be considered more.

Note

- (1) In 1996, the ritual place split into 2 places (N village and D village, T village join the ritual in N village).
- (2) Basically it follows the original guardian spirit pantheon in Muang La, Sipsong Panna, their original place, but some spirits are changed from the original pantheon to be suitable for the new pantheon.
- (3) According to the information I collect from migrants from N village in Bangkok, most of them come back to the village during the *Chao Luang Muang La* ritual at least once every three years.
- (4) The following is one example: a man was drunk very often and was violent toward his wife. However, as his son became a monk and took on an important role in the village, he felt shame at his behavior and reformed. If he had not done so, he would not have been able to stay in the village.
- (5) The following is an example of this: the daughter of a family drank alcohol at the house of her friend in a neighboring village, and didn't come home. Her mother worried about her, so she came to N temple and asked the monk to conduct this ritual. The monk prepares *Samphao* (a wooden model of a sailing boat) and a yellow robe. *Samphao* is considered as to be the boat which takes people to nirvana across a whirlpool of transmigration. The monk sets the paper from the client on the *Samphao*, and ties it with cotton thread. This ritual is called *Than Kham*, and is usually performed as a healing ritual. Someone tried it for reforming a child's behavior, and it succeeded in reforming the child's behavior, so it has been conducted for reforming a child's acts until now.
- (6) Walker points out that "For many commentators, cross-border cultural commonalities provide a basis for a sense of transnational Tai community that challenges the bounded imagined communities of the region's nation-states. ...Some recent Thai scholarship has suggested that these historical connections are now being enlivened by the modern circulation of commodities across national borders, ..." (Walker 2009).
- (7) The Tai Lue who emigrated to the United States as refugees forms a Tai Lue community as a voluntary association as American citizens (Nanshan Kang 2004).
- (8) Walker's book criticizes the concept of community of "Community School" ; The meaning of community is shown to be an alternative to "modernity", which was against state policy for development meant in Sarit's, during the 1950s and 1960s.

- (9) Walker summarizes Cohen's argument as follows: "attachment or commitment to a common body of symbols" is the basis of community. What members of a community share in common are the key symbols that distinguish them from outsiders. However the sharing of symbols is not the same as the sharing of meaning. The meanings attributed to shared symbols are not uniform within the community of members. There is considerable room for individual interpretation (Walker 2009).
- (10) Carsten looks at relatedness constructing the everyday life of the community. Through close ethnographic examination, she finds an emerging picture of a network and expanding relatedness through varied and multiple ties, focusing on food and substance as the basis of relatedness (Carsten 1997, Hayami 2012). The concept of "relatedness" in the context of Tai Lue society must be more considered.
- (11) There are different historical consciousnesses between N village and D village. N villager thinks that N village is a mother village from which D village separated, but D villager thinks that D village is a mother village. I investigated this point using historical documents, oral histories, ruins and geographical circumstances and concluded that there is a greater possibility that D village is a mother village. However this historical analysis is different from the historical reality of the villagers. Different consciousnesses between the two villages led to separation of the ritual place in the context of the rural development competition (Baba 1993, 1996, 2009).

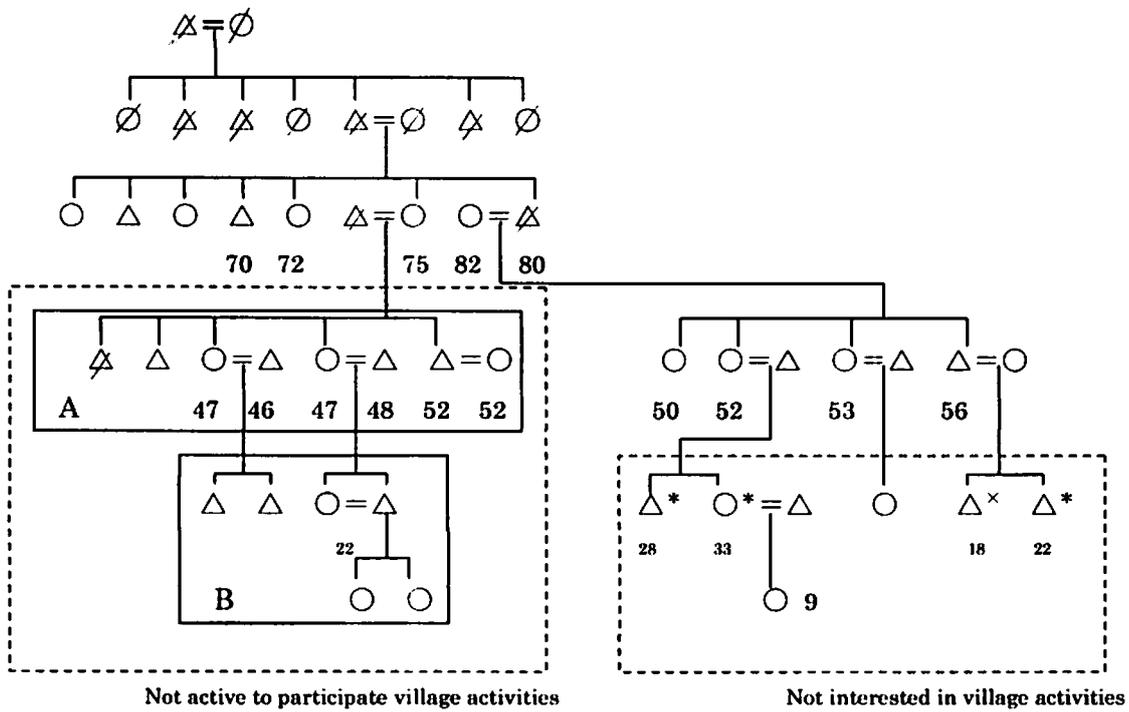
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Figure 1



A Not born in N village but have Tai Lue consciousness because their mother was born in N village (now not living in N village)

B Not born in N village and not have Tai Lue consciousness at all

* Participating village activities occasionally

× Not participating village activities at all

The number shows age (2013)