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Creation and Management of Local Communal Resources

This chapter will focus on the resources owned or held by locality groups, and analyze cooperative activities carried out by the villagers in connection with these resources. These resources have been created and organized by the villagers through their various communal activities. One notable activity has been the closure of public land located around the village which heretofore had always been freely accessible, and putting this newly acquired land under the collective management of the villagers. Another activity that has become widely practiced among villagers in recent years has been the creation of community-based facilities and funds. In the following pages, all these resources will be referred to as local communal resources.

The creation of communal resources is noteworthy because this phenomenon is still taking place in rural Thailand where significant socioeconomic changes have come about under the strong impact of government development policies. It is these changes which have led to the creation of new local communal resources, prompting villagers to adapt by turning to cooperative activities. At the same time, these cooperative activities have been drawing attention as a means for protecting natural resources.

This chapter will look at the kinds of local communal resources that exist in rural Thailand, the ways these have been developed, and the kinds of cooperative activities these have generated among the villagers. Resources related to temples can also be regarded as communal resources. However, these will not be discussed here, as they were dealt with in the previous chapter. This

chapter will focus on other types of resources in order to show how the creation of new types of communal resources has affected the character of rural communities in Thailand.

Acquisition and Management of Communal Land

According to an estimate by James C. Ingram, the amount of land under cultivation around 1850 equaled only 2 per cent of Thailand's present-day territory (Ingram 1971, pp. 8–9), and much of the rest was covered by forests which could be cleared relatively easily by hand and turned to cultivation. The clearing of forest land took place gradually over decades through the individual efforts of farmers who took possession of the land they cleared. The government long encouraged this process as a means of promoting the effective use of land. Among the farmers it was commonly understood that they could freely enter the unoccupied land and take possession of the portions they cleared. The unoccupied land could also be freely used for grazing cattle and for gathering edibles. In other words, in the past when there had been an abundance of unoccupied land, it was possible to both take possession and still have plenty remaining for open and free access. This situation disappeared with the increase in population, the improvement in transportation, and the development of market-oriented farming.

The Bowring Treaty concluded with Britain in 1855 opened up export markets for Thailand's rice, and this accelerated rice cultivation in the Chaophraya Delta. From the late 1950s through the 1970s, forests on the perimeter of central Thailand and in the Northeast and North were turned into farmland in response to the growing overseas demand for processed agricultural products, such as kenaf, cassava, maize, and sugarcane. This development was facilitated by the improvement of infrastructure, particularly canal construction in the Chaophraya Delta starting in the second half of the nineteenth century and railroads in the early twentieth century, which enhanced the access of farming villages to the markets. The development of road networks after the 1960s ensured quick access to markets even for areas far from the canals or railroads, stimulating the cultivation of still more land.

The expansion of forest clearing rapidly reduced the amount of unoccupied land. Continued clearing and acquiring of the remaining unoccupied land threatened to eliminate land free for public use. To prevent this, villagers began to put the remaining land under communal control. In this chapter such land is referred to as communal land, or communally held land. It should be noted, however, that legally speaking all land except that under private ownership is possessed by the state. It is such state-owned land that villagers have

been taking over communally. "Communal holding" in this context should thus be understood as land that is collectively held by custom.

State-owned land in Thailand is divided into (1) wasteland (*thidin rok rang wang plao*), (2) common land (*thidin samrap phonla muang chai ruam kan*), and (3) official land (*thidin phua prayot khong phaeng din doi choepho*), according to Article 1304 of the Civil Code. Wasteland can be privately acquired through the proper legal procedures, while common land is intended for continued use by the general public. Such common land includes pasture land and land for roads as well as rivers, canals, parks, beaches, lakes and swamps, and territorial seas (Orathai 1983, pp. 122–36). Official land is intended for specific uses by the state. Communal land in principle falls under the category of common land which is qualified officially for legal protection, but such land can also turn up as part of wasteland and official land.

The villagers' common use of land is guaranteed under Thai law and has been as far back as the late nineteenth century (Orathai 1983, pp. 10–11). However, the common use of land has not been fully protected against the process of acquisition for private use for the following three reasons. First, certain legal procedures have been required for specific land to be placed under official protection as common land, but only in a few cases have such procedures actually been taken.¹ Second, the methods for determining the location and area size of common land have posed problems. Usually maps on a scale of 1 to 50,000–100,000 have been used in the procedures for establishing legal protection. Careful plotting of public land on cadastral maps did not begin until 1986 (Shigetomi 1996b). Apart from mapping problems, public land was registered in only two ways: listing it in public land records and issuing a National Land Document for each piece of land. No maps were attached to the former, while the number of the latter documents issued was very small (amounting to only 3,708 by the end of 1971) (DOL 1973, p. 87). The third problem has been determining who should be in charge of management of common land. District chiefs, on authority from the director of the Department of Land, were supposed to be responsible for managing common land primarily for local use, such as pasture land, wetlands, and burial forests. However, with the limited number of personnel and diverse duties, it is virtually impossible for the district office to properly control common land.

These problems hampered the government, at least until the 1970s, in properly protecting common land through the enforcement of legal procedures, the determination of its actual size and location, and the overseeing of its actual management. Under these circumstances, the adequate protection of common land required the villagers as its users to have a shared intention to protect the land, have a common perception of its size and dimensions, and

know how to collectively manage it. Using the examples of Thon and Si Phon Thong Villages in the Northeast along with community forests in northern Thailand, we will look at how the villagers' perception of communal land and the system for its management have developed.

In Thon Village, individual villagers had already taken over and cleared by the second half of the 1950s all forest land in the vicinity of the village that was arable. Only a plateau along the Hai Creek to the south of the village was left unoccupied. In 1952 they cleared the land on the plateau to move the primary school from the temple compound. Thus the plateau which was public land with an area of 24 rai was enclosed as communal land for the village's common purpose.

The lowland lying between Thon Village and the Nam Phong River to the east encompassed several swamps. The larger swamps had never been claimed by any individual villager and remained open to free use until very recently not only to the villagers but also to anyone else, with only the reclamation of land through the scooping out of water being prohibited. Until a few decades ago the villagers shared the notion that these swamps were their communal holdings. They used to work together to clean the swamps during the rainy season or for fishing on prescribed days during the dry season when the water level dropped. Villagers voluntarily participated in fishing and it was open even to nonvillagers.

With time, however, the custom of collective cleaning died out, and by the late 1960s these swamps had become unusable because of vegetation overgrown. In 1986 the village committee organized a group of thirty volunteers, and permitted the group five-year's exclusive use of one of these swamps, Khi Pet Swamp, for fish breeding in exchange for the payment of rent (1,000 baht) and the cleaning up of the swamp. In granting this permission, Thon Village prepared a certificate of lease with a revenue stamp attached to certify its legality. The certificate specified conditions and the terms with all the villagers (represented by their headman) as the lessor and the leader of the group as the lessee. Khi Pet Swamp was thus rented out as the village's communal asset and the village gained 1,000 baht and a cleaned swamp. The fact that the village is specified as the lessor in this contract shows that the villagers perceive themselves as the landholder. As the fish grew, members of the fish breeding group took turns in keeping night watch, and issued tickets for fishing on prescribed days during the dry season. Ticket sales amounted to 54,000 baht in 1989 which, after payment of expenses, were expended for such purposes as donations to the temple, dividends to the members (1,200 baht per person), and additions to the group fund.

Khe Swamp, another of these swamps, had been cultivated with rice by a

landless farmer since around 1983. This state of private use was discussed at a village meeting which decided to collect 200 baht annually from the farmer. This solution of collecting rents demonstrates that the villagers clearly perceived that such land was held by the village. The land on the plateau where the primary school had moved became vacant after the school was moved again. In 1988 the villagers collectively began to plant mulberries there in support of the sericulture business that started in the village. The land was divided into eighteen equal units (1 rai each) and rented to eighteen villagers at an annual rate of 100 baht per unit.

Thon Village has many other plots of communal land such as the village square, a pond, a boxing ground, a burial forest, and the forest for the guardian spirit (*puta*). With the exception of the plateau extending along the Hai Creek which is listed as pasture land and the burial forest which is registered with the land office, all these plots are held by the village without formal registration. They are perceived by the villagers as communal lands and are being used as such.

The whole area of Si Phon Thong Village lies in a lowland along the Mun River. Once there were many swamps in the forest, but almost all of these swamps had been taken over by individual villagers by the 1950s and turned into paddy fields. As the swamp lands became occupied, the villagers began to feel that the nearby wetlands were becoming insufficient for their needs. In anticipation of this shortage, the villagers had earlier established two swamps as their communal holdings: Phon Thong Swamp sixty to seventy years ago and Thung Swamp thirty years ago. These swamps had been taken over by individuals, but the villagers determined that these belonged to the village and negotiated their return. However, the swamps were left almost untouched with no collective cleaning at all. When the dry season set in every year, the villagers went fishing together on prescribed days as seen in Thon Village, and the swamps were accessible even to nonvillagers.

Since 1988 the village has carried on fish breeding in Phon Thong Swamp. The business is operated directly by the village. The village executives release the young fry; all the households feed the fish in turns, each household supplying two handcart-loads of cattle dung twice a year; and the villagers undertake fishing collectively. Part of the catch is distributed to all the households, and the rest is sold to people in and outside the village. Revenues are saved for the collective purchase of rice husks necessary for preparing organic manure which in turn is utilized to improve the economic conditions of the villagers. With the start of the collective fish-breeding operation, the swamp lost its status of an open-access area and is now enclosed as village communal land. Fishing is no longer permitted without the village's permit and offenders are punished.

Another type of communal land, which was not dealt with above, is community forests (*pa chumchon*). These forests are held by locality groups whose members use the trees and forest products under agreement (Yot et al. 1991, pp. 227–28). Looking at a recent survey on 153 community forests in northern Thailand (Chalatchai, Anan, and Santhita 1993), the data on these forests reveal some interesting facts (Shigetomi 1996b).

The biggest single usage of community forests, accounting for more than 40 per cent, is as water catchment areas. If multiple usage (water catchment plus other use) is included, this figure rises to 64 per cent. This is followed by usage as socioeconomic forests, i.e., utilized by villagers for their everyday livelihood, which accounts for only 36 per cent even if multiple usage is included. The percentage of these forests used in connection with traditional religion and burial is modest. Clearly the use of community forests as water catchment areas is the most important.

A look at the reasons behind the establishment of community forests shows that “conflicts over the use of resources” accounts for nearly 50 per cent of the total. Such conflicts can be seen (1) between private companies which have acquired logging concessions from the government and villagers wanting to use the forest, (2) between minority ethnic groups farming in the hills and villagers wanting to secure water resources, and (3) between villagers wanting to convert forests into fields and those wanting to maintain the forests traditional use. Other reasons include “unfavorable weather conditions, natural disasters, and water shortages.” This latter group is clearly ascribable to the dwindling of resources. These two major categories, conflicts and dwindling resources, account for 61 per cent of the total cases for establishing community forests. Preservation of community forests for the purpose of “indigenous faiths and customs” accounts for only 6.5 per cent (ten cases); multiple reasons including “indigenous faiths and customs” still account for no more than 16 per cent (twenty-four cases).

These observations lead to the following inferences. The majority of community forests are used as water catchments because water is seen as a rare (dwindling) resource. As sources of rivers, water catchment forests exist for the most part deep in the mountains and the area of such forests is usually small. Because of its smallness, conflicts over land use in this portion of forest arise easily as a result of increased population and economic development. Conflicts seem to have intensified since the 1970s when commercial crops such as maize became popular following the increase in logging concessions in the 1960s. In the 1980s, conflicts became even keener because of a boom in planting trees for commercial timber and constructing resorts (Sane et al. 1993, pp. 171–72).

Few people ventured to do anything with water catchment forests deep in

TABLE 4-1
THE NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATIVE VILLAGES WITH COMMUNAL LAND, AND THE TYPE AND NUMBER OF SITES OF COMMUNAL LAND PER ADMINISTRATIVE VILLAGE

Type of Communal Land	Northeast			North			Lower Central			Upper Central			South		
	Administ-rative Villages with Communal Land ^a	No. of Communal Land Sites per Administ-rative Village	%	Administ-rative Villages with Communal Land	No. of Communal Land Sites per Administ-rative Village	%	Administ-rative Villages with Communal Land	No. of Communal Land Sites per Administ-rative Village ^b	%	Administ-rative Villages with Communal Land	No. of Communal Land Sites per Administ-rative Village ^b	%	Administ-rative Villages with Communal Land	No. of Communal Land Sites per Administ-rative Village ^b	%
Swamps ^c	31	81.6	1.28	1	7.1	0.07	16	34.8	0.27	8	19.0	0.34	1	4.5	0.05
Ponds ^d	6	15.8	0.12	2	14.3	0.14	0	0.0	0.00	6	14.3	0.10	1	4.5	0.05
Forests, wasteland, lowland, vacant land ^e	19	50.0	0.55	4	28.6	0.29	4	8.7	0.03	10	23.8	0.19	2	9.1	0.09
No. of the places surveyed ^f	[38]	(49)	[14]	(14)	[46]	(64)	[42]	(63)	[22]	(22)					

Source: The author's surveys in 1989-95.
 a When a settlement is divided into multiple administrative villages or when multiple settlements form an administrative village, a settlement is counted as a unit.
 b In some areas in the central and southern regions, where the author counted the sites of communal land at the subdistrict level, the ratio of communal land to administrative village was calculated by dividing the number at the subdistrict level by the total number of administrative villages in the subdistrict.
 c Natural wetlands.
 d Artificially dug water holes.
 e Communal lands which fall in this category are known to the Thais as *pa thung*, *non*, *don*, *thi lum*, and *thi wang*. Compounds of former temples, land for temples, land for schools, forests for the village guardian spirit, and burial forests are excluded from this category. Forests which are not perceived as communal land are also excluded.
 f The number of administrative villages and settlements which are used as denominators in calculating the percentages and ratios in this table. Figures in brackets show the number of administrative villages where the author directly conducted surveys about the existence of communal land; figures in parentheses show the number of the administrative villages in the subdistricts on which the author conducted communal land surveys at the subdistrict level.

the mountains before the commercialization of forest resources. Years ago there were lots of deep forests around villages and there was no strong population pressure. Nor did the villagers have economic incentives to carry on extensive deforestation. Since the villagers felt little incentive to exploit water catchment forests, it was not difficult to protect such forests as long as villagers felt an animistic awe toward forests and abided by the traditional rules of using forests. Therefore, the practice of cooperative and conscious control of community forests by villagers is believed to have emerged in the 1960s at the earliest, and came to prevail in the 1980s when conflicts over the use of land became keen (Chalatchai, Anan, and Santhita 1993, p. 132). Such changes have also been reported in the regions other than northern Thailand (Kono, Suman, and Takeda 1994, p. 30; Mongkon et al. 1993; Nithi 1993, pp. 5-7, 16-17).

How extensively do these communal lands exist in rural areas of Thailand? No relevant statistics are available, and the author has made some inferences from his surveys about the general state of communal lands in the different regions. Table 4-1 shows the existence of communal land by type in the areas where he conducted surveys. These showed that natural wetlands existed in almost all the villages in the Northeast, with some villages having multiple swamps. In the Lower Central, swamps were found in a relatively large number of administrative villages, and in many cases, a swamp was utilized by the residents of multiple administrative villages. About half of villages in the Northeast had small forests, deforested vacant areas, or state-owned forests which the village community had decided to protect as a community forest. In central Thailand, forests (or deforested areas used for cattle grazing) were found more frequently in the upper region. In the Northeast there were a certain number of cases where villages purchased private land and used it as communal land. Such land was being used largely as the sites for rice banks and village cooperative shops. Although an exceptional case, Khok Pia Village (NE12), which had suffered from the lack of natural wetlands, acquired private land to dig a pond using funds collected from all the households and from revenues of the cooperative shop.

As shown above, communal lands in the forms of swamps and forests, though differing with regions, have been common in rural Thailand. Almost all villages in the Northeast in particular have swamps as well as many grasslands and forests. There are also some villages that have collectively purchased land. This region is relatively abundant in land resources which are held and managed at the village level. The use of the collectively acquired land for collective undertakings is not limited to the villages examined in the above case studies. Table 4-2 outlines the results of the author's surveys of

TABLE 4-2
EXAMPLES OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES ON COMMUNAL LAND

	Places Surveyed	Type of Economic Activity on Communal Land	Year Started	Survey Number
Lower Central Region (4 places)	Thewa Rat	Fish breeding in a swamp	1987	LC9
		Tenders invited for sugar palms naturally growing in communal lowlands	1982	
	Mu 4, Si Phran Subdistrict	Fish breeding in a swamp	1989	Cf. App. A
	Bang Sadet	Planting of trees (<i>sadao</i>) in part of a silted swamp (inteded for the manufacture of insectifuge)	1989	LC12
	Rong Chang	Fish breeding in a swamp	1988	LC13
Upper Central Region (3 places)	Nong Phra	Fish breeding in a pond	?	UC18
		Collective raising of bananas on the ground around a pond	?	
	Si Charoen	Planting of teak in a 5-rai forest	?	UC19
	Ban Dan	Renting of wasteland (3,000 rai) to villagers ^a	1984	UC26
Northeastern Region (19 places)	Thon	Renting of a swamp (fish breeding)	1986	Cf. App. A
		Renting of a swamp (rice cultivation)	1988	
		Renting of the former site of a school to the villagers (mulberry cultivation)	1988	
	Non	Renting of a swamp (fish breeding)	1990	NE1
		Renting of the former site of a temple to the villagers (mulberry cultivation)	1989	
	Bung Kae	Renting of a swamp to the village's youth group (fish breeding)	1989	NE2
	Nong Kha	Renting of part of a swamp (rice cultivation)	1985	NE3
		Renting of a swamp (fish breeding)	1989	
	Khambon	Fish breeding in a swamp (managed by the village executives)	1986	NE4
	Klang Hung	Renting of the ground around a swamp to the villagers	1984	NE5
	Nong Ben	Renting of a silted swamp for the purpose of cultivation	1984	NE6
The swamp was dug out later to start a fish breeding business		1989		

TABLE 4-2 (Continued)

	Places Surveyed	Type of Economic Activity on Communal Land	Year Started	Survey Number
Northeastern Region (Continued)	Lao Kwian Hak	Renting of vacant land to a university laboratory (mulberry cultivation)	1988	NE8
	Thum	Fish breeding in a swamp (managed in turn by the villagers)	?	NE9
	Lao Na Di	Renting of the cleared burial forest to the villagers	1971	NE13
	Phu	Renting of a swamp (fish breeding)	1982	NE16
	Samran	Agreement by five villages to protect forests	1987	NE18
		Renting of the land around a swamp	1986	
	Han	Agreement to protect a 180-rai forest	1989	NE21
	Hua Fai	Fish breeding in a dammed river	?	NE22
	Nong Saeng	Renting of a pond (fish breeding)	?	NE29
	Mak Yang	Renting of a forest (mulberry cultivation)	1985	NE37
	Muang Noi	Renting of a forest (mulberry cultivation)	1986	NE39
	Non Sung	Fish breeding in a swamp	1986	NE43
Si Phon Thong	Fish breeding in a swamp	1988	Cf. App. A	
Northern Region (3 places)	San Sai	Planting of fruit trees in a burial forest and communal woods	1987	N8
	Rai	Fish breeding in a pond	1990	N12
	Ton Kaeo	Renting of the former temple site to the villagers (planting of mango trees)	1990	N14
Southern Region (1 place)	Nawa	Use of a cleared grassland as a pasture by a cattle raising group	1979	S3

Source: The author's surveys in 1989-95.

^a Renting was later banned on instructions from the district office.

collective economic projects on communal lands classified by region. Most projects are for collective fish breeding in swamps (including the leasing of swamps to villagers for their fish breeding) or the leasing of silted swamps or degraded forests. There are a good many villages in the Northeast which undertake these projects.

With the progress in closure of free-access lands around the village, there has emerged among the villagers a feeling that the remaining open land needs

to be held communally. However, this change in the villagers' awareness does not emerge automatically in response to the decrease in open land. In order for a sense of communal holding to arise, there needs to be an entity that can form a consensus regarding communal holding and collective management of the land. The data about the above-mentioned community forests in northern Thailand show that administrative villages account for 50 per cent of such entities. The figure rises to 61 per cent when joint management with other entities are included. Considering that administrative villages can serve as the entity for managing such extensive areas as forests, it would seem all the more natural for them to act as the entity for acquiring and managing such small communal lands as swamps.

Here again attention should be paid to the regional characteristics of communities. For example, in the North and Northeast, where an administrative village or an indigenous village is perceived by the residents as a social unit, villagers tend to regard land held by such villages as being quite natural. Moreover, when the administrative village is the entity which declares to hold the land, it is easier for communal holding of land to be officially acknowledged by the outside world.

In central Thailand, however, there are few communities which become the entity charged with the communal management of public land, and the villagers have little sense of belonging even to the administrative village. In these circumstances it seems that collective control of forests is undertaken by methods different from those in the Northeast and North. For example, according to Chantana and Surichai who studied the case of Ban Laeng Sub-district of Rayong Province, the villagers succeeded in taking collective control of a forest preserve by forming a protection group of volunteers when the preserve was in danger of being deforested by a company which had acquired a concession for logging (Chantana and Surichai 1995). After achieving their objective of protecting the forest, the leaders of the group formed an organization with their close acquaintances instead of attempting to form a consensus at the village level. In order to give authority to the group's supervision of the forests, they simply got the official acknowledgment from the subdistrict (*tambon*) administration. This is an example of the successful formation of a development organization based on a social organization in the form of a peer group when it was difficult to form a villager organization based on such units as the administrative village or the subdistrict.

Establishing and Managing Local Community Funds

In recent years communities in rural areas of Thailand have begun to establish and manage communally held funds for secular (as opposed to temple/religious) purposes. This section will discuss communally held funds used for general activities, while Chapter 5 will deal with funds provided by the government and NGOs for specific purposes. Few studies have been done on village financial management simply because there has been little financial management at the village level except that for mobilizing and managing funds for the temple. In the past when there was a need for funds, this was met either by the village headman who used his own money if the sum was small, or by soliciting donations if it was large. There was no system to continually collect contributions from villagers as community members. Government funds were intended primarily for the development of specific infrastructure, and no funds for the daily management of an administrative village were provided by the government.

However, the author has observed some activities connected with financial management in Thai villages although the scale of finance has been small and the institutionalization of financial management has been at a low level. Behind this trend are the increasingly closer connections between the administrative villages and the government. The growing number of government-sponsored development projects for rural areas has increased the opportunities for administrative villages to spend funds. For instance, there have been more opportunities to treat government officials and to mobilize villagers to participate in government functions. The costs of maintaining assembly halls and loudspeaker systems have risen. There has also been a growing demand from villagers for lower interest communal loans. At the same time villages have been gaining revenues from the management of communal resources, notably the leasing of communal land, and the management of resources provided by the government; these revenues are usually added to community funds.

As an example, Thon Village decided to appropriate 20 per cent of the contributions collected for major temple events and put it into common funds intended for the school and the village. According to the village account book, the village secured 8,700 baht from contributions for the *kathin* festival in 1988 and the ritual for listening to the story of Buddha's last great incarnation (*bun phrawet*) in February 1989. The appropriated money was spent on developing infrastructure, such as a feasibility study for digging common wells, the replacement of electric meters at the assembly hall and repairs to the hall,

TABLE 4-3
COMMUNAL FUNDS IN THE VILLAGES SURVEYED BY THE AUTHOR

	Places Surveyed	Source and Use of Communal Funds	Survey Number
Lower Central Region	Don Khwang	A part of contributions to the temple lent to village residents (since 1987) A fund created with donations and government subsidies (provides revolving funds for the construction of toilets)	LC1
	Mu 4, Si Phran Subdistrict	Transfer of part of profits from the fish breeding business to village coffers (since 1989)	Cf. App. A
Upper Central Region	Nong Phra	Transfer of commissions from tractor operators staying at the subdistrict chief's house to village coffers (since 1984)	UC18
	Mai	Saving part of contributions to the temple (since 1983) to assist poor families in the village (planned)	UC22
	Thang Daeng	Profits from sales of water jars made with government subsidies (appropriation undecided)	UC30
Northeastern Region	Thon	Transfer of part of contributions to the temple and rent from communal land to village coffers	Cf. App. A
	Bung Kae	Transfer of part of contributions to the temple to village coffers (since 1988)	NE2
	Khambon	Transfer of part of profits from the fish breeding business in a swamp and of contributions to the temple to village coffers (since 1984)	NE4
	Klang Hung	Lending of funds from land rent to the villagers (funds for toilet construction, etc., since 1986)	NE5
	Nong Ben	Transfer of profits from the fish breeding business to village coffers	NE6
	Khok Pia	Transfer of 10% of profits from a cooperative shop (established in 1983) to village coffers (some communal land was purchased with this money along with villager donation)	NE12
	Phu	Transfer of rent from land to village coffers (since 1990)	NE16
	Phon Sawan	Creation of village central fund by saving part of NGO subsidies and contributions to the temple (since 1985)	NE23
	Non Muang	Creation of a village development fund through an abbot's calling for donations	NE26
	Nong Thum	Lending of profits from sales of eucalyptus trees around the village swamp (since 1991)	NE35
	Muang Noi	Transfer of profits from NGO projects to village coffers	NE39
Pla Khun	Transfer of sales from rice husks in the rice bank to village coffers when necessary	NE41	

TABLE 4-3 (Continued)

Places Surveyed	Source and Use of Communal Funds	Survey Number	
Northeastern Region (Continued)	Si Phon Thong	Creation of a fund for buying rice husks with part of fish breeding revenues and savings at the savings group (since 1989) Transfer of part of contributions to the temple to village coffers (since 1981)	Cf. App. A
	Don Samphan	Lending of profits from NGO projects to the village residents (since 1989)	NE45
	Nong Talum Puk	Creation of a village development fund from rice bank revenues, government subsidies, and fish breeding revenues	NE49
	Rai Khok	Transfer of profits from NGO projects to village coffers (used for the construction of infrastructure and other cooperative projects)	NE50
Northern Region	Wang Nam Yat	Appropriation of part of cooperative shop revenues for the village development fund	N1
	Pa Toeng	Transfer of part of cash collected at <i>thambun ban</i> to village coffers (used for fees for streetlamps, etc.)	N5
	Pong	Use of part of irrigation fees for the construction of village infrastructure	N6
	San Sai	Appropriation of part of revenues from fruit sales in the village for the village fund (1987)	N8
	Rai	Transfer of fish breeding revenues to village coffers (since 1990)	N12
Southern Region	Samrong Sami	Creation of a village central fund from the remainder of a revolving fund at the completion of government projects, for lending to the residents (370,000 baht in 1995)	S6
	Sathon	Creation of a village development fund using the winnings of the Village Development Contest (50,000 baht) and penalties from village rule violators, for lending to the villagers for purchasing fertilizer	S7
	Wang Lung	Pooling of the charges for the water supply system (established in 1985) for such purposes as the repair of waterworks	S11

Source: The author's surveys in 1989-95.

Note: Revolving funds provided by the government and the NGO for projects under way were not included in this table.

as well as receptions for government officials and rural development inspection team. This was the beginning of ongoing village financial management separate from funds involving temple events. Previously village revenues had come entirely from money collected from a mobile proprietor of commercial movies who rented an open space in the village, but there was no custom to record these revenues. In Si Phon Thong Village the practice of appropriating part of the monetary contributions that went to the temple and using them for the management of the village has been going on since 1981. The village also has been providing loans to its residents from the funds derived from revenues from the fish breeding project. The loans are used for purchasing rice husks to prepare organic manure which has been important in enhancing farm productivity, as will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Table 4-3 lists the types of funds maintained by villages. Such communal funds are found more often in northeastern villages than in those of other regions. Most of these communal funds include revenues from funds for government or NGO projects. Many of the projects in the Northeast use communal land, and profits gained from these projects are sometimes put into communal funds. Likewise, profits from communal organizations, such as cooperative shops or rice banks, are added to communal funds, which sometimes also include contributions to the temple.

Summary

This chapter has discussed cooperative activities organized by locality groups when they acquire resources. One of the major acquired resources has been land, particularly free-access land which has been decreasing in availability. Villagers have been collectively taking possession of this land. The creation of such communal land has compelled villagers to collectively manage it. In the early days of such collective management, outsiders were not shut out from the use of communal land, and unless preservation of the natural environment compelled it, there were few rules for its use and only simple methods for its collective management.

However, increasing conflicts over the use of land as well as the villagers' growing demand for efficient use of communal land have changed the methods of collective control. Access to communal land is now limited to members of the community only, and there are many rules governing its use. Sometimes there is group supervision and violators of the rules are punished. Increasingly efforts are being made to gain profits from the use of communal land. These profits are being added entirely or in part to village revenues and used for common purposes. In order for the people in locality groups to col-

lectively control communal lands, a consensus over rules of behavior must be established among the villagers. From the author's observations, in the North and Northeast, the formation of a consensus and control of member behavior are undertaken primarily by communities such as administrative or indigenous villages, apparently because the characteristics of these communities are conducive to such undertaking, as shown in Chapter 3.

Communal resources other than land can include financial funds that administrative villages have come to possess on a continuing basis. In the past, financial funds, with the exception of those connected with the temple, were unknown to Thai villages. In recent years, however, villages have come to have funds which they maintain for secular purposes. Often a portion of the contributions to the temple and/or profits from rural development projects are allotted to these funds in order to defray the expenses of maintaining village infrastructure and for social functions connected with development projects.

In essence, the penetration of the market economy and the growing presence of development projects have prompted the rural communities in Thailand to become the holders of economic resources. As part of this process, they have had to learn how to manage these resources and how to mobilize their residents for this purpose. For individual villagers, this means that they are now collectively holding economic resources and securing accessibility to them as a community. This fact in turn is compelling the villagers to perceive the existence of the community.

Note

- 1 Between 1935 and 1954, only 113 reserves (common land) were established under royal order (*phraracha kritsadika*). The number of reserves set up by the National Land Allocation Commission from 1954 to 1995 was only a little more than 200 (data based on the author's examination of royal orders and interviews conducted at the Department of Land). However, even without following such legal procedures, land can be established as a reserve by court decision if it is actually being used communally (Orathai 1983, p. 110). But the evidence indicates that unless a dispute arises over communal land, villagers have rarely resorted to the trouble of legal procedures in taking collective possession of such land.