

# KINSHIP AND LOCALITY IN HUA KOK

By

JEREMY H. KEMP\*

## Introduction

Kinship has received comparatively little attention from anthropologists working in Thailand, partly because of the theoretical interests of researchers but also because of the perceived limited role of kinship in determining an individual's life chances. Kinship arrangements in rural Central Thailand are often presented as fluid or amorphous yet kinship at least in its idiomatic use permeates Thai society very thoroughly. In this discussion of the character of the connection of residence patterns and major social activities with kinship I depend, except where otherwise indicated, on data collected during my first period of fieldwork in Hua Kok in 1966-67.<sup>1</sup> In subsequent publications I will look specifically at the changes affecting Hua Kok since then, but in this background paper using the 'ethnographic present' my intention is a rather general presentation and interpretation of the role of kinship in both expressing and engendering some degree of community identity.

## Locality

Hua Kok straddles the river Wang Thong some eighteen kilometres east of Phitsanulok in what Pendleton designated the Upper Plain of the Chao Phraya and its tributaries (1962: 39). The hamlet occupies a narrow belt of land raised by former flooding. On the Phitsanulok side the fields behind the hamlet are divided into rice paddies, their small size attesting to minor variations in level despite a superficially flat, plain-like appearance. On the east bank the land undulates gently until reaching the first massive outcrop of the Petchabun mountain range some four kilometres away. Much of this was considered unsuitable for paddy cultivation on account of its unevenness and remained forest until the introduction of maize in the latter part of the nineteen fifties. Due in part to local pressure on agricultural resources and the existence of market opportunities, the forest was finally cleared and maize rapidly became the second most important crop in the district.

In late 1966 Hua Kok contained forty-eight houses, all but six being on the west bank. On this side of the river a cart track runs northwards for about three and a half kilometres, past Wang Khut and Bang Saphan, to the District Office (*amphōe*)

---

\* Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Kent at Canterbury.

1. Fieldwork in 1966-7 was sponsored by the London-Cornell Project for East and South-East Asian Studies which was jointly financed by the Carnegie and Nuffield Foundations.

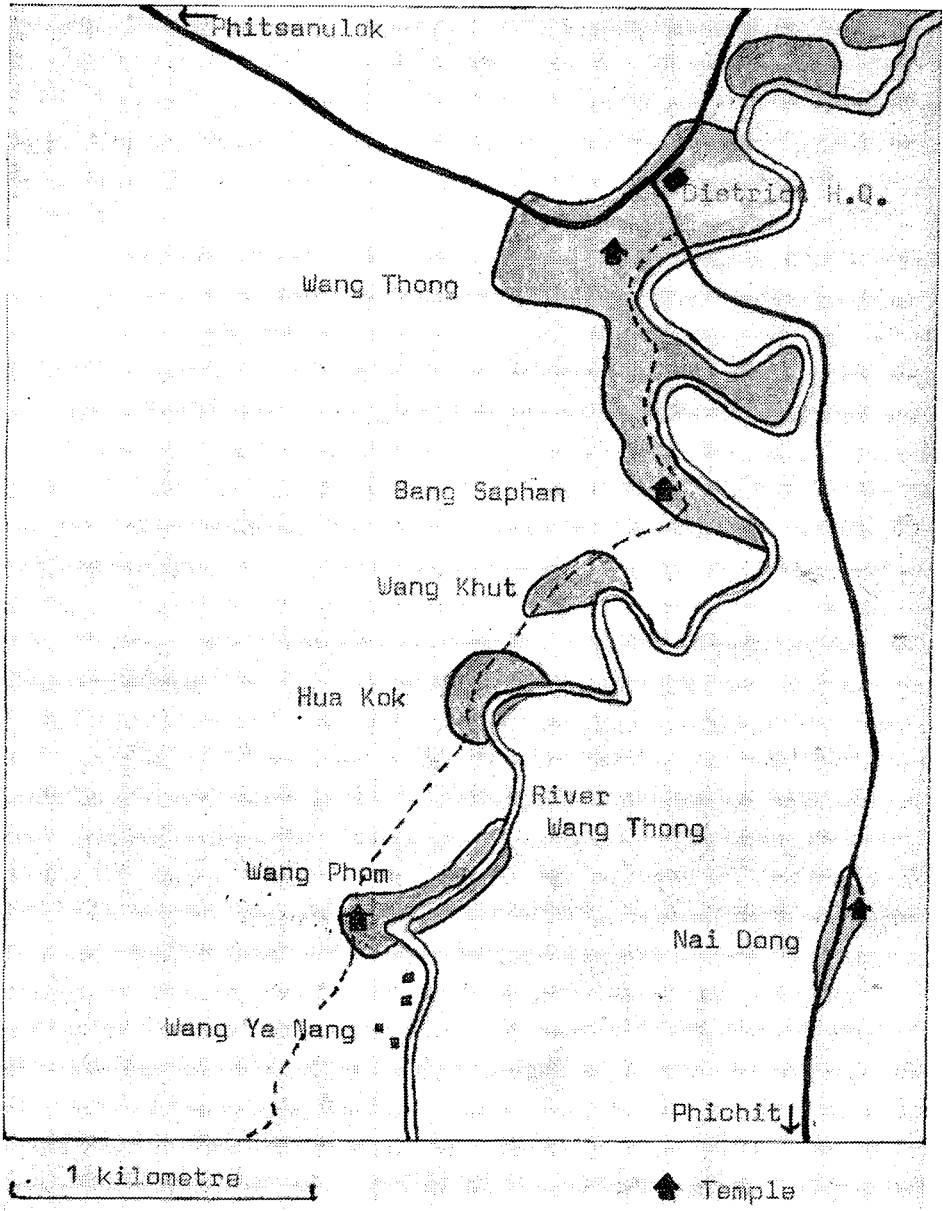
and market in Wang Thong where it joins the main Phitsanulok-Lomsak highway. Southwards it continues along the riverbank to the temple at the far end of Wang Phom where it turns inland. In the dry season it is occasionally used by trucks, but in the rains a number of low-lying places make it impassible to all motorized vehicles. Important as it is in linking the neighbourhood to the local market and administrative centre, this is no bustling highway. Except in the early morning and evening during the farming season the track is often deserted.

Indeed, Hua Kok lacks any obvious focal point around which activities fostering community identity and solidarity might occur. There is no ritual centre be it temple or animist shrine, neither is there a school nor any other public building within its boundaries. A single shop-house beside the road at the northernmost end of the hamlet maintains a supply of nearly all the day-to-day necessities in which households are not self-sufficient, but the people who spend most time there are the close kin and neighbours of the shopkeepers. Others come and go after a few words or send their children to make purchases. Sometimes a few men buying liquor sit and drink on the back porch, but overall the store does not function as a social or recreational centre.

Even the river does not dominate the settlement in the manner of the canals and rivers further south. It has cut deeply into the earth and except when in flood can be crossed on foot by an adult. The river is not used as a highway except during the rains, the only time it has sufficient depth for large trading and motor boats to reach the market. Most houses are clustered in groups of three or four and set back from the river rather than facing directly on to it. Nevertheless it does play an important part in the life of the hamlet; although there is no single riverside gathering place most people visit it several times a day to collect water and perform ablutions.

Physically Hua Kok is certainly a discrete unit in being spatially separated by fields and gardens from neighbouring settlements. Socially its standing is far less certain given the lack of foci around which joint activities might be generated. It does not necessarily follow from the foregoing that Hua Kok is anything more than an assemblage of houses. For such evidence one must turn to the organization of the major activities of political, economic, religious and familial life, yet even here no immediately coherent overall picture emerges.

In common with other settlements in the neighbourhood Hua Kok is not a formal administrative unit, though the present village headman happens to live at the northern end of Hua Kok in the shop-house. The rest of the village consists of Wang Phom which is over twice the size of Hua Kok, and part of the dispersed hamlet of Wang Ya Nang situated immediately beyond Wang Phom. In all, the village consists





of about two hundred houses and given the fact that it has its own school and temple it readily appears on paper that the village is the primary communal unit to which people from Hua Kok belong.

In reality the situation is very different with all Hua Kok children attending the school in Bang Saphan. The majority of Hua Kok residents also frequent the Bang Saphan temple more often than the one in Wang Phom, yet both temples and schools are almost equidistant from Hua Kok. Even the affairs of local government are conducted in terms of dyadic relations with the headman rather than of the village as a corporate entity. Finally it is important to note that during the period under discussion there was neither any major development scheme operating in the area nor any opportunities for formal political activity.

The lack of physical foci for interaction already alluded to is further reinforced by the absence of any clearly defined surrounding hamlet territory. This was formerly even more pronounced with the rice fields behind Hua Kok being owned and worked almost exclusively by farmers from the settlements to the north. There has been some consolidation of these fields in the hands of Hua Kok residents but this is a slow process. Most continue to farm paddies to the south, behind and beyond Wang Phom, where they are interspersed with those of people from other settlements. The pattern of land holding for the maize fields is similarly dispersed with people from different hamlets working in adjoining fields.

The recruitment of labour for agricultural tasks whether it be of kin, friends, or mere acquaintances, in part depends on 'happening' to meet them when making plans. The pattern of land holding thus suggests that co-operation between farming groups is less likely to be limited to hamlet co-residents than would be the case if there was a discrete area of hamlet fields. The reciprocal labour groups recruited for transplanting and sometimes for harvesting rice are as likely to include people met along the path to one's farm or who work in adjacent fields as they are fellow residents met when bathing in the late evening. Indeed, the dispersal of fields on occasion leads to the exclusion of close neighbours and friends because some families move to field huts to eliminate daily travelling to and fro in the work season. The same selective factors also pertain to the recruitment of wage-labour for both maize and rice cultivation.

On the other hand, involvement in a wider social network does not preclude significant interaction between co-residents, and these wider networks themselves lack well demarcated social boundaries. Temple congregations are not exclusive bodies with a formal membership, but those who regularly attend services tend to frequent



Bang Saphan or Wang Phom, and most people residing in the southern half of Hua Kok prefer the latter temple. However, the division is modified by Bang Saphan being the most important temple in the district, its abbot the district religious head is the only monk qualified to conduct ordinations. The increased food requirements of the forty or more monks and novices resident there during the rainy season retreat enables them to include the whole of Hua Kok in an early morning round of alms-collecting. In contrast there are at most only four or five monks at Wang Phom during the same period.

The individual and his destiny is an aspect of Buddhism sometimes emphasized to the neglect of collective activities. In addition to personal merit-making temple attendance is a social event. Indeed, I have seen special foods prepared on the eve of *wan phra* by people who then failed to present them at the temple because none of their friends and neighbours were going. Attendance patterns reflect many factors which include the distribution of kin and ties of friendship, the expected size of congregations, and opportunities for young people to meet others of the opposite sex. Bang Saphan is usually compared favourably with Wang Phom because of the large number of people from a wide area who attend, especially for major festivals.

On the other hand, an informant who had previously expressed a strong preference for Bang Saphan decided to go to Wang Phom on *wan phra* in the 1968 Lent. Her reason was that as she intended spending the whole day and night observing the Eight Precepts Wang Phom was better because she knew and was friendly with almost everyone there doing likewise, whereas she would have been a comparative stranger at Bang Saphan.

Within Hua Kok ceremonies are arranged on behalf of single households except where two or three co-operate for events associated with ordinations. Participation in these festivities can involve the whole hamlet but also many from neighbouring settlements. The only occasion resembling a hamlet ceremony proved to have been organized by two men from Bang Saphan. This was actually described initially by one informant as *tham bun klāng bān*, "making merit at the hamlet centre", but in fact it was merit making at an irrigation truck (*tham bun rot nāk*). A government irrigation truck was temporarily located in Hua Kok after being used to pump water into the paddies towards the end of the growing season. Five monks were brought from Bang Saphan to be fed and bless the truck, and some thirty people from Bang Saphan, Wang Khut and Hua Kok attended. A similar pattern of interaction occurs with respect to non-Buddhist activities; specialists may come from outside the hamlet for rituals involving individuals or, at most, single households. No ritual draws a congregation which might in any way be equated with Hua Kok.



How does this very fragmented and diffuse picture of hamlet social organization compare with residents' own perceptions of their social universe? How do they represent themselves and how are they identified by others? The term *mū bān* can easily give rise to confusion: by formal definition it is the smallest administrative unit but among ordinary people it is used far less rigidly to include hamlets. Sometimes, like Hua Kok, these are demographically and geographically discrete units, but one can also have fairly continuous settlement along canals and rivers. Popular designation as a *mū bān* or simply *bān* thus provides an insight into local perceptions of the social universe, and Hua Kok is indeed referred to in these terms. In contrast, the village is nameless and identified only by its number. Only in official situations do residents and those from adjacent settlements speak of "village no. 7". It is also relevant to note in this context that not all named localities are referred to in this manner. Dong Yang is the name given to the southern end of Hua Kok, after a clump of *yāng* trees, but it has no *social* identity of its own and so never merits the prefix *bān*. Overall then it must be seen as significant that a person's social identity is expressed locally as a "Hua Kok person" (*khon Hua Kok*), or as member of the Hua Kok group, (*phuak Hua Kok*), and it is one's fellow residents who are neighbours, (*phu'an bān*).

Two seemingly contradictory statements may thus be made, the first being that the activities of the inhabitants of the hamlet so overlap with those of others from elsewhere that Hua Kok in no way constitutes a corporate whole. On the other hand the local classification of groupings does suggest some kind of corporate identity, the source of which is as yet unspecified but clearly more than the consequence of physical proximity. One possible explanation of this is kinship, yet as with other activities, relations of kinship and affinity are in no way bounded by the limits of the settlement. Nevertheless it can be argued that the character and extent of the ties of kinship combined with the effects of proximity do account for a greater degree of community identity than would otherwise be the case. What we initially need to know then is the role of kinship ideology in structuring social relations.

### **Kinship**

Temple remains and other evidence indicate that in the Ayuthaya period the area supported a considerable population. This disappeared as a result of warfare or withdrawal to more defensible regions in the reigns of Taksin or Rama I (Damrong 2504:9). Perhaps a few remained or resettlement began again before the old *bot* at the temple in Wang Thong could fall into decay. Certainly it appears that captives taken in the war with Laos in 1827-28 were moved into the area. An unnamed couple

in Bang Saphan from whom people in forty of the forty-nine households<sup>2</sup> in Hua Kok are directly descended, are reputed to have been Lao from Vientiane. Hua Kok itself was probably settled around the turn of the century; by about 1909 there were four or five houses, but even at this stage the surrounding land fit for paddies had been cleared by those remaining in Wang Thong and Bang Saphan.

Except for an elderly Chinese and his family, everyone in Hua Kok has extensive ties of descent or affinity with fellow residents. Yet the exact implications of this are initially unclear, if only because everyone has extensive kin ties with people elsewhere. The fact that the earliest migrants chose to reside in Hua Kok from whence contact was more easily retained with kin in Bang Saphan, rather than move to Wang Phom or further south where their fields were, suggests the importance of kinship. Now lands are distributed over a far wider area facilitating interaction with other settlements, but the residents of Hua Kok remain more generally orientated towards Wang Khut and Bang Saphan than to Wang Phom, and this reflects the denser network of kin links with these places.

Its size and the extent of pre-existing genealogical connections restrict the number of marriages within Hua Kok. Unions between kin are generally disapproved of and, although technically legal, first-cousin marriages are considered wrong and extremely unlucky. They are believed likely to result in the death of any children or even of the couple themselves owing to the withdrawal of the protection afforded by *thēwadā*. For those less closely related disapproval sometimes appears little more than a legitimate means of expressing objections rooted in more mundane matters. Nevertheless, intra-kin marriages never conform to the traditional ideal of being arranged by go-betweens and accompanied with feasting and merit-making, ostensibly because anyone asked to be a go-between would be too "shy" to suggest a union of kin.

Despite these restrictions, the area within which most marriages are contracted is restricted, and there is an important degree of neighbourhood in-marriage. Out of forty-two unions in which at least one partner was from Hua Kok, twenty-four took place with people from the neighbourhood formed by Wang Phom (five), Hua Kok (five), Wang Khut (six), and Bang Saphan (eight). In all, twenty-nine unions were contracted within the district and thirty-two within the province. Seventeen men and twenty-nine women lived in Hua Kok prior to marriage, the combined figures for the four settlements being twenty-nine and thirty-six respectively.

Residents are thus closely linked with the surrounding neighbourhood by a network of interpersonal ties established by marriage and subsequently reinforced by

2. In late 1966 one of these household groups was residing with kin after selling its old house and prior to construction of a new one, hence the discrepancy between the figures for houses and household groups.



the birth of children. Even so, marriage is not so much a matter of the alliance of family groups as one of individual choice. Marriages may be suggested by parents and carefully negotiated, but there are no great pressures to accept these proposals. Indeed, soundings through go-betweens appear doomed unless the couple reach some understanding beforehand. Registration at the district office in accordance with the law remains rare with local custom, which allows for polygyny, continuing to offer an adequate guarantee of marital rights and duties.

Unions are established in a variety of ways which to some extent reflect the circumstances of the couple and a broader long-term pattern of change. With the traditional 'ideal' wedding, the *phithī tāēng ngān*, go-betweens negotiate the match and the wedding rites are accompanied by feasting and merit-making on a large scale. This type of union is referred to locally as *khō kan*, "asking", but nowadays the most popular form of marriage is the elopement, *tām kan*, which has become far more common in the past thirty years. A couple run away to the man's house for a few nights before returning to ask the girl's parents for forgiveness and their blessing. Other named forms of union include being caught spending the night with a girl in her home (*khu'n ha*), forcible seduction (*chut kan*), and living together without any ritual or payment (*yū dīao kan chōei chōei*). This last mentioned occurs when a couple are middle-aged or elderly and have been married previously.

Unless one of the partners already has a house, a couple normally live initially as dependents in a parental household until their first child is born. The traditional norm is that initial residence be matrilocal, and deviations by people marrying for the first time can nearly always be explained by either the impossibility of matrilocal residence or there being some specific advantage in doing otherwise (cf. Kemp 1970).

Couples eventually erect their own house, often but by no means necessarily, within the parental compound. However, one of the daughters and her spouse remain to care for the parents in their old age, the only recorded instance of a son doing this being that of an only child. Should the parents still be alive and all her sisters already married, the youngest daughter and her husband can expect to inherit the house and a possibly disproportionate amount of the other property. The likelihood of this occurring is reduced should elder sisters remain in the house; it had not happened or seemed very unlikely in the cases of a middle-aged woman who had refused to marry, a divorcee with children, and a woman with an illegitimate child. The incidence is further reduced by the death of parents before the marriage of younger children which results in the then resident couple taking over.

Couples may move to and fro between parents for several years before settling. Residence decisions can be, and sometimes are, rescinded but the choice of initial

residence both reflects and affects a couple's economic prospects. Rights in inheritance are insecure unless reinforced by bonds of sentiment and mutual dependence. Eventual erection of a house in a parental compound can thus be interpreted as a statement of expectations as well as one of ongoing interaction. Even should a husband and wife eventually inherit fields from their respective parents, utilization of both plots might well prove impossible because of the divergent locations.

The move to a new house does signify an important change in social relations but is, nevertheless, only one stage in a far longer process. Even before marriage children may begin to accumulate their own resources: money earned is their own and does not have to be contributed to the household budget. Similarly a young couple may even start to farm of their own account, though it is also true that dependence or interdependence can persist well after the move to a separate house. One residentially independent couple continues to eat and farm jointly with a parental household, in another case all farming is jointly organized, and a degree of cooperation exists in a number of others. Such instances give some idea of the possible variations in the organization and performance of tasks by household members. The frequent overlap between residential, productive, and consumption activities must not direct attention away from the exceptions which themselves are often structured responses to regular social processes in the development cycle of domestic groups, the distribution of resources, and accidents of demography.

Despite such qualifications it is still useful when discussing household organization to take as its core the nuclear or elementary family around which the sometimes larger household gathers. The distinction though is an analytical one, villagers themselves refer to *bān*, house, *bān dīao kan*, the same house and *khrṓbkhrua* ("cover arrangement of the hearth", Sharp & Hanks 1978: 52). The latter word which is almost inevitably translated as "family" in fact contains no reference to any explicitly kin-based principle of association.

Thirty-two of the forty-nine household groups contained only a couple with (at least some of) their children. The rest showed a variety of configurations; on a vertical axis these varied from two households with members from four generations to one of a widowed man and his young grand-daughter. Laterally, household size was increased by siblings of either spouse, children by former unions, and more distantly related kin like the grand-daughter of an elder half-sibling of the household head.<sup>3</sup> Overall, household size ranges from two to ten members with an average of five point seven persons per household.

3. Such people however tend to remain only temporarily since they have no claim to the resources of the household other than to a share of any crops they have helped to produce.

Headship (*huā na khrōpkhrua*) passes from the male founder (or successor) to his widow, and then to the senior male of the next generation who is usually an affine because of the norm of initial matrilocal marriage residence. Relinquishment of headship occasionally occurs when parents cease to play an active part in the management of domestic affairs and become dependents of the succeeding generation.

Although children are expected to honour and respect their parents, support them in their old age, and help them generally (and likewise parents are expected to look after their children when young and rear them well), the mutual dependence of each of the other is limited. This is associated with considerable scope for choice in the interpretation of role norms between even close familial kin. In Hua Kok as elsewhere in rural central Thailand, kinship structure is in no way an exclusive framework for the allocation of scarce resources. Instead of claims for support or access being restricted to a carefully specified group of people, one finds a wide spread of claims, the burden of which rests lightly upon each individual. Furthermore, such claims are unlikely to be effective unless reinforced by other personal ties or perceptions of self-interest

Household membership is contractual except perhaps for young children. The rights of any family member are indeed ascribed by the ideology of kinship and exist independently of role performance, a son is always a son, but in practice his inheritance depends on the performance of his role as son to parental satisfaction. Equally, a son's decision to maintain close links with his natal home is in part determined by his parents performing their roles as parents (and having the resources to do so) with resultant benefits which are to be compared with the possible gains from pursuing alternative strategies elsewhere.

It is the law in cases of intestacy as well as a local customary norm that all children inherit equally. Yet the owner of any wealth or property has the right to alienate it as he or she wishes. Variables such as position in the birth order, location of initial and subsequent marriage residence, relative availability of other sources of property, etc., all influence the manner in which parents allocate their belongings. The only practice which in normal circumstances is highly predictable is that the married child living with the parents at the time of their death will take over the house and its domestic equipment together with a significant share of the farm lands.

A number of considerations are taken into account at the time of any division of rice and maize fields. Land may be, and frequently is, divided (*bāeng kan*) before the death of both parents; if not the widow as head of the household might well be left to complete the process. The practice of allowing the use of fields to a child (*hai*

*chai*) without making an outright gift of it seems to be a long-established means of retaining parental authority and ensuring aid in times of need. Overall, the devolution of property is affected by a wide range of factors which all influence the way claims are pursued and recognized.

Land is without any social value other than as a commodity. There is no virtue or social standing to be derived from cultivating or owning the same plot for several generations, nor is the hamlet so organized that the oldest families have higher prestige or greater access to political power. Obviously, the traditional abundance of land in the immediate or fairly near neighbourhood has played its part in the emergence of this situation which, of course, is now changing rapidly with the development of the cash economy and emergence of land scarcity.

Over the past fifteen years, the tendency towards matrilineal and uxorilineal marriage residence, pre-existing links with settlements immediately to the north of Hua Kok, and the management of devolution according to the such practicalities as convenience of use, have all interacted to change the pattern of land holding. There has been a shift away from the original distribution of land holdings determined by the way in which the area was colonized as, with the passage of time, Hua Kok residents have inherited or purchased the land behind the settlement. In this respect at least one might see a possible strengthening of community identity. However, the process appears likely to be undermined in future by the shift from predominant owner-cultivation to a situation of an increasing concentration of ownership on the one hand and landlessness on the other.

Just as the dynamics of kinship and locality have interacted in changing the original pattern of land-holding, so too they influence the whole pattern of settlement formation and growth. In the period of population growth before land became generally scarce, old settlements did not expand rapidly to become huge conglomerations. Instead, expansion was gradual in fits and starts as some people left for areas where unclaimed forest was more readily available. Given the workings of the domestic cycle it is likely that older children who tend to require land before parents are willing to divide, constituted a high proportion of those leaving in search of better opportunities elsewhere. What is easier to document though, is the part played by kin ties in the actual process of migration.

The most common form of hamlet formation in the area seems to have been gradual settlement rather than a large scale move *en bloc* to a new area, with a few initial pioneers being joined over the years by others from their former hamlet. Kin ties, especially those between siblings, are frequently utilized in migration from one



place to another whether the move be associated with a search for land, breaking-up of a natal household in divorce, etc., or the practice of *pai thiao* whereby young men go visiting to distant settlements to enjoy themselves and possibly find a wife.

In Hua Kok itself sibling links have often been the means of movement in and out of the hamlet. In the early days the headman's mother moved to join a younger brother in Hua Kok and cleared a housesite at the side of his. Another, originally from a village to the south, came to Wang Thong to stay with a married sister and while there met and married a girl who had moved from Bang Saphan to join an elder brother in Hua Kok when her parents died. More recently, a man who had gone to Sukhothai brought back a wife who was followed soon afterwards by two younger sisters who found it preferable to move because they did not get on with their step-mother. One of these girls has already married a Hua Kok man. Three brothers from Hua Kok, the first, third and fourth children in a family of seven, all married girls from other hamlets and initially resided matrilocally. Subsequently the two older brothers jointly bought a large area of forest in a small hamlet in the southern part of the district. For the time being they continue to farm together although maintaining separate households. The youngest brother who went with them was also able to buy land very cheaply which he works independently.

### **Kinship and Locality**

Kinship and affinity constitute the most numerous and widely spread of all the sets of linkages joining Hua Kok residents to outsiders in addition to their high density within the hamlet itself. These links in themselves do not necessarily imply action, their importance lies in the fact that kinship provides an ideological charter for a wide range of social processes and transactions which may be classed as economic, familial, and so on, as is appropriate. The extent to which kinship permeates these varied areas of life has already been outlined. In this concluding section I intend to examine briefly both the values conveyed by this ideology and the way in which kinship interacts with the facts of locality to make Hua Kok a social unit rather than just a congeries of dwellings.

When descent is traced bilaterally in a highly complex society as is Thailand, descent as a simple ordering principle seems to be of relatively little significance as a structural feature. In Hua Kok, and among Thai generally, the extent to which obligations are effectively ascribed by kinship is very limited even when genealogical ties are close. As shown in the preceding pages, co-residence, property expectations, and personal compatibility all considerably affect both the form and content of

parent-child relations, an obvious enough point but one sometimes lost in the social scientists' search for generalization. In the Thai system these factors are perhaps especially significant because the equal tracing of descent through both parents does not provide a single structural criterion for allocating and distributing resources. In these circumstances the use of kin terms is freed from many of the constraints imposed when their function in indicating jural roles is more pronounced.

The Thai terminological system is well enough known not to require duplication here. What is usefully emphasized though is that, depending on the closeness of the linkage, age relative to Ego and Ego's parents is carefully distinguished. The way kin terms are used in Hua Kok suggests that a major function is distinguishing people as much by age as by genealogy. Kin terms which imply age differences clearly inappropriate to actual age are generally changed for ones more appropriate. Similarly, when kin terms are used ficticiously the forms chosen reflect the age differences of the participants fairly accurately.

Clearly then, the use of kin terms, especially between non-kin, affirms the appropriateness of sentiments of warmth and proximity which are the ideal of kin relationships<sup>4</sup> while at the same time spelling out that these are also relations of superiority and inferiority. They indicate who should defer to another, important in a society where much emphasis is placed on the view that respect is due to one's elders and superiors, and this is true even in the comparatively egalitarian setting of Hua Kok. In brief, kin terms reflect both the underlying morality of kinship with its emphasis on generalized reciprocity (cf. Kemp forthcoming), and local values about age and the sentiments ideally associated with kinship. Kin terms thus facilitate interpersonal relations, they offer their users a means of symbolically expressing major social values not in themselves necessarily derivable from biological connection albeit expressed in its idiom.

Kinship is so pervasive in Hua Kok because it is the means of expressing all close, interpersonal relations, often regardless of actual genealogical connection. The absence of a clear jural dimension as found in some simpler societies with unilineal descent thus sets the scene for a far freer expression of some of the other dimensions of kinship ideology. At the same time, however, one must emphasize that the situation described in this paper is one in which the progressive socio-economic differentiation of villagers associated with the development of the market economy was still in its early stages. Hence the fact that villagers still made extensive use of reciprocal labour groups in their fields and relative absence of the division between poor and affluent which has such a disruptive effect on traditional patterns of intra-communal intercourse.

---

4. The point is reinforced by the use of terms indicating linkage through one's mother rather than father.

In the situation outlined above, kinship taken in conjunction with the interaction engendered by geographical proximity is the principal unifying factor in Hua Kok. It is the bonds arising from proximity and common interests strengthened by the moral ideology of kinship which create Hua Kok's identification as a community. Kinship alone cannot do this, everybody has many kin outside the hamlet, but in the absence of corporate interests the combination of locality with kinship forms the most important framework for the various types of activity which occur. In other words, these two features interact to create a social setting which facilitates and supports relations with others and makes Hua Kok a distinctive social unit for its residents and those in the neighbourhood. They also give it an analytical importance which is not revealed by the boundaries of administrative units, temple congregations, or any of the other criteria so often used to designate what units are worthy of study.

Finally, there is the question of the quality of the relations involved in the development and maintenance of community life. The networks of interpersonal ties with which I have been concerned, although undoubtedly individually manipulated and managed are nonetheless structured by sets of commonly held values and expectations about one's duty to oneself and to others. In so far as any ideology is significant for, and can be used to explain action, the Buddhist notion of 'merit' has long been recognized as being of major importance; kinship is clearly another.

### Bibliography

- |                            |                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Damrong, Prince            | <i>Ru'ang mu'ang Phitsanulok</i> Published in a commemorative volume for Phun Saophajon. B.E. 2504, Bangkok.                                                              |
| Kemp, J.H. 1970            | Initial marriage residence in rural Thailand. Tej Bunnag & M. Smithies (eds.) In <i>Memoriam Phya Anuman Rajadhon</i> The Siam Society, Bangkok.                          |
| forthcoming                | Kinship and the management of personal relations: kin terminologies and the axiom of amity. To appear in <i>Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde</i> , v. 139, i. |
| Pendleton, R.L. 1962       | <i>Thailand, Aspects of Landscape and Life</i> American Geographical Society Handbook, New York.                                                                          |
| Sharp, L. & Hanks, L. 1978 | <i>Bang Chan: Social History of a Rural Community in Thailand</i> Cornell University Press, Ithaca & London.                                                              |