Village Baseline Survey
Population:
Households: 195~
Ethnicity: Thai
List of names: Headman doesn’t have – need to use the health information which we picked up

A. Infrastructure

1. Schools:
   School was built in 2480 – Elementary B.1-4, it changed to B. 6 under new system. 36-37 expanded to M. 3. (high school). People who graduate M. 3 from here all go to Chiang Mai either to study more or to work. Almost everyone leaves – no youth in the village. One old person said there are about 30 people studying more (but not sure of this number).

2. Health Clinic: yes – many years

2. Telephones:
   Telephones came in 38 – one public phone. Also have at the headman’s house but it’s not as clear as the phone booth. But the phone booth has a problem that the money changer is full and no one has emptied it.

4. Electricity: Electricity from Mae Chaem came in 39.

5. TVs: yes, many.

6. Vehicles (pickups): 40~ (many), Motorcycles: many many
   The one lady talked about her family’s vehicles (she has many grandchildren etc)
   They have 2, 6 – wheelers
   They have 2, 10 wheelers and they use these to take people to the fields both their family or wage workers. They also go back and forth to Mae Chaem. Probably use to take to S. Probably some of the middleman from Mae Najon.

7. Other Facilities:

   The kamnan has a big rice mill. There are also 2 other mills that are smaller. All three of them are run on electricity.

8. Roads: Built in 28 when Kukrit was Prime Minister – before this was only a path that the villagers built themselves. The province gave 100,000 Bt to build the road, tractor services 60,000 Bt – 40,000Bt. was cost of bridge construction but this money wasn’t enough so they asked for 30,000Bt more. This was still a dirt road. 27 km from Mae Chaem to Mae Najon.

Seasonal Use:
9. Travel to Market (most frequently used means of travel): passenger cars for 20 Bt. every day.
10. Travel time: MCh?. 20 Bt., 45 min., 27 km. Hot? ChM?

B. History

1. When was the village established?

2499 – The old kamnan was in the group and he began to be tambon headman that year and they had about 110 households.

Started with 10 households spread out along the various rivers. These people come from Sanpatong, Bangat, Mae Mu, Kong Kaek, Mae Prik, and they came to live here. They had problems back then with bandits and crime and it was hard to look after one another when they were all spread out. So people came to settle in one central place around 70 years ago. When they came first there were Karen already there doing shifting cultivation. Maybe brought cattle to trade for land. The Karen then moved to other places. One old lady still has land near Mae Sa which is far from mae Najon – in a Karen village area. She said that the Karen just use land further out.

During WW2 – the Japanese used this road to retreat from Burma. They used Mae Najon as a village along the way. There were Japanese soldiers in the area and one boss. In the beginning the boss was bad and the soldiers took food and animals from the villagers. When they retreated the boss was nicer and they could go complain to him if soldiers acted badly. There was also a temple and monk there then. Helicopters came to pick up the soldiers – they said there were over 10,000 soldiers.

On the way back had problems between men of the village because the Japanese men had money that had value then and could seduce the women.

They planted upland rice first and then started planting paddy as well. But the rice wasn’t enough to eat so they would go to buy at Bangat (Sanpatong). They used to only walk, also could ride a buffalo during the day. But not at night so some bought horses which were faster. But most people walked which took 2-3 days. They went in groups of 4-10 people. They usually just went to buy rice. But they also would have forest products to sell (Gaw – to use with beetle nut). People in Sanpatong would order this especially from them – 25 kg = 2.5 Bt. This was a lot of money as some would sell cattle - At that time a cow was 6 Bt.

At that time rice (unmilled) 5 Bt/20 tang

(We found out later - as the interview progressed and they started to like us - that they started planting opium when they first got to the area – and probably were still planting then and selling – though we’re not sure if they took it down to Sanpatong to sell or others came up to buy.)

In their upland fields they did shifting cultivation for the rice and the labor they had wasn’t enough so they would hire people to help dig in the upland fields (didn’t plow with buffalo but by hand). The wage then was 1 Bt./day. (about 50 years ago). They hired people from Jom Tong for this. At that time people were coming from Jom Tong. They didn’t want to hire Karen then because they were worried about the land (and maybe losing it). .5 Bt/half day to plant in the afternoon. If in the morning they would pay .75Bt/half day. They said that there were starting to
have government officials come in to the village and know people there so that’s how they would make connection to Jom Tong labor.

In the time that they were forbidding the planting of opium, the village had a crisis of not enough rice to eat and not having any money to buy rice. At times that they didn’t have enough rice so they ate a certain tree bark. Steamed it and ate in place of sticky rice. Government came in to help but there wasn’t a road into the village and so they dropped rice from helicopters (this was during the time that this guy was kamnan (so after 2499) and the govt official stayed in his house. But it was regular rice that was already milled and it fell in the paddy got wet and was ruined. They had to walk to pick it up.

C. Land

1. Land Area:

They have upland fields in basically two places – they say many thousands of rai. All the same area as we heard of from Mae Najon Nua.

River Jaem ta – paddy around 300 rai. (this is a mixture with Karen as well)
Right next to the village they have about 70 rai of paddy.

River Mae Jon – about 100~ rai of paddy
River Mae Mu- also about 100 rai
River Mae Sanga – about 70 rai that they bought from Karen

Mae Najon used to be in Tambon Mae Suk. Now are 4 tambons in the old Mae Suk area.

2. Irrigated by run-of-river: They have some paddy that is irrigated by the river.
3. Irrigated by other means (well, pipe): Otherwise rainfed.

4. Forest:

They don’t have a forest to use now. They used to cut in the forest but don’t anymore. Now it’s the Karen who cut the forest. They used to cut trees and now they just cut the branches.

5. Home-gardens:

They plant vegetables and sell in the market in the village. They don’t plant much and they don’t sell these outside the village.

6. Prevailing land quality /soil description:

Check with Mae Najon Nua.
7. Tenure:

In the paddy they have SK1 title some – but not all. They got this in 2498. They can sell it only unofficially (have to keep the same name on the title).

After that, 2517 they got NS3 (Green) a very little bit in the paddy – about 30 people. This is title that can sell and buy – but not sure or perfect because it came before the Red kind (won’t get as good a price).

After that they can request to make it Red NS3 – and they asked for this in 2531 about ten people got this. The red kind is even more sure than green.

In the upland there is S.T.G. which is the right to use this land to eat. With this one person cannot have more than 15 rai and can’t give to their children. Or they have to ask permission to do so.

2514 – The forestry department came in and made the area a protected forest and at that time the people got. S.B.G. (SKT) – in upland - which allows people to use the area but can’t sell it but can pass on to children.

8. Any communally controlled land? (specify)

9. Major crops and rotations:

They also mentioned some orchards near the village – only about 10 rai. Just started a few years ago (the oldest is only 5 years) with lynchee, lamyai and mango. They sell a little of the mango but the others not yet.

They started planting seed corn in 39 for CP.

In 40 they also had sweet corn come in which was suggested by a middleman. They planted over 100 rai. Middleman gave all the inputs and told them how to plant and set time to plant and harvest. They would sell as ear and husk. The price was 2Bt/kg. They were very happy and said they will plant more of this. (Tuang says this is an export crop).

They raise a lot of pigs and chickens.

10. Major changes in land use by crop:

They first planted opium. But the govt officials came in to tell them that they shouldn’t plant it because it was against the law. But they didn’t really do anything to control it at the time. But at the same time they also couldn’t sell it anymore so they started to change. We think this was over 20 years ago. The old lady said it was really nice to grow opium. They had no problems with the soil, didn’t have to use fertilizer and it was fun to smoke too.
S. came in in 2520 – but they had a problem because S. bought only dry soybeans. Their soy wasn’t like that so they sold to middlemen instead. 4-5 years later they started planting corn (37-38). S. suggested they plant the corn. For soybeans and corn they get inputs from S. and the system is exactly the same as Mae najon Nua (see notes there).

They pay up to 250 Bt./day to spray pesticide because it is dangerous and they don’t want to do it. Seems there are a few people who do this in the village.

They used to use buffalo and changed to tractors 20~ years ago. Now they only use tractors in the paddy fields. When they built the road there were tractors that helped build the road and they started using them after that. They have over 100 small tractors (this includes Mae Najon Nua).

15 tang /rai – they pay in rice usually. They buy their own fuel. They plow first and and then they pay after harvest time.

12. Major land investment decisions?

   Same as Mae Najon Nua.

13. Major agricultural problems –

   They also had a problem with brown hoppers on the rice as the rice was spreading out (before grain). 50-60 tang/rai before with the pest 10 tang/rai only. But it depended on the person. Some people got absolutely nothing – others got some.

   They have planted seed corn for 2 years but last year didn’t plant because they had the same problem as Mae Najon Nua with too many people wanting to plant so CP just stopped. Also they don’t like it too much because it takes a lot of capital and management. They also had a middleman/trader who also sold seed for seed corn and gave a price of 20 Bt/kg but in the end he didn’t come back to buy. And so they sold to other middlemen 15-18 Bt/kg - who sold it again as seed other places.

   In the paddy they have problems with water. Every year one time because not enough water. They use water from Mae Chaem river only to bath and wash clothes etc. The problem has been for two years now. Before the Mae Chaem river was deep to their waists and now it is down to their calves. So they only use rain water now for the paddy as well because there is no longer enough water in the rivers to irrigate the paddy in the dry season. They used to plant soybean in the dry season in the paddy but now they don’t plant as much because it’s not enough water.

   They plant both corn and soy in upland fields in the rainy season and to decide it depends on price. The decision how much to plant depends on capital they have available.

   In the upland fields the biggest problem is with capital. Before they didn’t have problems because they didn’t plant to sell.
14. Other areas of concern or interest at village or community level.

They don’t like the Karen and the Hmong. The govt made a mistake by suggesting vegetables (cabbages) as a substitute for opium. Because now the Karen and the Hmong who use all the water and now they have water problems. The government also helped them with electricity education etc. and now they live like Khon Muang. And they said that now the Karen are richer than they are – they have cars and money etc. (Note: they seem to group all ethnic minorities together and not distinguish Hmong and Karen who in fact have very different ag systems and degrees of wealth) (The conflict over water has really brought bad feelings to the surface.)

They hire Karen to come do work for them. They pay 80 Bt/day for a couple (husband and wife)!!! They only hire them though if there is not enough labor in the village and so not that much.

If they have capital they will hire as a wage. Some people want to be paid and others prefer to share labor. Mostly they share labor – same as Mae Najon Nua.

17. Effect of economic crisis?

(The older people there don’t have many problems. They seem pretty set and said the economic crisis does not affect them much.)

But there was a younger guy who came later and said that he came back because he doesn’t have anything to do. He said they have been coming and going for awhile. But for the past two years there have been people coming back and working the land with their parents more (this suggests they have become unemployed and couldn’t find work to go back for).

One example, one guy who plants everything - His daughter left and got married in Pattaya. Now has come back and doesn’t have her own house so lives with him and works on his land.

They talked about using the land of relatives as well in a shifting type system. It appears that they always have land to use if they need it. Said they divide the land among a family and maybe parts of the family won’t use all of it so others will go in and plant.

D. Major sources of information

1. Agricultural development or other projects in village: When begun?

There is a weaving group but it has stopped 2-3 years ago because they couldn’t sell what they produced. They also have to buy the cotton to weave and without a market it wasn’t worth it. The amphoe came to suggest the weaving group.

Now the amphoe came to suggest basket weaving from banana leaf for the women. People came to teach how to do this with banan leaf. But the old kamnan said it’s not a good idea because they would have to buy – or plant - the banana leaf (they don’t have there). Instead they should do something with materials they have like bamboo. He said
that if they are going to suggest something to help they need to figure out the marketing before or have someone help with the buying and selling.

They also have a water generated electricity cooperative that has money. But they don’t use water generated electricity anymore. They money is still there and they lend it out to people for whatever. It started in (check in Mae Najon Nua – same year).

Farang teachers have come and given money for Karen kids to come down and study at the school in Mae Najon. The kids stay at the school there.

Women’s group they also take the grain off corn and get paid for it.

2. Credit institutions: (When people need money where do they borrow from?)

Mostly borrow from relatives and they help each other in hard times. Sometimes they work for a relative to get rice or a meal etc. The older lady said that she pays up to 150 Bt/day for help (if a person needs it badly she gives more.

If they are in debt to S. they have to pay everything to borrow again. They sometimes borrow in the name of the other relatives from S. – they don’t give the relatives a cut for this it’s just to help them.

S. in Mae Najon has 180 members of Sahagon.

S. has money to use for emergencies. Can borrow 500 Bt. for hospital etc. They also have to pay a funeral fee of 200 Bt/year. Used to be 10 Bt. per person who died but now they just charge one fee for the year.

5% of the money they borrow they will keep at S. as a deposit (or little savings) that the members can ask for once each year. This acts like shares in the cooperative.

T.G.S. – they have to borrow in a group 4-10 members. They borrow in larger amounts. They couldn’t say how many people are members. Came after S. Have fewer T. than S. Because they have to agree among the group and coordinate and share responsibility for pay back.

3. Where do people learn about market prices?

They usually sell to S. and then S. sells to middleman.

For soybean they will have a person from S. to check who has what soybean to sell and what quality and then they tell a middleman to come and pick it up.

To decide who to sell to they look at the price and timing and/or management (middlemen has a shelling machine). S. only buys good quality but middlemen will buy everything just set prices lower.
Lot of different middlemen come and many come from Sanpatong.

4. Where do people learn about job opportunities and wages outside amphoe?

Others who have gone before come back and tell.

4. Where do people learn about agricultural crops and technologies?

District ag came to suggest planting soybean. Also the king came and saw that the soy wasn’t good so he told the district ag come and help.

20~ years ago had Ongkhan J.B.S. – Watershed Development Project came in to teach them about planting rice (in rows). They were getting 10-11 tang/rai then after they got 20 tang/rai and were very happy. They also came to teach them about planting soybean and middlemen came to buy the soybeans.

E. Labor and migration

Many people have left especially women. They leave because they fight with their husbands or their husbands do bad things – drink or gamble. The older woman said that it’s the women who do all the work and the men are lazy. So it’s easy for the women to leave. So some of women who leave are single and others married. Some go as families and they will stay for the year. But people who leave still have their names listed as residents here. Only people who marry outside of the village and leave take their names off the list.

They do send money back as well. At new year they will return and people who live far like in Bangkok will come together and donate money to the village or the temple. They will also ask their friends in Bangkok to help to make merit. Sometimes they will send money through other people. Or send things like TVs or other appliances for their parents. They said it comes as 1,000 Bt or 2,000 Bt at a time.

The old kamnan told about a few women who fought with their husbands and left for Pattaya, Bangkok and Chonburi. He doesn’t know what they do there. They went for one or two years and then came back. In this case the husband was a drug addict (Yaa Baa) and the wife just thought it better to leave.

A younger guy in the group came later and said that young women in the village are pretty and it’s easy for them to find work.

(Though no one would come out and say it directly – and we never asked directly either – it seems that many of the women that leave must be going into the sex industry. They dropped hints to the effect as noted below by places women go and why they get work there.)

If they are young they tend to go work in Chiang Mai. But they usually graduate M.3 before they leave. A very few can’t find work – but most can. There are many people who have gone before and come back and tell them of work opportunities. So most can find work easily.

Is there Aids – Mostly it is young people who have AIDs. The adult people don’t have it really.
They get it from drug addiction one man said that it tends not to come from sex – a few do contract it from sex who have gone to work in the city.

The older woman has grandchildren who live in the villages. But all her children live somewhere else. They have left to other places (likely to Sanpatong). She has gone to Sanpatong – her father is from there. The other lady who is over 80 has never left the village.

There are about 5 people who live in Japan now and have married there. Seems that they still have a relationship with Japanese. During the war some Japanese also took Thai wives. About 2-3 years ago a group of 60 came to the village and stayed with the villagers. They have helped with village development. They have also taught English etc. We’re not sure if it’s only a government project or because these relationships continue since the war.
F. Prices – 1=last year, 2=two to three years ago, 3=10 years ago

Agricultural wages: 1. Plant (w), 50-60 Bt, (m) 70 Bt, 2. (w) 50, (m) 50 3. 40 Bt (men and women). Different now between men and women because work of men is bigger – have to carry inputs.
Harvest 1. (w) 100, (m) 120, 2. (w) 70, (m) 100, 3. 50 Bt (the same).
The men load the trucks.

Karen: 1. Couple 80 Bt/day helped with sweet corn – quick harvest.

Tractor Services: small - 1. 15 tang/rai, 2. 15 tang/rai 3. 6 tang/rai
Farm Gate Corn (animal feed) –1. 1.7 Bt/kg (ear), grain 3 Bt./kg 2. 2 Bt (ear) 3. Didn’t plant

Sweet Corn: 1. 2 Bt/kg, 2. Didn’t plant

Farm Gate Soybean: 1. 8 Bt/kg 2. 7-8 Bt/kg , 3. 40 Bt/tang

Fertilizer: Rabbit Brand 1. 480 Bt./g, 2. 320 Bt/g, 3. 280 Bt/g

Gasoline: Benzene – 1. 12 Bt./l, 2. 10 Bt. 3. 8 Bt/l

Herbicide: Kamuckson 1. 270 Bt/l 2. 120 Bt/l 3. 110 Bt/l

Pesticide: Heckonan Brand 1. 520 Bt/l, 2. 380 Bt/l

Milling Cost:
1. 12 Bt/g (3tang – but they charge for the weight of unmilled rice) , 2. 9 Bt/g, 3. 9 Bt/g

Rice (Consume): (regular rice)
1. 70 Bt./tang (unmilled), regular rice milled 220 Bt/tang 2. 120-180 Bt./tang (milled) 3. Unmilled only 22 Bt/tang

Rice Sell: (up to 10 years ago they sold – now they buy)
1. didn’t sell, 2. Didn’t sell, 3. 22 Bt/tang (unmilled)

Fish Sauce
1. Large bottle 1. 10 Bt, 2. 5-7 Bt, 3. Didn’t have price

Cooking Oil:
1. Small 1. 14 Bt, 2. 9-10 Bt, 3. Didn’t use

Cement:
Buy in Mae Najon – old people don’t know.

Notes: This was our first meeting that was almost exclusively people over 60! Many came and at times there were probably 20 people there. We had to break into different groups to talk to all the people and listen so we came together at the end of the day and just compared notes. The tape was of little use as so many people spoke at once. Quite fun really as the old people seemed to really enjoy telling us about the history of the village etc. One woman was especially knowledgeable and liked to talk. She invited me to come back and stay in the village to learn more and I may just take her up on the offer – Yai Kaew was her name – 78
years old. By the end the rapport built up also paid off as they began to tell us about opium production in the past. At first they said they only grew rice – but then told us it was mostly opium in the upland fields. This is probably the case in other Thai villages we have visited but they were not willing to tell us about it. So the history was quite good from these folks but they couldn’t answer as well about current agricultural problems or practices. However, our interview in Mae Najon Nua covers the same area as it is really the same people – and there we talked to younger-middle age couples heavily involved in agriculture and the cooperative etc.

There seems to be evidence of a similar dependency relationship between Mae Mu and Mae Najon as in Om Maeng and Na Yang Din. But it’s not so severe because Mae Mu has more of its own resources. However, it seems that Mae Najon (a huge area) is built on land that was formerly used by the Karen now in the surrounding hills.