

Revisit to Yamani Village

by Takashi TOMOSUGI

Twenty four years have passed since I visited the village for the first time in 1967 to make social studies in rural Thailand. I had conducted field surveys many times between 1967 and 1977, and published a monograph on the village, *A Structural Analysis of Thai Economic History*, in 1980.

This year I had an opportunity to revisit the village and be much surprised at the changed features of village life. Great social change has taken place during these years. The social change, in a word, is due to the popularisation of the market economy into every corner of village life in both economic and non-economic activities.

Rice cultivation on which a village economy is based has experienced fundamental changes. The cultivation made a shift from the rain season growing to the dry season one by virtue of new high yielding varieties of rice seeds recommended by a government experiment station, which could realise doubled productivity compared with traditional ones. The realisation of high productivity, however, is inevitably accompanied by huge expenditure of money, especially wages for hired labour. Almost all aspects of rice production are done by waged labour.

Consumer life has also tremendously changed. For instance, TV, which was not seen in 1967, has spread to nearly all families in the village in a very short time. Other electric appliances are also popularised owing to their utility combined with the fashionability of today. Fashionability is the most important in buying commodities even in the village. Food which is a main item of daily money expenditure is now bought at nearby stalls just for convenience. Consequently they

have to earn much more money in order to cope with the increased expenditure. Dry flower making as a cottage industry can now be seen at many houses, which provides some money to the villagers depending on the amount of their products.

Lots of young people have migrated to urban areas, especially Bangkok, in search of good jobs. They return to the village only on occasions such as annual events held at the village temple. The temple is still a centre of social integration on a village level and the basis of villagers identification with homeland.