

<b>Thesis Title</b>	Transmission of the Body of Knowledge Relating to the Shifting Cultivation System of Karen Communities	
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### Abstract

This research was to study the transmission of the body of knowledge relating to the shifting cultivation practised by Karen people. The scope included the communities' belief systems, social organization, methods of transmitting knowledge, and the conditions which had sustained the transmission. Three Karen communities - Khun Win, Huay Hoi, and Thung Luang, which had settled down at the present sites for more than 150 years, and which differed in the degrees of exposure to outside changes, ratio of shifting cultivation, and levels of altitude, were selected as the sites for the investigation.

The findings are as follows: There were belief systems which support social relations of production in the shifting cultivation. Local knowledge helped preserve biodiversity both in the cultivated and farrow lands. Procedures of shifting cultivation included area choosing, soil preparation, planting and maintenance, and harvesting, each of which was supported by principles found in the local wisdom. The practices brought in balance between human beings and nature.

The transmission was done through individuals, groups, and community, in everyday and ritualistic activities. "Hta" or Karen lyrics were used in the process. Story telling was one of the transmitting methods. It helped present the message and entertained at the same time. NGOs had introduced development ideas which reinforced the transmission and stimulated revitalization which was hoped to produce bi-cultural people.

After introducing some stimulating actions in the villages, efforts on local curriculum was being launched. There were some differences among the cases under investigation. Khun Win depended mostly on traditional method while in the other two there was a combination between old and new methods. Only few people in the latter cases could say the "Hta" but some middle aged people were enthusiastic in the revitalizing efforts. Khun Win had higher degree of self-reliance, had close kin relationship, believed in nature, and practiced more shifting cultivation. Few practiced shifting cultivation in Huay Hoi while almost none did so in Thung Luang. The differences were attributed to communication access, receptibility of agricultural innovation, and religious beliefs. Factors explained continuation of the transmission were the belief systems shared by the ethnic groups, effective means of transmission, close relationship at family, kinship, and community levels. Shifting cultivation helped

put human beings in balanced relationship with nature, served as the community source of knowledge, and helped correct the negative impact of educational and development programs which had lacked cultural dimensions. The degree at which the government had accepted the shifting cultivation as environmentally sound depended on the strength of the community organizations and the ideological reinforcement on the part of the academics and the alternative development workers.

The recommendations are: School could serve as the arena in which various cultures interacted; the state should realize the potential of the hill area villagers who could manage their own natural resources and launch R & D projects to retest the results and should also sponsor bi-lingual education programs to produce people of two cultures, and; the mass media should keep themselves informed on the issue and present the correct image of shifting cultivation to the public.