

Thesis Title Social and Cultural Role of "Laapcin" : A Case
study at Sanluang nua village, Moo 10, Tambol
Chanjavatai, Ampoe Maechan, Chiangrai Province.

Name Ratana Prompichai

Degree Master of Arts (Cultural studies)

Thesis Supervisory Committee

 Saowapa Pornsiripongse, B.A., M.A.

 Pattiya Jimreivat, B.Ed., M.A., Ph.D.

 Yingyong Thaoprasert, B.Sc., M.Sc., M.C.N., Ph.D.

Date of Graduation 30 August B.E.2537 (1994)

ABSTRACT

The objective of this anthropological research is to investigate the social and cultural roles and contexts of Laapcin, as well as its effect toward health of people at Sanluang nua village, sub-district of Chanjavatai, Maechan district, Chiangrai Province. The study was conducted from April to November 1993 by means of observation, participant observation and in-depth interview.

In Upper Northern Thailand, Laapcin is a popular dish which is made by raw beef or pork chopped with blood and lots of spices. The Laapcin usually goes with various raw vegetables. People usually have Laapcin on special occasions such as hospitality friends and neighbors, workshop to spirits and for given, celebration for satisfaction in ritual and being lucky, and ect. People also believe that Laapcin is a good protein source and good for their health. It is considered to be delicious and expensive so as to certify that people

who often have Laapcin are wealthy. As a consequence, Laapcin has become symbolic of friendship, wealth and luck.

According to the findings, social roles and functions of Laapcin are crucial. Most of the villagers often eat Laapcin on many occasions even though it is raw and vulnerable to parasitic infestation. The reasons for eating Laapcin is not only to fulfil their physical needs but also creates social and cultural ties. They believe that this is a way to communicate between human being and supernatural being; to strengthen family ties, community life and inter-community relationship. It also symbolizes the healthy condition, wealth, strength, adulthood, luck and way of life. In addition, the villagers believe that disease from this food not only can be prevented by choosing meat circumspectly, cooking with spices and eating with alcohol, but also can be treated easily by the effective drugs. So when comparing its social and cultural roles with its effect on health, the villagers are inclined to regard the former as more important. To them parasitic infestation is not a serious problem, since it can be easily diagnosed, prevented and cured, while stop eating Laapcin would effect their basic way of life.

Other factors which promote the habit of eating Laapcin include good transportation, so the villagers can easily buy meat from the market; the way of life in the agricultural community; and kinship system lead people join together. According to this lifestyle, Laapcin usally forms part on their normal life and it is popular among all social groups.

It can be seen that eating Laapcin plays a very important role on social and cultural norm of the community although it affects

their health. Therefore, emphasis should be placed on having all the factors causing disease and illness under control rather than merely trying to change their food habit, for changes may affect the system of community life which is the main structure of the society. At the same time, while preserving and promoting the traditional foods we should consider the strategies to control and prevent diseases which may come with the food.