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Early Adolescent Girls in Transition in a Peri-urban Northern Thai Community:
Perceptions of Gender Role and Sexuality

by

Warunee Fongkaew

A dissertation submitted in a partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree of

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(Chairperson of Supervisory Committee)

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Abstract

Early Adolescent Girls in Transition in a Peri-urban Northern Thai
Community: Perceptions of Gender Role and Sexuality

by Warunee Fongkaew

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This study primarily concerns the impact of gender socialization and socioeconomic transformation on young girls' perceptions of their gender roles and sexuality which places them at risk for contracting STDs and AIDS through sexual transmission. Ethnographic approaches were used to develop a fuller understanding of the specific social and cultural contexts that structure the meanings of gender and sexual experiences of the Thai young girls. Data were collected during a twelve month period from February 1994 through January, 1995, by methods of participant observation, focus group interviews, and in-depth interviews, with an attempt to triangulate various perspectives of the participants. Thirty six girl informants aged 11-14 years participated in the focus group interviews. Eleven of the girls from the focus groups participated in in-depth interviews. Other key informants were mothers and grandmothers of the girl informants, the girls' teachers, health personnel, old men in the villages, and village headmen. Content analysis of fieldnotes and interview transcripts produced themes that represented the girls' perceptions and their shared experiences of gender roles and sexuality.

It is evident that Thai culture emphasizes the notion of male superiority in politics and religion. This socially and culturally constituted relation of power impacts the construction of sexuality, which tends to place rigid controls on female sexuality, but not on male sexuality. In childhood socialization, girls were

undergoing an important training to be "feminine" and a wife and mother, which is embedded in her conscious and unconscious development. There is more restriction on girls' activities than that of boys', which led girls to develop negative feelings of being bored, disadvantaged, inferior, and of having less freedom.

Heterosexual meanings have become central to the gender symbolism that girls and boys have been socialized to, which involves "teen" and "adult" styles of femininity and masculinity. The Thai feminine stereotype is characterized by gentleness, weakness, dependence, emotionality, and is responsible for taking care of the house and children. According to this stereotype, a woman's beauty is also a major asset. These young girls entered the preadolescent period with ambiguous feelings about their gender stereotypes. On the one hand, they perceived that women should be strong, independent, and equal to men. They don't want to be "goody goody girls" who are weak and are easily humiliated by boys. On the other hand, they want to preserve their socially constructed feminine role as gentle and proper women.

The girls also enter their sexual lives with silence and with the ambivalence associated with being a woman. Most of young girls experienced negative and shameful feelings about their changing bodies and menarche. They have difficulty in understanding their own developing bodies. Premarital sexual relations and dating were the topics about which mothers, grandmothers, and teachers most frequently disciplined their young girls. Inadequate learning from their parents or other adults has led them to explore sexuality from media, pornographic materials, friends, and by peeking at others' bodies.

The impact of modernization on changes in economic power which doubly exploit women and lessening influence of the ancestral spirits in the local villages that has contributed to the emerging of multiple sexual patterns or sexual liberation in this local community is also discussed.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Thesis Statement

This study examined the impact of gender socialization on young girls' perceptions of their gender roles and sexuality in the peri-urban villages in northern Thailand. The study focuses on how the social construction of gender and socioeconomic transformation in Thai society shapes the way adolescent girls perceive their sexual roles of being Thai women and places them at risk for contracting STDs and AIDS through sexual transmission.

Adolescent women in developing countries may be among the least powerful group in protecting themselves against HIV infection by sexual transmission because of their lack of information about HIV transmission, their emerging sexuality, and double standards for sexual behavior of women and men in many if not most societies. The prevalence of HIV infection in developing countries is higher in young women aged 15 to 25 than women in any other age group (United Nations Development Programme or UNDP, 1992).

The focus on young girls in these particular villages is an appropriate one. First, they are beginning to have sexual encounters and are vulnerable to social pressure. Physiological and sociocultural forces play a major role in placing female adolescents at risk of contracting AIDS. Physiologically, during adolescence the cervical epithelium matures from being a thin layer of cells to a thick multilayered wall. It is conceivable that the immature pre-adolescent genital tract surface is less efficient as a barrier to HIV than the mature genital tract of older women (United Nations Development Programme or UNDP, 1992, p. 3).

According to the World Health Organization, more than three million women worldwide were infected with HIV in early 1990 (Bruyn, 1992). This number might be underestimated because of difficulties estimating HIV prevalence on the basis of sporadic surveys that may not be comparable in method or equally representative. Women in developing countries are more susceptible than men and women in developed countries to contracting HIV because of several factors such as economic status, relative lack of access to AIDS related information, cultural perceptions that distinguish between good and bad women based upon their sexual behavior, and the influence of stereotypes of AIDS as a disease of prostitutes and homosexuals (Bruyn, 1992). In addition, gender discrimination creates an image of the female prostitute as a primary carrier of HIV transmission, a source of infection rather than a victim. Education and health care programs, and even research into HIV prevalence have been skewed as a result of gender bias.

The Thai government now estimates that 200,000 to 400,000 people are infected with HIV. It is estimated that the number could rise to 2-4 million, as much as 6 percent of the Thai population, by the year 2,000 ("Asia," 1992). Because HIV was first recognized in Thailand among men--a gay man in 1984 followed by a few others, and in 1988, by male intravenous drug users (IVDUs), and then female prostitutes, authorities had not considered the general population to be at risk. Only recently has the HIV threat to the general population been documented. A national survey of 26,000 men between ages 20 and 22 and eligible for Thai military service found that 2 percent of these young males nationwide, and up to 11.5 percent in Chiang Mai, were HIV positive ("Mechai," 1990). Current survey data suggest that HIV has already been transmitted to monogamous women and their children. It

is now predicted that women will become the largest group of HIV carriers in the next few years. Two years ago, it was already estimated that 4 percent of wives and girl friends of IVDUs and promiscuous men were infected in a few provinces in the North of Thailand (Limpakarnjanarat, 1991). Also in the North, a study in a major hospital demonstrated that among obstetric patients, the anti-HIV antibody prevalence rate increased rapidly: by 250 percent in the year ending in 1990 (from 4.8 % to 11.8%), and by 320 percent in the next six months by June, 1991 (to 38.1%) (Siriwanthanapa, 1991).

In Thailand the threat of AIDS has increased the demand for young, presumably "infection free" prostitutes. Young girls entering the sex industry may be more vulnerable to HIV infection than their more mature co-workers. Culturally, a double sexual standard that requires never married females to be virgins or "good" prevents women from protecting themselves because good girls are not supposed to know about sex. Their consequent lack of information or misinformation about sexual health, their emerging sexuality, and double standards for sexual behavior of women and men leads them to be a less powerful group in protecting themselves against HIV infection and other STDs by sexual transmission. Compounding these gender-specific risks, public health campaigns have tended to expect women rather than men to take responsibility for negotiating safer sex, particularly condom use, with their partners. These campaigns have failed to take account of the power differential between women and men in sexual relationships that is transmitted through childhood socialization.

Secondly, some of these peri-urban villages are in the process of rapid capitalist penetration which has contributed to the changing status and role of women in the local villages and the loosening of family control over the

behavior of young people. Thailand is striving to become a newly industrialized country (NIC) even though 80 percent of its population lives in rural areas. The current economic boom of the 1980s was partly stimulated by private companies buying up fertile land from peasant householders to build condos, factories, and tourist resorts. Economic development has increased the Gross National Product (GNP) to double-digit growth by focusing on developing the industrial rather than agricultural sector. This neglect of agricultural landholders has resulted in small farmers losing their self reliance and self-sufficiency in food, and faced them with increasing debt. It is estimated that 45 % of farming families in Northern Thailand do not have access to sufficient land to meet their needs for domestic subsistence (Ekachai, 1991). In Thailand, the greater the technological and economic advances, the wider the gap between the rich and the poor becomes.

Due to this rapid penetration of modernization and capitalist development in Thai society since World War Two, the position of Thai women as inferior relative to men has been reinforced by class inequalities (Ong, 1989). Women's labour in the industrial sector also gradually marginalised them as subordinate to men. Prostitution and beauty images are examples of the commodification and exploitation of women which place rural female youths at risk for AIDS transmission.

There appear to be no data that distinguish the prevalence of HIV infection between rural and urban Thai women. There are some survey data that demonstrate an inverse association between socioeconomic status and HIV susceptibility. The highest HIV prevalence rates reported in Thailand are between 70 percent to 100 percent. They derive from Chiang Mai low-priced female prostitutes (Handley, 1990; Vichan, 1990). Data from studies of blood

donors from a major hospital in Chiang Mai also revealed an inverse relationship between socioeconomic status and HIV infection rates (Vichan, 1990).

Despite these data, AIDS education projects among primary and secondary school students are rare because of cultural barriers against talking about sexual behavior with children. Most studies of teens and AIDS have focused on HIV transmission patterns, and knowledge, perceptions of risk, and condom use among male adolescents. Much of the social and behavioral AIDS research and interventions among young women have targeted commercial sex workers. There is little empirically based knowledge of the influence of gender socialization on adolescent female sexuality.

In the absence of a vaccine or effective therapy for AIDS, attention must focus on prevention, specifically reducing or eliminating high risk behaviors. Therefore, empirical knowledge of the female youths' experiences of their gender roles and sexuality is needed to generate guidelines for public health policies that promote health education in respect to empowering young women to assert control over the factors which affect their lives. This will result in promoting AIDS preventive behavior among female teenagers in Thailand

Overview of the AIDS/HIV Epidemic in Thailand

The first case of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in Thailand was reported in 1984. The human immune deficiency virus (HIV) in Thailand was undetectable or found at very low prevalence in surveys among male and female prostitutes and IVDUs from 1985 through mid-1987 (Wangroongsarb et al. 1985; Traisupa, Wongba & Taylor, 1987; Suwanagool & Kobwanthanakun, 1988). In 1988, an explosive epidemic of HIV infection took place among IVDUs in Bangkok and surrounding provinces, where HIV

rates rapidly reached 36 to 43% (Weniger et al. 1991). By 1989, similarly high rates of HIV-1 were found among IVDUs in provinces throughout the country (Ungchusak et al. 1987; Ungchusak et al. 1990).

In contrast, HIV prevalence rates among heterosexual groups have varied geographically. Surveys among female prostitutes, male sexually transmitted diseases (STD) clinic clients, and military recruits have demonstrated highest rates of HIV-1 infection among heterosexual groups in Northern Thailand (Ungchusak et al. 1987; Ungchusak et al. 1990; Ungchusak et al. 1991; Weniger et al. 1991; Sirisophana et al. 1992). The AIDS epidemic in Thailand initially spread from gay men and IVDUs to prostitutes¹, then to non-IVDU male clients of prostitutes, and has now spread to the wives and girlfriends of these men in the general population (Weniger et al. 1991). Currently, heterosexual transmission is the paramount cause for the accelerated rate of HIV transmission in Northern Thailand.

Twice yearly National Sentinel Surveillance Surveys were inaugurated in June 1989. Initially they demonstrated high rates of HIV infection among brothel-based (lower class) female prostitutes. Prevalence rates ranged from 0% to 5% in 13 provinces throughout the country (1.5% in Bangkok), but Chiang Mai was unexpectedly high at 44% (Ungchusak et al. 1989). Monthly incidence rates of HIV infection among Chiang Mai prostitutes were 10% in 1989 and 1990 (Sirisophana, 1992). The incidence rates reported in another study were 4.8%, and 3.4% in 1989 and 1990 (Sawanpanyalert et al. 1991). The average price for a sexual encounter in Chiang Mai's brothels (more than 50 brothels) is US\$ 2.00 to \$4.00, which is affordable to most laborers. Most

¹Although both male and female prostitutes were affected, for years only female prostitutes were surveilled (Muecke, 1990)

of the lower fee female prostitutes are "girls from rural, poor Thai families, from indigenous Hill People villages, and from poverty stricken areas of neighboring Laos and Burma" (Muecke, 1990, p. 8). The increasing commodification and monetization of Thai society has served as a major factor in increasing the financial pressures on poor Thai families, and hill tribe people, and caused them to migrate to find jobs in urban areas (Ford & Koetsawang, 1991; Yoddumnern-Attig, 1993). This leads poor women to become commercial sex workers with no choice because of their low level of education or illiteracy.

The most recent national survey, conducted in 1989 to 1992, shows that HIV prevalence rates among low fee female prostitutes, and men attending STD clinics are increasing: from 3.5 percent to 23.86 percent among low fee prostitutes, and 0 percent to 6.06 percent among men attending STD clinics in June, 1989 and December, 1992 (Division of Epidemiology, 1993). A study conducted in Chiang Mai in 1991 demonstrated significant associations between HIV infection and prostitute contacts, and between HIV infection and a history of STDs among two subgroups of heterosexual males, male STD clinic patients and male blood donors (Kunanusont et al. 1991).

Some studies in northern Thailand have demonstrated that male STD patients or males with history of STD symptoms show a higher prevalence of HIV infection than males without STDs (Kunanusont, 1991; Nopkesorn et al. 1993). Kunanusont (1991) reported that male STD patients who had a history of any STDs in past five years had two-fold higher risk of HIV infection than men who did not (odd ratio, OR = 2.03). This is supported by another study which showed the strong association between history of STD symptoms and HIV-1 infection, independent of frequency of sex with female prostitutes,

among young men in northern Thailand (Nopkesorn et al. 1993). To date, no studies have documented a relationship between the prevalence of HIV infection and history of STDs among heterosexual women in northern Thailand.

Only recently has the HIV threat to the general population been documented. A national survey of 26,000 men between ages 20 and 22 and eligible for Thai military service found that 2 percent of these young males nationwide, and up to 11.5 percent in Chiang Mai, were HIV positive ("Mechai," 1990). Current survey data suggest that HIV has already been transmitted to monogamous women and their children. It is now predicted that women will become the largest group of HIV carriers in the next few years. Two years ago, it was already estimated that 4 percent of wives and girl friends of IVDUs and promiscuous men were infected in a few provinces in Northern Thailand (Limpakarnjanarat, 1991). Also in the North, a study in a major hospital demonstrated that among obstetric patients, the anti-HIV antibody prevalence rate increased rapidly: by 250 percent in the year ending in 1990 (from 4.8 % to 11.8%), and by 320 percent in the next six months by June, 1991 (to 38.1%) (Siriwanthanapa, 1991).

High rates of HIV infection among pregnant women (Weniger et al. 1991) are a warning sign that HIV had spread into families and that the next victims will be babies born to HIV infected mothers who might or might not know that they are infected. HIV infection among pregnant women attending antenatal care in several hospitals in the Northern region of Thailand could reach as high as 20 % (from private discussion) while the rate provided by Chiang Mai's official health representative is between 5-6 % ("AIDS," 1993). Furthermore, Weniger (1991) reports seropositivity rate of 0.6% in early 1991

among female secondary school students aged 18 years entering vocational training in Chiang Mai. In fact, we are unable to determine the HIV seroprevalence for heterosexual women in the general population because the National Sentinel Surveillance Survey selectively studies persons in primary risk groups; women included in the survey are primarily prostitutes, and obstetric patients in some of the major hospitals.

From 1984 to the end of 1993, the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) reported a total of 8,300 cases of full blown AIDS and 3,906 AIDS-related cases (ARC). By the end of 1994, these numbers had increased by 77.81% to 14,758 full-blown and 6,276 ARC cases (MOPH, 1994). The Thai government now estimates that 200,000 to 400,000 people are infected with HIV. It is estimated that the number could rise to 2-4 million, as much as 6 percent of the Thai population, by the year 2000 ("Asia," 1992). The age group 15-34 years has been most affected by the AIDS epidemic since 1984, with 65.36% of reported cases of AIDS/ARC, being in this group (MOPH, 1994). Even though there are currently more HIV-infected males than females, the Thai Working Group predicts that this will change and soon there will be more HIV-infected females than males.

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which is a cytopathogenic virus that causes AIDS, has been identified into two types of retroviruses: HIV-1, found worldwide, and HIV-2 found mainly in West Africa. There is growing evidence that HIV-1 is transmitted more efficiently through heterosexual contact than HIV-2, at least early in the course of infection (Mann, Torantola, & Netter, 1992, p. 267-277). In Thailand, many previous studies have demonstrated that two distinct HIV-1 variants have been segregated by different modes of transmission. Subtype E predominates among

heterosexuals while subtype B predominates among intravenous drug users. In a case control study of couples in Thailand, Kunanusont et al. (1995) reported that seroconcordance was higher in couples where the male index case was infected with subtype E compared to subtype B (70% versus 26%, ODDs ratio 6.8, 95% CI 2.7-17.6). They pointed out that this would be a major concern if HIV-1 subtype E can be transmitted through heterosexual intercourse more easily than subtype B, and may have contributed to the rapid spread of the HIV epidemic in Thailand.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the present study was to gain a better understanding of the processes of gender construction and perceptions of sexuality as they involve young Thai females. This understanding was needed to provide a basis for developing more effective health education related to AIDS prevention with young women. The specific aims of the study were to address the following questions:

- 1) What were the female adolescents' perceptions of becoming women in the peri-urban villages of northern Thailand? What were their perceptions about their gender role expectations?
- 2) What were the female adolescents' experiences of their emerging sexuality in the peri-urban villages of northern Thailand? and what was their knowledge of sexuality and sexual health related issues?
- 3) What sources of sexual information were available to female adolescents in the peri-urban villages of northern Thailand, and which ones did young girls use?

4) How much did Thai female adolescents in the peri-urban villages of northern Thailand know about AIDS? What were the attitudes, and beliefs regarding the risk of AIDS in female adolescents?

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first involves theoretical considerations of the social construction of gender and sexuality. The second presents a perspective on gender construction, social transformation and HIV transmission in Thai society.

Theoretical Considerations on Social Constructions of Gender and Sexuality

Gender is the term used in "discussions of socially and culturally determined differences in the behavior, role, and status of men and women" (Seymour-Smith, 1986, p. 129). Herdt (1987) concludes that "gender will indicate those shared and learned ideas and feelings a group has regarding the ways to be (identity) and the ways to act (role), male or female, masculine or feminine" (p. 67). Jacobs & Roberts (1989) define gender as the cultural designation of biobehavior and psychosocial qualities of the sexes, for example, woman (female), man (male), other(s) (e.g., *berdaches*--is the term used for a variety of cross-gender expressions in American Indian cultures). Gender is defined differently in different societies depending on the ways in which cultures define and differentiate human (and other) potentials and possibilities. Thorne (1993) points out that in the U.S, heterosexual meanings have become dominant notions of adult "femininity" and "masculinity" and the meanings also become central to gender symbolism geared to teens. In the past, some traditional Native American cultures defined gender meanings by occupational pursuits, dress, and demeanor, but not by sexuality. It was not until the late nineteenth century that sexuality became an essential core of

individual adult identity (p. 155). As Parker, Herdt & Carballo (1991) state "Gender is an example of a very fundamental cultural category that structures human sexuality" (p. 80). Evidence from my field work supports the assumption implied in these definitions that gender is a fundamental organizing principal of social organization worldwide. In this study, Lips's definition of sex and gender are used (Lips, 1994). Sex is used to refer to a person's biological maleness or femaleness. Gender refers to the nonphysiological aspects of being female or male--the cultural expectations of femininity and masculinity (Lips, 1994, p. 4).

Male and female infants must undergo a process of sexual socialization in which they are shaped and labeled as "boy" and "girl," "man," and "woman." They are trained to fit gender roles and to internalize the beliefs and values appropriate to performing their roles in all situations and social institutions (Herdt, 1987). *Sexual socialization* is the process in which someone learns the sexual feelings, desires, roles, and practices that are typical to her or his cohort in their society. The cultural environment is an essential process that exerts normative pressures on the "sexual scripts"¹ of the individual. Through these sociocultural scripts, the individual learns the expectations of society and acts in varying degrees of alignment with these expectations (Simon & Gagnon, 1969).

Socialization into gender roles has shaped adolescent girls' perceptions of their own gender role expectation and sexuality. The category of "women" in each culture is linked to the notion of motherhood which typically attributes

¹A metaphor for conceptualizing the production of behavior within social life as proposed by Simon & Gagnon (1969).

to woman characteristics of fertility, naturalness, maternal love, nurturance, life giving, and reproduction (Moore, 1988). I agree with Ortner (1974) that this ideology of biological determinism reflects patriarchal ideas about the place of women or the hierarchical relations between women and men. Ortner (1982) argues that the notions of gender "do not simply reflect or elaborate upon biological 'givens' but are largely products of social and cultural processes." (p. 1)

Ortner's argument for the cultural valuations which make women appear "closer to nature" can be summarized into two main aspects: 1) Women's physiology and her specialized reproductive functions make woman appear closer to nature, and confine her social movement. Women are symbolically associated with nature while men are identified with culture. "Woman creates naturally from within her own being, whereas man is free to, or forced to, create artificially, that is, through cultural means, and in such a way as to sustain culture." (Ortner, 1974, p. 77); and 2) Women's social roles are seen as closer to nature because their involvement in reproduction has tended to limit them to social functions which are mainly domestic domain. These domestic roles confine women's activities that related to intra and inter familial relations whereas men's activities are associated with society and the public interest (Ortner, 1974).

Adolescent girls are undergoing the process of learning female role identity through their personal identifications with mothers. The learning process involves the continuity and development of a girl's interpersonal relationships to her mother and other female relatives that facilitates continuous and early role learning. This leads the young girl to become involved in the world of women which is characterized by motherhood role and little

involvement in the learning of externally defined role characteristics. A quality of embeddedness in social interaction and personal relationships characterizes women's life relative to men's (Chodorow, 1974, p. 57). This could support Ortner's argument that feminine personality has been generated by social-structural arrangements rather than by innate biological factors (Ortner, 1974).

Rosaldo (1974) also argues that an emphasis on women's maternal role as childbearing and childrearing confines women to the domestic sphere, limits access to the sorts of authority, prestige, and cultural value that are the prerogatives of men, and thus constitutes the basis of hierarchical gender relations. In her argument, Rosaldo suggested that characteristic aspects of male and female roles in social, cultural, and economic systems can all be related to a universal, structural opposition between domestic and public domains of activity (p. 35). She points out some examples of the cultural expressions of sexual asymmetry associated with domains of activity, such as ritual activity, which demonstrates that men have authority over women, and that they have a culturally legitimated right to her subordination and compliance (Rosaldo, 1974, p. 21).

These cultural valuations given to women and man offer a way of linking sexual ideologies and stereotypes both to the wider system of cultural symbols and to social roles and experience. Mead, in her work on Samoa, has greatly contributed to the societal notions of gender and sexuality in that they are socially constructed, rather than biologically based. Her argument for the primacy of nurture rather than nature, of culture rather than instinct was most frequently quoted by scholars (Caplan, 1987, p. 13). As Moore (1988) concludes:

"The differences between men and women can be conceptualized as a set of opposed pairs which resonate with other sets of oppositions. Thus men may be associated with 'up', 'right', 'high', 'culture' and 'strength', while women are associated with their opposites, 'down', 'left', 'low', 'nature' and 'weakness'. These associations are not inherent in the biological or social nature of the sexes, but are cultural constructs, which are powerfully reinforced by the social activities which both define and are defined by them. The value of analysing 'man' and 'woman' as symbolic categories or constructs lies in the identification of the expectations and values which individual cultures associate with being male or female" (p. 15-16).

This gender ideology of women's subordination affects how the power differential between women and men in sexual relationships is transmitted through childhood socialization. Fine (1988), in an ethnographic study in a comprehensive public high school in New York City, concluded that female sexuality has been conveyed as violence, victimization, and individual morality. Sexuality as violence presumes that official silence has an impact on the decrease in sexual activity. Sexuality as victimization leads young women to learn their vulnerability to potential male predators. Sexuality as individual morality values women's sexual decision making as long as the decisions made are for premarital abstinence. She further asserted that the traditional notions of what it means to be a woman, which are "to remain subordinate, dependent, self-sacrificing, compliant, and ready to marry and/or bear children early," do little to empower young women in developing their sexual arrangements (Fine, 1988, p. 49). There is a strong ideology that transmits restrictive double standard messages which require never married females be virgins or "good."

This prevents women from protecting themselves because good girls are not supposed to know about sex. Their consequent lack of information or misinformation about sexual health leads them to perceive themselves at low risk of AIDS including STDs. In addition, many mixed messages about sexuality from media also provide the fantasy about sex and images portraying females as ineffective, passive, or unskilled and male as assertive, independent, and dominant.

Sexual mores in each society are constructed of numerous rules governing behavior that dictate individual attitudes toward sex, and thus affect the sexual socialization process in each society. Simon and Gagnon (1984) describe three distinct levels of *sexual scripts*--*cultural scenarios*, *interpersonal scripts*, and *intrapsychic scripts*--as a metaphor for conceptualizing the production of behavior within social life. *Cultural scenarios* are the instructional guides that exist at the level of collective life which can be seen as systems of signs and symbols through which the requirements and the practice of specific roles are given. If there is a fundamental congruence between the sexual as it is defined by prevailing cultural scenarios and experienced intrapsychically, the consequent behavior is symbolic.

Sexuality is a product of the social and cultural systems that shape not only one sexual experience, but also the ways in which we interpret and understand that experience (Parker, 1991; Parker, 1994). "It is really not possible to analyse sexuality without reference to the economic, political, and cultural matrix within which it is embedded" (Caplan, 1987, p. 24). In his study of Brazilian sexual culture, Parker (1991a) points out that experience of

sexual excitement and erotic satisfaction is defined not as just a physical sensation but as a cultural construct. The romantic *beijos* (kisses) that pass across the screens in movie theaters or on television are among the earliest models for structuring sexual conduct during childhood socialization (p. 233). The main categories of heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality, first introduced into Brazilian culture in the mid twentieth century, are highly problematic within the context of Brazilian culture. In contemporary Brazilian life, sexual practices have been organized on a distinction between masculine *atividade* (activity) and feminine *passividade* (passivity) within the patriarchal tradition. Masculinity was characterized in terms of a man's superiority, strength, virility, activity, potential for violence, and legitimate use of force. In contrast, femininity was defined in terms of a woman's inferiority, weakness, beauty and desirability, and subjection to the absolute domination of the patriarch. (Parker, 1991b, p. 32).

There have been some studies in the United Kingdom about young women's perceptions of their sexuality and AIDS related behavior in heterosexual sex. Sexuality is socially constructed in that the young women are involved in the processes of their sexuality and sexual experience through which the power relations embedded in sexual relations are produced and reproduced, and become part of individual sexual identity. This sexual identity for heterosexual women is ideologically constructed in a context which defines sex in terms of men's drives and needs. Women tend to be seen, and to see themselves, as passive receptacles of men's sexual desires. (Holland, Ramazanoglu, Scott, Sharpe & Thomson, 1990, p. 340). A study by Holland, Ramazanoglu, Scott, Sharpe & Thomson (1992) demonstrated that young

women viewed sex as something which they do only if they love and trust someone. Therefore, they thought that condoms should be used only in situations in which partners are not to be trusted.

From reviewing the existing British literature of young people's heterosexual encounters, Wight (1992) found that safer heterosexual sex is impeded by cultural issues relating to the taboos around the discussion of sex and gender role expectations. A taboo against the explicit discussion of sexual behavior constrains the negotiation of sexual activity. The ideology which portrays women as dutiful wives, submissive, passive, and pleasing to their husbands, has led women to adopt passive feminine sexual identities which assume male superiority. In intercourse, men have the privilege of gratification, so asking men to use condoms "is a potentially subversive demand." (Wight, 1992, p. 17)

In Thailand, despite the avoidance of transvestites by many individuals, there appears to be an increasing tolerance of male homosexuality and transvestism, particularly in commercial and tourist centers (Muecke, 1983). In his study of homosexuality in Thailand, Jackson argues that there is a dominant heterosexual ethos that minimizes and trivializes homosexual practices rather than actively excluding them. Jackson (1989) states

"The open discussion of homosexuality or of sex in general is not traditionally sanctioned in Thailand, and given the dominant heterosexual ethos of Thai society this restriction upon talking about sex means that there is considerable ignorance and misunderstanding of homosexuality, both in the general populace and among homosexual themselves (p. 39-40)"

However, it appears that there is as yet no literature on female homosexuality in Thai society. There is some evidence that females acting in what is viewed as masculine ways are rare by comparing to males who are said to be acting in effeminate ways (*Toot*, ตุ๊ด). This suggests a gender socialization process in which girls follow a female model almost exclusively, whereas boys may ambiguously follow both female and male models (Muecke, 1983).

Perspectives on Gender Construction, Socioeconomic Transformation, and HIV Transmission in Thai Society

I would argue that the notion of women as closer to nature could also be applied in analyzing Thai gender asymmetry, particularly in relation to how women's social and domestic roles are constrained by Buddhist ideology.

Theravada Buddhism is a major sociocultural characteristic of Thai society that influences Thai women's perceptions of their position in the society. Buddhism is a dominant and pervasive ideology that is crucial for understanding development, gender, and change in Thai society. Many scholars agree that it is essential to explore Thai Buddhist values that both constrain and motivate Thais as they assume roles in order to better understanding the roles of women in Thai society (Boonsue, 1989; Kabilsingh, 1991; Keyes, 1984; Kirsch, 1982; Kirsch, 1985). Some Western Buddhist scholars have argued about the relationships between Buddhist values and sex roles in Thai society. Kirsch (1982, 1985) suggests that the Buddhist ideology leads women to adopt more worldly roles than men, and that women's Buddhist religious roles are poorly developed and not highly regarded. He points out

that the values embodied in Theravada Buddhism relate to the patterning of sex roles in Thai society such that they favor women's involvement in economic activities and the men's involvement in political-bureaucratic roles.

These notions of Buddhist values and sex roles are criticized by Keyes (1984) who argues that they are based on misleading interpretations of the culture of gender in Thai society. Keyes (1984) suggests that Thai Buddhism does not relegate women to an inferior status relative to men. Rather, he shows that there is a symbiotic relationship between women and men in both spiritual and worldly matters in rural Thai communities. Mother-nurturer is the dominant image of women in that women fulfill a nurturant role both for the family and Buddhist institutions through support of their ritual activities. He concludes that

"neither males or females have a "naturally" greater propensity to realize Buddhist salvation. Both males and females must confront the problem of worldly attachment, and if they seek liberation from the "suffering" attachment entails, then they both must traverse the Path taught by the Buddha." (Keyes, 1984, p. 226)

However, some feminists have argued the existence of gender inequality in Thai Buddhist ideology (Boonsue, 1989; Kabilsingh, 1991; Thitsa, 1980). Boonsue has argued that by emphasizing a spiritual transcendental approach, some Thai and western Buddhist scholars have ignored the socio-political as well as the historical fact that human beings are not born in a vacuum but in a realm of social and political thought (Boonsue, 1989). Boonsue adopted Gramsci's concept of ideological hegemony as a theoretical framework for studying how religious ideology has been manipulated as male hegemony to oppress women via cultural and moral

patterns in Thai society. There are three myths concluded by Boonsue which emphasize the unconscious aspects of gender bias:

"1) the myth of female inferiority, which leads women to perceive themselves as inferior to men both mentally and physically and therefore to believe that they need male protection; 2) the myth of female subservience to the male, which causes women to perceive themselves as submissive and dependent and justifies their acceptance of male supremacy and the role of the men as head of the household; 3) the myth of domesticity, which leads women to believe that their aim in life should be marriage, reproduction, and domestic work." (p. 57)

Khin Thitsa, a Burmese woman and a student of Thai society, has drawn her argument from her studies of prostitution and from Thai feminist literature. She finds that Buddhist ideology contributes to a devaluation of women (Thitsa, 1980). This is supported by Kabilsingh who proposes that Thai Buddhism has ignored and devalued women. However, Kabilsingh asserts that "pure Buddhism" is gender-neutral.

Kabilsingh (1991) argues that Theravada Buddhism in Thai society has been influenced by negative perceptions of women from Indian and Chinese societies. Buddhist social values in Thai society were distorted by Brahmanic social and religious values which "restricted women to domestic life, denied them access to education, and subordinated them to male authority and power." (Kabilsingh, 1991, p. 7) Women were viewed as the cause of all temptation that obstructed monks from achieving enlightenment, so monks were prohibited from direct contact with a woman. Women may become nuns (แม่ชี), but may not be ordained as female monks (ภิกษุณี). The roles of nuns in a monastery are entirely subservient, usually involving household chores and giving the

monks domestic assistance. Only men are eligible to be ordained into the monkhood. Therefore, a negative perception of women is widely held among local Thai beliefs and customs. Recently, some scholars have found that many Thai women are convinced that they were born as females due to their bad karma, so they engage in merit making to improve their karma for their future incarnation (Kabilsingh, 1991). It is not surprising to see women engage in merit making behavior much more regularly than men in Thai society. Kabilsingh argues that the images of women provided by Buddhism as it is understood by lay persons results in gender inequality, limits female freedom, and controls female sexuality (Kabilsingh, 1991). This is noticed in the popular expression stating that "women are the hind legs of the elephant, and men, the front legs." There is a verse used to teach one's younger sister:

"A wife must get up before the husband in the morning, go to bed after him at night, speak to him sweetly at all times, honour all those whom he honours, and comply with his wishes in all things." (Boonsue, 1989, p. 43)

Adolescent Thai Buddhist girls have been raised to be mother role substitutes. They have been given more domestic responsibilities than boys as a mean to keep them closer to the home (Muecke, 1983). These behavioral patterns reflect a double standard that is fully operative in Thai society. Women's attitudes are deeply shaped by cultural norms that good women do not talk about sex or are not supposed to know about sex. There is a widespread belief that daughters who have too much freedom would have premarital sex, or that the daughter would be viewed as "loose", bringing

shame to her parents. A girl was considered as having "*phid phii*" (ผิดผี) , offended the ancestral domestic spirits, if she engaged in premarital intercourse (Potter, 1976, p. 106). Daughters were trained to share child-rearing and household maintenance responsibilities with their mothers so that they would become good women. This is supported by Pramualratana (1992) who reports that parental expectations of the daughter's ability to care for them when they are old are higher than for the son's doing so.

The social and familial expectations of a good daughter have been documented in relation to prostitution in northern Thailand. Prostitutes who have fulfilled their family obligation by taking care of parents and younger siblings financially, even at the cost of earning remittance money through prostitution, are labeled as good daughters by their families (Muecke, 1992). One member of a family spoke of their daughter with obvious pride that " she is a good daughter. 'She takes care of us in our old age', and 'She saw the family suffer'. And she wanted to help." (Ekachai, 1991, p. 170, 173)

It could be concluded that the underlying logic of cultural thinking in Thai society, particularly Buddhist ideology assumes the inferiority of women, or in other words the Buddhist notion of gender difference stresses female inferiority. Women are linked with fertility, nurturance, and attachment while men are linked with supramundane power and detachment. However, in order to better understanding of Thai women's status, it is essential that socioeconomic development, stimulated female out-migration and changing role in the wider economy, be also taken into consideration.

Ester Boserup (1970) was the first economist who examined the role of capital development in the subordination of women in developing countries. In

her book, Women's Role in Economic Development, she points out the issues of demographic and economic shifts involved in modernization that has enormous impact on women's status in Third World countries. In the case of Thailand, due to the rapid penetration of modernization and capitalist development in Thai society since World War Two, the position of Thai women as inferior relative to men has been reinforced by class inequalities. In other words, there has been an increase in gender differences in social position, prestige, and power that selectively disadvantage nonelite women (Muecke, 1984; Ong, 1989). The social and economic changes associated with modernization shift the balances of power between man and women, particularly poor women.

Thai women have played a significant role in family and community life in this agrarian society. Women play an essential part in the household's economy by finding and exchanging food, and trading. However, the transformation from an agrarian society into a rapidly industrialized country has contributed to the changing status of women and to the understandings of sexuality. Even though the five year National Economic and Social Development Plans have aimed at improving the status of women and reducing inequalities between men and women since 1972, training activities in rural areas have emphasized strengthening women's domestic roles as housewives rather than as farmers (Staff, 1991). While young men may obtain respected positions in society through the military, police academy, and the monkhood, these options are not open to women. This reflects the impact of capitalist accumulation on women's lives which have led to the development of a new hegemonic view of gender and class in Thai society. Institutional, social, and

legal processes define women as housewives, and dependent persons that require fewer rights and opportunities than men.

Modernization also has created a big gap of opportunity for education between youths who live in rural versus urban areas. Despite having universal primary education, Thailand has the lowest secondary enrollment rate (percent continuing on to secondary school after completion of primary school) among Asian countries, 29 percent in 1989. In 1990, 83 percent of the workforce had no more than a primary school education. Those who did complete secondary school education are concentrated in Bangkok (estimated rates are 70-90 percent) (Komin, 1993). Only 10 percent of children from rural areas are enrolled in secondary schools after completing six years of compulsory education. One of the reasons rural youths do not pursue secondary education is the need to support their families. However, in the Sixth Five Year Plan (for 1986-91) and in the Seventh Five Year Plan (for 1992-1996), a specific goal was set by the Thai government to increase continuation rate from primary to lower secondary to at least 73% by 1996. It was not until 1994 that the Thai government started a national survey on children's continuation to secondary schools. The data won't be available until the middle of 1995. It is reported from one study that the continuation rate of the children increased from 61% in 1989 and 1990 to 81% in 1991 when universal education was expanded from sixth to ninth grade and started to open for the 1991-1992 school year (Knodel & Havanon, 1992).

There is also a gender difference in access to formal education. There are greater training, education and occupational opportunities for men than women, with a larger proportion of women than men who receive less

education, have higher rates of illiteracy, receive lower wages, and have little opportunity for advancement (Muecke, 1981; Staff, 1991). In urban slum areas there are clear gender differences in access to education, with the illiteracy rate being twice as high among women as men, and also twice the national average (Gorden, 1991). Many northern women have sought employment in urban industrial areas as a survival strategy due to the limited sources of livelihood available for them in rural areas. Two characteristic areas of income yielding work for lower class women in urban areas are in the manufacturing and in the sex entertainment sectors. Textile factories prefer hiring women because they are considered more productive, and less troublesome to control or manipulate than men. Although no accurate statistics are available, it is estimated that the proportion of female workers is about 40 percent and might be up to 65 percent in the manufacturing sector (Yoddumnern-Attig, 1993). Females ages 11-13 and 14-19 comprise the largest proportions of the child labor force in both municipal and non-municipal areas (Soonthorndhada, 1992a).

In a study of changes in women's status associated with modernization in northern Thailand, Muecke (1981) found that "modernization" has discredited the status of rural peasant and urban poor women by making heavy demands upon them for new economic and social skills. Mills (1992) analyzes the way meanings of modernity are constructed in the dominant culture, and the power and attraction these have for young rural Thai women who migrate to Bangkok. She concludes

" The structural obstacles rural migrants, and especially women, face are substantial, and the hegemonic power of "modernity" in legitimating

capitalist structures and relations of power seems only to increase. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge these women's efforts to live meaningful lives within such limits. The choices available to women migrants are constrained both by the structures of an exploitative economic and political systems as well as their own understandings about who they are and what they desire to become." (p. 88)

It has been argued that modernization and capitalist development have allowed Thailand's media industries to pose women and women's bodies as a predominant source of visual imagery, and to channel social values in favor of women's beauty. The beauty of a "modern woman" (ผู้หญิงทันสมัย) is assessed by having fashionable dress and stylish coiffure. Women then tend to overemphasize their physical beauty as their primary worth. I agree with Bhasin (1987) in her argument on the influence of the mass communication media on the process of socialization and how the media shapes ideology and thinking of people, and thus influences society, particularly women. The media has its indirect influence on the status of women by gradually shaping public opinion, personal beliefs, and even women's self perceptions. Thailand's media industries, particularly in television commercials, movies, and magazines, portray women and women's bodies as a predominant source of visual imagery. It could be seen that inexpensive jewelry, make-up, and fashion accessories that attract young women are displayed around the streets in Bangkok, and thus lead them to place high values on fashion and beauty. The urban cosmopolitan styles and images penetrate and pervade rural Thailand, from where they draw young women into the city where they can be at once beautiful and modern. There has been some documentation on cases of girls who become prostitutes because they wanted to earn money for

beautifying themselves (Kabilsingh, 1991). One study on young girls' perceptions of prostitution in fifth grade students demonstrated that 4.4 percent of the girls said they are certain that there is a possibility that they will become sex workers ("AIDS", 1993). Most of these women are young and poorly educated. This makes them more easily lured into the entertainment industry where they are at high risk of contracting STDs including HIV and of further exploitation by the sex industry.

Van Esterik (1989) points out the issue of beauty contests as one type of evidence of the sexploitation of Thai women and gender subordination in Thailand. In addressing the issue of Miss Thailand who became Miss Universe in May of 1988, Van Esterik comments that "her prizes were important reminders of the rewards for beauty" (p. 9). The ideology of beauty is very strong in Thai society: individuals are ranked on the basis of their physical appearance. Van Esterik suggests the need to analyze how beauty contests are used to encourage women to conform to a passive, morally upright, and dutiful stereotype. She concludes with some of the Thai feminists' argument for opposing the idea of holding the Miss Universe pageant in Thailand, and for objecting to women being assessed on the basis of their appearance, and for expecting that the pageant that would encourage sexist tourists who view Thailand as "the biggest brothel in the world" (Esterik, 1989, p. 10).

Some young women are lured to engage in commercial sex industry because of the pressure to present themselves as modern women, and to purchase modern consumer items for their families. Thai women have been encouraged to channel their interests and abilities into their outer appearance, with focus upon the beauty of their physical appearance which enables them to

gain attention. There are five beauties identified as a description of Thai women: hair, eyes, teeth, nails, complexion (เบญจกัณยาณี).

Buddhist ideology, the changes associated with the Green Revolution, and transnational capitalist production that have produced constructions of the Thai female that are based on class and provide an understanding of the historical dynamics of women's subordination in the Thai society. On the whole, it could be said that the social structure in Thai society leads women to be exploited, both in class structure and in gender bias. There appears to be unequal power between man and women, especially in those roles based on socioeconomic status. Prostitution and beauty contests are examples of commodification and exploitation of women in Thai society. Both are deeply embedded in Thai cultural ideology. The increasing commodification and monetization of Thai society has served as a major factor in increasing the financial pressures on poor Thai families, and hill tribe people, and caused them to migrate to find jobs in urban areas (Ford & Koetsawang, 1991; Yoddumnern-Attig, 1993). This leads poor women to become commercial sex workers with no choice because their low level of education or illiteracy permits them little choice.

Most of the lower fee female prostitutes working in the cities are "girls from rural, poor Thai families, from indigenous Hill People villages, and from poverty stricken areas of neighboring Laos and Burma" (Muecke, 1990, p. 8). Economic necessity and social responsibility are among the factors that motivate these young women to the cities and engage in commercial sex work. Meanwhile, most of these women are young and are poorly educated. This makes them more easily exploited and difficult to reach through AIDS

education campaigns (Muecke, 1990). In addition, there are some survey data that demonstrate an inverse association between socioeconomic status and HIV susceptibility. The highest HIV prevalence rates reported in Thailand are between 70 percent to 100 percent. They derive from Chiang Mai low-priced female prostitutes (Handley, 1990; Vichan, 1990). Data from studies of blood donors from a major hospital in Chiang Mai also revealed an inverse relationship between socioeconomic status and HIV infection rates (Vichan, 1990).

Moreover, the stigmatization of AIDS as negative stereotypes relating to certain categories of people, particularly prostitutes and homosexuals, reflects sociocultural perceptions that distinguish between good and bad women based upon their sexual behavior, and reflects moral shame on the individuals with deviant behavior. These traditional ideas which associate AIDS with prostitutes lead many in society to identify women as those who spread the disease. This gender discrimination creates an image of the female prostitute as a primary carrier of HIV transmission, a source of infection rather than a victim. In Thailand, for example, AIDS, along with other STDs, is literally called "prostitutes' disease" (Bruyn, 1992, p. 250). AIDS campaigns addressed to men have urged them to be cautious about contracting AIDS from visiting prostitutes, and transmitting to their wives which infer to, from a bad woman to a good woman. These female prostitutes were perceived as sources of infection, rather than the victims from men's multiple relationships.

The cultural perception of women as either good and bad, depending upon her sexual behavior, and the cultural meaning of AIDS which stigmatizes AIDS as prostitutes' diseases leads most young girls to perceive themselves not

at risk. Condoms are associated with "bad girls" and are conceived as men's business and something to be used with prostitutes because their function is to prevent STDs. "These are the 'good girls' who are generally perceived to be loyally monogamous or asexual and hence not at risk for HIV" (Carovano, 1991, p. 135). Furthermore, the gender ideology which portrays women as submissive, passive, and interested only in pleasing their husbands has constrained the development of AIDS education for young women, and led them to adopt passive feminine sexual identities which assume male superiority. These notions cause adolescent girls to be among the least powerful groups to protect themselves against HIV infection. The social pressures and constraints could directly impinge on their abilities to make decisions about sexual safety and pleasure. Heterosexual transmission is considered the most likely source of transmission among female adolescents. The proportion of girls and young women who become infected during their teens and early twenties is higher than women in any other age group. In Thailand, it is estimated that the number of HIV positive women between the ages of 15 and 19 is three times that of men in the same age group, and two times that of men in the 20-24 age group ("Good girls", 1993).

Chapter 3

Methodology

This study was exploratory and interpretive in design. Ethnographic approaches were used as methods of inquiry. Ethnography identifies shared meanings and interpretations which are needed to develop an understanding of the socially constructed meanings of gender role and sexual experiences of young girls in a northern Thai community. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first discusses the nature of ethnography. The second deals with feminist ethnographic approaches versus health behavior in adolescent girls. The third identifies ethnographic methods in studying health behavior.

Ethnography

Ethnography is a way to provide thick description and an analysis of how people lead their routine and ritual lives with each other within the context of their culturally constituted environment (Muecke, 1993). In other words, the ethnographer attempts to capture the detailed descriptions and understanding of human phenomena of a particular culture (Aamodt, 1989). An emphasis of ethnography is on conducting research in the natural setting because ethnographer's epistemology is based on "a belief that human behavior can only be understood within the context which it occurs" (Robertson & Boyle, 1984, p. 44). Leninger (1985) asserts that it is challenging to discover the broad holistic perspectives that influence human lifeways and realities within different cultural, social, and physical environments. This context or natural environment with cultural, physical, social, and historical aspects provides rich and meaningful qualitative data about human experiences.

Ethnography is considered as one of the methodological approaches within the interpretive research tradition which is commonly referred to by

other terms such as qualitative, naturalistic, and inductive research, along with hermeneutics and everyday life perspectives (Lowenberg, 1993).

Hermeneutics is recognized as a philosophy that focuses on an interpretive approach to people and emphasizes that human understanding through a complex experience cannot be separated from the social and historical context. This philosophy of thought also acknowledges the notion of praxis in that knowledge and understanding cannot be separated from application (Thompson, 1990).

Qualitative methods are useful in allowing the researchers to capture or observe complex human behavior in their natural environment, while quantitative methods are useful in emphasizing precision of measurement by controlling the observation and measurement of a variable. There are three fundamental assumptions shared by different methods in qualitative approach: 1) a holistic view that seeks to understand phenomena in their entirety in order to develop a complete understanding of a person or situation, 2) an inductive approach that the development of general patterns is established through specific observation, and 3) naturalistic inquiry that has an intention to discover human phenomena in their naturally occurring states (Rudestam & Newton, 1992, p. 32).

Ethnography, phenomenology, and grounded theory are the three methodological divisions most used by nursing in interpretive research. Phenomenology is applied when the problems and concerns of the researcher are to describe the lived experience of the person as free as possible from the theoretical or social constructs. Grounded theory is a methodology that uses symbolic interactionist perspective as the foundation for studying social relationships and the world as perceived by its inhabitants or for understanding

how a group of people define, via social interactions, and their reality. The purpose of the grounded theory is to generate a more substantive general theory which emerges from the experiences of the informants in a specific social phenomenon through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon (Munhill & Oiler, 1986). Strauss & Corbin (1990) conclude "data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge" (p. 23).

It could be concluded that unlike grounded theory and phenomenology, ethnography is grounded in the culture concept and seeks to understand the native's view of a cultural system (Aamodt, 1989). Ethnographers attempt to discover symbolic meanings that constitute a specific phenomenon, and also attempt to triangulate various perspectives of the participants by emphasizing interaction, social context, and the social construction of reality (Lowenberg, 1993, p. 14). Aamodt (1989) summarizes two assumptions that help to understand ethnography: "1) culture is viewed as a system of knowledge used by human beings to interpret experience and generate behavior, and 2) linguistic expressions used by informants during social interactions are the structural blocks of meaning for constructing systems of cultural knowledge" (p. 33). The characteristics of ethnography in capturing the detailed descriptions of the cultural knowledge that people use to organize their behavior and interpret their experience make ethnographic approaches appropriate in studying human behavior, particularly issues related to sexual behaviors among adolescent girls which will be discussed in the following section.

Ethnographic approaches allow nurses to capture the complexity of human response to health and illness which is consistent with the nursing profession's proclaimed practice that is comprehensive and holistic and embraces the total human experience. It is an important vehicle for the development of nursing knowledge in documenting and analyzing human behavior that is related to health and illness because human experience is so complex in relation to the multiple realities of their lives. Nursing is faced with developing a body of knowledge that is heavily concentrated on issues that relate to human behavior and behavioral change, particularly with the current of AIDS epidemic. For example, nurses have to take responsibility for preventing the spread of AIDS epidemic through teaching safer sex practices and empowering behavioral change. Furthermore, little knowledge exists regarding the transmission modes, disease course, psychosocial factors, and intervention efforts among women. This limited health knowledge reveals the necessity of implementing ethnographic methodologies as methods of inquiry in order to obtain information on cultural community norms, which will help us to understand how safer-sex campaigns are perceived and received by different cultural communities (Herdt & Boxer, 1991).

Individual behavior is strongly influenced by life experience within a particular culture. Cultural expectations from each ethnic group govern the mode by which behaviors are expressed (Chrisman & Kleinman, 1983). Risk perceptions in each society are heavily influenced by political, cultural, and social factors, such as involvement in a social milieu, cultural norms and values. Nelkin (1987) concludes "Attitudes toward risk are often subjective, closely embodied in a system of beliefs, values, and ideas that constitute a

culture. Thus different cultures or social groups will emphasize certain risks and minimize others or perceive similar risks in quite different terms." (p. 983)

Sexual behavior is defined and expressed in very different ways across each ethnic group. Standards of gender role norms and beliefs related to sexual behavior play a central role in shaping the perceptions of risk of individuals in each cultural group. For example, the cultural perception of Thai women, which is based on a dichotomy of good and bad women on the basis of sexual behavior, leads most Thai young girls to perceive themselves as not at risk for contracting AIDS. Qualitative approaches provide the possibility of investigation that allows us to develop a fuller understanding of the specific social and cultural contexts that structure sexual experience and script sexual behavior. Furthermore, the growing number of AIDS related cases in different social groups make it necessary to develop a more sensitive cross-cultural understanding of AIDS.

I agree with Herdt & Boxer (1991) that the sensitive nature of information on sexuality cannot usually be uncovered in surveys or formal interviews because a special rapport is needed in order to obtain accurately intimate experiences from the respondents. It is unlikely to capture a process of behavior change by using true or false or likert scale response to an item. Results from surveys indeed limited information regarding how people use facts in weighing the possible outcome of their behavior. Survey research methods can be expected to provide only a few insights into the complexity of social and cultural meanings associated with sexual behavior, and provide few explanations regarding changes in health behavior (Parker, Herdt & Carballo, 1991). The survey method is limited, however, in its ability to collect more in-depth data on the meaning of sexual practice for each individual, and is unable

to account for those behaviors that respondents are unwilling to acknowledge or report. The use of surveys becomes problematic in cross-cultural contexts when they are developed by foreign researchers. There are some sources of error that challenge the validity of survey instruments in cross-cultural contexts: 1) the failure to recognize cultural interpretation when the questions are constructed from a cultural frame of reference different from that of the respondent and 2) the failure to acknowledge that information is contextually based (Chayan Vaddhanaphuti, personal communication, 03/93).

Nonetheless, I consider ethnographic approaches as a way to complement rather than to replace the survey or epidemiologic approaches. Ethnographic approaches can be integrated with survey research to broaden and deepen survey data, and to obtain information that might escape from the survey instrument, for example to gather information from individuals who reject or unwilling to agree to a formal interview using the survey instrument as discussed earlier. Cross-sectional survey is one type of descriptive study that can be used in combining with ethnographic approaches to provide information on developmental timing differences in sexual attitudes, rules, and roles that influence how person respond to HIV sexual risk investigations (Hennekens & Buring, 1987; Herdt & Boxer, 1991). Furthermore, large-scale data will provide extensive and detailed data on on-going primary relationships among variables that related to sexual behaviors or describe the medical and behavioral parameters within which HIV/AIDS is occurring, and provide statistics that could possibly encourage changes at policy level.

To conclude, ethnographic methodologies can both complement and supplement the data collected through survey methods and can play a significant role in validating survey findings. In addition, ethnographic

approaches provide a better understanding of the implicit meanings and meaningful context that are often embedded in behavioral patterns, and thus make a key contribution to develop more effective strategies for AIDS prevention.

There are some studies that support the notion of using ethnographic approaches to discover culturally sensitive categories of HIV knowledge, attitudes, and behavior to prevent HIV infection among women (Bruyn, 1992; Harrison, 1991; Nyamathi & Shuler, 1990). A study with in-depth interviews in Zaire demonstrated some beliefs that "semen contribute to women's health and reproduction while condoms were feared to injure women or even cause sterility" (Bruyn, 1992, p. 252). Another study by Harrison et al (1991) in 620 adult women from south Florida including black (50.6%), white (28.7%), Hispanic (13.4%), and Haitian (5.0%) indicated that some women, particularly among Haitians, had myths about acquiring AIDS from casual contact and from insect bite. There was a consistent prevalence (over one-half of all respondents) of unprotected sex with their main partners across all racial or ethnic groups with the Haitian women reporting the greatest prevalence of these behaviors. Even though 75% of the sample agreed with the statement that "you can't trust lovers to tell you about any of their sexually transmitted diseases", women did not perceive themselves at risk for contracting the HIV virus. From the study, it seems that cultural norms, including gender role norms have exerted powerful influence on personal decision making and sexual behavior. Nyamathi & Shuler (1990) point out that there are barriers in AIDS education for minority women because it is not provided in a culturally sensitive manner. Among minorities, particularly Hispanics, discussion of sexual activity is not a socially acceptable topic of conversation. They suggest

that it is essential to have some understanding of the clients' cultural values and how these values influence behavior through the application of qualitative research approaches such as the focus group interviews.

Feminist Ethnographic Approaches versus Health Behavior in Adolescent Girls

There are some circumstances that need to be taken into consideration when studying sexual behavior of adolescent girls. There are some sociocultural factors that play a major role in shaping women's views of practicing safer sex, particularly among poor women and women in minority groups. They are the most at risk because poverty and little education make it particularly difficult for them to negotiate safer sexual practices with male partners. The findings from a study by Dorfman, Derish & Cohen (1992) demonstrate that it is easier for sex workers to adopt AIDS risk reduction techniques with their clients than with their steady partners. Economic dependency on males and social expectations of a more compliant female role limit women's ability to negotiate change in sexual behavior with their partners. The ideology that portrays women as submissive, passive, and pleasing husbands has led them to adopt passive feminine sexual identities which assume male superiority.

In so far as social context affects women's sexual behavior and decision making, incorporating feminist principles into the study of health behavior of adolescent girls promotes critical examination of the power relationships, hierarchies, and gender roles that affect lives and perceptions of adolescent girls. There are three basic principles shared by most feminists (Hall & Stevens, 1991).

- "1. a valuing of women and a validation of women's experiences, ideas, and needs;
2. a recognition of the existence of ideologic, structural, and interpersonal conditions that oppress women; and
3. a desire to bring about social change of oppressive constraints through criticisms and political action." (p. 17)

The goal of the feminist researchers is to uncover both the invisibility and distortion of female experience, which restrict their worldview and limit their access to resources, in ways relevant to ending women's unequal social position (Lather, 1991, p. 71). Nursing and feminism are alike in rejecting dualism and objectification, and attempting to understand everyday experiences (Parker & McFarlane, 1991). Thus, it is challenging for nurse scholars to utilize feminist approaches for examining women's experiences.

The ideology of gender inequality that prevents women from protecting themselves against HIV infection needs to be explored. The implementation of feminist approaches will promote understanding of the various dimensions of oppression and exploitation, including economics, social, and ideological factors involved in historical and cultural aspects of any society. The new understanding to be generated by incorporating feminist approaches could suggest appropriate ways to promote health of the adolescent girls.

Feminist ethnography is one of the schools that emerged within the scope of critical ethnography. Critical ethnography emphasizes power and status inequalities of the relationship between the researcher and other participants. It critiques interpretive ethnography for essentializing and "rounding off observations to an integrated core which results in excluding contrary voices that keep culture alive and ever-changing" (Muecke, 1993, p. 11). Wolf (1992) raises issues of colonialism and imperialism in her field

research in Taiwan to demonstrate that power differentials within the Taiwanese society, and between anthropologists and those they study, exist. She concludes that "anthropologists must be constantly aware of how these differences in power can distort their perceptions and skew their interpretations. Obviously, they must also be careful not to take advantage of their (usually) considerably greater power in ways that will disadvantage the people they are studying." (Wolf, 1992, p. 6) It could be concluded that feminist ethnographers "are primarily oriented towards minimizing their own exploitation of their informants, and of exposing the forces of oppression against the less privileged groups of society." (Muecke, 1993, p. 12)

Life experience is complex, unstable, and disorderly. Women tend to see themselves in a network of relations to others, or interconnected relationships (Jayaratne & Stewart, 1991). Therefore, it is essential that we acknowledge a tolerance for ambiguity, multiplicity, contradiction, and instability (Wolf, 1992). We need to contextualize all parties by emphasizing the partiality of interpretation as well as the plurality of interpretations. Duffy (1985) concludes that we cannot deny the fact that "multiple truths exist and the context of the research, including the researcher, influences the research findings." The acceptance of "plurality of shared views and voices " will lead us to understand "nature, society, and ourselves." (p. 349)

Hall and Stevens (1991) state that "rigor in feminist inquiry includes the degree to which research reflects the complexity of reality." (p. 23) There are several strategies that can be used to capture the complexity of women's experiences including "locating the analysis in the context of participants' everyday lives; exploring the influences of larger social, political, and economic structures; and providing historical background." (p. 23) It is

essential that the political and social conditions are taken into consideration because criteria for rationality are socially constructed. This will help us to explore how power imbalances and systematic misunderstanding constrain and distort interpretation. As Allen (1986) stated "critical social theory differs from hermeneutics by its interest in the relationship between the meanings including embodied activity and social structure or power." (p. 34)

Furthermore, a feminist approach calls for "systematized reflexivity" (Lather, 1991, p. 67). Lather (1991) states "in determining that constructs are actually occurring rather than mere inventions of the researcher's perspective requires a self-critical attitude toward how one's own preconceptions affect the research." (p. 67)

Janice Thompson (1990) introduces the issues in the postmodern critique of logical positivism and acknowledges the importance of incorporating a critical hermeneutic in nursing research. She concludes

" . . . hermeneutics helps us to better understand ourselves. It is a good philosophy for nurses because it avoids many of the patriarchal biases inherent in Western philosophies. It avoids Cartesian dualism. It shows us that human understanding is limited and conditioned by our social interests, our values, our language and concepts, and our time in history. . . . It emphasizes the social, political, and ethical dimensions of each and every step of the research process, and therefore, it can lead to more insightful, more reflective, and, hopefully, more liberating kinds of research." (Thompson, 1990, p. 228)

Her study of Khmer refugee women is an example of using the feminist interpretive method to explore culture and gender of the women. The study has demonstrated the way the researchers adopt a self-awareness and a dynamic methodology which is responsive to the population under the study.

Emancipatory method and reciprocity are also employed in order to preserve women's experience in context (Thompson, 1991).

Reliability or repeatability is not necessarily achievable or desirable when ethnographic methods are used because the techniques for gathering data are naturalistic, highly individualistic and involve complex perspectives of observations (Robertson & Boyle, 1984, p. 46). These techniques are true in feminist approach which emphasize the contextualized nature of women's experiences and interpretations rather than their standardization and repeatability (Hall & Stevens, 1991). Hall and Stevens propose an alternative concept, dependability. This concept "does not decontextualize the data and does not expect or require that observations be repeated or conducted across observers and time." (p. 19) Context of discovery which leads to narrative descriptions and interpretations of cultural phenomena, rather than verification, is the major concern of ethnography (Robertson & Boyle, 1984). Validity is reconceptualized as overall "adequacy" which implies that "research processes and outcomes are well grounded, cogent, justifiable, relevant, and meaningful." (Hall & Stevens, 1991, p. 20) Triangulation is the method proposed to overcome the internal validity problems in ethnographic approach (Robertson & Boyle, 1984). A feminist approach also considers triangulation as a critical method in establishing data trustworthiness (Lather, 1991, p. 66).

Ethnographic Methods in Studying Health Behavior

In order to maximize or achieve adequacy and dependability as well as contextualization, alternative field methods should be incorporated into the design of research as much as possible. There are several methods of data collection that employed in ethnographic research such as participant observation, focus group interviews, and in-depth interviews.

Participant Observation

Participant observation involves not only casual observation and participation in events or activities and settings, the ethnographer must also raise questions and explore the relationships to other types of data.

Participation involves several kinds of strategies such as attendance at cultural functions, interactions with persons being observed, observation of activities and the physical characteristics, and direct participation in events and on-going life patterns or what it feels like to be part of the scene (Robertson & Boyle, 1984, p. 45; Spradley, 1980). Through participant observation, it is possible to describe processes, relationships among people and events, as well as the immediate sociocultural contexts including social, political, and economic context of the culture in which human existence unfolds (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 12). Ethnographic observation is another term used by Parker, Herdt & Carballo (1991) in describing a method that can be employed in collecting data of a wide range or spectrum of social behavior. They also suggest how to focus on the context of sexual interaction in order to obtain more extensive data on sexual behavior.

Participant observation seeks to describe the meanings of human existence from the viewpoints of insiders by uncovering, making accessible, and revealing the meanings (realities) people use to make sense out of their daily lives (Jorgensen, 1989). Jorgensen (1989) points out that some important issues, such as physical and social location, determine what may be experienced or observed, and provide certain perspectives on phenomena of interest and ethical issues, politics, and complications regarding the self concept of the investigator. He concludes that "the participant role may be as a

complete outsider, a complete insider, or various ranges between the outsider and insider of a phenomena of interest." (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 68)

Participation will begin with descriptive observations by trying to get an overview of the social situation and what goes on there. Then focused observations will be employed after recording and analyzing initial data. Finally, by narrowing their investigations, the investigators will be able to conduct selective observations (Spradley, 1980). Verbal interactions between the researchers and persons in the field can also provide extensive data even though it is not possible to develop these interviews systematically (Spradley, 1980). Jorgensen (1989) concludes

"Participation observation generally is practiced as a form of case study that concentrates on in-depth description and analysis of some phenomenon or set of phenomena. . . . Direct observation and experience are primary forms and methods of data collection, but the researcher also may conduct interviews, collect documents, and use other methods of gathering information." (p. 23)

Fieldnotes can be written up in description from scratch notes or diaries, and can be used to produce meaning through interaction with the investigator's "headnotes"¹ (Sanjek, 1990). Sanjek (1990) describes ethnography as the product of both fieldnotes and headnotes, but the headnotes are more important because they are constantly being revised or changed as new material is

¹"Headnotes" is a term coined by Simon Ottenberg to describe the ethnographers' memory of or reflections upon her/his experiences in fieldwork. Ottenberg (in Sanjek, 1990: 93) points out that headnotes are more important than fieldnotes in that they continuously reflect the ethnographers' understandings that evolve and change during their time in the field. Margaret Mead (1977: 283 in Sanjek, 1990: 93) refers to these as reflections of her "individual consciousness which provides the ground on which the lives of these people are figures."

discovered during the time in the field (p. 93). Fieldnotes will help the investigator evaluate and re-evaluate the ongoing central issues and topics that should provide the focus for ethnographic observation (Spradley, 1979; Spradley, 1980).

Focus Group Interviews

The focus group interview is an in-depth loosely structured discussion in which a small group of informants, usually seven to ten, under the guidance of a facilitator, talk about topics considered important to the investigation (Scrimshaw & Hurtado, 1987; Krueger, 1988). It is a qualitative research method that allows the capturing of a multitude of perceptions in a defined area of interest in a permissive and non threatening environment (Krueger, 1988). Krueger (1988) asserts that when a group environment is utilized with nourishment from skillful moderators, the investigation could result in candid portraits of participants' perceptions that often are not obtained through other forms of questioning. The open informal nature of the discussion will encourage spontaneous expression of individual ideas, as well as exchange of ideas between group members, which will enhance the group interview process. This shared insight among participants is identified by Krueger (1988) as face validity. Although focus group participants may be unlikely to discuss experiences that deviate from accepted social norms openly, the focus group method can provide significant information concerning the dominant norms within the community, and help the search for some specific areas of agreement and disagreement among the informant population (Parker, Herdt & Carballo, 1991).

In-depth Interviews

The last method that will be discussed in this chapter is in-depth interviews. This method is considered as an important strategy in research on human sexuality because it requires a deeper, more intimate and trusting rapport between the investigators and informants than is usually necessary in other areas of social inquiry (Parker, Herdt & Carballo, 1991, p. 91). This type of interview may provide a more accurate level of information and a deeper understanding of an informant's subjective experience of sexual life because an investigator may be able to establish rapport, mutual respect, and trust with the informants.

There are some important differences between the data on sexual experience that is collected through focus group interviews and in-depth interviews. Focus group discussions offer important insights into group norms and dominant values but tend to be less effective in documenting variations from the norms, or values that derive from the dominant culture patterns. In contrast, in-depth interviews offer a context in which individual variation and deviations from community norms can be explored more effectively, such as some possible contradictions between ideal norms and actual behaviors (Parker, Herdt & Carballo, 1991). It could be concluded that the degree of rapport and confidence that is developed between an investigator and their informants determines the quality of data collected through in-depth interviews.

Chapter 4

Methods

The study design was exploratory and interpretive because the research goal was to understand the peri-urban Thai female adolescent's own experiences about their gender role and sexuality. I conducted the study by using ethnographic approaches which allowed me to develop a fuller understanding of the specific social and cultural contexts that structure sexual experiences and script the sexual behaviors of the Thai female adolescents with whom I worked. I wanted to uncover both the invisibility and distortion of female experiences which restrict their world view and limit their access to resources as proposed by Lather (1991, p. 71). In addition, I also tried to value and validate women's experiences, ideas, and needs; and to recognize the ideologic, structural, and interpersonal conditions that oppress women, which are principles shared by most feminists (Hall & Stevens, 1991).

I carried out the field component of the study from February 1994 through January 1995. Because of my faculty position in the region's university, I was permitted regular contact with students and teachers in the school, as well as with the villagers. I helped teach English to the students in order to develop initial contacts with the teachers, their girl students, and through them, the girls' mothers. Because of my position, the teachers and students all called me "teacher (ครู)" which is a generic term for all types of teacher. It is customary for Thai students to call any outsider adult who comes to visit or work in the school "teacher." I conducted one or two sessions per week during the school terms through December, 1994. The school was in session from May 16 to October 7, 1994, and again after vacation, from October 31 to the end of March, 1995. While school was in session, I went to

visit the girls' mothers and grandmothers and other potential informants including village headmen, health personnel, and older villagers. I also visited some of the girls and their mothers and grandmothers at their houses during the weekend two or three times per month. As a means to maintain contact with the girls during school vacation, I also volunteered to teach English and mathematics to the girls once a week or every two weeks during the vacation (from March 30, 1994 to May 15, 1994).

When in the village, I stayed in the personnel house of the school so I could join some of the school and village activities. This participation in everyday activities allowed me to explore and understand the cultural meanings and social structure that condition female roles and sexuality in this northern Thai community on a casual everyday basis. My staying in this personnel house also allowed me to build up relationships with some girls who came to talk to me after school was dismissed or during the weekend.

Study Population

The study included young girls who were enrolled in one of the local primary schools in a district of Chiang Mai province. This school provided education for children from four nearby villages, from pre-school through early secondary level. The pre-school provided child care for working parents. The school was founded in 1959 when it offered compulsory education only from grade 1-grade 4. Compulsory education was extended to grade 5 and to grade 7 in 1970 and 1974, respectively. It was not until last year (1994-1995 school year) that government primary schools was extended to include lower secondary grades (through grade 9). This extension of the local school enabled village parents to send their children on for further study because it reduced the costs of transportation to other villages or towns that had private secondary schools, of other supplies and a daily food allowance. The continuation rate of

the children between the primary and secondary grades increased to 100% when the school began the expanded program. In the past 6 years, the lowest continuation rate of the girls was 60% in 1987; it steadily increased to 95% in 1993. For the boys, the average continuation rate from 1987-1993 was about 90%.

In February 1994, I began by working with the girls who were enrolled in grade 5 and grade 6 of the village public school year. They continued on to grade 6 (ປະຖົມ 6) and grade 7 (ມັດທຍົມ 1) after vacation in May, at which time they were 11-14 years old (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1. Number of Informants by Age (years) and School Grade
in May 1994

Age (years)	Sixth grade	Seventh grade	Total
11	8	-	8
12	10	3	13
13	1	13	14
14	-	1	1
Total	19	17	36

All of the girl informants were Thai nationals and ethnic Tai. Most of the girls studied participated in focus group discussions, those few who did not were away for vacation with their parents. Nineteen of the girls in sixth grade and 17 of the girls in seventh grade participated in focus group discussions, for a total of 36 girl informants. In addition, I conducted in-depth interviews with 11 of the girls from the focus groups. All but one was in the seventh grade.

Other key informants were mothers (n=7) and grandmothers (n=3) of the young girl informants, four of the girls' teachers, two health personnel from the District Health Center, two old men in the villages, and four village headmen.

Protection of Human Subjects

The investigator submitted an application for this study to the Human Subjects Review Committee, University of Washington. Permission to conduct the study was sought from the Chief District Elementary Education, and the Principal of the School. All potential participants were provided sufficient information about the aims, reasons for the study, the procedure used, potential uses of the data, and risks and benefits of their participation in the study. They were made to understand that they would be free to leave the study if they no longer wished to participate, without disadvantage. In addition, the participants were assured of the privacy and confidentiality of their information and of their relationship to the study. Tape recordings of interviews were made only with the respondent's explicit consent and were destroyed at completion of the study.

Oral consent was obtained from potential participants prior to data collection. In Thailand, everybody at any age can give interviews on their own consent. We have no law or custom to prohibit doing so. In Thai society, however, written consent is not a custom. Villagers prefer to have verbal consent based on personal rapport and trust. Thai villagers generally feel that if they have to sign any papers, then they would be too easily identified and it would make them suspicious of the researcher and of the purpose of the research. Therefore, I stayed in the villages for 2 months in order to build social relationships before beginning data collection. Information about the objectives of the study was gradually explained to potential informants.

In order to maintain confidentiality a system of pseudonyms was used. A pseudonym was assigned to each participant and used in all written records of the study including interview transcripts and field notes. Only the investigator had access to the list which associated pseudonyms with

informants' real names. The audio tapes were listened to only by the investigator and assistants.

Modes of Data Collection

The data were gathered through participant observation, focus group interview, in-depth interview, and discussion with key informants with an attempt to triangulate various perspectives of the participants by emphasizing the role of interaction and social context in the social construction of reality. In-depth interviews with the young girls and key informants were used in conjunction with focus group interviews to provide a check on the reliability of the data. Furthermore, focus group interviews could provide significant information concerning the dominant norms within the community, and helped identify some specific areas of agreement and disagreement among the informants. Through in-depth interviews, I sought deeper understanding of informants' subjective experiences of sexual life. The success of the interviews depended on my ability to establish rapport, mutual respect and trust with them.

Particularly due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter, whatever insights I gained were heavily dependent on the quality of the relationships that I was able to develop with informants. Ethnographic work depends upon the mutual trust and friendship that the field worker establishes with informants for this research (Muecke, 1993). I told villagers that "I am a nurse who teaches in the region's university. I am interested in learning about girls' experiences of being a girl and a young woman in this northern Thai community. I, too, am from Chiang Mai." I dressed in a casual style to make them feel that I was not an authority figure with a higher status than they. I had lunch or dinner with them and ate the same kinds of food that they ate. Some villagers told me that

"You are not like the other teachers. You are very natural with us (เป็นกันเอง). You associate with villagers very well (เข้ากับชาวบ้านได้ดี)." On several occasions, the girls' mothers and grandmothers asked me for advice for their health problems and for their daughters and grand-daughters' education.

Similarly, I tried to be informal with the girls. I let them play, do or say whatever they liked, which contrast with the behavior of their teachers or their parents. I played table tennis with them after the school or during the weekend. I took some of them to visit a zoo in the city. I arranged small parties and picnics which they could join in small groups and discussed whatever they wanted to. Some girls talked about the picnic as the most wonderful experience in their lives, as one that they had never had before. They cherished not having to worry about their behavior, which is of great concern to their teachers and parents or other adults. I let them touch me or hug me when we met. These were some strategies I used in order to build up my rapport and trust with them and made them felt that I could be their friends or sisters or mothers that they could ask any question they wanted to.

Participant Observation

Ethnographic observation preceded and occurred concurrently with focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. The observation was conducted to identify potential informants and to gain better understanding of the context of female gender role and sexuality. Several strategies were employed in participant observation. Participant observation in the school involved wherever the discourses of sexuality are woven through the curricula, classrooms, lunchroom, library, playground, musical room, and some school activities. The observation included how the young girls present themselves as women and how they react within the female groups and with their boyfriends.

Observations were made primarily during the day and early evening hours when the girls were in school.

To understand an overview of the social situation and how gender and sexuality are socialized within the community, I attended the Northern Thai rituals including the Thai New Year festival (งานสงกรานต์), the ceremony of celebrating a new or renovated religious building (งานปอยหลวง), and the ceremony of presenting yellow robes to Buddhist monks after their lent retreat (งานกฐิน), and other activities.

Several strategies were conducted to build on the relationship with the villagers including visiting the village headmen and informing them about the purposes of the study; informal contacts with the members of the community, the Health District personnel, and a few old villagers who are highly respected by most other villagers; participating in village activities such as religious ceremonies at the temples, celebrating new houses, and attending funerals.

Different kinds of written records, such as scratch notes, or diaries were kept while in the field or shortly after some period of observations. The records included activities in the field, unique experiences, conversations with informants, and other matters of possible interest. Fieldnotes were written up in description from scratch notes, diaries, and were used to produce meaning through interaction with the investigator's headnotes (Sanjek, 1990). The investigator also kept a journal concerning research activities, and observations. It also contained identified parts of the girls' interviews that the investigator thought needed elaboration or validation by other informants.

Focus Group Discussions

I conducted focus groups in order to identify the potential informants for in-depth interviews and to identify prevailing norms, attitudes and general observations regarding of the young girls' experiences. I reviewed the list of young girls in the sixth and seventh grades from a census of the school. Letters were sent from the Principal of the School to parents for permission for their daughters to participate in the focus group discussions. An informed consent procedure was used to explain that the conversations would be audio taped and that participants' responses would not be disclosed to teachers, parents, and friends who did not participate in the discussion groups (Appendix C).

I conducted six focus groups with 7-10 participants in each group. In order to provide an environment where the participants could feel free from schoolwork and to prevent uninvited observers from interrupting the group process, I held the focus groups during school vacations, two in April and four in October 1994. I invited the girls one week before the scheduled day of the group. I postponed two group interviews because some of the girls were away on vacation with their parents, and I wanted at least 7 participants in each focus group. Some girls forgot the day scheduled for the group so I picked them up at their houses. The discussion guidelines (see Appendix B) were generally phrased in term of open-ended questions which were intended to bring out opinions and encourage participation.

The first two focus groups were held with the girls who were going to enter the seventh grade in May, 1994. I assigned the girls into two groups according to their school classes in order to increase the homogeneity of class group. I held another four focus groups six month later with girls in the sixth and seventh grades and divided by their school classes as well. I assigned the girls in seventh grade to two groups based on the closeness of their

relationships that I had observed. This was because some students had moved to study elsewhere so these remaining were all in one class. Therefore, all the girls in the April focus groups were also in the October focus groups, although not necessarily in the same groupings.

In the focus group discussions, I used informal settings to create a comfortable atmosphere to help the participants feel sufficiently at ease to express their experiences and feelings. I held the group discussion during the weekend, and we sat around each other on the floor, and ate snacks during the discussions. I found that a break in the discussion was useful in order to maintain informal atmosphere and provide time and space for participants to relax. It is very important to take time to build up rapport in the groups and to let them wander on the other topics because it is very difficult for girls in this age group to concentrate on the topics. Therefore, several of the group discussions lasted up to three or four hours. Two groups wanted to watch a TV soap opera, so I turned on TV and watched the movie with them before we started the group discussions.

During the discussion sessions, an assistant and I took notes on an observations of the process of discussions. We emphasized observations on the interaction between group members and on non-verbal cues. This will help to validate that the group process occurred in a naturalistic and permissive environment which will lead to face validity, as discussed earlier (Krueger, 1988). After the discussion, the assistant and I listened to the tape to write a more complete summary of the discussion. We discussed the participants' responses to the key questions to obtain a short summary that is mutually agreeable to both investigator and assistant. This brief summary report was completed as soon after the discussion as possible to avoid difficulty remembering distinctions among focus group members.

In-depth Interviews

The girl informants were recruited from the focus group discussions. I invited these potential informants by personal contact with the young girls and their mothers. I explained the study and what participation entailed. They were provided an opportunity to ask any questions they might have before their consent or refusal to participate was ascertained (see Appendix C and D). Verbal consents was obtained from both the young girls and their mothers.

The in-depth interviews were arranged in natural settings as much as possible. For the young girls, most of the interviews were conducted during a weekend or after school so they could relax and feel comfortable to talk with me. Some of the girls came to sleep with me so we talked during the night. There were 2-5 interview sessions per each girl. The interviews with the key informants were held either at home or office rooms as it was convenient for them.

Usually, interviews were conducted entirely in the local Thai dialect, however there was a few occasions where the informants preferred to use the official standard Thai. I used a field assistant who was fluent in both Thai and Northern Thai to help me survey the households, background and socioeconomic changes of the local villages. The field assistant was also trained to collect material related to gender and female sexualization in Northern Thai such as newspapers, magazines, soap operas, etc.

Reciprocity was introduced into the research process as much as possible. I had expected mutual assistance and reciprocal understanding to be part of the researcher and informant's relationships. I attempted to develop rapport with the informants in order to reassure myself that I was treating the Thai female adolescents in a non-exploitative manner. I acknowledged the

inequalities of power within the Thai society that could distort or bend my perceptions and interpretations. I considered myself to be middle class, an assistant professor in a School of Nursing, and a doctoral student in the United States. While acknowledging the limitations of my own objectivity, I attempted to minimize the superiority that Thai society imposes on me as a well educated privileged woman in my relationship with the informants. I attempted to base the relationship between the informants and me on an egalitarian relationship in order to avoid exploiting of these adolescents. However, I expected to achieve only minimal degree of reciprocity because it was difficult to overcome some factors such as preexisting power, class, hierarchies, and the pragmatic obstacle of limited time and resources.

The interviews were conducted in a collaborative, interactive, and dialogic manner. Several interviewing sessions were conducted to facilitate collaboration. I had shared with them information on my own sexual life experience and encouraged the sharing information. I had some questions to put to them while encouraged them to bring up any questions or ask me anything they were concerned about at any stage and I tried to answer as much as I could at that particular in time. This interview was characterized by Webb (1984) as an "exchange of information" (p. 255). Some feminist nurse researchers have viewed increasing access to information for research participants as an act of empowerment (McPherson, 1983; Anderson, 1991; Parker & McFarlane, 1991).

Modes of Data Analysis

Demographic data were summarized into numbers and presented in tables. The tape interviews were transcribed verbatim by the investigator and a skilled transcriptionist who familiar with social science research. The

investigator reviewed all of the data for accuracy and completeness in the transcription. Portions of the transcriptions that indicated unintelligible data were checked again by the investigator against the original recordings and the extensive notes taken during the interviews. No discrepancies or major errors were found. The typed transcripts then were prepared for use with the data management program, Ethnograph (Seidel, Friese & Leonard, 1995).

This program was used to aid in data analysis and manage the text. The Thai transcriptions were numbered into the text lines, and were coded in English by using the participant's own terms and words whenever possible to reflect their meanings as accurate as possible. The program was used to structure the information from interviews into a useful format for coding of verbatim statements and later retrieval data by codes. Theoretical memos were used to develop ideas and raise them to a conceptual level. These memos were made at the time an idea occurred to me.

A constant comparative analysis was used to analyze the textual data from focus group discussions, individual interviews, and key informant interviews. The approach was inductive by using the participants' own terms and words whenever possible. Unlike the grounded theorists, this analysis was concerned with developing a deep or thick understanding of the informants' world from their perspective, not primarily with the generation of middle range theory. Data were reduced or abstracted by discovering conceptual categories and the relationships among these categories and then describing them in a coherent and parsimonious form. The responses from the different sets of data were checked for representativeness, compared, contrasted and cross-checked as part of the analysis. Glaser (1992) addresses the need to compare all emerging ideas with all subsequent data in order to see patterns and be able to continue further analysis.

Different sources of data from fieldnotes, interview transcripts, and other evidence were used for descriptive analysis of cultural phenomena. Diverse perspectives and sources of information were compared and contrasted during initial analysis to establish relationships between and among phenomena. Initial impressions were tested against subsequent new evidence from a variety of sources and further refinement of categories was sought. Data were analyzed as they are collected. Muecke (1993) describes data analysis for ethnographers as

"a process of analyzing data while collecting them, engaging in an iterative process of gathering and verifying information. . . . While gathering data in the field, the ethnographer is the equivalent of a multivariate analyst, sorting and exploring on the basis of implications of comparative and contrastive information. Knack and insight are the ethnographer's basic tools in the collection and analysis of data" (p.6).

The fieldnotes were recorded and reviewed conscientiously to uncover the potential sources of bias as well as inconsistencies in the data. Through these processes, the investigator would arrive at the detailed conceptual description of a particularly cultural group.

Reliability or repeatability is not necessarily achievable or desirable when ethnographic methods are used because the techniques for gathering data are naturalistic, highly individualistic and involve complex perspectives of observations (Robertson & Boyle, 1984, p. 46). This issue also seems to be true in feminist approach which emphasizes the contextualized nature of women's experiences and interpretations rather than their standardization and repeatability (Hall & Stevens, 1991). Hall and Stevens propose an alternative concept, dependability. This concept "does not decontextualize the data and

does not expect or require that observations be repeated or conducted across observers and time" (p. 19).

Life experience is complex, unstable, and disorderly. Women tend to see themselves in a network of relations to others, or interconnected relationships (Jayaratne & Stewart, 1991). Therefore, it is essential that we acknowledge a tolerance for ambiguity, multiplicity, contradiction, and instability (Wolf, 1992). We need to contextualize all parties by emphasizing the partiality of interpretation as well as the plurality of interpretations. Duffy concludes (1985) we could not deny the fact that "multiple truths exist and the context of the research, including the researcher, influences the research findings". The acceptance of "plurality of shared views and voices " will lead us to understand the "nature, society, and ourselves" (p. 349).

Hall and Stevens (1991) state "rigor in feminist inquiry includes the degree to which research reflects the complexity of reality" (p. 23). There are several strategies that can be used to capture the complexity of women's experiences including "locating the analysis in the context of participants' everyday lives; exploring the influences of larger social, political, and economic structures; and providing historical background" (p. 23).

Validity is reconceptualized as overall "adequacy" which implies that "research processes and outcomes are well grounded, cogent, justifiable, relevant, and meaningful" (Hall & Stevens, p. 20). Triangulation is the method proposed to overcome the internal validity problems in ethnographic approach (Robertson & Boyle, 1984). A feminist approach also considers triangulation as a critical method in establishing data trustworthiness (Lather, 1991, p. 66). Furthermore, a feminist approach calls for "systematized reflexivity" (Lather, 1991, p. 67). Lather (1991) states "in determining that constructs are actually occurring rather than mere inventions of the researcher's perspective requires a

self-critical attitude toward how one's own preconceptions affect the research" (p. 67).

Several techniques were used to assure the reliability and validity of this project including ongoing analysis of data as they were gathered and compared to previous analysis. Reflexivity was implemented continuously during each step of the research process. I would critically examine my own values, assumptions, characteristics, and motivations to see how they affect the research process. Researchers require a great deal of reflexivity in order to successfully study in their own culture (Wolf, 1992). Wolf states "social descriptions by, of, and for members of a particular culture require a relative emphasis on defamiliarization" (p. 131). I kept a self-reflexive diary about the data collection and analysis as the research process is going on. Field notes were taken while in the field or shortly after some period of observation and interviews.

Chapter 5

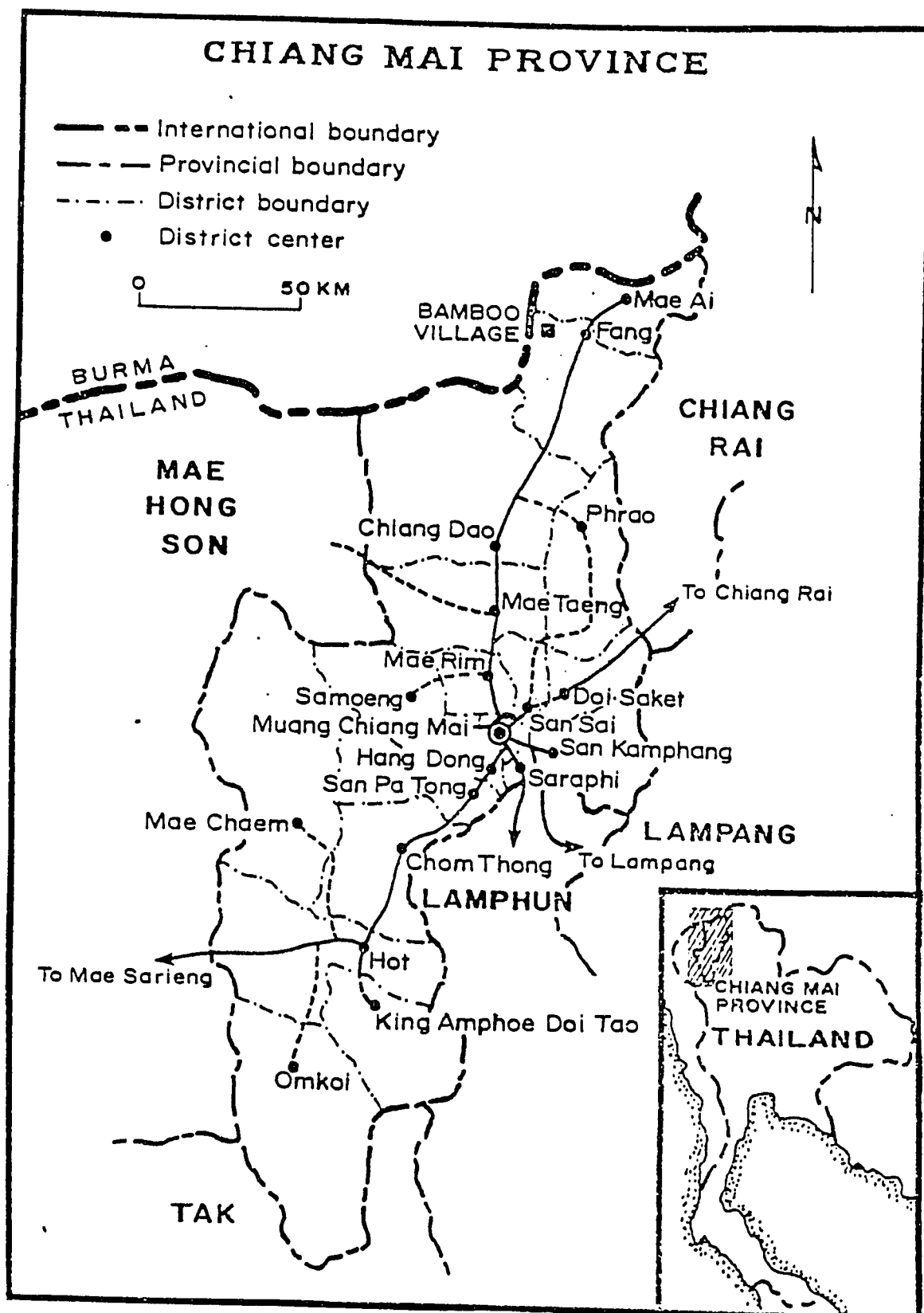
Description of the Research Site and Socioeconomic Changes (Socioeconomic Transformation and Transitional Status of Northern Thai Women in local Villages)

The function of this chapter is to serve as background and context for the three following chapters, which report the findings of the study. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first is a brief description of the villages. The second describes changes in agronomic features. The third section deals with socioeconomic changes in the local villages. In the fourth section, transitional changes of the role and status of women in the local villages are presented.

A Description of the Villages

The school where I conducted the study is located in one of the villages in a district of Chiang Mai province, which is in the North of Thailand (see map 1). The city of Chiang Mai is an old city, established by King Mengrai in 1296. Today it is the most important commercial and political centre in Northern Thailand. It is believed that the district was established and developed as part of the kingdom of Lannathai, which was ruled by King Mengrai in the late 13th century. The area of the district is about 752 square kilometers. It is about 16 kilometers from the city of Chiang Mai. About one fifth of the district is lowlands, the other four fifths are mountainous terrain.

I will refer the four villages which the school where I worked serves as Village 1, Village 2, Village 3, and Village 4 in the following sections. These administrative villages (หมู่บ้าน) are composed of small hamlets (บ้าน) defined by the contiguity of household compounds. Hamlets within the same



Map 1. Chiang Mai Province, Northern Thailand.

villages are separated by roads, streams, woods or paddy fields. There is a Sub-district Health Center located in Village 1. This health center is assigned to serve people in 10 villages in a sub-district. All of the villages are peri-urban, for they are situated on the periphery of an expanding Chiang Mai metropolis. They are considered medium size villages, ranging in size from 97-159 households.

The development of the Irrigated Agricultural Development Project, which is located in Village 1, has contributed to many changes in these local villages. With the construction of modern road and a new and fast highway to the Dam Project in 1989, transport is more frequent and easier. It now takes only thirty minutes for the 22 kilometer trip from the villages to the city of Chiang Mai. This development is resulting in the incorporation of the district's villages into the urban sphere. The incorporation of these villages into zones of capitalist development has profoundly affected these small village areas, particularly through the transformation of economic status. The social structures that had evolved along with traditional agricultural patterns are changing, a topic which I will further address in the following sections.

Changes in Agronomic Features

There are variations in cropping among the four villages, depending on topographical features, types of soil and sufficiency of water suited to the cultivation--fruits, rice and soy bean. Village 1 and Village 2 have sandy-loam soil which is suitable for rice crops. Village 3 and Village 4, most of the soil are sandy soil and lump laterite which are not suitable for cultivation. In addition, some areas of these two villages are uplands and dipterocarp forest.

The old men in the villages told me that these traditional northern Thai

villages used to be self sufficient communities, depending on rice as their staple crop. Each family aspired to have enough paddy fields to grow their needs in rice for the year. Some of them grew other types of crops such as chilli peppers, soy beans, tobacco, and an assortment of vegetables. The surrounding forest supplied them with building materials, and a wide variety of seasonal vegetables, along with fruits. They could easily find several kinds of edible forest products such as bamboo shoots, and mushrooms. There were teakwood and some other bamboos, and wild animals. In the evening, villagers had to keep their dogs inside the houses otherwise they would be eaten by the tigers. The forest was also a source of bamboo, rattan, woods, and fibres used to build huts, and make domestic appliances and a broad range of robes, traps, and nets for hunting and fishing.

The villages used to have an abundance of water all year round, particularly Village 2 which has three traditional irrigation canals known as the "น้ำเหมือง" or "local water", which are fed by streams originating from a river from the hills. Therefore, Village 2 has without doubt the most varied cropping system and the most profitable. However, these traditional irrigation canals have gradually become shallow and almost dried up. In the last five to seven years, there has been a decline in the amount of water available for dry season crops. The villagers attribute the lack of water to the deforestation of important catchment areas by some of the local villagers. They also claimed that some official authorities, including foresters, made profit by hiring villagers to cut down trees. Village 4 is the most affected area of all the study villages by a poor water supply. The villagers rely on the water from tubewells which have gradually dried up as underground water decreases.

The Irrigated Agricultural Development Project was established by the national government to serve these villages in other districts in an attempt to alleviate the problem of water shortage. However, villagers complain they still don't have enough water supply to grow dry crops after the rainy season, particularly soy bean and chilli pepper. One of the farmers who is about 62 years old told me that

"... I own land about 8 rai¹ (ไร่) which is about 5 rai for the paddy field. I myself still grow rice every year but my son has to work as a truck driver in the city. Last year I got 230-240 thang² (ถัง) of rice. I lost without gaining any benefit because I had to pay the wage laborers, buy insecticide, and pay for ploughing, and harrowing. I had to pay 80-100 Baht/day for the laborers. We don't have labour exchange any more because we don't have enough people in our family to pay the labor force back to them. You probably won't be able to see any labour exchange in our village now. . "

I noticed when I stayed in the village that some of the land was not being cultivated. This is the result of labor shortage. Traditionally, villagers practice, "นาค้า", a sharecropping system in which the landowner and the rice grower share the rice yield half and half. The owner also provides the buffalo for ploughing. Today, however, some of the landowners told me that even when they offered the grower two thirds or three fourths of the product instead of half and half, they could not find anyone to farm their land.

In addition, the villagers complained about the difficulty of practicing cooperative labor exchange called "Ao mu (เอาหมู)". One of the village headmen said

¹rai=unit of land measure, equal to two-fifths of an acre.

²Thang=unit capacity equivalent to 20 liters.

"Ao mu is not appropriate now because the villagers have to wait so long for recruitment of household members from cooperating households. Most of the villagers now are very busy looking for wage earning jobs and work outside the villages. They need to find jobs that will give them salary every month in order to fulfill their needs."

The traditional labor exchange is characterized by reciprocity, in which the cooperating households send at least one adult member who is appropriate for a particular task to help a household where labour is required. The host household is expected to provide necessary equipment, as well as a midday meal of above average quality which is eaten in the fields. The host household must also provide labor to households which provided it with labor. This traditional labor exchange is generally practiced among kinsmen, and its' social function is to strengthen kinship ties as well. This labor exchange is practiced exclusively in the production of "ข้าวนาปี" or wet-season rice (first rice).

A previous study found that the transport of paddy from field to granary was no longer performed by the *Ao mu* method but was performed by hired labour (Turton, 1975). However, I still found this traditional agricultural practice in a few of the villages where villagers still own a small amount of land. They said they must depend upon their kin group, as they do not have enough money to pay for the wage labor.

Furthermore, some agronomic problems have begun to emerge, such as deficiencies in trace elements, requiring increasingly higher chemical inputs to maintain the crop. As farmers have to invest more heavily in inputs, more and more of them have to go into debt in order to buy the chemical inputs for their crop. The more they have planted, the bigger the loss they are faced with. This eventually adds pressure to the farmers, particularly poor families, to sell

their land. The old men in the villages informed me that agriculture has declined noticeably in the past 5-6 years.

Socioeconomic Changes in the Local Villages

When the government initiated construction of the large dam in 1975, at the suggestion of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, and eventually started to build it in 1976, the price of the land increased from 600-1,000 Baht to around 10,000-30,000 Baht per rai. In 1989, when the dam construction was nearly completed, the price surged up to around 150,000-250,000 Baht per rai. Many villagers joined the selling spree, beginning with those who owned land near public roads and the dam project. Most of the land was sold after 1988 (see Table 5.1). Importantly, it was mostly small landowners who sold their land (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.1. Number of Farms Sold in the Villages by Year

Village 1	Between 1967- 1977	Between 1978- 1988	After 1988- 1994	Total
Village 1	6	15	28	49
Village 2	3	8	17	28
Village 3	7	10	12	29
Village 4	5	5	24	34
Total	21	38	81	140

Table 5.2. Number of Farms Sold in the Villages by Size, 1967-1994

Village	Less than 5 rai	6-10 rai	11-20 rai	More than 20 rai	Total
Village 1	32	13	2	2	49
Village 2	22	5	-	1	28
Village 3	20	4	5	-	29
Village 4	30	4	-	-	34
Total	104	26	7	3	140

From the tables above, it is clear that most of the land was sold by small landowners. One of the village headmen explained

"... I sold mine more than three million Baht for 9 rai. At first I did not want to sell it. But you see, mine was in the middle of the others which had already been sold. Obviously, there would be no exit from my land. So I sold it to the landowner who is now building the housing estate in this area. If I keep it, I won't be able to grow any rice either because I won't be able to make any profit."

Villagers also complained that the construction of the dam came too late to serve the needs of the people in this area. They pointed out what one of the former district headman (นายอำเภอ) had said "When the dam was finished, all of the land was owned by others.³"

The four villages have certain features in common. Most of the paddy fields and orchards are now owned by rich investors and businessmen from Bangkok or Chiang Mai city. These big landowners rent out part of their paddy fields to the villagers and hire villagers to take care of their orchards. In

³It is common knowledge in the villages that the new owners of land are rich landowners from other areas, particularly Bangkok.

Village 1, almost all of the paddy fields (200 rai out of 250 rai) are owned by a rich landowner from Chiang Mai city. A few villagers own the rest of the paddy fields, with an average of 5-10 rai per person. A few villagers own average 10-20 rai. Some of the land in the Village 2, about 70 rai which used to be the paddy field has been converted into a big garden, with westernized building style. In Village 2, the villagers themselves now own only about 4-5 rai per person.

Four big landowners own orchards in Village 3. Each of them owns between 20 to 60 rai. They have built big pseudo-western style houses on their land, which they use as vacation homes. They employ gardeners from the villages to take care of their land. Two vacation resorts, with little hideaway huts and pseudo-western style houses were also built in this village. These resorts are expensive, accessible only to the well-heeled tourist.

This phenomenon is also found in village 4 where two big orchards are owned by the rich landowners. One landowner used to own more than 1000 rai of land. A former village headman helped coerce villagers into selling the land for 200 Baht per rai. These villagers didn't have any means to bargain and fight for their own rights at that time. Now most of them must work outside their village as low-wage laborers. These big landowners are now developing their land into subdivided orchards and selling them to people from other areas. Some part of the land in this village is now used as a big ground basin where they dig up soil and sell it for construction.

Land speculation by wealthy Bangkok investors who built plantations, resorts, and housing projects has contributed to the growing disparities in wealth in these local villages. It could be seen that the contraction of land holdings, which typically accompanies capitalist penetration into the

countryside, is present in the villages I studied. In fact, figures for 1987 revealed that over 609,000 Northern Thai families were landless, the highest rate for all of Thailand (Bencha & George, 1993). This could be due to the impact of Thailand's rapid economic progress, which has resulted in : 1) loss of land due to public projects such as roads and dam construction; 2) an increase use of water supply or irrigation from non-agricultural supply such as unplanned resorts, housing projects, and golf courses; and 3) promotion of tourism which is promoted extensively in Northern Thailand. Now most of the villagers do not own agriculture land and own only less than 1 rai domestic land for dwelling. Most of them own some agriculture land, on average 1-5 rai. Some of them live on land that was owned by their parents, and some of them share land with members of their immediate family or among their kinship group. A few tenants rent land for rice cultivation or work as plant or land caretakers for rich landowners (see Table 5.3).

Table 5.3. Size of Household Landholdings by Village*

Access to Land by Household	Village	Village	Village	Village	Total
(Number of Households per Village)	1 (162)	2 (127)	3 (101)	4 (118)	(508)
Landowning Households					
-Under 1 rai	73	74	58	56	261
-Under 5 rai	35	33	20	39	127
-6-9 rai	16	11	7	10	44
-10-14 rai	6	2	2	3	13
-15-19 rai	2	2	2	1	7
-20 rai & over	4	1	2	-	7
Tenant Households	16	13	2	9	40
Landless Households	19	6	10	3	38
Total	171	142	103	121	537

*The total of the frequency distributions exceeds the number of households per village because some of the households also rent land or own land in the other villages.

Of the village sites, Village 1 is the most affected by the establishment of dam project, and land boom in this area. This is because this village is closest to the dam project. The dam project has contributed to a rather complete infrastructure such as roads, electricity, telephone, supply water system, resorts, and housing projects. There are some villagers who own a private business. Commercial buildings and a market are located in this village.

Two landlords are now establishing residential subdivisions in the village.

Three pseudo-western style houses have been built in these subdivisions, with fenced gardens and extensive landscaping. Most of them are empty for most of the year but are cared for by guards and employed grounds keepers. Villagers told me that now the price of each subdivided plot has surged up to 1,160,000-2,000,000 Baht per rai (US \$46,400-80,000).

New commercial buildings were built recently to house retail businesses selling motorcycles, cars, televisions, stereos, clothes and luxury goods. Most of these motorcycles, cars, and luxury goods are imported from Japan, and are purchased by villagers by means of long-term credit at high interest rates. One of the wealthy households in this village became rich from selling land. The head of this household is the owner of a large part of the market in the village. Now his sons and daughter are the successful merchants in the village, selling building materials, electronic and automobile appliances, office supplies, groceries, and gasoline; and offering long term credit to those who want to buy cars, pick-up trucks , motorcycles, or TV sets.

An increasing number of men and women have had to take work as low-wage laborers in the villages, where they earn 70-80 Baht per day (US \$2.8-3.2). Some seek work in the cities at construction sites and factories, where they can earn 80-120 Baht per day (US \$3.2-4.8) for men and 70-100 Baht per day (US \$2.8-4) for women (see Table 5.4 to Table 5.7). There are more farmers in Village 2 than in the other villages due to the topographical feature and kinds of soil and water supply that is suitable for cultivation as discussed earlier. In addition, there are more households in Village 1 who are able to reproduce themselves by having their own business than the other villages. I will further discuss the class differentiation in these local villages in following

sections. Improved road links between the city of Chiang Mai and peri-urban districts and low fare mini-buses which pass through the villages have facilitated movement of villagers to work in the city. This has created a situation where rural people have easier access to off-farm employment to supplement their rural income.

Villagers increasingly prefer commuting to work in the city, particularly those from Village 2 and Village 3. In a study on construction workers in Chiang Mai, Singhanetra-Renard (1984) found that 61.9 percent of them commuted daily to the city to work. Most of the younger villages have quit farm work. Only their parents still work on the farm. In these villages, it is common to find aging parents taking care of the houses, while their sons and daughters go out for work. Some of the women in Village 3 are now working as waitresses and grounds keepers in the two resorts built in this village, which hire them for 70-80 Bath per day. Villagers told me that working in the city is better because it gives them salary every month.

Table 5.4. Types of Occupation in Village 1 (N= 162 households)

Occupation	Men	Women
Wage Labourer in Local Village and District		
-Construction Worker	8	2
-Agricultural Labourer and other types of Labourers	23	24
Wage Laborer in the Cities	11	1
Farmer	20	14
Housewife	-	37
Seller	11	40
Dam Project Worker	9	4
Government Employee	10	2
Home*	27	15
Other	19	11
Total	138	150

*Most of them are elderly who watch the house and raise children.

"Other" includes temporary work, and self-employment such as: hair dresser, growing mushrooms, raising chickens and frogs, driver, and singer.

Table 5.5. Types of Occupation in Village 2 (N= 127 households)

Occupation	Men	Women
Wage Laborer in Local Village and District		
-Construction Worker	15	2
-Agricultural Labourer and other types of Labourers	8	9
Wage Laborer in the Cities	20	23
Farmer	32	19
Housewife	-	16
Seller	2	19
Dam Project Worker	5	-
Government Employee	3	2
Home*	18	23
Other	9	8
Total	112	121

*Most of them are elderly who watch the house and raise children.

"Other" includes temporary work, and self-employment such as: hair dresser, growing mushrooms, raising chickens and frogs, driver, and singer.

Table 5.6. Types of Occupation in Village 3 (N= 101 households)

Occupation	Men	Women
Wage Laborer in Local Village and District		
-Construction Worker	2	-
-Agricultural Labourer and other types of Labourers	18	22
Wage Labourer in the Cities	24	14
Farmer	12	6
Housewife	-	16
Seller	3	15
Dam Project Worker	5	1
Government Employee	2	-
Home*	9	11
Other	12	4
Total	87	89

*Most of them are elderly who watch the house and raise children.

"Other" includes temporary work, and self-employment such as: hair dresser, growing mushrooms, raising chickens and frogs, driver, and singer.

Table 5.7. Types of Occupation in Village 4 (N= 118 households)

Occupation	Men	Women
Wage Laborer in Local Village and District		
-Construction Worker	21	10
-Agricultural Labourer and other types of Labourers	17	21
Wage Labourer in the Cities	11	10
Farmer	15	11
Housewife	-	12
Seller	1	8
Dam Project Worker	13	1
Government Employee	2	-
Home*	13	35**
Other	9	7
Total	102	115

*Most of them are elderly who watch the house and raise children.

** Some of the women in this village who used to work as wage labourers are now unemployed.

"Other" includes temporary work, and self-employment such as: hair dresser, growing mushrooms, raising chickens and frogs, driver, and singer.

Wage labor provides a greater amount of income regularly received compared to working on the farm, which provides an uncertain income. This motivates villagers to engage in new ways of life. Consumer behaviors have

also been changed. Now they can afford to buy things that they could not have obtained in the past. My research showed that villagers are far less agriculturally based, instead maintaining a life-style dependent upon consumer goods which is more urban than rural. It is clear that their satisfaction with simple living has been changing. Their needs have changed during the past decade. They now have to have cash to send the children to school, to buy a radio, a motorcycle and consumer goods. Electrification of the villages is inevitably followed by the purchase of televisions and refrigerators. The changeover from a subsistence economy to a cash market is already well underway. This traditionally self-sufficient society, where they seemed to be satisfied with simple living, has developed into a consumer-oriented society, whose members are regularly stimulated by the nightly advertisement on new televisions. Television has spread the growing culture of consumerism to the local villages. This consumption pattern has spread all over the local villages for a decade. Many villagers own TV sets, radios, refrigerators, motorcycles, and some of them own cars and pick-up trucks, and washing machines. The monthly installment payment system makes this possible (see Table 5.8).

Table 5.8. Number of Consumer Items Owned by Villagers in the Four Villages

(Number of Households per Village) Type of Items	Number of Item in each Village			
	(162) Village 1	(127) Village 2	(101) Village 3	(118) Village 4
Television	150*	120*	93*	107*
Refrigerator	120*	89*	67*	76*
Radio	137*	104*	80*	91*
Motorcycle	125*	102*	73*	97*
Electric Fan	153*	121*	92*	108*
Car & Pick-up Truck	52*	23*	13*	12*
Laundry Machine	35	11	12	8
Sewing Machine	31	18	7	38
Bicycle	26	30	20	48
Small Tractor	11	9	4	6
Water Pump Machine	86	74	32	74
Telephone	9	5	1	-
No Electricity	1	1	2	2

*Some households own more than one

Folk ways have also become more luxurious and competitive, particularly in Village 1 which has more rich and middle income households than the other villages as discussed earlier. Generally speaking, this village is becoming more and more urbanized. Villagers acquire modern household decorative items and clothing, which in this local society clearly indicate

material-oriented competition. This has caused some villagers to undertake debts in order to purchase consumer items. Some of the old men in the villages and village headmen told me that some of the villagers who sold their land had spent money lavishly, building new houses, buying motorcycles, some furniture, and some luxurious things. Furthermore, some of them had used up all their money in gambling and overspending, and had to sell their daughters in order to redeem their debt.

The first brothel in this sub-district was opened around 1981 in Village 1 when the dam project recruited thousands of part time wage labours to work in this area. In the past, there were not so many brothels in the city or nearby town to which men could go. Some older women told me that men rarely visited brothels at that time. This first brothel was rejected by the villagers because it was located in a residential area. The owner abandoned that project, but four more brothels were opened around a year later in Village 3 and Village 4. These brothels are not located so close to the residential area, and most of them are located near the new highway which passes through the dam project. I had heard that the brothel in Village 3 was built to provide service for guests who were spending their vacations in the resort, which is also located in this village. One of the elder villager told me that the owner of the brothel had said to him that he earned more money from sex trade, which the local people call "ขายสาว" (selling women) than from other commercial trades. His net disposable income is about 50,000 Baht per month after deducting all expenses (equivalent to US \$2,000). This could be compared to a college educated school teacher who could earn monthly salary around 5,600 Baht (US \$224) to 15,000 (US \$600).

This has contributed to sex becoming commercialized and commoditized in these villages. Sex becomes available as part of the growing male-dominated economy where males 'pay' to get access to a female body. The young girls recruited to work in these brothels come from other Northern provinces, particularly from Chiang Rai and a few from nearby Lampang and Lamphoon. During the Thai New Year festival (งานสงกรานต์), there were two new young girls from Chiangrai sitting near the local irrigation canal. They were looking for men who would pay to deflower them. Newly recruited prostitutes who are virgins get the highest price about 3,000 Baht (US \$120) for the first time, which the villagers call "เปิดบริสุทธิ์." Men will pay extra money to "open a virgin," that is to take the virginity of a young girl new to prostitution. The price of service is reduced as the prostitutes gets older. For example, the price of young girls who have already lost their virginity is about 100 Baht while the price of the older ones is about 70-80 Baht. Only few of the local women work in these brothels. This work is temporary because such employment is frowned upon and gossiped about by the villagers.

There has been great deal of debate in Thailand recently as to whether the economy is in the process of transformation to the status of a Newly Industrialised Country (NIC). Government policy toward economic growth has created huge disparities of wealth both geographically and socially. Moreover, the pressure of modernity is dragging rural communities into the modern world, retaining their traditional heart while dressing in modern clothes.

Socioeconomic factors are undoubtedly playing significant roles in determining the opportunities of education for younger generation. The wealthier villagers who own superior means of production have sent their little children to attend private kindergartens in the city. They believe that by

starting off at these kindergartens at age three and a half, their children will be ahead of other children when they reach grade school and will be ready to mix with "better people," and also have a better chance to pursue higher education in the city.

Those villagers who are sufficiently able to reproduce themselves are now struggling to push themselves so they would be able to support their children for further education. Many villagers desire to send their children to attend tertiary education. They believe that a good tertiary education is equated with a good job. However, for poorer villagers or those who have to exchange their labor power for wages on regular basis, such investments are out of reach. Their children just have to accept that they might not be able to attend the tertiary institutions or even the higher secondary level.

These new values and practices are the results of the indirect influence of the dam construction and land speculation, and its accompanying material culture as it is portrayed in the mass media. Although common as recently as 4 or 5 years ago, it is now hard to find villagers working together at rice planting and harvesting, house building, or organizing weddings and funerals together. The traditional features of Northern Thai society--villagers as fairly cohesive entities with strong cultural roots, independent community organizations, and production methods based on mutual cooperation --are being diluted. Villagers spend their evenings watching urban, middle-class television soap operas, which have replaced the informal gatherings at which village affairs were discussed. Fewer villagers participate in local festivals and ceremonies. Participation in the Northern Thai rituals including the Thai New Year festival (*Ngan Songkran*, งานสงกรานต์), the ceremony for celebrating a new or renovated religious building (*Ngan Poi Luang*, งานปอยหลวง), and the

ceremony for presenting yellow robes to Buddhist monks after their lent retreat (*Ngan Kathin*, งานกฐิน), has changed noticeably.

In *Ngan Poi Luang*, villagers used to participate in the procession inching its way to the temple with fluttering flages leading the way, followed by a lavishly decorated set of offerings "*khrua taan*, กรัวตาน", dancers, and a van carrying the traditional long drum. It once took up to 10 days for each cluster of neighbours to join together to decorate their *khrua taan* in a joyous mood. But now fewer villagers participate in the procession, with a less elaborate *khrua taan* which villagers only spend one or two days decorating. This was all the time they could spare for the ceremony. The *khrua taan* is now overwhelmed by consumer goods ranging from bright plastic cups to packages of detergent and junk food, and even chairs and tables to money which is stuck into stems that are made from straw or betel leaves.

Today, the older generation prepares for the ceremony without help from younger villagers. When night falls, the grandparents gather at the temple hall to listen to night-long sermons as part of the traditional *Ngan Poi Luang*. However, outside the hall, groups of housewives and young girls are dancing to blasting pop music and some of them are drinking. They take turns on the stage as part of the community fun, choosing to copy the free singing and dancing they have seen on the television, instead of preserving the traditional fundraising dances (รำวง). In fact, this is the only activity organized by the Housewives' Group, I was told by the Chairperson of that group. The money is raised for the temple by making men pay for the tickets to dance with the young women they fancy. Other youngsters are attracted by the floating swings, rocking horses and games which have only recently been brought into the villages, with the fee 10 Baht per ride or round. There is a clear trend

towards an increase in some typical features of commercial trade including stalls selling food, clothing, household items and entertainments, and a decline in the number of ritual practices in the temple hall.

This phenomenon is also found in other traditional rituals or ceremonies, where preparations for ceremonies have become the affair of the older generation, while the younger generation enjoys itself dancing and playing games or even drinking. In the *Ngan Songkran*, youngsters enjoy throwing water over each other. It is the tradition that young people throw well-water over each other to stimulate the oncoming rains and to provide relief from the intense April heat. Some young men gather into small groups to drink, play guitar, and throw water at the young women. Some young women also join into small groups, and turn on pop music to dance while throwing water at people who ride motorbikes near their groups.

Most of my girl informants say they never participate in the religious ceremonies in the temple, engaging in water-play throughout the festival which lasts about 9-10 days. Only a few of them help their mothers or grandmothers to prepare "*khanohmtean*, ขนมเทียน", packets of sweets made from glutinous rice, to present to the monks. This is one kind of sweet that villagers used to join together among familial and kinship groups to make and give out to neighbours during the traditional Thai New Year tradition. However, it is now difficult to find this practice in these villages. Most of my informants' mothers buy *khanohmtean* from the market because of the constraints on their time. Two of my informants were participating in the *song khrau rite* (พิธีส่งเคราะห์) which is known as "expelling Adversity" described by Davis (1984). One of them came because her mother had to go to work and the other came with her mother and grandmother. I found that villagers participate in the *song khrau*

ritual, which was held on April 16th, more than any other day of the *Ngan Songkran*. In other days, such as the Prince of Days (วันพญาวัน) which is the day that is devoted to the Buddhist religious services, the worship services in the temples are mostly attended by the older generation, and by women more than men, and fewer villagers congregate in the temple hall than in the past. One of the old men in the village said

"Very few youngsters go to the temple now. But elder people still do it because we don't have another thing to repose one's trust in. . . . They like to go to the water fall and the dam. They have their own activities such as birthday parties and don't want to answer when we ask who are those friends that they accompany with. Sometimes they shout at us when we try to get their answer. . . . They say that we are out-of date and we should stay with our generation, not theirs. When we tell them to go to join the ceremonies, they will say OK-but end up with joining with their groups."

In addition, the series of ritual "requests for forgiveness" made by younger people to their elders, which used to begin on the Prince of Days, are rarely practiced by the villagers. In Village 1, only the village headman and another 6 or 7 villagers participated in the procession carrying plastic packages of junk food and some fruits to pay respect to elders in the villagers. It is hard to find this performance which is known as "asking forgiveness and paying respect" (สุมาคารวะ) as described by Davis's experience in Northern Thailand:

"While the old people sit in their homes waiting for the younger generations to seek them out, younger people, both male and female, children and adults, walk from house to house carrying bags of flowers and bottles of fragrant lustral water made from *sompauy* and flower petals (Davis, 1984, p. 133)."

Today, villagers must combine a series of rituals which used to take several days into one or two days because they have to work in response to their financial pressures. The elder villagers and village headmen told me that fewer villagers participate in the traditional ceremonies, and it is very difficult to organize a meeting or any activities among villagers. Organizations such as the Housewives group, or Youth groups exist only in name. Members have no time to meet or organize any activities. Those who must earn their income by selling their labour and through small trading transactions must work all year round to get enough money for their survival. Some of them only have one day vacation during the Thai New Year. As a result, this group of people has less time to participate in community activities. The opportunities for communities to meet and work together co-operatively in traditional rituals and labour exchange has gradually disappeared.

Thus, the links that provide cohesion in village life have gone. It could be seen that the linkage between different generations becomes loosely tied as well. Family life has become very tense because of financial pressures, debts. Villagers must rush around and work all the time to get money. And money is so important in their lives. Parents have very little time to spend with their children, while they used to have plenty of time in the past. Some parents are actively seeking special classes during weekend for their children, in the hope that their children will get more education and won't waste their time watching television and hanging around with their friends.

I have concluded that this capitalist development has introduced ecological and social disruptions due to the overexploitation of the resources and the changes in several social and economic characteristics of the people in these local villages. These technological innovations have introduced changes

in the economic power of these women which doubly exploit them, both in the class structure of Thai society and in the gender bias within that structure which I will further discuss in the next section.

Transitional Changes of Women's Role and Status in The Villages

The penetration of commodification and monetization into these communities has served as a major factor in the changes in economic power which doubly exploit women both in the class structure and in gender bias, and has also contributed to the lessening influence of the ancestor spirits. There is a decrease in women's traditional role which used to be remarkably strong due to the matrifocal kinship system that secured the status of Northern Thai women, particularly in the agricultural sphere. I would agree with Muecke (1984) that there are at least two aspects of Thailand's socioeconomic development that directly erode the traditional status of Northern Thai woman. These are demographic change and population control policy. They particularly reduce the importance of motherhood which was valued for numerous functions, and also erode the female power base through the loss of her traditional status in relation to descendants, house, and land. (p. 465-469).

I have divided the transitional changes of women's role and status in these communities into four sections. The first is life opportunities for occupation and career choices. The second is changes in fertility patterns. The third is education opportunities for young girls. In the fourth section, changes in social and parental control in the local villages are presented.

Life Opportunities for Occupation and Career Choices

Changes of social and economic structures that have occurred during the recent decades have an impact upon women's lives in the villages I studied. The capitalist penetration into this countryside, and limited resources, have induced the preferential recruitment of women, including young women, into the workforce. Those who have completed compulsory education have been forced to migrate or commute to urban centers in search of higher education or, more commonly, low-paying jobs in manufacturing and the service sector, including the sexual service industry. Some of them migrate by their own choice to fulfill their roles as dutiful daughters, and some move as a result of their parents' financial pressures. The expansion and diversification of women's occupational role to other non-agricultural areas is necessary in order to secure personal and family welfare and achieve personal goals within existing household resource limitations.

During my fieldwork, I had multiple opportunities to converse with the teachers, local health personnel and villagers. From them I heard that until the year of the field work, there was no school in the villages for graduates of the sixth grade to attend. Although about 60 percent usually went on to school in other towns, the remainder typically found a way to earn money. Other girls were recruited to work as low wage labourers in nearby districts or as domestic servants in the city. Some girls found employment as factory workers or in other service sectors. Some were recruited into the sex industry. Some of them were sold by their parents to traveling recruiters in order to settle debts, improve their existing house, or buy rice land. Some of the girls were persuaded by village friends or kin who had been employed as prostitutes and had sent back money for their parents or families to build new houses and to

buy consumer items. Although the number of older girls who had been successful in sending remittances home from their work in prostitution was small, they provided models for younger girls, with their parents' support, to follow. This was particularly true for girls who had another family member involved in the sex industry. One of these girls who was about 19 years old died of AIDS last year. A few of them are now working in the coffee shop as "indirect prostitutes" (women who exchange sex for money but disguise their actual occupation by claiming to work as traditional masseuses, civil servants, waitresses, night club singers or phone sex workers). Some of the teachers said they have tried to advise some of the girls who used to be their students to use condoms. But they said it is difficult for them to refuse when clients offer more money for not using condoms. This could place these young women at high risk for contracting AIDS from sexual transmission.

I was told by some teachers and villagers that there are some married or divorced women, who were "forced" into sex industry because of economic necessity and social responsibility. A teacher who was a local villager, explained: "Some of them were left by their husbands who did not take any responsibility for family income and expenses or even take care of the children. The men rarely came back home with very little money and sometimes new wives accompanied them." When these women look for work, they tell their children that they need to find jobs as maids, waitresses, assistant cooks in restaurants, or guides in a tourist agency in the towns. To hide the fact that they are prostitutes from their children and neighbours, they work in other towns in Northern or Central region where it would be difficult for them to be recognized by someone. They come back home once a month or even once a year or two years and send the money to their parents or cousins who have to

take care of their children. Most of them have migrated to work in cities such as Chiang Mai, Bangkok, Had Yai, and one or two gone to Japan. During the New Year's holiday, some return home for a brief period. I was told that this can be difficult for some of them who think the villagers might look down on them as bad women. They tried to avoid socializing in the neighbourhood. One of them who just came back from working in another city for about a year and remarried a man in the village had died of AIDS last year. Her two daughters (one of them was my informant, Duen), did not know that her mother had died of AIDS. Duen was told by relatives, teachers, and villagers that her mother had died from lung disease. Duen said

"My mother told me that she had to work as a waitress in a restaurant in other cities. She rarely came to visit me just about one time in two years for only 1 or 2 days. The first time when she came back I was in Grade 4 and I even could not remember her face because she left me when I was very young. My sister and I had to stay with our aunt and I really didn't like to stay with her because she got drunk everyday. When my mother came back to live the village for about a month, she remarried and I moved to stay with her and my stepfather. She died after staying with us for a year and people said that she died of lung disease. The doctor said she had a mass in her lung. Some of them said she was possessed by an evil spirit and took her to see a witch doctor, but she still got worse My real father has three wives. When my mother separated from him when I was in Grade 2, he had never taken any responsibility for taking care of us. And my sister and I never saw him after he separated from my mother. I used to hate my mother for leaving me behind, but I don't feel like this anymore."

Some of the women who had gone into prostitution are now remarried and live in the villages. There appears to be no social or sexual stigma attached to them. Only a few of them were able to build large, expensive houses which

stand in clear contrast to the other villagers' houses which are made from poor quality wood. Their improved economic standing serves to improve their social standing within the village that would otherwise be impossible for them. There are few of them who have married and are now living in the US with husbands and sending money back to their parents. Their relative richness could attract young girls and make them more vulnerable to be lured into the sex business. One of my teacher informants said she had heard girls in grade 3 say that when they grow up, they want to marry foreigners, either Japanese or Westerners (ฝรั่ง) like that Westerner's wife who lives in the village, so they will be rich and own a large expensive house and a car and won't have to work, but will be able to hire a maid to do the housework, and can travel around with expensively fashionable dresses like her. They perceived marrying foreigners as a valid and acceptable means to improve their economic condition.

Several of my informants including Duen told me that they would definitely choose to work in the city where they don't have to work hard and they could be modern (ทันสมัย) like city women. One of my informants has an aunt who used to work in Japan and who had built a new house. This informant told me that she wants to be like her aunt, not her mother who works as a wage laborer on a farm. She doesn't want to suffer in the sun, which is too hot and causes the skin to be thick and freckled. She seems to admire her aunt for her expensive clothes, makeup, and a hairstyle that makes her a beautiful woman. The girl knows only that her aunt went to work in Japan and has a rich Japanese husband who sends money to her every month. Several of my girl informants also said that they don't want to work in the farm. It is a hard work that they won't be able to tolerate, and they don't want to soak in the mud and suffer in the sun either. They'll definitely choose to work in the city where

they can easily go to shop in the department stores and can be the modern women they want to be. As Duen said:

"I would rather choose to work in the city because the job is more comfortable. And I can go to visit many places-the Central Plaza (local people call "*Khad suan kaew*, กาดสวนแก้ว") and other department stores that I want to. It is not convenient to travel from here to the town. I don't think I can tolerate the farm work. It is too hard. Now I rarely go to *Khad suan kaew* with my sister or other friends by minibus. I like to go there. I dream about having a watch and a doll. Now I am trying to save money so I'll be able to buy those things sometime in the future. I want to stay in the city so I will be quick-witted like other people and will not be seen by the others as an out-of date person."

Unfortunately, this desire to be modern could lead these girls into the sex industry. There is evidence that female rural-urban migrants are usually confronted with the dilemma of low-paid urban jobs, which do not provide enough money for them to remit to their families and to meet the costs of urban living. The desire to earn more money and the absence of the strict control of parents and community members may influence the young girls to enter prostitution (Boonchalaksi & Guest, 1994). I would argue that indirect prostitution would be the alternative option for these young girls. There has been an expansion of indirect prostitutes who work as waitresses, as hairdressers, as salegirls in the department stores, and in other service sectors where they can meet potential customers. In addition, the expansion of the Chiang Mai economy, particularly from tourism has contributed to the recruitment of young women to work not only in the local factories, but also in the expanding service sector such as hotels, and tourist factories, and handicraft production.

The data in Table 5.3 to Table 5.7 show that more women than men commute to work in the city. Their participation in the labor market is encouraged by higher wages. Some women prefer to do off-farm employment so they don't have to suffer in the sun, which causes freckles on skin and blemishes on their face. Wage labor allows them to keep their feet and hands clean because they don't have to soak in the mud. Only a few old villagers age 50-60 years do the farm work.

Most of the jobs in the service sector in the city that are open to rural people require little formal education or training. Working as maids, cleaners, and waitresses in the hotels, department stores, and private hospitals, which offer regular salary from 2900-3300 Baht per month (US \$116-\$132), are the favorite choices for women in the villages. One informant's mother who was waiting for the mini-bus to go to work in the city told me that

" I just quit working as a construction worker in the local district because it was hard work. I was very tired when I arrived home in the evening and could not do anything else. You know, I had to work 8 hours per day every day so I could earn enough money to cover basic expenses. I never got overtime even when I had worked more than 8 hours, and was only paid 80 Baht per day. And I never had time for my daughters. Now I work as a custodian in a big supermarket, both morning shift and evening shift. I get 118 Baht per day and have 4 days off for every month. My husband still works in construction. He earns 100 Baht per day. The daily rate for such work is 100 Baht per day. Sometime he is unemployed because there is no construction work available in the village or nearby villages."

Today more and more women are leaving their land and traditional occupation of rice farming because of their dislike for the poverty of

agricultural production. The increase in landlessness of peasants and migration into towns were the result of the development strategy of Thailand which aimed at economic growth through incorporation into the world economic system. Besides their role that binds them to domestic work and child-rearing, these women must take additional work outside the home, adopting a more active role as family 'breadwinners' than in the past. The process of Thailand's socioeconomic changes and the success in the national family programme has resulted in a rapid decrease in family size and a preference for more nuclear families, consisting of the husband and wife and one or two children, during the last two decades. However, the number of families experiencing divorce has increased during the same period, and in most cases children continue to stay with their mothers. This has led to an increase in the number of female household heads (Archavanitkul & Pramualratana, 1990).

I was told by the teachers in the local school that this phenomenon is also occurring in the research villages where many children stay with their mothers after their parents get divorced. During my time in the villages, I also observed several women hastily send their children to school before heading off to work. The 1988 Labour Force Survey (LBS), indicates that female labour force participation rates were higher among the separated and the divorced than among the married in both urban and rural areas. As a consequence, women are pushed into stress from their roles as the main income-earners, particularly among those who are uneducated, or have limited skills and knowledge (Archavanitkul & Pramualratana, 1990). Most of them were transformed into wage earners, but their wages were not sufficient to take care of the whole family. Some of them were forced by poverty to migrate into

the towns and find jobs to maintain their families. With limited skills, these women find only very low wage job opportunities, often forcing them to become commercial sex workers (CSWs), the only option that is available to them as I discussed earlier.

I would argue that this is the form of gender subordination with class exploitation as produced by the Thai economic development. "Since women are considered as 'secondary status' workers in capitalist production they are in the position of 'last to hire, first to fire' (Skrobanex, 1983, p. 26)." As Bell (1991) writes:

"Gendered class formation has taken place in Thailand within the context of highly competitive world markets which push down the price of domestic labor and make female employment extremely attractive. The female labor employed in new industries or industrial zones. . . is subject to the same social constraints. Women are seen as more malleable than male workers, more linked to their families and thus not seen as primary bread-winners and thus not requiring as high wages as their male equivalents. Women are seen as capable of being subjected to more intense work, and increased discipline from male supervisors and bosses, with longer work days(p. 69-70)."

Changes in Fertility Patterns

The increase in women's productivity outside the home is associated with lower fertility in the villages. I found that women who participated in the labor force have changed their perceptions of having children. Socio-economic constraints seem to have an impact over these women's attitudes toward family size as reported by previous studies in Northern Thai community (Muecke, 1976; Mougne, 1981). In her study, Mougne found that there was a rapid

decline in fertility rates after the late 1950s in all age groups, particularly in the case of women aged between 20-29. In general discussion with the District Health personnel. I was told that there is an increase in eligible women⁴ using contraceptive methods. Most of them prefer to have only one or two children.

The most commonly used methods of contraception are the daily pill, injectable contraceptive, and female sterilization by tubal resection. Condoms (ถุงยางอนามัย), diaphragm and intra-uterine device, IUD (ห่วงอนามัย) are not widely practiced. Vasectomy has been very rare in the villages due to the widespread beliefs that male sterilization will cause impotence and that women should be the ones responsible for birth control. There are a few cases of women using contraceptives to postpone the first pregnancy. Some of them have taken oral birth control for about 20 years and could not get pregnant when they want to. They believe that their womb may have dried (มดลูกแห้ง) from taking the pill. There is also some belief that sterilization of women could irritate a tendon which would cause those women to have a great desire for sex. In fact, I found that most women just use contraceptive methods to prevent pregnancy without understanding any risk or side effects of the methods that they used. Before modern birth control methods became available around 1970, induced abortion was also used as a means of fertility control in these villages. Two of my older informants told me

"In the old days, there were no contraceptive methods available. Women who didn't want to let their babies be born had to get induced abortion (การทำแท้ง) from a granny midwife (หมอดำแย) in nearby

⁴This refers to women who are currently married and still menstruating, who are considered potentially at risk of pregnancy.

villages, who practiced induced abortion by "squeezing or pressing the abdomen" (*bipp thoong* or *kaen thoong*, บีบท้อง, เค้นท้อง). She would squeeze the belly frequently and the dead infant came out one or two days after this induction. We saw several livid bruises around their abdomen. There were a few women we knew that had died of this induced abortion. Some of them were very pale and weak. Some of the women might attempt abortion by drinking hot herbal medicines, but these would rarely work to induce abortion."

One informant's mother told me that her own mother had induced abortion several times because there were no other contraceptive methods available for her to use at that time and she could not raise more children. She also had a relative who had gone to have abortion induced by *biip thoong* from a granny midwife. When they got home, the dead fetus with some fingers and a little hair came out and they buried it in the backyard. She was very scared of the evil spirits at that time. This granny midwife had died about ten years ago. Now these indigenous methods are not common in the villages, most of women seek abortion through informal channels in some private hospitals in the city which provide induced abortion. This induced abortion which is still illegal, is accessible only to those who can pay for it. Nowadays, modern medicines make inducing an abortion easier than in the past. I had heard that there were some young women who had an abortion while they were in the schools because of the strong socio-cultural pressures against illegitimacy and out-of-wedlock pregnancy.

It is clear that these socio-economic constraints make childrearing more complicated than in past decades. Many women point out the economic difficulty of providing adequately for childrearing when their families are not self-sufficient. They must rely on relatives, particularly grandparents, to care

for young children. But many were forced to turn to a day care center located in Village 1 which provides low fee daycare for working parents: about 120 Bath per month for children aged 2-3 years old, and 80 Bath per month for children aged 3-4 years old. Many children aged 2-4 years are sent to this day care center with an average of 35-38 children per year. Children above 4 years old were sent to the pre-school level offered by the local school at a low service charge of about 50 Baht per month. There is no service charge for pre-school for children over 5 years old.

Some women live separately from their children, particularly women who migrate to work in the city. One of my informants was raised by her grandmother from an early age. Her mother is working as a custodian in a big hotel in the city of Chiang Mai and her father just recently moved to work as a guard in this hotel. They rent an apartment and come to visit the family once a month or every two months. I was told by my informant's grandmother that her parents want to move the girl to get secondary education level in the town if they earn more money. They believe that their daughter will get better education in the city than in the local school.

Educational Opportunities for Young Girls

Increased occupational opportunities, particularly in the city, drive a desire for advanced education, at least beyond the ninth grade level. Primary education is not sufficient education to get a good job. More villagers desire to send their daughters to school so they could learn a more stable occupation than farming, one which would provide them enough money to buy modern appliances such as refrigerators or televisions, that they feel are needed. I

would agree with Gray (1990) that education is providing the channel through which the villagers are becoming a class. Education represents a means of class production for the wealthier households while it seen as the sine qua non of upward mobility for the marginally poor households.

Household income is a major factor that influences the type of education a family can afford, and thus influences young girls' opportunities to enter into types of employment. As Gray (1990) stated: "Differential access to strategic resources has influenced the employment of young women principally through the degree of investment in education households are able to make (p. 214)." It is clear in these villages that young girls from wealthy households and middle income households have more opportunities to receive their education in the city starting from pre-school level, as well as to tertiary education. Data from household interviews suggest that young girls from Village 1, which has more wealthy and middle income households than the others, have a better chance to get higher education in the city than the young girls from the other villages (see Table 5.9). School registration data were not obtained to corroborate these figures.

Table 5.9. Types of Education of School-Age Children by Village

Type of Education	Village 1		Village 2		Village 3		Village 4	
	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl
Study in the local village and district	37	40	32	32	24	25	34	35
Study in the City								
-Pre-school and Primary school level	4	14	3	2	-	3	-	2
-Secondary school level	14	6	7	4	1	2	-	2
Tertiary Education								
-Vocational Education	16	17	6	1	7	4	9	1
University	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

One can see that there is an emergence of upward mobility in the investment in the education of their children by the villagers. There is an increasing entrance into vocational colleges which reflects an expansion of employment opportunities, especially within the service sector in Chiang Mai. One of my informant, Mali who has two daughters, told me:

"I keep telling my two daughters that they must concentrate on their education and not pay attention to having any boyfriends. They should learn from my experience and should not follow my track. I married when I was sixteen and only completed primary education with having very little knowledge that does not allow me to get any good job. Nowadays, education is very advanced with new technology and they should catch up with this modern technology. I told them to look at one of my relatives who finished her 5th year in accounting and received a

Higher Certificate in Vocational Education or *Por vor sor*⁵(ປວສ). So now she can get an official position in one of the police departments."

Mali is a mother who has tried to work hard in order to support the costs of her daughters' education. Her family could be considered as a middle income household which Mali and her husband are sufficiently able to reproduce through their own household. Her husband works as a permanent employee in the dam project, and also works part time as a construction worker. Mali herself makes artificial pipal trees for Buddhist worship, and sends them to the Buddhist store in the town. Her elder daughter is now studying in accounting at the 3rd year level of the Certificate in Vocational Education or *Por vor chor*⁶(ປວຮ). She could not get into the government vocational institutions which are more competitive, so her parents decided to send her to study in a private vocational college where the fees are considerably higher. For Mali, education is seen as a viable means of securing better employment for her two daughters. It will be even harder for her when her younger daughter completes the lower secondary level or (ມັດຍມ 3) in the next two years and needs to continue for tertiary education in vocational institutions.

However, this may not be the case for girls from the poor and marginally poor households who have to leave school earlier. Some of my girl informants told me that they haven't made any plans to continue their education after grade 9 (ມັດຍມ 3). Most of them think they don't have the opportunity to

⁵*Por vor sor* is the Higher Certificate in Vocational Education. It is a five year course. Students enter the college after completing grade 9 or the junior high school.

⁶*Por vor chor* is the Certificate in Vocational Education. It is a three year course and equivalent to grade 9.

do so because education beyond the lower secondary level is financially impossible for their families. Some of them said they have to find jobs first and then continue to take correspondence courses offered by the Non-Formal Education Department, which is the only option provided for them. They hope to use newly gained credentials to find newer and better-paying jobs.

One of their parents said "If this local school doesn't open for lower secondary level, I won't be able to support my daughter after she finishes grade 6 either. I don't have enough money for the transportation, books, and other supplies." This family is typical of the poor landless family whose land is owned by the government. Only the father and the elder daughter earn income for the family. The father must exchange daily wage labour for only 80 Baht per day. The elder daughter, who finished primary school and didn't have a chance to get more education, works in a day care center and receives 2,200 Baht per month. The mother takes only temporary work because of health problems. There is very little margin in the household for other expenditures such as medical costs or luxury goods. Most of the income is immediately spent for buying food, paying for electricity and other household expense. Recently they have been forced into debt to buy a motorcycle, using credit offered by a wealthy merchant in the village.

Young girls have more opportunity to go on to lower secondary education as offered by the government's continuation program in the local school. However, only few of them, particularly those lower-middle income village households who are able to make investments in their daughters' education, have a chance to go on to their higher education. For marginally poor households or poor households, there is no option but to seek short-term

economic gains through their children's labor because of the high educational costs. They could not invest for their children's long-term growth and security through education.

Pui is an example of a girl from a poor household who has less opportunity to continue in higher education. She was about 12 years old. She lives in a house which is made of bamboo thatch close to the fields that her family shares with other relatives. She had lived with her grandfather since she was young because her mother went to work in the city, and rarely came home. Her mother told her that she worked as a guide and cook helper in the city, but I heard from the teachers and her neighbors that she worked as CSW. Just last year her mother came back to live in the village with her. Pui said she would like to go to study in a school in the city so she could travel (ເທື່ອໆ), and have fun (ສຳນຸກ) like some of her friends. Her friends have told her about the shopping mall. She also dreamed about getting higher education at the university level. However, if she could only get the ninth grade education, she would seek a job in the city, perhaps as a waitress. She didn't want to work as a wage-labourer or farmer in the village. She said she didn't know how to reap, and it was too hot, and muddy in the fields. She would like to be rich, and own a big house like some of the villagers.

Another girl, Suu was also from a poor income household whose mother used to work as a prostitute as I was told by the villagers. She didn't have any ambition or even any plan for her studies. Sometimes she played hooky from the school. She didn't want to do any homework and just liked to play. She said she didn't like to study because it was too hard and she could not catch up with the lessons. When I went to visit her at her house, several times I found

that she just played games and gambling with her aunts, and other children. This could be explained by her cultural environment of poverty which makes her feel powerless and helpless. She is an example of a girl in the underprivileged group who doesn't have the supportive environment that would inculcate in her an ambition for learning.

These are examples of the young girls who would have to enter low-paying occupations, such as factory work, working as maids or waitresses, or custodians, or beauticians without any option because of their minimal levels of education. Gray (1990) points out the differentiation among young girls who were recruited from the peri-urban villages of Chiang Mai into the urban workforces from her study in five villages surrounding Chiang Mai:

"Such a differentiation relates, not surprisingly, to the nature of class formation regards as almost 'natural' in contemporary agrarian economies undergoing economic transformation. . . Rich and very rich households are able to reproduce themselves as a class through capital accumulation by investing in education and the adoption of the life style which equips the young women from these households with the necessary tertiary qualifications for well-paying, high status employment. In the same vein, the position of young women from poor and marginally poor households, employed for the most part as wage labourers, is essentially fulfilling the same class position as those employed as agricultural wage labourers-those who in the classic model have been forced out of agriculture, or farm insubstantial plots, and who as a consequence have to rely on wage labour (p. 346-347). "

Changes in Social and Parental Control in The Local Villages

The level of participation in spirit cults, *phii puu njaa* (ผีปู่ย่า) by women has been declining in these villages. There are several different interpretations

of the structural and ideological importance of these cults. *Phii puu njaa* are the ancestral spirits among Northern Thai that have been inherited from the matrilineal ancestors (Iddhichiracharas, 1977; Cohen, 1984; Cohen & Wijeyewardene, 1984; Davis, 1984). Spirit cult participation once provided general beliefs and practices to control female sexuality, particularly in the control of female pre-marital sexuality. According to the tradition, if an unmarried couple was found having a sexual relationship, or even having bodily contact, it was said to be an act of sexual violation which wronged the spirit (ผี) (Chootisukharatn, 1971). To atone for such transgressions, the man was required to provide money to the girl's parents to purchase a pig's head as an expiatory offering to the spirits (เลี้ยงผี) (Cohen & Wijeyewardene, 1984). This forgiveness must be sought, otherwise sickness or some form of misfortune would strike a family member. In addition, if a daughter of the lineage is about to marry, the spirits of the old house must be informed. This is necessary to further harmony in their married life.

I would agree with Mougne (1981, 1984) and Gray (1990) that the socioeconomic changes along with the differentiation in class and economic status has contributed to the gradual abandonment of the cults. In her study in Ban Pong village, Mougne observed that despite the tradition of not allowing any pre-marital sexual contact because of fear of the punishment by the spirits, a certain degree of contact occurred more than in the past. The young girls were less worried about retribution from the spirits, they often pointed out that "as long as their mothers do not know, then neither will the spirits (1981, p. 410)." Almost thirty percent of households in the village had abandoned their practice of "respect" or "support" *thu phii puu njaa* (ถือผีปู่ย่า), and the reason

given for dropping out was that the cults were pointless or old-fashioned (1981, p. 436 & P. 460). Mougne also found that "high socio-economic status was evidently an important variable in abandonment of the cults (1981, p. 461). This is concurrent with Gray's work which also found that "abandonment of the cults is a lot higher in the areas I worked, closer to Chiang Mai city, and the attitudes the young women have towards young men is a more liberated one than in the recent past" (1990, p. 287).

Among all of the young girls, mothers, and grandmothers I studied, *Phii puu njaa* are becoming less important in each generation, particularly in the young girl groups. In the grandmother's and mother's generation, I heard a few of them still showing respect to these ancestral spirits. Two grandmothers who still hold the spirit cults said that all of the girls in their generation (presently about 70-75 years of age) were strictly controlled by their parents or old respected women who carried messages of *phid phii*. They were warned that they would inevitably suffer if they wronged *phii puu njaa*. Their opportunities to meet men were limited and usually supervised. Usually men could visit them at home under the watchful eyes of their parents. They were not allowed to sit near the men, or even on the same mat or plank of the floor to prevent body contact

This was also founded in Turton's work in Mae Suai District, Chiang Rai Province. Turton stated that "Technical sexual trespass includes a man stepping over the threshold of a girl's family bedroom or touching any part of her body, even indirectly by sitting on the same mat or plank of the floor" (1984, p. 279). There were some cases where the men intentionally performed sexual trespass or *phid phii* because the parents would not allow the girls to

marry them, or did not like them. The young men were then required to make a payment to the girls' parents, so that an offering could be made to her ancestral spirits (เลี้ยงผี, เลี้ยงผี) and to inform them of marriage. This offering should also be made in case of marriage even when there has been no *phid phii*, otherwise they will be seen as giving offence to the spirits (ศีลผิดค้ำ), causing the bride's mother or other close kin to fall ill. The grandmothers also said that now villagers are not concerned about *phii puu njaa* as it used to be in the past.

Many women in the mother's generation (presently about 30-35 years of age) said that they never participated in any cult activity, only their mothers and grandmothers still believe in the spirits of *phii puu njaa*. Some of them said they knew that their mothers put the "house spirits" (ผีเฮือน) which is described as clan spirits by Davis (1984)) inside their bedrooms. When some women in their families get married, it was their mothers' duty to make offerings to the ancestor spirits prior to a marriage. They have heard that their mothers or grandmothers continue to make offerings to the *phii puu njaa* with their cult groups. Usually the ritual of presenting offerings to the spirits, *ngan liang phii puu njaa*, is performed among their cult groups which refer to women who describe themselves to be "of the same spirits (ผีเดียวกัน)" as described by Davis (1984, p. 57). The rite is usually held in the ninth (Northern) lunar month (June to July), in the Thai New Year (in April), and at the beginning and end of Buddhist Lent^๗(เข้าพรรษา). Only a few women in this generation still maintain links with a cult group in their natal village, and

^๗The Buddhist lenten season lasts from the full moon of the tenth month (between early July and early August) to the full moon of the first month (between early and late October) (Davis, 1984, p. 180).

some of them were being incorporated into the group of their husbands' mother. There was one woman whose family had a marriage hastily arranged because her aunt found that she was being embraced by a visiting man, who is her husband now. She was only sixteen at that time and was very frightened of getting married. She said " I even didn't learn what it is like to be a young single woman (เป็นสาว)." One of the woman said she didn't have time to join the ritual in her cult group last year, but she gave the 50 Baht to her sister to contribute food as an offering to her *kao phii* (เก้าผี) in her natal village. *Kao phii* (*kao* means 'stem' or 'trunk') refers to an older kinswoman who is associated with the sprits or who makes offerings to the spirits as described by Mougne (1981, p. 414 & 444). My findings in 1994 concur with those of Muecke (1981) that a decrease in the maintenance of the spirits was associated with loss of ancestral house and land ownership. In her 1977 survey of 215 low income status, ever-married women in Chiang Mai city, Muecke found that one fifth (N=42) of them no longer paid any attention to these spirits. They stopped caring for the spirits when they moved out from their parental homes. One woman told me that:

"Before we married, my husband's mother asked me if my natal village presents offerings to the spirits (เลี้ยงผี). I really didn't understand the meaning and asked my mother. My mother told me that she didn't belong to any spirit cults. So my husband's mother made offerings to her ancestor spirits at our marriage. She still makes offerings to her spirit cults with a jar of home brew and a pair of chickens (เหล้าไก่คู่) every year. Sometimes I help my mother-in-law honor the spirits during the Thai New Year festival, but I never taught my two daughters about *phid phii*."

On talking to the women in this generation, it appears that most of them were no longer actively concerned with their *phii puu njaa*, and most of them had not informed their daughters about *phid phii*. Many of them said they had stopped believing in *phii puu njaa* a long time ago. One of my key informant teachers said:

"It was my parents who were involved with their cult group. When I married, my parents had to offer a pig's head to the spirits. They also made offerings to the spirits every June with a pair of chickens and home brew. I didn't take over the care of the spirits when my parents died. I am not sure if my elder sister has taken responsibility for the spirits. I think we now live in a modern world. We've learned science which tells us to believe only the truth. It was the beliefs of older people in the past, and their customs. Nowadays, we can date and go out with men, hugging each other when we are dancing, and nothing happens. I used to dance with a man who was not my boyfriend, and nothing happened to me or my family. Now women are free to go out with men."

Some of the women told me that it is impractical for them to teach their daughters about *phid phii*. Nowadays, touching between the young women and men is almost unavoidable. One of them said " When my daughter goes out with a young man who is our relative by motorcycle, it is impossible for them to avoid having any kind of bodily contact, and no-one will react to this. It is not the same as in the past when we walked to the market or the temple." The belief in these ancestor spirits has degraded such that *phii puu njaa* have no relevance in controlling their daughters' behavior today.

Belief in the spirits of *phii puu njaa* seems not to have been transmitted to the young girls' generation. Most of the young girls indicated that they never

heard of these beliefs and practices from their mothers or grandmothers, or never heard anything about *phid phii*. They seem not to have any knowledge of the existence of the *phii puu njaa* at all.

I would agree with Mougne (1984) that there is an interaction between economic and demographic changes, and their impact on social structure which have resulted in a substantial reformulation of the traditional patterns. As Mougne (1984) adds

"While demographic and economic changes take their toll, the psychological impact of 'modernization' is gradually undermining the system of beliefs of which the *phii puu njaa* cults are just one component, so that villagers have begun to seriously question the authority of the spirits" (p. 306).

It has been suggested that the occurrence of premarital sexual relationships was not unusual in the past. Davis (1984) said "In point of fact, most girls are not virgins when they marry, and fines for known sexual trespasses are only imposed if the girl is unwilling and protests" (p. 60). This was supported by Andrew Turton who found "In practice probably, it was widely held, very few girls are virgins at marriage; they may have had several love affairs, sometimes leading to conception, abortion, before marriage" (p. 279). This point of view was also supported by Cohen and Wijeyewardene (1984) who added:

"Traditional adolescent sexuality is shrouded in a fog of idealization, rationalization, and the very likely differences in patterns according to class and economic status. In theory a girl's sexuality was protected by the *phii puu njaa* and even the touch of a non-related male was *phid phii*, 'an offence of the spirits'. . . It was, however, accepted that young

people had intercourse when they were out working in field and forest. There is a view that a significant proportion of these encounters would have to be classified as rape" (p. 258-259).

However, there were some forms of social control of sexual relations such as the ancestral spirits, phii puu njaa, and gossiping that will bring shame on the women. As Cohen and Wijeyewardene (1984) said

"Two things interfered with young people having sexual relations in the house. Only after offerings were made to the spirits would a daughters husband be accepted in the house. But even more important was the nature of the house itself, which made it impossible to keep sexual relations secret -apart from anything else, being heard by others was a matter of great shame" (p. 259).

The capitalist development which has contributed to changes in traditional social control along with class antagonism has caused sex to become commercialized and commoditized, and the changes in sexual behavioral pattern of people in the local community in the recent decades. These changes in social and economic structure could shape adolescent girls' perceptions of their own gender role expectation and sexuality, a topic I will address in chapter 6, and chapter 7.

Chapter 6

The Construction of Femininity

This chapter presents the informants' experiences of being girls. I examine how experiences and beliefs in the Thai social environment shape young girls' notions of their feminine roles. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first is a description of gender construction in the local community. In the second section, experiences of feminine roles are presented.

Description of Gender Construction in the Local Community

As far as my field observations and interviews are concerned, it seems that there is a clear distinction between female and male categories. *Ying* (หญิง) refers to female; *chai* (ชาย) refers to male in this local community. A distinction in the socialization of girls and boys in their developmental period of life is apparent as well. Girls and boys arrive at adolescence with a different range of social experiences. The development of femininity and female role activities are immediately apparent in the world of most girls' daily life. A girl's final role identification is based on gradually learning a way of being female by continuous observation of her mother and other women whom the girl regards as role model (see also Chodorow, 1974, p. 51). It is the mother, grandmother, and other women with whom the girl has her earliest relationship and ongoing relationships. These relationships greatly influence the formation of her gender identity. Gender identity refers to a social sense of one's self-image as regards belonging to a specific sex or the social sense of knowing to which sex one belongs. As a girl grows up she takes in the images of the women around her including mother, grandmother, aunts, sisters, cousins, teachers, movie stars, and women in books and magazines by consciously and unconsciously forming an image of herself as a woman. From my observation,

it could be seen that most of the girls in my study have absorbed or internalized the ideal feminine characteristics, feelings and images of their feminine roles from their mothers, grandmothers, and from the women who discipline them, as well as from their friends and movie stars.

I gathered data regarding gender-specific activities mostly in the school. Some additional observations were also made in homes and yards, and in community activities. From these observations, it is clear that gender differences between girls and boys have been rigidly defined in many characteristics, such as style of dress, sports, and social activities. Girls and boys are assigned to wear different school uniforms. During daily life at school, girls and boys are segregated in their friendships and casual encounters. In most of the school activities, girls and boys are separated into different groups. Before and after school, children have to split into rows by sex and grade level in the school yard. This is considered to be routine activity for paying respect to the Thai flag which is the symbol for the Thai nation, religion, and king.

In the school cafeteria, boys and girls sit at separate tables during lunch time. Whenever the teachers placed them in groups, it was clear that the girls and boys in grade 6 and 7 gathered into groups separated by gender. One teacher shared her experiences with me and told me that the girls and boys would start to separate into their same sex groups when they were in grade five. She sometimes asked them to mix within each group as she thought that they should learn how to be friends with each other. She said that the girls would start acting shy toward the boys when they were in grade five. They would try to keep away while boys passed close to them, and they didn't dare look at the boys. In my observations, I also noticed that girls would act this

way when they were near groups of boys from other schools. When I asked whether it is the way that they learn from people around them, particularly from television, she said it is natural for a girl to be shy and not related to whatever they had watched from television. She said: "Why don't you look at the small girls and boys; girls act shy differently than boys. It's so cute for the girls when they act like that." I would argue that the way that this teacher was disciplined could affect her perception of this gender stereotype, and thus lead her to develop these conclusions as a rationalization in disciplining the young girls.

There is a noticeable gender division between the boys and girls observed. It appears that socialization for developing distinct feminine and masculine manners begins in early on. Young toddling girls are taught and encouraged to be well-behaved and gentle as well as polite in all ways. The teachers tend to pay attention to the girls' characteristics more than the boys by addressing their manners in sitting, dressing, speaking and the neat performance of their school work. During home economics and craft classes, the teachers are more strict with girls' performance and insisted that it should be neat because they are girls. In contrast, the teachers would not be as concerned with the boys' performance because of societal expectations that boys are tough (กระด้าง). It is said that a boy's character cannot be changed. Girls are expected to work more neatly than boys. In addition, the teachers assigned boys to do jobs which required physical strength while they assigned girls light jobs. This emphasis on boys' physical strength could reflect the Thai social value which reinforces masculinity as a biologically determined tendency to act as provider and protector, and thus could lead the girls to internalize their belief that they are weaker than boys. I noticed that the young

girls in sixth and seventh grade who are approaching puberty are very cautious in their manners, particularly in sitting and dressing. They are very careful not to wear an outfit that is too tight. Some of them wear a coloured T-shirt inside a uniform blouse. They said that their white blouses might be too thin to conceal their bodies, especially their breasts. Some of them use pins to hold the collar of their school uniform blouses closed while some of them are careful to hold their blouses against their bodies to keep the boys from looking down their blouses whenever they bend over for any reason. The girls said they will be pinched by the teachers if they don't sit with their knees together and keep their skirts properly (covering their knees).

One of the teachers told me that she has tried to encourage the girls to behave in a feminine way, she said: "I always tell the girls to be well-behaved, gentle and polite. They should be good in household chores, which makes them a charming woman." The notion that good women should be equipped with good culinary skills, pleasant words, and cautious in all manners is preached in school. A proverb written by a famous Thai poet, Suthorn Phu, is used to teach in Thai language classes. It states that:

"Having been born as a woman, one should realize that and behave as a woman. One should be conscious of her feminine characteristics. To behave in a manner that is half masculine and half feminine is not appropriate. It is considered as disgraceful behavior by the others" (Sunthorn Phu as quoted by Kerdhet, 1974, p. 120).

Young girls start to play among their own groups when they are in the beginning of the sixth grade, aged 10 and 11. From observing young girls' playing activities during recess, physical education class, and after the school, I noticed that there are distinct play patterns for boys and girls. Girls like to play

in a small group among their own intimate groups. In contrast, boys like to play in much larger groups than girls, particularly in team sports such as football and basketball. Girls were rarely observed playing in a group as large as eight to ten persons. I found that most of the girls gathered in a dyad of close friends or best friends, and they engaged in conversation rather than played anything at all. Their games were played inside more often than the boys. The games they like to play are jump rope and hopscotch (jump with one leg to pick up the coin in each sequential block) which are games where players take turn and where there is only one game role present at a given time. In the games, each player is in a specified, sequential order, and attempts to accomplish the same task as all other players. Most of the time, if any quarrels broke out, they tended to end the game. This observation was supported in a previous study by Janet Lever. In her study of sex differences in the complexity of children's play in 181 fifth-grade children, Lever (1976) reports a significant difference in organization of play between the sexes. Boys play out of doors and play in large and age-heterogeneous groups more often than girls. They play competitive games more often, and their games last longer than girls' games.

It is clear that there is differential socialization in task assignments of girls and boys in school. Teachers said girls are more compliant and responsible in doing their assignment than the boys. So they tend to assign tasks requiring responsibility to the girls. I often found girls staying at home and performing their domestic chores which included cooking, cleaning, and washing and taking care of their brothers. They have learned how to take their mothers' places. The girls would prefer to stay in the houses watching television or making some snacks when others girls visited them. The girls are expected to start their domestic responsibilities in their early childhood while

the boys are excused from household chores. The boys are usually found in groups of two or more. They have more freedom to roam around the villages. Some of them carry a sling shot to hunt birds. Some gather in a group to form motorcycle gangs and hang out with other youngsters. They are given more freedom to roam (ไปเที่ยว), to play sports, to swim, and to entertain themselves with several things such as hunting and fishing.

This has also been observed in a previous study of Thai youths in a central province by Mentzer (1973). He reports on the differentiation of parents' attitude toward their daughters and sons. He says that

" . . girls are much easier to rear and care for (เลี้ยงง่าย) than boys. . . Girls are more obedient (เชื่อฟัง) because they fear parents more and are generally "softer" (ใจอ่อน) in affect disposition and, therefore, affectively more responsive to parents. Boys are stronger (ใจแข็ง) in affect disposition and when older can take care of themselves" (p. 114).

As I will argue when I present the experiences of the young girls in later section, daughters are socialized to stay home, to do household chores, and to participate in society much less than sons. The reason that daughters are not given more freedom in their early adolescent years might be the fear of parents that their daughters will be enticed into premarital sex or might be raped if they wander too far from home. As one of the girl's mother told me, she always warns her two daughters not to hang out at other friends' houses because this might be perceived as promiscuous behavior by the community even if premarital sex does not occur. This will also affect the parents' moral standing within the village. Parents will be accused of not bringing up their daughters properly and of allowing their daughters to run loose.

The experience of being female in patriarchal culture has been transmitted through generations from grandmother to mother to daughter in this local community. The image of the inferior submissive woman is found generally among these Northern Thai women. There are some old Northern Thai doctrines that provide moral lessons for women and men. These doctrines express the basic rules that should govern female behavior, but rarely pertain to men's behavior. It is believed that this moral instruction has been preached since Ayuthayan period (1350-1767) (สมัยอยุธยา) which was influenced by the Brahminic ideology of male supremacy (Tantiwiranond & Pandey, 1987). For example, in Prince Lau's Teaching for the World (พระลอสอนโลก)¹, there are moral instructions that govern the control over female sexuality while they support men's authority and control over women:

"Moral instruction for men: 1) on a long journey, do not keep another man's wife as company. 2) do not take another man's servants as your own. 3) do not deceive other people. 4) be faithful to your wife and children. 5) be decisive but do not profit from another man indecision. Moral instructions for women. It delineates women who are not good and don't deserve to be a daughter and a wife: 1) women who are uncertain and unpredictable. 2) sensual women who are ready to melt, like wax when brought near a flame. 3) women who are sexually insatiable like fire that is never satisfied by fuel. 4) the sly women who are unreliable. 5) women who are like thieves and who are ready to kill her husband. 6) dangerous women who are like sharp knives. 7) stubborn women who are hard to harness like a man herding twenty

¹This is a traditional text that was written in the form of "bundle of palm leaves (ปึกใบลาน)", see also Davis, 1984, p. 137. It is about 300 years old and was found in a temple (วัดไชยชุมพูน) in Chiang Rai province.

stubborn cows (in Prince Lau's Teaching for the World as quoted by Payomyong, 1990, p. 43)."

There is also a verse on women who are virtuous and who are considered wives:

"1) gentle women, polite, and cordial. 2) women who speak softly and sweetly. 3) women who are industrious. 4) women who love their families as well as their husbands' families. 5) women who are thrifty and carefully with the money. 6) women who love their husbands as they love their children. 7) women who respect their husbands as slaves respect their masters. 8) women who appear like a jewel to their husbands. 9) women who are concerned for the well being of their children and husbands (in Prince Lau's Teaching for the World as quoted by Payomyong, 1990, p. 44)."

Furthermore, there is another moral instruction in a "warning poem" (คร่าวอุทธารณ)², which prescribes a feminine role as virtuous and dedicated, like housewives who should stay home and look after things and serve (ปฏิบัติ) their husbands. It is an explicit declaration that women should be subservient and subordinate to their husbands:

"Women's five duties to their husbands: 1) prepare clothes for your husbands (clean, iron, and lay out the clothes). 2) keep the house looking beautiful and orderly. 3) keep household utensils in their proper places. 4) take care of your husbands in terms of illness. 5) speak sweetly to your husband. Husband's ten obligations to wives: 1) earn money for the family. 2) be the leader of the family. 3) be the teachers of your wives and children. 4) be the person who thinks about the family's progress and well being. 5) take care of your parents as well as

²It is the most poetic form which is one type of traditional text in Muang script (คำเมือง). It is in the form of pap made from the inner bark of the saa tree, see also Davis, 1984, p. 137. It is approximately 200 years old.

your wives' parents. 6) conceal your wives' mistake. 7) provide good shelter. 8) be generous and love your relatives. 9) don't ignore your wife and children at times of illness. 10) be a good example of your wife. Married women's duties: 1) be humble and helpful at the home of parents-in law. 2) don't dress to attract other men's attention. 3) practice self restraint. 4) turn on the light at night. 5) have the bed well-made. 6) prostrate oneself at husband's feet before going to bed. 7) do not place yourselves higher than your husbands. 8) get up early and prepare food. 9) prepare face-washing water for your husband. 10) when preparing food, make sure that everything is clean. 11) never criticize your husbands either in front of or behind their backs. 12) never threaten your husbands. 13) always follow your husbands (in speech, action etc.). 14) consider what you should do and what you should not do (in warning poem as quoted by Payomyong, 1990, p. 45-46)."

There is an ideology of male dominance in which men are superior to women in the position they take in coitus and in their access to greater magic power which is described in a study by Davis (1984, p. 65). Female is inferior in all respects to male. One is born as a woman because of an inadequate store of Buddhist merit. Two grandmothers (age 70 and 75 years old) told me about their experiences of being Northern Thai women in their generation , they said:

"Our elder people said that we have little merit (บุญน้อย) to be born as women. If we want to be reborn as a man, we need to preserve mercy and meditation or make sufficient merit for three existence lives. Being born as a man means that he has made a lot of merit (บุญมาก). If he wants to be reborn as a woman, it only takes him one life to pray for it. You can see how we have little merit, our women are not allowed to enter the second fence of the Pratat Doi Suthep, พระธาตุคอกยสุเทพ (a place where a relic of the Buddha is enshrined). If a woman goes into that prohibited area, there will be a big storm. Our mothers told us a

story about a big storm when one woman entered that area. . . When we were married, we were told to wipe our husbands' feet with our hair and to pay respect to them by prostrating ourselves (กราบ) at their feet before going to bed. But we didn't wipe our husbands' feet, we only prostrated ourselves. We must respect and take good care of them, and should be neat in household chores, and patient. Our ancestors told us that a man is the forelegs of an elephant. . . Also, our lower garments must be washed separately from our husbands' clothes, and we should not hang the garments at head height in order that our husbands can avoid walking past them, and the garments should be put underneath their clothes. If their parents see we put the garments on top of their clothes, they will say that we are not good women, and that we try to degrade and control our husbands. . . . When we were about 14 years old, just about at the beginning of puberty (เป็นสาว), our parents warned us not to play or get close to young men. They said that it is a bad thing that we should avoid. If someone knew that we were touched by a man, there would be some gossip among our neighbors, and villagers would say that we are bad women. A woman should preserve her body. If she loses her virginity (เสียตัว), she won't be able to get it back. And it is really a great loss. The man's parents will look down on her as a loose woman. . . . Our parents weren't concerned us as much with their sons as they were with their daughters. When their sons went out, they just told them not to have contact with bad guys. For us, we could not go out alone at night. When the village had ceremonies, we were only allowed to go out as a group or if we were accompanied by our parents. . . . We only finished the 2nd grade level of primary education. At that time most boys went to monastery schools. It was monks who taught them how to read and write. "

Some elder women said they tell their granddaughters to pay attention to their education as much as they have the opportunity to do so. So they won't be stupid like those who cannot read and write, and so they don't have to work hard like them. One woman in my mother's generation also told me about the

inferior status of being born as a woman. She was taught by her parents that "having a daughter is like to have a jar of fermented fish in front of the house (มีลูกสาวเหมือนมีโอ่งปลาอยู่หน้าบ้าน)." If a fly lays eggs into the fish, it will cause worms which means that if a man sleeps with a daughter, she will get pregnant, and if the man doesn't accept her to be his wife, it will dishonor her family.

Another woman, Khulaab, who was about 42 years old, shared her experiences of being a woman by saying that she felt disadvantaged because she had to work hard both inside and outside the house. She said that men place the burden on women by giving them most of the responsibility for cleaning house, childcare, and even earning a living. Today women need to go out to work which is not the same as in the past. After coming home from work, women are also required to do the household work. Sometimes women become very tired of this heavy burden. She said that she needs to ask her husband for help. "He'll help me only if I ask him to do", she said. ". . Men care more about what their friends think even though they would like to help us. They fear that their friends will tease them and call them a weak man who does household chores. . . They will say, "Hah!! Your wife gives you work to do!!!" If someone comes while he is helping with the household chores, they'll say that he is the servant of his wife (ทาสรับใช้เมีย). He's got a woman's face (หน้าตัวเมีย), they say, not a man. . . I think women do more work than men in the family life. We work hard. . . And we also lie down beneath them. We are always subservient to them (ทาสรับใช้เขาตลอด). . . That's why the elders told me that it was sinful (บาป) to be born as a woman."

On the other hand, Khulaab, also internalized the ideals of femininity that glorify motherhood, subservience, self-sacrifice, and long-suffering

endurance. She also supported the ideology of the housewife as being a, "gracious woman, (กุลสตรี)" who should be equipped with good culinary skills, pleasant words, and patience to nurture marital bliss. As she said, women need to be good both inside and outside the house, or should be good in everything. But they should not be too coarse (กระด้าง). Women should not only be good at household chores. They need to be good at making the family happy and at teaching their children how to be good people. A charming woman should be good in household chores. She also complained that now young girls are not very concerned about being good at household chores.

The notion of the polluting nature of menstrual blood has been incorporated into the belief system of this local community. Some of the women in my mother's generation shared their experiences of menstruation. They said that when they are menstruating, they are prohibited from entering or setting foot in the kitchen garden to pick vegetables, such as basil leaves, chilli pepper etc. This is because it is believed that the inside of the body is stale and has burst (แตกเน่า), and that the body is hot from the wasted blood (เลือดเสีย). This destructive heat can cause the living plants to shrivel and die. One of these woman said that she went to pick up some plants while she was menstruating and a day later the plants shriveled and died. Furthermore, menstrual blood is regarded as a polluting and morally degrading substance or a lower thing (ของต่ำ). Therefore, women are prohibited from entering Buddhist monasteries. One of the women said, " It will be sinful if I enter the temple while I'm menstruating."

This notion of the polluting and sinful nature of menstruation is transmitted to daughters, but seems to be degraded among the young girls. Only a few of my young informants told me that they still believed in this

notion of polluting menstruation. One of them said her mother doesn't go to the temple during her menstrual period and told her that it is sinful to do that. So she doesn't go to the temple during her period either. But some girls told me that they did enter Buddhist monasteries while they were menstruating and that they did not tell anyone about it. There are some girls in the groups who heard from their elders about the prohibition of picking up vegetables in the kitchen garden. One of them said they didn't allow menstruating woman to stir the *kao matuupayart* (ข้าวมธุปายาส).³ The *kao matuupayart* was considered a sacred ritual and menstruating women were not permitted to participate in the preparation because they were considered polluting. Some of the girls believed that menstruation is polluting. They didn't want to jump over the boys during gymnastic sessions in physical education class. The girls who felt this way also accused the girls who did jump over the boys of doing a bad thing.

Practices that reinforce the notion of the superior status of men were noticed on several occasions in functions of ritual practices. These are known generically in Thai as *ngann* (งาน). These are commonly social gatherings which include domestic rites, temple fairs, and merit-making occasions such as the celebration of a new house. During the ritual ceremonies in the temple hall, elderly men and adult males sit immediately in front of the monks, women and young children sit to the rear. All of the ritual specialists are men, and only men possess spells, magic formulas and divinatory texts. Women are likely to know only a few phrases. They have to gather gifts to present to the

³This is a special kind of food making for a special occasion, such as for the celebration of new Buddha image. It is made of rice with milk and mixed with honey. This ritual still practiced in some temples in this district. It should be virgin females wearing white clothes who perform the ceremony in the beginning.

monks and to prepare food, snacks, soft drinks and other supplies to serve the people who come to join the ceremonies. It is women's responsibility to make sure that everyone is served and satisfied with food. This is very important in domestic rites, particularly the celebration of a new house (งานขึ้นบ้านใหม่) because it is considered to be part of the host's hospitality. This service by women no doubt enhances men's prestige in the community.

Even though the notion of polluting menstrual blood and the inferior status of women in ritual practices is rarely passed on to daughters, the ideology of the housewife in the domestic sphere, as well as ideal feminine roles based on notions of modern or westernized women have been adopted by young Thai women. Ideas concerning men's superiority have been incorporated into young girls' perceptions of their expected roles as good Thai women. I will address this issue in the following sections.

Experiences of Feminine Role as a Thai Woman

The young girls' experiences of their feminine roles are divided into two sections. The first concerns perceived ideal feminine characteristics. The second concerns feelings of being a woman.

Perceived Ideal Feminine Characteristics

A young girl's perception of herself as a woman or gender image, is affected by the ideals of her society. Gender role expectations in Thai society, particularly from family and community, influence young girls' perceptions of their feminine roles. It is clear that the training and social conditioning of Thai women has aimed at producing "good women." There is a clear polarization of what it means to be a "good" and a "bad" woman as perceived by these young

girls. In addition, the penetration of capitalism and the modernization that is associated with the transitional changes in the local community has introduced ambiguity in gender images. Some contradictions repeatedly occurred both in the group discussions and in in-depth interviews, as well as in the essays written by each informant. The contrast between "old fashioned" and "modern" women was often mentioned by the informants. There were repeated references to things being "different from in the old days." When I asked in focus group what they thought about being forced to be "well-mannered" women, some informants pointed out a conflict between their own and their parents' disapproval of their feminine roles in that:

Kig: If I sit improperly, my mom complains. Then I have to sit with my knees together

Kai: When old people visit our houses and is not neat and clean like their expectations of what women should do in the past. They'll think that we are not good women

Kase: Yes, they always complain and complain.

Kug: Absolutely, my mom likes to scold me too.

Kase: They like to watch old movies, but we like to watch modern movies.

And if we watch teenage movies or listen to the pop songs that we like, they complain that it is worthless or ridiculous to listen to those kinds of song. They tell us to listen to the old songs.

Kai: It is very different in that now technology is more advanced than in the past.

Young girls are becoming increasingly exploited by capitalist expansion through commercial endorsements and publicity appearances, such things as commercial advertisement, and beauty contests. There are strong markers of

modernity (ทันสมัย), while there is also a strong sense among girls that elders are old-fashioned and that they try to control the girls' behavior. Also, an ideology in which a woman's beauty is considered to be her major asset has penetrated this local community, impacting young girls' self-perceptions.

Duang is considered one of the most beautiful girls in the school. She seems to be the favorite person for both her family and the teachers. She was chosen to be the drum major of the school band. I had heard some girls gossip that Duang had received special privileges from the teachers. One of the other girls, said: "It is lucky to be born as a pretty woman who can wear beautiful and fashionable dresses." During my observation of school activities such as the New Years fair, and sports day, I also noticed that parents tended to pay special attention to their daughters' dress, attempting to make them prettier than other girls. The girls were very proud to make themselves beautiful with their make-up, beautiful clothes, and ornaments. Furthermore, in the school library, the girls often looked at the beauty of the models and the fashions in the magazine rather than reading scientific news or novels. Some of the girls in the groups expressed that they would like to be modern women. Most of them expressed the desire to wear fashionable teenage dresses if they had a chance to do so. As one of them said: "just to be modern like others, to dress as people in the modern world dress. It looks awful to wear a Thai sarong while the others wear jeans."

There are some contradictions regarding the essential characteristics of femininity as perceived by these young girls. They have ambiguous feelings in adopting feminine roles during the process of their gender formation. On the one hand, they want to be strong, independent, and equal to men while at the same time they want to preserve their socially constructed feminine role as

gentle and proper women. They still want the men to be strong, and to be the leaders who act as providers and protectors for their family members while they also want men to be polite, respectful, and to accept women's rights. Furthermore, if they want to prove that they are brave and tough as masculine, they will be labeled a *Tom*⁴(ทอม). Three examples will illustrate some aspects of the young girls' experiences of their feminine roles. These experiences were expressed through their essays which responded to the two questions "What characteristics should a woman have?" and "What characteristics should a man have?"

Example. 1

Duang's personal view of what characteristics a woman should have, state that:

"There are different types of women in the world. Some are weak and some are strong and do not give in to difficulties and hardships. In the past, women used to be the hindlegs of an elephant because women were the weaker sex.

Nowadays, our nation is developed. So women are changing from having weak to having strong personalities. Women should be strong and patient in every way. A woman should be a good wife, work outside the house, and should be responsible for housekeeping. She must help to earn income for the family. Some women are lured to become prostitutes with their lack of knowledge and language barriers.

In the world, we believe that women have rights to do everything for themselves, and are not controlled by someone else. Therefore, I think women and men are in the same position or they represent the same legs of the elephants."

⁴This term is a loan word from the English word "Tomboy." Although the term is perceived by some Thai adults as masculine lesbian, it is not perceived as lesbian by the young girls.

Duang's personal view of what characteristics man should have, state that:

"Men are the stronger sex and are leaders in every way. So men are viewed as the forelegs of an elephant because they can do hard work and take more responsibility.

Nowadays, men are strong. Men need to be responsible for themselves and their families. A man should earn income and take care of his family, and should be strong and patient in work. He should not drink, be addicted to any drugs, and he should not wander around with friends who might take him to do bad things. He should respect women and accept that women have the same rights as men.

Being a good man, he should be responsible for family, he should not be too indulgent and forget himself and his family. He should help in earning income to support himself and his family."

Example. 2

Tuk's personal view of what characteristics a woman should have, state that:

" In my personal view, women should have these characteristics:

1) Knowledge. Women should have broader knowledge to protect themselves from being lured by the men. We should have enough knowledge to make our intellect deeper. 2) Gentleness. Women naturally tend to be polite and gentle in all ways. 3) Independence. Nowadays, it is not necessary for men to help women on every occasion. Women don't have to be followers (the hindlegs of an elephant). 4) To guard your reputation (รักษาศักดิ์ศรี). This is an essential characteristic for a woman. Nowadays, women tend to be loose. Women should try to preserve their bodies and their self-respect. 5) Clean and be proper (สะอาดเรียบร้อย). This is a characteristic that has accompanied women since the old days, which makes women different from men. 6) Self confidence. Women should be strong and confident in making decisions, and do whatever they think is right. 7) Pride in being a women. Now, there are some women who tend to act like men which is bad. We should be proud of ourselves. It is great to be born as a woman.

Being a woman makes one more gentle in some ways. In the past, women had to be really proper. But now these strict rules are decreasing because women have to increase their ability to help themselves."

Tuk's personal view of what characteristics a man should have, state that:

"Men are leaders who are strong and who direct women to do certain things in most circumstances. Man is the forelegs of the elephant while woman is the hindlegs of the elephant. In my opinion, men should have the following characteristics: 1) Strong and patient. Every man is trained to be tough which means that he doesn't give up easily. 2) Leader. A man has to be the leader of the family. 3) Boldness. He should be courageous to do good things and to discourage bad things. 4) Pride in being a man. Men should be proud of themselves and act like men. They should not act like a woman or *Katoey*⁵(กะเทย). 5) Pleasure-loving. Men are more pleasure-loving than women. 6) Love one's dignity. Men tend to be strong in preserving their dignity. They don't let someone look down on them, and they are easily challenged when provoked by others. 7) Respect women. Men should respect women instead of pushing them around.

A man should be a leader and should devote himself to a woman. He should love to be a man more than love to act like a woman, or else he would appear like a *Katoey*. He should proud to be a man."

Example. 3

Dang's personal view of what characteristics a woman should have, state that:

"In the past, women had to stay at home and do housework all the time. They had to be cautious in all their manners in order to be considered as an ideal and virtuous Thai woman who speaks softly and is good at sewing. They were not allowed to go out, and only men could go out to work outside the home.

⁵It is a term that Thais call a man who acts like a woman. Nowadays, the term is not unpopularity used by young generation.

Nowadays, our nation is developed. We are now using many kinds of modern equipment. Women can go out to work and have to race against time. So women need to have higher education than in the past where women did not get an education and had to stay home. Women have to help their husbands by seeking jobs outside the house. Some women can do the same hard work as men. But women should not only enjoy their outside work, they must also be responsible for taking care of the housework. They should be well-mannered, respectful, and kind. They should speak softly and should not discriminate against people by class. The most important thing is to be a good wife and a good mother.

Now women should not ignore that they have to take more responsibility than in the past. They should be a good person and be responsible, be a good wife and a good mother. They need to have higher education, work efficiently, have a good relationship with others, and do the housework as much as they can."

Dang's personal view of what characteristics a man should have, state that:

"Men have different kinds of personalities. Some are good and some are bad. Some of them are bad tempered, rough in speaking, not gentle, and are not gentlemen. But some are gentlemen, soft-minded, and calm.

A good man should be responsible for his family and not addicted to any drugs. He should not drink and smoke. He should be a gentleman, treat women gently, and should not be corrupted. He should be a supporter and advisor for family members, able to build good relationships with others, and should not believe others easily. He should be a good leader of the family and he should not oppress women. He should not too extravagant or too thrifty, and should be able to improve the economic status of his family. Furthermore, he should be strong and work efficiently, and should also be a good husband and a good father. The most important thing is that he should be a real gentleman."

This ambiguity in the young girls' perceptions of their feminine roles was congruent with the findings from the focus group discussions, in-depth interviews with the key informants, and my observation in the field. The feminine characteristics, pointed out by the young girls, can be categorized into: (1) women should be gentle and well-mannered, (2) women are weak, passionate and emotional, and dependent (3) women should be dedicated to families as dutiful mothers and wives, and (4) women should preserve their reputation.

Women Should Be Gentle and Well-mannered

In this ideal type of feminine characteristic, most of the informants seemed to agree that women should be polite, gentle, and well-mannered in every way. They use the term "to be proper" (เรียบร้อย) which is normally used when describing "good women" in Thai society. This is a term which is difficult to define in English since it means more than being simply well-mannered. The term is normally used when describing a woman in Thai society who acts, speaks, and dresses in a modest way. Explanation of this property was given by these young girls as:

Daeng: Women should be proper and gentle.

Tuk: We should maintain Thai cultural values that women must be proper.

Tan: Be proper in every manner to be a virtuous Thai woman. And can do every household chore.

Dum: Be proper both in front of people and in private. This includes showing respect to elders, and acting gently and politely.

Porn: Not to be mischievous like a boy.

Ya: Dress properly, not dress provocatively.

Jeub: Not act rigidly and speak politely.

Most of the informants agreed that women should be more proper than men. Girls are expected to be proper in every way which includes speaking, dressing, sitting, walking, and eating. They should not play roughly like a boy. They are quite concerned about societal expectations, which are taught to them by their parents. As some of the girls pointed out:

Pu: If we do not sit properly when we have visitors in our houses, they will accuse us as being bad girls.

Pui: They will gossip about this.

Ping: My mom told me that if I don't sit properly while we have visitors, my parents will be accused of not teaching me to act properly. For boys, people know that they are rigid. They can sit in whatever way they like without being blamed by others.

However, there are some contradictions to these attitudes that were raised by some of the informants in the groups. As some of the informants said:

Kai: I don't believe that Thai women should worry so much about being proper as the society expects.

Kig: As I said before, we need to be out-going otherwise we are not equal to men. If we are goody-goody women, we will be easily lured by the men.

Kai, Kig, Nee: We don't want to be goody-goody women like in the past.

Nee: We need to combine the past and the present.

Kase: In the past, women were proper but too passive. Now women not only need to be proper but also need to catch up with the changing environment.

Nee: And need to be strong as well.

In my interview with one of the young girls, she also expressed her feelings that she didn't like the teachers who strictly control the girls' behavior. The girls have to behave gently and politely. They must sit with their knees together otherwise they will be punished by the teachers. Furthermore, the teachers tell the girls to be cautious in their manner when they walk and when they meet with elder people.

Women are Weak, Passionate and Emotional, and Dependent

Girls' attitudes toward their gender image of being strong or weak are ambiguous. On the one hand, women are seen as physically and emotionally weak. The girls frequently described women as very soft and weak. Women cannot tolerate with hard work like the men, they say. They are vulnerable to influence or easily convinced by someone (ใจอ่อน), whereas men are intrinsically strong of body and mind (ใจแข็ง). On the other hand, women need to be tough like a man. They need to be strong in order to adapt with the changing society where women have to work outside the home. It is striking that most young girls feel they should be strong in order to prevent themselves from being the victims of men's abuse. However, if they want to prove that they are brave or tough, they will be labeled as a *Tom*. In reply to the question "Are women weaker than men?" Most of the young girls replied:

"Some of them, but most women are weaker than men."

"Women are weaker than men both physically and emotionally."

But some of them replied:

Tai: Women are not much weaker than men, just half as strong as men.

Most of the young girls perceived themselves to be more emotional than men. There are four terms that the girls frequently brought up: "weak-hearted" (ใจอ่อน), "cry baby" (จี้ร้องไห้), "inferiority complex" (จีใจน้อย), and "worrier" (คิดมาก). Weak-hearted is described as soft-hearted, or being easily influenced or reinforced by others. Cry baby is described as being fragile and crying easily. Inferiority complex is described as being sensitive and easily hurt by something. Worrier is described as thinking too much. They said:

Ming: Women cry easily on every occasion.

Maew: They are really emotional, they get angry and upset easily.

Tuk: Women are more soft-hearted than men. They are easily conciliated by others.

Kai: They are not as brave as men. Men are more courageous than women.

Mol: Women tend to cry a lot when they watch sad movies while men do not cry.

Noi & Au: Yes, they are easily hurt, they get angry and forget easily.

Mol: Some married women think too much that their husbands will have a minor wife (เมียน้อย).

Auan: When their husbands came home late, they think too much that their husbands might have minor wives.

According to the young girls, these emotional manners, particularly "cry baby" tend to be the important characteristics of being a woman. They associated these manners with one of the heroines, Kardtaa (กาดต้า), in a recent and popular soap-opera, "unhusked rice, (ข้าวเปลือก)." The heroine was trying to be a strong woman because as a child, she watched her mother be beaten by her father. She tried to be tough. She fought her step brother who tried to beat her sister-in-law. She seemed to be a *Tom* because she practiced judo, spoke

in a deep voice, and behaved roughly in front of men. But she was a woman because she cried easily, and she was soft-hearted. In the story, she cried on every occasion. In addition, she was good in household chores. So she was not considered a *Tom* by the young girls. As some of the girls said

Noi: Women get upset easily.

Tai: But women who are *Toms* keep their feelings inside. They should not let others know about their feelings.

There was a strong sense of rejecting women who tend to be strong and behave like men or a *Tom*. They are seen as being hard or rigid (กระด้าง)

which is not considered appropriate feminine behavior in Thai society.

Homosexual orientation was clearly labeled as inappropriate by this local community. The teachers actively tried to encourage the students not to engage in *Tom* or *Dee* behavior. The boys who acted gently like a girl would be labeled as *Toot*, ตุ๊ด ("Tootsie"). Tootsie is a new term that is commonly used by adolescents to describe a man who acts like a woman. In the past, men who acted this way were called *Katoey*. The term *Toot* was brought to Thailand in the 1980s by a American movie "Tootsie." In this movie, the actor, Dustin Hoffman, had to dress and act like a woman to get a job as an actress in a T.V. series.

The girls described "*Toot*" as a boy who shows personality traits that are regarded as feminine or who acts like a girl- - gentle and polite- -, who walks effeminately, and is soft-hearted like a woman, who dresses in feminine clothes, who plays and gets along with girls and who doesn't like to play with boys. *Toots* also like to be pretty, speak with exaggerated tones, and are easily startled by others. *Tom* was described as being a girl who tries to act and dress like a boy, who is coarse and does not act properly like a girl, who speaks with

a deep voice, and who likes to flirt with girls. These girls are believed to walk with their chest thrown out and bow-legged like a boy. *Toms* like to have a female lover, which is called "*Dee*⁶, " (feminine lesbian partner).

They said the teachers would warn the boys who acted like *Toots* to behave like boys, and also warned the girls who acted like *Toms* to behave as a girl. They were told by the teachers not to have contact with *Tom* and *Dee* because they have very strong feelings with someone that they love. They will hurt the person who tries to get away from them. The teachers told the girls not to act like *Tom's* because it is unacceptable behavior. Most of the girls had heard about *Tom* and *Toot*, but only a few of them heard about *Dee*. Most of them said they did not know about Gay. In fact, there was a sense of discriminating against *Tom* and *Toot* among these young girls. When I asked "What are your feelings with *Tom* and *Toot*?" They replied:

Pui: I don't want to associate with them, and I don't want our society to have people who act like *Toot* or Gay.

Pom: It degrades Thai society.

Jeub: Women should behave like women, and men should behave like men.

Pom: This will make Thai society liveable and worth seeing.

Most of them in one group said they worried about the reputation of the country, that it would be looked down upon by the foreigners who came to visit Thailand.

⁶This term is loan word from the English word "Lady." It is interesting that this term and Tomboy both pass through a similar semantic shift from neutral connotation to a negative connotation which reflects the social expectation of gender roles in Thai society.

In the focus groups, some of the young girls admitted to having homosexual inclinations. They seemed to have ambivalent feelings of being *Toms*. On the one hand, they felt that it makes them strong, tough and brave. They felt that they could protect themselves and their friends from being harassed or molested by boys. One of them said she fought against the boys and defeated them. On the other hand, they dislike being associated with *Toms* because they were ridiculed by the boys. Their parents disapproved of them behaving like a boy and dressing like a boy. As one of them said: "My parents said that it is disgusting to behave like a boy." One of the girls was dissatisfied with her friends when they pointed out in the group discussion that she was a *Tom*. During my observation in the school, I noticed that these young girls act tough and strong like the boys. They were not cautious about being well-mannered in speaking, walking and sitting like the other girls. There was one girl who explicitly expressed her inclination to be a *Tom*. She said she really wanted to be a boy so she could play with the boys and hang out with friends as the boys could do. But a girl could not do this. I noticed that she played aggressively with the boys. She was accused of being *Tom* by her neighbors when she was playing with the boys, and she never was concerned about it. She was trying to flirt with one of the girls in her class because she was very cute. She said that if she was a weak girl, she would be harassed by the boys. However, she also has conflicting feelings. In her essay, she stated:

"Nobody can force us to be born as a boy or a girl, but it is natural for everybody to be born as human beings. We cannot choose the way we are born or the sex that we are. But I am so proud of myself that I was born as a woman, because of women's role as a mother, the person who gives birth to our lives.

But being a woman can have both advantages and disadvantages. Some advantages are: 1) women are responsible for nurturing family members to make sure that they are comfortable and happy, and they are responsible for financial management in the household, and 2) women have to clean and wash the dirty clothes, and clean the dirty dishes, and get her husband's clothes ready for work in the morning.

The disadvantages are: 1) if you are a weak woman, you will be humiliated by others, 2) if you are not a good cook, you will be accused of being a bad housewife, and 3) if you sit with your knees separately on the floor while you are eating, you will be accused of being impolite. But if you are a man, you can sit with your knees separated on the floor without being blamed.

Therefore, I don't want to be a woman. It is advantageous to be a man because you can flirt with pretty women. If I could choose to be born, I would like to be born as a man because I can flirt with pretty women and get married to the prettiest woman. However, to be born as a woman, you have to be strong."

Even though the young girls rejected women who behaved like a *Tom*, they also argued that women should be brave, tough and masculine. They felt that women in the past were too weak and too gentle, and that they were vulnerable to the desires of others. The girls said they were taught by the teachers and parents to be proper, but some of them thought that they should be tough as well as being proper. As one of the girls, Tig, stated in her essay: "If every woman is strong or proud of herself, a man will not look down on her as a weak woman who cannot do anything. My ideal type of woman should always be brave and patient. She should not easily give in to difficulties." Furthermore, there are some arguments that the young girls brought up during the group discussions.

Tuk: We should be proper, but we should be strong as well.

Tig: We must fight back.

Daeng: We should not yield to the boys too much, but we also should not be too coarse.

Porn: Strong inside.

Daeng: To be soft and gentle outside but strong inside.

Duang: Women should be brave and tough.

Tig: Be intrinsically strong minded.

Porn: But we should not be as coarse as a *Tom*.

There was also an ambiguity in the issue of whether women should be a follower or a leader. There was a strong sense of rejection against the Thai proverb, "A husband is the forelegs while a wife is the hindlegs of an elephant (ชายเป็นข้างเท้าหน้าหญิงเป็นข้างเท้าหลัง)" which stated that women were subordinate to their husbands. The girls said it allowed men to have too much control over women. Women were required to stay at home and only men could make important decisions. As some girls replied in the groups when I asked the question, "Do you agree that a man is the forelegs of the elephant and a woman is the hindlegs of the elephant?"

Daeng: I disagree because we live in modern times, not as in the old days.

Dum: Some women might have more abilities than men. So it is not necessary for women to follow men all the time. We should not only be housewives who are good at household chores. Sometimes men, who are the leaders, might need someone to consult with.

Kai: I won't follow them. It is not necessary.

Pa: Women should be able to follow their own ideas.

Kai: Not follow whatever men tell them to do.

Kase: Now women can do some work that men can do.

Duang: Women should be the same legs of the elephant and have equal

dignity.

There were a few girls who argued in the groups that men should still be leaders in some circumstances and need to be more responsible than women. As Tig disagreed with the group, she said: "Men should be the leaders because they are stronger than women. Men can do more kinds of tasks than women."

Some girls seemed to agree with Tig. As Duang said: " Yes, it is another part that we should consider as well." When I asked who should be the person to make the decision first? Some of the girls said it should be the men who make the initial decision and then women should follow.

Most of the girls have ambiguous feelings on this issue. Tig is one example. On the one hand, Tig expressed clearly that women should move forward or change in response to the modern world. As she said in her essay:

"I think it is old-fashioned if a women accepts being the hindlegs of the elephant, and allows a man to be the forelegs of an elephant. Nowadays, technology is advanced and women need to seek their own jobs. . . There are some women who want to be businesswomen, or a prime minister, like in Sri Lanka. Therefore, it means that women are thinking about being the forelegs of an elephant. . . Now the world is becoming globalized. So women should be able to do whatever men can do."

On the other hand, she also felt that she needed some protection from men, who she said should be strong, confident, and the leaders of the family. As Tig said: "A good man should be a good leader both in the family and in the public sphere." Another girl, Kase, also pointed out that, " Men should be responsible for his family's duty and should take care of women."

It is clear that the image of "good/capable women" which is shaped in the creation of Thai folktales and soap-operas might be an important influence

for these young girls' notions of women being smart and playing leading roles. In most of the new folktales such as "A Daughter of the Sun, ลูกสาวพระอาทิตย์," and "A Miracle of the Black Ruby, อภินิหารทับทิมดำ," the heroines are good in fighting and are educated. In the soap-operas, women also shown of having lot of active roles in many types of occupations such as engineers, lawyers, medical doctors and teachers. As many young girls mentioned in their essays, women should be educated, and independent. Some girls pointed out that girls need to be more educated so they won't be cheated easily or they won't be victims who are lured into prostitution.

Women Should Be Dedicated to the Family

Most of the girls felt that they were obliged to perform household tasks and take care other family members. It is clear that these young girls have grown into adulthood within domestic spheres that see their primary roles as being mothers and wives. They have undergone an important process training them to be "feminine" and to be a wife and mother, which is embedded in their unconscious development. I found that most of the girls were very close with their mothers and grandmothers. The girls usually remain at home where they are taught domestic skills, while the boys are likely to run around (เที่ยว) with their friends.

Many of these girls see motherhood as essential to the attainment of female identity. They associated the important value of mother as being the person who gives birth to human beings and who takes care of the family's well being. As one of the girls, Tuk said in her essay: "Women are mothers who give birth to every human being. Therefore, women play an important role on both an individual and societal level."

Most of the young girls feel that it is good to be a woman who is the caretaker of her family. They feel that they are obliged to give assistance when parents are ill. It is striking that most of young girls felt men do not fulfill their obligation in assisting or supporting parents. As one girl said: " For one thing, it is good for me to be a woman to take care of my mother when she gets sick, and help her with the household chores, not like a man who is not willing to help his mother when she gets sick." This was also found in another study in which older people viewed daughters are better active supporters than sons in their ability to provide proper care for their old parents (Pramualratana, 1992).

Furthermore, being good in household tasks is an essential characteristic of being a woman. The ideology of housewife, which is transmitted through their mothers, grandmothers, teachers, and through women's magazines, is perceived as an ideal image of Thai womanhood by these young girls. Despite their notion of having more economic freedom, the young girls still believe that they must perform as good wives. Most of the girls feel that it is advantageous for women to do the household tasks for their families. Women should be good housewives. Several girls stated that women should also work outside the home but should not ignore their responsibility in housework. Taek explained her feeling of being a woman in that,

" Men like to wander around. But women like to stay home and do the household work such as cooking, washing the dishes, cleaning the house, and sewing. If women don't take care of the household chores and like to wander around, who will take care of the job? Men cannot do it so women need to do it like one of the proverbs that says, men work outside the house while women do the housework."

In responding to the question of what is the difference between *Tom* and women, Au pointed out that if one is a woman, she should be able to do the household tasks including cooking, and rearing the children.

I would agree with Tantiwiranond and Pandey (1987) who state that the ideology of motherhood has further depreciated the economic value of women by over-glorifying the moral aspects of being a mother. Buddhism tends to differentiate the moral obligations of sons and daughters with respect to their parents. A son could enter the monastic order which would insure his parents' betterment in their next lives. But a daughter could not. She had only one way to return her gratitude by being a life-long caretaker of her parents. The girl was expected to fulfill her triple roles as dutiful daughter, caring wife, and a sacrificing mother (p. 140-141).

Women Should Preserve their Reputation and their Virginity

It could be seen that there is a different socialization that enforces a double standard that discriminates against girls, and thus affects young girls' self- development of their gender image. This double standard allows men to have two forms of sexual interaction, commercial and sexual behavior within courtship, while it allows women only one form of sexual interaction which is sexual behavior within courtship. Women have been warned to take extreme caution in maintaining their chastity in order to avoid gossip and contempt from the villagers. *Rak nuan sa-nguan tua* (รักนวลสงวนตัว) is a timeless message that has been traversed through the generations from grandmother to mother to daughter. It is the concept that firmly grounded in the Thai society which refers to "protect one's virginity-avoid premarital sexual relationships, save oneself for marriage." The girls explained *rak naun sa-nguan tau* as:

Noi: Love yourself by not allowing men to touch your body.

Tai: Don't lose your virginity "*sia tua*" (เสียตัว) to a man.

Mol: Preserve one's virginity until one becomes a woman.

Ming: Not allowing sexual contact.

Porn: Not allowing men to touch or hold your hand.

Jeub: Not going beyond a friendship relation which means men and women
can sit and talk to each other but cannot hold hands.

Tan: Not go out alone with a man or allow him to touch her body.

Duang: If she has dignity(รักศักดิ์ศรี).

However, it is clear that the girls in some groups tend to accept some various degree of intimate relationship including touching, and holding hands or hugging. As they said:

Kig: It is O.K. for touching and holding hands.

Kai: But not hugging. It is disgusting, and our parents won't like it.

Dum: But it should not too much.

Duang: Not lose one's virginity.

Exposure to Western society which has been dominated by romances broadcast through television soap operas and advertisements might lead the girls to accept some kinds of affectionate behavior toward men, which used to be strictly reserved for the traditional sphere of marriage. It could be seen that there is an increase in frequencies and explicitness of sexual references in the television programming and advertising than in the past decade. This reflects that modern Thai society has been influenced by Western values in shaping and determining the content of the television soap opera that tends to include more fantasy love and romance than it used to be in the past.

The notion of "*sia tua*" (to lose one's virginity) is viewed as the worst thing that not only destroys women's worth but also that of their families. I found that "*sia tua*" is a broad term and that has different levels of meaning for these young girls. It could vary from touching, holding, and hugging to sexual intercourse. It might mean loss of virginity to some women. But for some women, it might mean having bodily contact with men. Only few girls perceived "*sia tua*" as having bodily contact with men. As one of the girls said, "If you are hugged or kissed by a man, it means that you lose some part of your body to him." Most of the young girls perceived "*sia tua*" as a loss of one's virginity. However, the young girls did not associate *sia tua* with married women because they behave in a socially acceptable way by following the marriage tradition.

According to the young girls, virginity or "พรหมจารี" is a woman's ultimate virtue. In Thailand, the term "hymen" is defined as "เยื่อพรหมจารี" which means lack of sexual experience or refers to someone who never has had a sexual experience. Therefore, a woman's hymen is a symbol of her own innocence and purity which represents the control over female sexuality by men in the Thai society. As some of the girls said:

Nid: *Sia tua* means to lose one's purity. Woman's purity is at her vagina

Porn: It means to take her virginity (เปิดบริสุทธิ์) or to have sexual intercourse for the first time.

One of the girls, Kase, explained "*sia tua*" as "ถูกเจาะไข่แดง" (the egg yolk is being punched) which is the slang that commonly used by Thais to describe intercourse. She also added:

"Virginity is very important for women. If a woman loses her virginity, she won't get it back. But men can still do this with several women without being accused by others. For a married woman, she will be gossiped about by others if she wants to have another husband. . . A woman must lose her virginity to only one man, which is her husband. It is degrading to lose her virginity to someone else."

Most of the young girls I talked with perceived that their female worth is characterized by their fundamental innocence and purity (ความบริสุทธิ์). The loss of virginity is the loss of their worth beyond recovery. The notion of Gain-Lose (ได้เสีย) which delineates men as the ones who gain, and women as the ones who lose, is firmly grounded in Thai society and has been traversed through the generations from grandmother to mother to daughter. As Gai said:

" My mom told me that if you lose your virginity, you won't be able to get it back, and it will cause you trouble if you get pregnant. . . My mom said it will lose a woman's worth, particularly if the man doesn't not accept her after she becomes pregnant. . . For men, they don't have anything to lose. No one knows if they have had sexual experience. But women cannot, people will know it when she gets pregnant. . . I heard many people say that if a woman loses her virginity, she will lose her worth or she will have no value anymore."

The other girl, Duen, said: "People gossip about the girls' behavior that they are chasing men. Instead of thinking about their work, they thinking about sex. . . People condemn only women, who are men hunters. Men don't have anything to lose. Women do."

It is clear that most of the young girls associated women's loss with getting pregnant in which women cannot conceal their behavior from being noticed by the society. Being pregnant out of wedlock is the worst thing that can bring dishonor to the family. As the girls discussed in the group:

Duang: She would be pregnant without the father. But some women who give their bodies to a man might commit suicide.

Dum: If he won't agree to marry them.

Duang: If the men won't accept her as a wife, she might kill herself.

Dum: Some girls' parents would be ashamed.

Duang: The parents would not tell anyone that their child was pregnant.

Most of the girls strongly agreed that women are the ones who lose while men don't lose anything. Even though sexual intercourse has not happened, just being watched by others while being touched by a man will be seen as a serious crime for that woman, and her reputation would be ruined. Therefore, they should be concerned about protecting their reputation. It is clear that the girls tend to accept the restrictions placed on them with regard to outdoor activity as being their own part of being girls. They are concerned with being criticized as bad girls if they roam around like boys. As some girls said:

Dum: Whenever you go, you should go with an adult. You should not go out alone with a boy. You should have an adult with you. And you should come back home on time.

Duang: You should have an adult as a chaperone.

These young girls tend to see themselves as passive receptacles of men's sexual passions. Most of the young girls I spoke to spoke of social pressure to expect men to initiate the courtship relation. When the relationship starts, they want the relationship to go on steady. Good women are expected to be inexperienced and naive in sexual matters. Therefore, proper behavior for women in gender relations is an important issue that women need to be concerned about in order to avoid public criticism. It is unacceptable for

women to reveal their own desires by displaying affectionate behavior to men. "Women don't dare say anything. . . Women would never tell men that they like them. They will lose their dignity. They would blush. . . When you talk of love, the men should speak first, and the women should only respond", Duen said. This was also supported by other girls, as Kase explained:

"It should be a man who initiates any demonstration of affectionate behavior. If he likes the woman, he can hold her hands, or even put his arm around her shoulders if he wants to. . . But a woman cannot do this. A woman should not express her feelings like this. . . It is not acceptable in the society. It has not been the Thai custom to allow women to act like this. . . if women act first, they will be accused of running after men (วิ่งหาผู้ชาย), and trying to catch a man (จับผู้ชาย)."

The other girl, Gai, expressed her feeling in that:

" I never see a woman as the person who starts the courtship relation. . . If a woman starts it, and the man doesn't like her as she thought or he might think of her as a friend, that woman will lose her face. . . But the man doesn't lose his face if the woman is not accepted him."

One of the group pointed out an example of virginity in one popular soap opera, "Daoprasuk, ดาวพระศุกร์" (Venus) which has been made into a television series several times. In this story, the heroine's mother, Saasiprapa (ศศิประภา), has become pregnant out of wedlock. Her nanny had encouraged her to induce an abortion but she decided to keep the baby. She had to leave her daughter, whose name was *Daoprasuk*, in the hospital in order to protect her reputation. After that she fell in love with a handsome General. She underwent great inner turmoil and felt ashamed with the loss of her virginity when the General asked her to marry him. She cried because she was not a virgin woman who deserved to wear a white wedding dress. As one of the girls

said: "The white color is a symbol of virginity." Daoprasuk also underwent great inner turmoil because she lost virginity to the hero. She felt ashamed and felt that she didn't have any worth at all. She cried when her step father told her that she should preserve herself for the right man. But the heroine eventually marries the hero with their parents' approval. This reflects a social context in which virginity is very much upheld, and in which women have been told to fulfill their feminine roles as good women.

There is a strong ideology that "good women" should take extreme caution to be chaste and to avoid gossip and contempt from others, particularly to protect their parents' reputation. The girls were warned to be cautious so that others would not blame their parents for not bringing them up properly (พ่อแม่ไม่สั่งสอน). This is due to the fact that villagers have close social relationships with each other. Whatever happens in the village is inevitably spread to neighbors.

Women who reveal their own needs and desires for sex have negative images as "bad women." There are many terms that the young girls can identify that label bad women in Thai society. It is clear that "bad women" were perceived as inverse proportion to their sexual availability. Thus the worst women were prostitutes, followed by girls who engaged in occasional, casual, but not commercial sex, and finally the girls who only go out on dates (ไปเที่ยวกับผู้ชาย) and don't listen to their parents (ไม่เชื่อฟังพ่อแม่).

The girls described prostitutes as bad women in the following ways: they give themselves to a man or prostitute themselves (ขายตัว); they want to have money; they don't do hard work, they like to have it easy and don't want to work in the sun (Manual labour is associated with women in lower status who have to work in the sun and get dark-colored skin); they act like a whore

by dressing in skimpy clothes and acting seductively (ล่อผู้ชาย); and they try to catch men and run after men. However, they also pointed out that there were some prostitutes whom they might consider as good prostitutes because they were forced to enter the sex industry without their willingness, and they need to send money to their parents. But those who are willing to enter sex industry for making money are labeled as bad prostitutes.

There are some terms which have a negative connotation for women who don't follow the traditional rules of gender role expectations. Girls who are labeled as flirtatious or loose (แรวด) are described as ones who go out with men or go out on dates at night, who dress sexy, who are considered to be a slut (ร่าเริง), or a tease (ล่อผู้ชาย) which is opened to seduction by act seductively and dress seductively. They are a kind of woman who is very easy to seduce (ใจง่าย), who is infatuated with a man (หลงผู้ชาย), and who would like to try to have sex with a man (อยากลอง). Some girls described these women as ones who got the itch for sex (คัน, it is the Thai idiom which have negative connotation for women). The girls also pointed out an example of one of the jealous female characters in the popular soap-opera, *Daoprasuk*, who was labeled as loose woman because she tried to tease the hero. She tried to seduce the hero by wearing provocative clothes and by acting very sexy. She also tried to catch the hero. This was in contrast to the heroine who acted as an ideal and virtuous Thai woman. She tried to be modest and played hard to get.

Girls who don't preserve themselves, who play with boys and allow boys to touch them are considered as behaving inappropriately. As some girls in the group said:

Kase: In the past, the girls didn't throw themselves to a boy. But now they do it anyway. Some girls in grade 5 or grade 6 are throwing themselves at

boys, and tease the boys.

Kig: Yes, some of them are making eyes at the boys and like to have the boys to chase and hit them.

Kug: Let the boys chase them and lift up their skirts.

Kase: I don't like it, it's disgusting.

Cajteeg (ใจแตก) "to fall in with a bad crowd" is another term which frequently used by the girls, parents and teachers to describe girls and boys who don't follow the set of rules and behaviors that are socially acceptable in Thai society. In general, it refers to girls and boys who don't think about their studies and don't listen to their parents. They grow up too fast or are wise beyond their years (แก่แดด), and they are often involved romantically with someone of the opposite sex. However, it usually has more of a negative connotation for girls than it does for boys. For girls, it means that they are boy crazy. They like to play with boys and go out on dates. They are considered to be loose or sexually permissive (ปล่อยเนื้อปล่อยตัว). It is believed that they would like to have sex with men or sleep with men, and to possibly run away with young men, which is considered the worst act. Some of the girls pointed out one of the Thai proverbs "ชิงสุกก่อนห่าม" (to taste forbidden fruit or jump the gun) which refers to girls who have or who are interested in premarital sexual encounters. For boys, however, this phrase simply means to be rebellious. For example, to go out with friends, to a discotheque, to gamble, drink, smoke, sniff glue or experiment with drugs.

This deeply-rooted cultural expectation of what it means to be a "good woman" leads these young girls to feel that they must repress their feelings or desires in order to be good girls as endorsed by society. The girls described a "good woman" as one who is proper and polite, who stays at home and looks

after things (อยู่กับเหี้ยมฝึกับเรือน), doesn't have many boyfriends, and doesn't fall in with a bad crowd (*cajteeg*). She should not be easy or loose, she doesn't engage in puppy love, she doesn't believe what every men tells her, and she should listen to her parents. In addition, she should pay attention to her studies and should not be sexually permissive. One would argue that Thai children are usually taught a blend of peacefulness, politeness, and deference which discourages strong overt expressions of emotion and encourages outward displays of self-control and unemotionality as described in one study (Weisz; et al, 1987). I would assert that parents tend to tolerate some of the boys' inappropriate behavior more than that of the girls'. This might be due to the fact that parents are concerned that their daughters will be enticed or forced into premarital sex as I discussed earlier.

Feelings of Being a Woman

According to the Thai cultural ideal of gender, young girls are taught to be modest, and cautious in preserving their reputation. They are disciplined by their mothers (or elders) to stay at home and attend to household chores. In addition, parents increase their supervision of girls when they approach puberty, both for the girls' sake and for their own sake. Young boys, however, are not censured for running off and hanging out with other youngsters. The gender role expectations of Thai society which aim at producing women roles as a good daughter, wife, and mother might affect the girls' feelings of being a woman.

Many young girls felt that they were highly restricted by their parents and felt that they don't have much freedom. This made some of them wish that they would be a boy. They have less freedom to express themselves than boys.

One girl said that she didn't like it that her mother complained if she didn't complete the household work. Yet boys don't have to do this work, she said. Their parents would do that for them. As some girls in the group replied to the question, "What does being a woman mean to you?":

Kai: I would like to be a boy.

Pa: I would like to be a boy too, it's better than being a girl.

Yai: Yes. If one is a girl, she is followed by her mom every day.

Kai: For the boys, they can play whatever they want to. They don't have to get pregnant. And girls have to do housework.

Yai: Yes, a girl is assigned to do the work most of the time. But for boys, they can go out all day, and roam around on their motorbikes.

Rai: One more thing, most dads like boys because they can inherit the family's lineage.

Kai: Boys have more freedom than girls. Girls have to stay home. Boys can go out at night. There is no loss for them. Their parents don't have to be concerned about them.

Yai: For girls, if they try to go out, they will be scolded by their parents.

This feeling of having less freedom was also expressed by one girl, Mol:

"Being born as a woman, sometimes I like it but sometimes I don't. I can't do what I want to do, as a man can. My mother always blames me. I can't go to some places that I want to go and I can't play as a boy does. For example, if school is dismissed early, the teachers would ask me to do more work. So I get home late, and I am scolded by my mother for being late.

It makes me feel that I don't have any freedom to do what I want to do. But in another way, my mother will be satisfied if I stay home and do housework instead. She said it is good to do that because I am a

girl. Whenever we have visitors, I have to behave quietly while my brother is playing around.

I feel that as a woman, there is no way I can behave like a man. I feel like being a man is better than being a woman. Overall, there is no freedom for a woman while a man can have plenty of freedom."

I would argue that the cultural ideal of gender stereotypes which is transmitted through child-rearing and socialization practices, has led parents to be more concerned in restricting their daughters' behavior and this has led to girls developing some negative feelings about being girls. Many of the young girls expressed their feelings of being a woman as being bored (เบื่อก), disadvantaged (เสียเปรียบ), and inferior (น้อยใจ). Two examples here will illustrate some aspects of the young girls' feelings of being a woman. These feelings were expressed through an essay which responded to the question: "What does being a woman mean to you?"

Example 1.

Pu's feeling of being a woman

"Why do we have to be separated into different sexes and then determine who is stronger than the other since we are all human beings? Why do we have to be born as a woman or a man? Why don't we all have the same sex with similar sexual organs instead of having different sexual organs?"

Women are better than men in some ways in that they can do certain things that a man cannot do. They take responsibility in their tasks more than men. But women are not better than men in other ways. Women need to be well-behaved and polite in everything they do, such as sitting carefully, speaking gently, and eating with good manner. They should not open their mouth or make a loud noise when they are chewing food. They should be aware while talking. Women have to sit down on the toilet instead of standing like men when they go to the

bathroom. Furthermore, they have to sit with their knees together, and have to pull their skirts under the knees while they are sitting. They must be careful not to wear an outfit that is too tight. But men can wear short, tight pants even if it shows their body and their sexual organs. They can do this without being blamed by others.

Moreover, if parents don't have enough money, they will sell their daughters to become prostitutes so that their daughters will send money back home.

These are feelings that occur for one who is born as a woman. However, it is better to be born as a woman than not to have chance to be born at all (!)"

Example 2.

Au's feeling of being a woman.

"Women are the weaker sex. They are fragile and cry easily (จี้ร็องไห้). It is a mix of good and bad things. Women need to be well-behaved and gentle, as well as polite. We have to say "ก๊ะ" and "กา" (a polite suffix) after each sentence when we speak in order to make us refined women. if you don't say kaa after each sentence, people will think you are a coarse woman.

There are two disadvantages to being a woman: 1) we have to get pregnant and 2) we have to menstruate. I don't want to menstruate since I have seen my mother suffer from abdominal cramps. She is prohibited from lifting heavy things which will increase her menstrual flow.

If I were a man, I would not have to menstruate and I would not have to get pregnant. Women have a disposition where they get angry more easily than men, and they bear a grudge longer than men. If I was a man, it would be difficult to make me angry, and I would forget more easily. Women have to do light housework, but I like to do hard work. If I were pregnant, I would not be allowed to eat some kinds of bad food (อาหารแสลง) which would harm the fetus and might cause death.

But in another way, being a woman is good. We don't have to drink and fight each other and smoke cigarettes, or end up with drug

addictions. If he is a good man, he won't become addicted to drugs. However, I don't like women who become prostitutes because they have to serve and please men and exchange their bodies for money. And they might eventually get AIDS.

Therefore, some women might appear to be rough on the outside, but might be gentle and well-behaved on the inside."

These feelings are congruent with the findings from focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with the key informants. Most of the girls felt that they are disadvantaged because they are the so-called "weaker" sex. They are confined to do certain activities as designated by gender role expectations. It is striking to find that some girls felt that getting pregnant and having menstruation retarded their achievements. This might be due to their close relationships with their mothers or other women who experienced some constraints upon female reproduction. They always get the same message from the parents and the teachers that they should realize that they are born as a woman and should be conscious of their feminine characteristics. Dang said: ". . . my mom told me that I should not behave like a boy because I am a girl. . . And the teachers also warn the girls to behave properly." As the girls explained their reason of feeling bored in the groups as:

Ping, Pu, & Ming: We feel bored. Women are the weaker sex. We are frequently humiliated, and cannot walk bow-legged like a boy.

Ming: We can't walk with heavy steps or stomp our feet. My mom scolds me when I walk like this, but she never scolds my brother.

Pu: And we can't whistle either.

Jeub: We can't sit with lifting our legs on the chairs, and cannot split our legs while we are lying. We can't do what we want to do such as to topple

over or climb trees.

Ping: I feel bored that woman have to get pregnant when they grow up.

Jib: My mom said it was very painful during delivery.

Ming: And some get depressed because of threatened abortion.

Pui, Ping, Pu & Jid: And some are lured into prostitution.

The girls who felt that they are disadvantaged and inferior explained their feelings as:

Mol: Girls are disadvantaged because when they grow up they need to have family.

Tai: And they have to get pregnant.

Mol: They will suffer with labor pain while men don't have to.

Noi: They are weak.

Tai: I feel inferior as a girl.

Noi: Because boys are stronger than girls.

Mol: Boys like to humiliate us.

There were few girls who disagreed that women are disadvantaged. As one of them said: "It is good to be born as a girl, so we don't have to be addicted to drugs as boys. Men have to do hard work while women don't have to tolerate that." It is striking that many girls mentioned that the boys like to humiliate them. Most of them said they are afraid that the boys will try to touch and nuzzle their cheeks, and try to touch their bottoms. Some of them were afraid that the boys will lift up their skirts. The boys started to do this when they are in Pratom 6 (grade 6). There were even cases where boys were punished by the teachers because they had tried to grab the girls' breasts. They were assigned to wear a placard around their necks announcing "sex predator, keep away, มนุษย์ป่ากามห้ามเข้าใกล้" while they were in the school for a whole

week. A few girls said some boys like to court them with extravagant gestures and syrupy words. I would argue that this reflects the cultural value of a gender-based double-standard in which boys are socialized to value experience and knowledge gained from visiting and courting girls, and even from visiting brothels.

Besides having these feelings, the girls also fear being victims of sexual abuse. The girls' parents always warn them not to go out alone at night. Duen is one example of a girl who was told by her grandmother not to, "go out at night because you are a girl. Be careful of men who get drunk. If they see you, you might be the victim of their sexual lust." Nid was told by her mother not to, "go out with a strange man. If one asks you, don't go with him. He might be a sex predator." Nid also said that there was a case in the village in which a woman was raped and killed in her house. In fact, there was one case of rape which happened to one of the girls in grade four two years ago. She was raped by her father's friend and didn't tell any one about this. After that her cousins reported to the teacher that they noticed that she got vaginal bleeding and they thought she was too young to menstruate. The teacher then got the information from the girl that the man had forced her to have sexual intercourse with him. The girl said she had told the man that she was in pain but he didn't listen to her. The man was put in jail for three years. No one knows where the girl is now. The teacher told me that she moved to stay in another village with her mother. Fear of stigma might be her main reason for leaving the village.

The teachers always warn the girls to avoid certain areas that are dangerous for girls. They are told not to walk on particular roads because those roads are often empty. They also warn them not to go out by themselves

at night. During my observation in the school camp, I also found that the girls walked in pairs or in small groups at night as they were warned to do by the teachers. Furthermore, during my field work, I was warned by the teachers to avoid certain areas and not to go out by myself at night. I noticed that many parents always try to keep an eye on their daughters. They come to pick up the girls when they have to stay at school late for some school activities such as the annual school fair and the New Year fair. I also found that there are many rape cases reported in the local newspaper in which the schoolgirls are raped or sexually harassed by teachers, stepfathers, relatives, or friends of the family. The girls told me that they had seen the word "rape (ข่มขืน)" several times in the newspaper and television, and their parents would use this opportunity to warn them not to go out alone. There was a case in which a girl was raped in the school camp and told no one about it. The parents found out about it when she got a severe stomach pains and had given birth to a baby. The girl then was expelled from the school on the grounds of misconduct damaging to the school's image. This girl is one example of many girls who experience being a double victim, victimized not only by her attacker, but also by a system that brands her as outcast and robs of her educational opportunity (Double, 1995).

These messages which convey women as victims leads these young girls to learn about their vulnerability to potential male predators. I would agree with Boonchalaksi and Guest (1994) who stated that, "The view that men are sexual predators and that their sexual appetites must be satisfied if the virtue of "good women" is to be protected is also common in Thai society." (p. 7-8). This is reflected in comments made by some men in the village, which included police officials, who were discussing closing the brothels in a small coffee-shop. They said that there would be an increase in sex crimes if the brothels

were closed. The brothels were closed as assigned by the police chief Pol Gen, Pratin Santiprapop in response to the death of a 15 year old prostitute who committed suicide at Hat Yai police station in Songhla province in mid-July, 1994. The brothels were closed only two months due to this incident and I had heard that they were reopened again in October after the news faded away from the public interest . However, I also heard from the district health personnel who visited the brothels in that the owners closed only the main entrance and still provided the service from the back doors even though they were ordered to close by the chief of police.

Tig and Duen are two examples of girls who believe they are vulnerable to sexual abuse by their stepfathers and were prepared to defend their honor. For Tig, her mother has to work in the afternoon shift in the city and usually comes home around midnight. After her father died three years ago, Tig had to stay home alone at night while her mother went to work. She would keep herself in the house and closed the door and all windows after the nightfall. Her mother remarried in June which Tig was very disappointed with the marriage. Tig told her friends that she tries not to stay alone with her stepfather who tends to drink a lot. She keeps herself in her room after sunset, locks the door and all windows, and also keeps a stick, a knife, and scissors in her room.

Duen is another girl who has to live with her stepfather because her mother died about one year ago. She has a younger sister who also stays with her. She also keeps sticks and knives in the bedroom and locks the door and all the windows at night. Duen said she was also afraid of a man who lives near by her house because he drinks a lot and likes to make eyes at her.

Another girl, Jib is one of the girls who tends to explicitly express her negative feelings regarding women being the victims of sexual abuse, as she said in her essay:

"I think men and women have equal rights. But men still abuse woman just like in the old days. Why do people say that if you have a daughter in your family, it means you have a toilet in front of your house?

In the past, the family would arrange the marriage for you even you didn't know each other or love each other, and they had to spend their lives together. Every time the husband gets drunk, he kicks and hits the wife. And the wife would keep it a secret. The wife must also stay and take care of the house. Most of the time the household work is never finished, from washing the dishes, cooking, washing the clothes, to laundry, but as soon as the husband comes home from work, the wife has to drop everything in order to serve him a glass of water.

I think women need to learn how to fight against rape and help themselves. Women have to help each other so we are not alone. I think men and women are the same in that we have to depend on each other in order to live."

Some girls in the groups also pointed out that there have seen some cases where women were beaten by their husbands. Some of them might experience this situation in their own families, but they prefer to keep this secret in order to preserve their family's reputation. One of my key informants in my mother's generation shared her experiences of being abused by her husband. When he got drunk, she said, he would become an aggressive man who forced her to have sex, and scolded her, and at times even said that he wanted to kill her. When he forced her to have sex, she would let him do it otherwise she would be hurt by his violence. Her friends encouraged her to fight back, but it got worse when she started to resist. So the only thing that

she did to avoid his attack was to go outside the house or to lock the door and keep herself in the room. She eventually got so bored with this situation that she said she was fed up with it. She had tried being a heavy drinker but her friends had warned her to stop doing it and said it would not solve the problem. She said now she is trying to overcome her tension with the Buddhist' doctrine. Now she listens to the Buddhist's preaching every Sunday, and tries to be a cheerful person. She told me she believed that there are many women in the village who have to face this experience if I asked them.

It could be concluded that social rearing or socialization is a crucial element for gender formation which is reflected in young girls' perceptions of their feminine roles as expected by Thai society. This social construction of gender is also in part the social construction of sexuality which will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 7

The Construction of Female Sexuality

This chapter I present the young girls' reports of their experiences of sexuality. And I examine how experiences and beliefs in the Thai social environment shape the young girls' notions of their sexuality. The chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section, I describe the social construction of female sexuality in the local community. This section reports my own observations in the research field as well as the experiences of some women in the mothers' and grandmothers' generations regarding sexuality. The next three sections deal with the girls' sexual experiences and their knowledge of sexuality and reproductive health. I gathered the information from focus group interviews and in-depth interviews with the girls' and from interviews with some of the girls' mothers and teachers. In the second section, I report on the girls' experiences of and feelings about their bodily changes of puberty and of their emerging consciousness of their own sexuality. In the third section, I report on the girls' knowledge of reproductive health and sexual behavior. In the fourth section, I report on the girls' experiences of sources of sexual messages.

Description of Social Construction of Female Sexuality in the Local Community

In the last two chapters, it may be seen that there is evidence for social inequalities between women and men which serve as one of the most important bases for differences in power in the sexual lives of women and men. These effects of gender power on the sexuality of women and men are reflected in the control of women's sexuality. From my field observation and talking with

some women in mothers' and grandmothers' generations, I noticed that northern Thai woman's sexuality is denied; she is expected to have no sexual interest, and her only desire to be pure. Good girls are virgins. The cultural norms by which lack of sexuality or sexual neutrality is a valued feminine quality lead the girls to perceive sexuality as something that must be ignored and concealed. By the age of two or three, the young girl is taught not to display her genitals. She is disciplined to sit well, sit with legs together. In contrast, from birth until the age of four or five, the young boy's genitals could be tickled regularly and publicly by relatives or neighbors. The boy even can run around without wearing underpants.

It is evident that cultural norms based on gender inequality in sexual relations that expect women to be inexperienced and naive in sexual matters, and to see themselves as passive receptacles of men's sexual passions, are widely held in this periurban northern Thai society. Most of the women in and mother's and grandmothers' generations that I interviewed told me that they were not given any information about sex before they were married. They knew only that they would get pregnant if their menstrual cycle was missing for a month or a couple of months. They felt that expressing interest in sex or sexual pleasure was evidence of something "wrong" with a woman. The double standard which is based on the assumption that males have a greater desire and need for sexual activity than females do causes most women to internalize their passive and non-initiative-taking role. A study by Chris Lyttleton (1994) in Northeast Thailand also supported this assumption. As he stated:

"Thai women are strongly socialised not to engage in sexual demonstration of pleasure, and making love in positions other than

where the woman is prone and unmoving is the subject of much shyness. Young women are told colloquially that the walls have ears, the doors have eyes and the spirits and angels will see any sexual exhibition" (p. 178).

There is certainly evidence from my interviews that women's sexuality was denied. They could not express their feelings. They saw themselves as passive receptacles of men's sexual passions. They were taught nothing at all about sex or pregnancy and childbirth before their own personal experiences with these events.

Furthermore, they were discouraged from learning about their own bodies. The image of female genitals is socially constructed as something that is dirty and taboo. I would argue that the clitoris is rarely touched, except for hygienic purposes, by most women. It is perhaps for this reason that to this day, tampons have not been successfully marketed in Thailand. Some of my informants told me that they knew some women who, even when pregnant, did not know where their babies would come out. What some of them had heard was just that babies are born from "down there (ข้างล่าง)." One woman admitted that she first learned that women have two different orifices--vaginal and urethral-- when she got severe itching from gonorrhea. She also looked at her daughter's genitalia and learned that she had labia majora (แคมใหญ่), and labia minora (แคมเล็ก).

Som, Kulaab, and Kluaj are three examples of women who were socialized to accept that they were expected to have no sexual interest and not to display their sexual feelings too much. Som was about 34 years old and a mother of two daughters who said she knew nothing about sex before getting married. She said she did not dare talk about this thing. She knew only that she would lose her virginity (เสียตัว) but didn't really know what would happen

to her. She did not have sex on her wedding day. But on the day after her wedding day she was teased by her friends that she walked like a duck (เดินเหมือนเป็ด).¹ When she had sex on the second day, she was frightened and sweating. She didn't know what would happen and what she should do. But her husband did it slowly and didn't force her. She experienced pain at the beginning. She had heard some married women talk about sexual intercourse (การร่วมเพศ, เพศสัมพันธ์), saying that women would have some flow of discharge when they slept with their husbands. She thought that they talked openly about this kind of sexual matter, but she didn't dare to talk to them. She kept it in her mind and wondered about it. After getting married, she learned about sexual intercourse from a group of neighbors who liked to talk about sex while they were drinking. After giving birth to her first baby, she started to read newspapers and magazines with columns that answered readers' sexual queries. She learned a lot from these materials. She also exchanged information about sexual matters with a woman who is a co-worker while they were reading these materials in the office.

Kulaab was about 42 years old and is a mother of two children. She was told by her mother that when she was born, she came out from a clump of bamboo. She said women are taught that sex is dirty and embarrassing. So it is inappropriate for "good" women to talk about sexual matters. They should repress their sexual interest. She also concealed her sexual interest and learned from reading books. She learned about sex by watching X- and R-rated videos with a group of friends when she was in vocational school. They kept

¹It is a common term used by Thais to tease a newly wedded couple about their experience of having sex, particularly for women, who experience pain because of the irritation around their vagina perhaps due either to inadequate foreplay to arouse her, or to vaginal dryness for unknown reasons.

watching them again and again and talked to each other about what they saw. When she got home, she kept quiet and didn't dare to talk about what she had seen with anyone. She said she could talk about it among her friends because they were all women. If they were men, she would not talk about this thing. She would not dare to talk about it with them, as she was scared that they would look down on her. When I asked her if she thought young girls would have some feelings when they watched romantic material, she said she thought that they would experience sexual excitement but that they would try not to admit they were sexually aroused. So they would pretend to laugh in order to keep their feelings hidden.

Another woman, Kluaj, who was about 45 years old, also said that she didn't know anything about sexual intercourse when she reached puberty. When she was about 21-22 years old, she had a boyfriend and was going to get married. She was very shy when he kissed her and later looked in the mirror and cleaned her mouth. She didn't know what sexual intercourse was. She had heard in school that some girls slept with boys and got pregnant. So she knew only that they would put "that thing" in but didn't know how they would put it in. She had no idea what an orgasm (สำเร็จ, จุกสุดขยอ) might be. Her parents never taught her about it. And she never read anything about this. She first knew about it when she got married. Her husband taught her how to put his "thing" into hers. The first time she was scared and told him that she didn't want to do it. After giving birth to her baby, she learned about orgasms by looking at magazines and watching X-rated video tapes. She said she didn't know about orgasms because she was very shy at the beginning and only had her husband on top, but she didn't feel shy any more after giving birth. She learned how to move up and down (เตียงขึ้นเตียงลง) by following the X-rated

video tapes. She then started getting quite wet and experiencing less pain than she used to. Sometimes her husband got drunk and wanted to sleep with her even though she had no desire for sex. If she didn't he would abuse her. It was painful for her but she just had to be patient (อดทน). She said that women need to be patient.

Kluaj also shared her experience of eroticism or sexuality within marriage. She said women in her age group (about 45 years old) take a much longer time to reach climax and need to have foreplay for a while. But most men are selfish. They just please themselves. They just get on top of the women while making love and do it until they are finished. They don't think about their wives' pleasure or if their wives reach orgasm. Sometimes she just let him get it done because she was fed up with it.

She believed that men would claim sexual dissatisfaction as the reason to look for a new wife or to visit commercial sex workers (CSWs). They would say that the other women bounced (ดีใจ) better than their wives. Some men would say that their wives were unresponsive and lazy. Some men might warn their wives that they would beat them or even threatened that they would get new wives. There was one woman who had a hysterectomy and didn't want her husband to have sex with her. She was berated by her husband as a woman who didn't have a womb (อึบไม่มีมดลูก). Among friends, women would talk about intimate matters generally by teasing each other.

Kluaj was another example of women who have little control over what happens to their sexuality, that is over men's sexual access to their bodies and the conditions under which sexual encounters take place (Dixon-Mueller, 1993, p. 269). Furthermore, Kluaj represented women who generally lack the power to protect themselves against sexually transmitted disease (STD). When she

was about 22 years old, she got gonorrhea, which Thai villagers call "woman's disease (โรคผู้หญิง)" from her husband. She said her husband didn't tell her that he had gone to visit a prostitute². At first, she didn't know what was the problem? She experienced a lot of itching in her vagina. She looked at a mirror to see what was wrong with her vagina. She got three shots of Kanamycin and experienced a lot of pain from the injection. She was very mad at her husband and rebuked him for not telling her about visiting prostitutes. She could not do anything more than that and simply told him that if he wanted to visit prostitutes, he should choose the high-priced prostitutes.³

The only thing that she could do to protect herself from getting STD or AIDS from her husband was to observe his behavior. She would guess that when he went out to drink with friends, they might end up with visiting prostitutes, and then she would try to avoid having sex with him. She also observed his sexual activity. She said, "If his penis is not stiff enough after we don't sleep together for several days, it shows that he may have gone to visit prostitutes, and I should be cautious of getting the disease from him." I also found that this was the strategy that another woman, Khulaab, used to protect herself against STDs or AIDS.

However, they told me they believed that their husbands didn't visit prostitutes after the outbreak of AIDS in 1988 because they were scared of getting AIDS. Kluaj also said that her husband never used a condom. He told her that it had no sensation (บ่มีว่วน) and that his penis was too small. He also told her that some young men use three layers of condom. There is evidence

²Thais like to call it "เห็ดขลุ่ยผู้หญิง, แอ้วผู้หญิง."

³There is evidence in northern provinces that the highest rates of HIV prevalence are found among the low-priced female prostitutes.

that condoms are rarely used by villagers because there is a widespread perception that sex with a condom is unsatisfying. Condoms are used only for contraceptive reasons in a few cases where there are problems in using other contraceptive methods. The district health personnel told me that they don't think villagers would use condoms for AIDS prevention. They said only a few women asked for condoms for family planning and might ask something about AIDS, but there had never been any men who came to ask for condoms. And they didn't think that they would buy condoms from the drug stores either because they could get the condoms free from the District Health Center. They had heard some comments like "playing outside the shirt is not pleasurable (เก๋าลังนอกเสื้อดีงป่าหุ้ม)," which meant they would experience no sensation if they used a condom.

What is clear is that condoms do not play a major role in sexual relationships within the villages. This is because of the emphasis of the government policy promoting 100% condom use among the CSWs, which cites female prostitutes rather than intercourse with different partners as the source of infection. The difficulty some women experience in trying to be effective in sexual negotiations was often experienced as a bias against any women who must use her effort to bring up the issue and encourage her husband to use a condom. One of the health personnel told me that she had heard some women say: "I don't want to use a condom. I have never used ones. It's disgusting". One woman was told by her husband that "If you ask me to use a condom, I won't sleep with you." Some women said that their husbands would complain that they would experience no sensation and the women would feel pain. However, I heard that some men used condoms when they visited CSWs, and some of them even used two or three layers of condom for effective prevention.

It may be concluded that the stereotype that men have a stronger sex drive than women is widely held in this northern Thai community. Women are supposed to be passive recipients. After marriage, it is generally accepted that men will engage in extra-marital sexual relationships, particularly with CSWs. From a previous study in a northern Thai village by Iddhichiracharas (1977), there is evidence that it was common for men to have multiple sex partners. Venereal disease was the most common disease in the village among young men and some women. He also cited the example of a young man who liked to have fun by gambling and used the money that he had won on shopping, going to restaurants, and visiting brothels in a nearby town. There are no moral implications attached to such behavior and no obligation or responsibility entailed by their paying for sex. From growing up in a northern Thai society, I have repeatedly heard from women around me and it is often said in newspaper that for many women, it is better for men to visit prostitutes rather than to have minor wives (เมียน้อย), the latter being harder for them to tolerate.

Kulaab was one of the women who accepted that men could have sexual experiences if it didn't affect their marital lives. Kluaj said that it is common for men to join in a group to drink, listen to music, and end up by visiting prostitutes. They said they like young girls, about 15-16 years old, because they are more fit than the older women and they don't have too much hair. They would talk about the young girls' hair as being like the fresh bamboo shoot with fine and scanty hair, as they call it "กุยกาสน้อยไร่."

I would argue that the distinction between the wife (the respectable woman) and the mistress and the prostitute (the bad woman) serves only to divide women into a hierarchy and to strengthen a patriarchal ideology in which women are a source of male pleasure and cater to men's emotional

demands. It is a widely held belief that men are more frequently and more easily sexually aroused by erotic material. Therefore, most material that is denoted to be sexually arousing is produced for a male audience.

from my observation of the local newspaper and magazines that were available in the villages, I noticed that women are portrayed as passive objects of sexual desire. They are viewed as sex objects rather than subjects. The depictions of the bodies of "attractive" women in magazines, advertisements and the movies demonstrate an emphasis on slender bodily contours, shapely legs, breasts, and buttocks. There are many advertisements that encourage women to supplement their breasts in order to increase their attractiveness. One of the advertisements in which women's breasts are prominently displayed states that men are easily stimulated by breasts. Breasts are the real symbol of femaleness. It is the breasts that about 90 percent of men pay first attention to. Women need to use every weapon in their bodies to capture the hearts of men. Another advertisement compares the woman's body as a model of the "ideal" sexually attractive shape and size to the quality of a rice cooker.

It may be concluded that the capitalist penetration which has brought modernization and a semi-urban way of life to the community has resulted in lessening the power of maternal ancestral spirits and thus has contributed to the emerging of multiple sexual patterns or sexual and social liberation in this local community in recent decades. As one of my informants said, "Nowadays, people aren't concerned about *phid phii* any more. There is more sexual liberation in that women and men can sleep together without any sanction from the villagers." This informant related an increase in sexual activity among women in the village relative to available methods of contraception. The methods gave women more freedom in the enjoyment of sex for themselves

without worrying about getting pregnant. They just needed to get the contraceptive injection once every three months.

Another reason for sexual liberation among women besides these contraceptive methods is an increase in drinking behavior of women. I also noticed that married women would join into small groups and drink Thai whisky during funeral rites, housewarming parties, and New Year festivals. During my observation in the housewarming parties, I found that women were drinking liquor in small groups in the kitchen while they were preparing food for the monks and the guests who came to celebrate the new houses. In contrast, the school girls were in small groups like the adult women, but drinking pop instead of alcohol.

The social meaning of sexual relations has changed from a pattern where sexual relations occurred as part of a process of marriage and continuation of the family and kinship, to a pattern where sex has become a part of individual pleasure and gratification, and also as a part of gender power relations. There is also evidence of increasing commercialization of female sexuality, in that men and women play and gain money through sex. Sexual behavior has become more permissive. Extra-marital sexual relations have become the new norm of the community, supported by the penetration of commercialization into the community. Some married women or widows become sexually involved with men for economic reasons but others for pleasure, which the local people call "แม่บ้านรักสนุก" (lit. 'housewives who love to have fun'). Some sexual narratives were told as forms of gossip among adult women and men, particularly among women. Often such gossip is moralizing and negative but apparently without social discrimination. I heard some gossip among small groups about some married or widowed women who

were promiscuous, and had sexual affairs with other women's husbands, but the gossipers continued to socialize with those women as if nothing (unwanted) had happened. That is, such promiscuity did not stigmatize the women.

There is evidence that X-rated videos, R-rated movies and videos, and pornographic magazines (like Playboy in the US.) have had an impact on the sex lives of many villagers. Advertisements for Thai whisky in the form of calendars that show women in frankly sexual poses with their breasts prominently displayed were posted on the walls of some houses, in coffee shops, and in the police station. In fact, most of this pornographic material that is available depicts women's bodies as de-personalized objects and instruments of men's sexual pleasure. Elder villagers told me that young adults like to watch these pornographic materials. They watch the X-rated videos while their children were in the schools. This concurs with the data I got from the young girls, who said that they learned about sex from pornographic materials. I will present these findings in the following sections. As two older women told me:

"You know. It's very disgusting. We saw it when these youngsters were watching this kind of thing. They watched it while their kids were in school. They like it and hide from other people when they watch it. There were white people naked and kissing on the TV screen. They did different kinds of sex on screen. One man licking a woman's vagina and a woman sucking a man's penis while another man was putting his penis in her anus. . . So I warned my son about this. He asked me why he could not watch it, and why I had to complain about this thing? Then I said it's a dirty thing (ບໍ່ສວຍງາມ) that he should not bring into our house, and asked him if he could do this type of thing with his wife. Some of the youngsters said to me that it's up-to-date. It was not the same in my time. (What do you mean by this dirty thing?) It's the thing

that is low and base (ของต่ำ) and inside your clothes. Excuse me. Like talking about penis (ควย), butt or vagina (หี)." .

It is increasingly common for adolescents to start sexual intercourse at a younger age. It is more common to find teenaged couples on motorcycles passing along the roads in the villages. Most households own motorcycles which provide adolescents more freedom to wander. The motorcycles provide them much opportunity to gain access to parties and events at nearby villages, towns, and in the city, and this leads the young women and men to feel removed from censure and gossip. Some couples might seek a more romantic view along the side of the dam to express their intimate relationships, some of them still dressed in their school uniforms. I also heard some complaints from the dam's security guards who found some teenaged couples having love affairs in the roadside pavilion at night or even found condoms scattered on the pavilion's floor in the morning. Just before I left the village, the authorities decided to close the dam's gate after office hours and not to turn on the light after sunset.

However, it was the young girls who went to study in the city on a daily basis who were more liberated in their attitudes towards young men and pre-marital sexual behavior. I would agree with Mougne (1981) and Gray (1990) that "socioeconomic status. . . was an important variable in abandoning the cults (Mougne, p. 461)" and thus allow these young girls to be more sexually and socially liberated. They are influenced by the urban mores that they encounter while they are in schools and department stores, while becoming less attached to village life. Several of my girl informants told me that some young girls who study in city institutions-including secondary and tertiary level are promiscuous because they are fascinated by the city lights and influenced by

their peers. They said that some of their friends who commuted to the city for school had to have abortions because they got pregnant while they were in school.

During my study in the field, I heard many stories of women who sell their bodies or become minor wives or mistresses of rich men. Some of these women are known to have worked as prostitutes which did not preclude them from finding husbands in the villages. Most of them married men in the villages. They told some of my key informants that they will try to use every method to please their men, including oral sex, which some villagers called "smoke" but which they described as sucking. So these men would support them with large amounts of money in return. Some of them now have new houses and have their own businesses supported by these rich men. They own cars to drive around the villages, wear expensively fashionable dresses and stylishly coiffured hair, all of which improve their social standing within the local villages. I would propose that this sex trade might be seen as a mechanism to become upwardly mobile, and not in conflict with one's moral principles, if one justifies their actions in terms of the need to earn money. Mougne (1981) writes "sexuality does not appear to invoke conflict or anxiety among the Northern Thais as it so often does in our own society. It is seen as a necessary component of life which can quite readily be converted into a marketable commodity without causing serious moral conflict (p. 416)." Mulder (1978) explains this phenomena in terms of "inside" versus "outside" relationships in that

"As persons they seem to have disconnected their moral roles within their ingroups from their public roles vis-a vis third persons. . . To sell one's body is an outside phenomenon-and so it is to buy-and does not imply any feelings of loyalty or even moral respect for oneself. It is a

monetary transaction, and money is widely admired and the pre-eminent embodiment of power. One is not personally involved; it is a business transaction in which the loss of 'face' element is amply compensated by another presentational element, that is, money and its inherent power.

To be the minor wife (เมียน้อย) or mistress of a rich man, is to be in his patronage, and his status, power and money reflect on the status, power and money of the minor wife. To be a minor or hired wife is a honourable profession and a much sought-after status" (p. 79-80).

Young Girls' Experiences of Their Emerging Sexuality

This section presents the young girls's experiences of their developing sexuality from my interviews with the young girls both in the focus group discussion and in-depth interviews and from my interviews with some of the young girls' mothers. These experiences are presented in four parts. The first is young girls' experiences of their bodily changes. The second is young girls' experiences of menstruation. The third is young girls' experiences of talking about sex. The fourth is young girls' sexual interest.

Young Girls' Experiences of Their Bodily Changes

It is evident that these young girls are in a period of transition between the years of childhood and the years of puberty and adolescence. They are in the process of beginning bodily changes, such as the development of their breasts and the growth of their pubic hair. There is an increase in self-consciousness about their developing bodies which makes them interested in finding out about the changes. I agree with Martinson (1994) that "preadolescents are more cognizant of and influenced by the sexual scripts and social taboos subscribed to and taught by adults they are in contact with than are younger children (p. 39)." Most of the girls said they started to notice their

bodily changes when they were in the fifth grade or about 10 years old. They always wondered what their bodies would look like when they grew up or what an adult woman's body should look like. They were interested in the genitals of boys. Most of them said they had learned that their genitals were different from the boys' genitals by looking at the genitals of their brothers or of small boys around them.

In fact, the social values which designate the genitalia as a tabooed part of the body could affect the young girls' learning process as regards their reproductive health when they reach adulthood. There was one girl who strongly insisted that she never touched her clitoris. She said while she was taking a shower, she would touch and inspect her breasts but not her genitals. It is a part that we should not pay attention to or even talk about it. She thought that she would know about this by herself when she grew up.

Most of the girls had very little explicit knowledge of the bodily changes which occur at puberty because of the sketchy advice that they received. They didn't know why these physical changes occurred during puberty. Most of the girls learned about pubertal changes from observing the development of their older sisters, and of friends who developed the physical changes earlier than they did. Most girls had never been told anything by their mothers about physical changes that would occur during puberty. When I asked some mothers about what they told their daughters about menstruation and physical changes, the mothers responded that they would rather observe than discuss their daughters' physical changes with them. This could be explained by the fact that the mothers themselves are not knowledgeable.

Most of the girls said they learned about physical changes from teachers in life experience classes. These classes taught them about secondary sexual

characteristics, that boys would develop a deep voice (เสียงแตก), and that girls would develop big buttocks (สะโพกใหญ่) and big breasts (นมใหญ่) and would need to wear brassieres. There was little discussion about behavioral and emotional changes from the teachers. They were told only not to have boyfriends, but instead to concentrate on their studies.

Some girls said that they would become a woman when they reach 15 or 16 years old. A few girls said girls who reach puberty would be interested in the opposite sex and fantasize about boys. They said that post-pubescent girls would be interested in dressing and wearing make-up that would attract the boys. The most common thing that they had heard about becoming a woman, which they pointed out in the focus group as well as in the in-depth interviews, was that they would be capable of becoming pregnant when they started menstruating. As they said: "Once I start getting my periods, I could become pregnant. I would now be considered as a woman once I start getting my period. I should not go out with boys or go around with men that could lead me to become pregnant. The teachers said a girl would become a woman when she began menstruating."

The young girls' inadequate learning from their parents or other adults has led them to explore sexuality from other sources, such as friends, pornographic materials, such as magazines and videos, or even by peeking at others' bodies. Some girls tried to learn about having breasts by grabbing their friends' breasts. They would act like they were playing and unintentionally touch them. One girl learned that her breasts would get bigger from grabbing her friends' breasts. She also learned that she would start to menstruate after her breasts began to develop by observing her friends' physical changes.

From focus group discussions, it is evident that the girls in the sixth

grade were curious about the changes in their bodies. Most of them were in the early beginning of their pubertal changes. There were only two girls who had started their menstrual periods. One of the girls talked about how she felt when she first noticed her breasts, saying "I wonder! How does it happen?" When I asked "What do you want to know about your bodily changes?" The girls in the sixth grade replied that the two things they were most curious about were: 1) Why do women have big breasts and men don't?, and 2) Why do women have to menstruate? A few of them also asked another question about pubic hair. They used the term "the thing that looks like hair, down there!" instead of pubic hair. They said they had seen this on their cousins. One of them said "It's black like hair, I wonder if I'll have it." Some of the girls in the group shared the knowledge that men also have pubic hair. Most of them had seen it in the X-rated movies. A few of them said they had seen it from their grandfathers.

However, most of the girls in the seventh grade were reluctant to admit to having some curiosity about their pubertal changes and in genital differences between males and females. In one group, they said (in the group) only that they wondered about their bodily changes. They were curious about these changes and wanted to ask someone but didn't dare to talk about it. Only a few girls in other groups felt comfortable to admit that they had ever inspected their bodies, particularly in the breasts and genital organs while they were taking a shower or changing their clothes. Some of them said they had seen their mothers' breasts and genitals while their mothers were changing clothes and sleeping. Only a few of them had seen their fathers' genitals. They learned the genital differences between themselves and the boys by looking at their younger brothers and the small boys around them. One girl said in the group

that she peeked through the hole while an adult man was taking a shower. She said his genital organ was really big.

There was one group in which most of the girls insisted that they never noticed their bodily changes or were even interested in knowing about these changes. As some of them said:

Nee: I am not curious about it.

Tuk: I don't want to see it. It's disgusting.

Tig was one of the first girls in the group not to feel embarrassed to share her experiences (in the group) that she had looked at herself when her body started to change. She asked the other girls if they had ever looked at their bodies as she had done, but the other girls kept quiet. So she stopped talking about the topic and tried to change to the subject. Some girls in the group said that it was difficult to talk about this thing. One girl said she felt shy to talk about it. When I interviewed some of the girls in the seventh grade individually, I realized that they were afraid someone in the groups would reveal this personal information. It may be concluded that the social values by which women are expected to have no sexual interest and are taught that sex is bad might lead them to be more reticent in sharing their experiences with others.

On the other hand, they were more comfortable to share their experiences with me in the in-depth interviews. In addition, I found that by initiating conversations related to the health issues I could indeed create the appropriate environment for a dialogue. This led the girls to feel less constrained to share experiences about which they had learned to be aware of the social constrictions on sexual expression. Nee, who insisted in the group that she had never looked at herself naked while she was taking a shower,

shared with me in private that she started to look at herself when she was about 9 years old and discovered that her genitals were not the same as her brother's. She wanted to ask someone about this but didn't dare to ask anyone. She was also curious about her pubertal changes, but thought that she would know by herself when she reached her puberty. She had seen her aunt's breasts while she was nursing her son. So she thought that it was not strange for her to have breasts and hers might look like that when she got older. As she said, "I see that other people have these things, so it doesn't matter."

Deun who didn't bring up her experiences in the group shared with me in the in-depth interviews that she first looked at her genitals when she saw a pornographic magazine belonging to a boy who was her neighbor. She said she liked to peek at other people's bodies. She said, "I and other children like to peek through holes to see adult women taking a shower. I think they're all the same. Not different from each other." Unfortunately, one woman knew about it and told her father, and she was rebuked for this unacceptable behavior.

However, there was one girl, Kase, who didn't have any reticence in sharing her sexually interesting experiences. She was the only girl who dared to ask her mother something about her pubertal changes. She was told that her breasts would get bigger when she reached adulthood. She didn't feel embarrassed to admit that she had started to inspect herself while she was taking a shower when she was in the fourth grade. As she said:

"After taking off my clothes, I'll inspect my body. . . I'll look at my genital and breasts to see if they have got any bigger." She was the only one girl who continued taking a shower with her younger sister, who was one year younger than her, while other girls said they stopped doing this when their breasts began to show. She said: "I like to take a shower with my sister because I can notice the differences between hers and

mine. But you know her breasts are bigger than mine. (How about her genital?) Ya! It's bigger than mine too. But her pubic hair is scanty. . . We don't feel shy about this because we used to play with each other since we were young."

However, the social constraints on sexual expression, particularly the strong ideology in the sexual socialization process that legitimizes sex as something that children do not think about and which must be concealed, might retard their learning experiences. Their curiosity in learning about their bodies is prohibited by sexual taboos which might make them develop negative feelings and some conflicts about their bodily changes. This also leads the girls to have difficulty in understanding their own bodies. The sudden enlargement and maturation of their secondary sex characteristics alerts them that some unusual things might occur in their bodies. They see their bodies as something not right. So they feel ashamed and try to hide their bodies. Most of the young girls expressed feelings of being shy, ashamed, or afraid of their developing bodies, and afraid of being teased by others. The young girls explained these feelings as something that is inborn with girls. They are born with these feelings.

In the focus groups, most of the girls agreed that girls have to start acting shy when they enter adolescence. They need to dress modestly. They don't want to reveal too much of their bodies. It is clear that this experience is related to the development of their breasts, one of the earliest visible signs of puberty. They are intensely self-conscious about this part of their bodies (their bodies when their breasts continue to stand up). This is because breasts are external and incontrovertible signs of femaleness that have often been focused upon as models of the ideal sexually attractive shape and size. I would agree with Brownmiller (1984) that breasts are used as a prime cue to a woman's

sexuality. When I asked in the groups why women should be shy, most of the girls agreed that women have breasts and that makes them feel that they have to be shy. They replied:

Kase: Women have more unusual things than men do. Because our breasts start to get bigger, the boys all look at us and wonder why. May be sometimes they laugh at us.

Kig: My mom tells me not to wear an outfit that is too tight.

Deun: Not to wear a blouse that has wide-collared.

Kai: The teachers also tell us not to wear wide-collared blouses, short skirts, and short pants.

Some girls in one group expressed their fear of having breasts. When I asked what they feared about having breasts, they replied:

Auan: I am afraid that they will get bigger.

Mom: I am afraid someone will say something about mine.

Mol: I am afraid if they see they would try to grasp mine.

Tai: Not only boys do this, girls do too.

Au seemed to be one of the girls who was particularly concerned about having big breasts. As she wrote in one part of her essay: " If I were a man, I would not have big breasts. I would be ashamed if someone teased me about my big breasts." Girls who developed breasts early tended to be more shy about having breasts and were afraid of being teased by others, particularly boys. They were very concerned about being seen as not "normal" or not like the others. The girls seemed to be more comfortable expressing their feelings in in-depth interviews than in the groups among their friends.

Most of them started to feel shy when their breasts first began to develop, when they were about 11-12 years old. Several of them mentioned

that they were afraid their breasts would get bigger, particularly in the beginning of their pubertal breast development. They would try to wear loose-fitting clothes, particularly before running in the physical education class. Three girls said that when they walked, they would shrug their shoulders and lean forward a little bit because they didn't want to draw attention to their breasts. Kase and Kig were two girls who stated that their mothers had told them that girls are supposed to be shy and that they must conceal their bodies. Kig was warned by her mother when she used a towel to wrap up only the lower part of her body when she was going to take a shower.

From observing the physical education class, I also noticed some boys giggling about one of the girls, Kai, when she was running because the running made her big breasts move and become more visible. Some of the girls were very much concerned about running because the T-shirt uniform that was used for this class was tight. So they put their hands under their T-shirts to hold them out away from their bodies while they were running because they didn't want the boys to see the movement of their breasts.

Kai is the one of the girls in seventh grade who most encountered with pressure of not being normal or being like the other girls. She was about 13 years old. She was a fairly big girl. She was the youngest of three daughters in her family. Her oldest sister had to quit school early because she got pregnant. Kai was always told by her parents to concentrate on her studies and not to follow in her sister's footsteps. She said she could talk about some personal matters with her sister and mother such as menstruation, but she felt that it was not appropriate to ask them about breasts and other sexual matters. Kai said she was the first girl in her class to develop breasts, this was when she was near the end of fifth grade. She was asked by other girls why she had big

breasts which made her felt very embarrassed about them. She kept wondering why her big breasts were bigger than those of other girls but didn't dare to ask anyone about it. She said she was the only one of the girls in the class who had big breasts. She had been looking at other girls' breasts and found out that hers were bigger than the others. She was also teased by some girls and boys about her big breasts. She said that with time, the problem got better because other girls also develop breasts. As she shared her experiences with me,

"I don't really know why I have to be shy. Sometimes I ask myself why should I be shy about it? There is nothing to be shy about. It's natural. . . I was very shy and frustrated when I was teased about having big breasts. They like to ask me why I have big breasts. I told them why, it's natural. So I learned to wear a brassiere. I tried to wear loose-fitting clothes. I feel no one should be able to see. So I hold my shirt out all the time. When I ride my motorcycle, if the wind blows my shirt against me, then I have to put my hand under my shirt and hold it away from me, and I have to ride with one hand. I often compare myself to other girls. Sometimes I wore layers of clothes so no one can possibly see. I keep wondering if some of my friends were the same size as me or if they were smaller than me. I don't know. I am always conscious of being big. . . I discovered that adult women could have breasts like me when I accidentally saw my older sister who was going to take off her brassiere. . . She also wears a big brassiere. So it is not strange. Some people might even have bigger breasts than me. It doesn't matter to me any more."

Nid was another 13 year old girl in the seventh grade who felt ashamed of and being teased about having big breasts. She was the only daughter in her family. She had a brother who was two years younger than she. She said she had seen her brother's genitals when he was young. She also developed breasts earlier than other girls. She was a fairly plump like Kai. She worried that her

breasts would get bigger and wondered why women should have big breasts. She had thought that she should ask her mother about her breasts but never dared to do so. Her mother bought her a brassiere and told her to wear it when her breasts started getting bigger, but that was her only communication to Nid about her changing body. Nid was curious about her bodily changes. She was only one of the girls who shared her frustrations with me because she could not find out what would happen with regard to her bodily changes, particularly with regard to her breasts and genital area. She said, "Sometimes I look in books in the library. But I am frustrated. Sometimes I feel like I want to rip the pages up because I can't find anything at all." She was also frustrated about asking others about it. She said, "I would like to ask, but I don't dare to ask about this thing. . . I would like to ask my mom but don't dare to ask her about it."

Duen was also a 13 year old girl in the seventh grade. She was not raised by her biological parents. When her father left home for another wife, her mother went to work in other cities and rarely came home, about one time in two years for only 1 or 2 days. Duen had to stay with her aunt who got drunk almost every day. When Duen's mother came back, she remarried but died after staying with Duen only about a year. So Duen and her younger sister went to stay with her new stepfather and his mother. Duen said she didn't feel close to her mother because her mother had moved away from her when she was in second grade. Duen had to seek information and learn about becoming a woman from neighbors and other women outside the family. She developed a close relationship with me. She shared with me that she was concerned about her sexual experiences. She expressed her feelings of shame about having a woman's body:

"We should be shy. We are women not men. . . Women have things which are more shameful than anything men have. I think the most shameful thing that women have is female genitalia, and followed by breasts. . . I don't know why women's things are more shameful than men's. But I know that this is true. You can look at the local irrigation canal where people go to swim. When girls swim, they must cover themselves with thick clothing and not allow anyone to see their breasts or genitals. Men, however, wear only shorts, and those shorts may even be translucent when wet. I even see their genitals. They are very big, you know. And they don't feel anything. . . It's not only the girls' feeling of shyness but also the fear of being accused by others as dressing too sexy if they wear thin clothes."

Some girls also pointed out their fear of having pubic hair. They were afraid the hair would grow longer. Sometimes they thought that they should pull it out. Duen was the only girl who explicitly shared her experience of the growth of her pubic hair:

"I was very worried when the hair started to get longer. I am thinking about pulling it out. . . It's about a month ago, one of my neighbors asked me to pull out her underarm hair. She told me that we would have the same hair down there. (So you looked at yours after that, did you?) Yes, I found that I also have it. I am afraid it will get longer. I tried to pull it out but it hurt. So I stopped. I don't know how to deal with it. Sometimes I think I'll just cut it when it grows longer. Sometimes I think I don't want to cut it. If I pull it out, it will hurt a lot. I think maybe I am not get used to it. (Did that woman tell you to cut it off?) No, she told me not to cut it off. It will drop off when one gets older. . . One day my grandmother was sitting with her separated legs, so I looked at her hair. She really doesn't have any hair."

Young Girls' Experiences of Menstruation

There were 17 of the girls, from 36 girls who reported that they had started their menarche (see Table 7.1). I found that menstruation was the only thing that girls felt comfortable talking and sharing their feelings about as women, different from all men. They sometimes talked about having their periods, whether they used any kind of pads, and how each of them felt during her period. Girls who had their periods longer taught girls who were just starting to menstruate how to use pads. In fact, menstruation was the only topic about which the girls said they dared to ask their mothers and about which they did not feel ashamed of asking.

Table 7.1. Number of Girls by Reported Age at Menarche*

Age (years)	Sixth grade	Seventh grade	Total
10	-	2	2
11	1	7	8
12	3	4	7
Not yet	15	4	19
Total	19	17	36

*These ages are approximate only because the girls estimated their ages at menarche retrospectively by age in years or school grade.

Kai was one of the girls who felt that menstruation was the only thing that she could talk to her mother and sister about. She did not dare talk to them about her big breasts. She said she was ashamed to ask them about this kind of thing. As she said: "I don't ask anyone about it. I just try to forget about it. I tell myself that it is natural. I just keep in mind that is natural. Don't worry about it." Although, there were a few girls who dared to ask their mothers

about their breasts, most of their mothers just said that they needed to wear bras. Some girls also admitted having some discussion about the size of the breasts of the models who advertised bras in the magazines.

The young girls also reported negative experiences about their menarche. This is shaped by cultural, religious, and personal attitudes about menstruation that often reflect negative attitudes toward women. I have discussed some of these beliefs and taboos in Chapter 5. Menstrual blood is widely thought to be unclean and destructive. Menstruation is not discussed openly either in daughter-mother communication at home or in girl-female-teacher communication in school. All that the girls hear from their mothers is that menstruation happens to all girls and women every month, and it is the waste blood that comes out from their bodies. In fact, most of their mothers told them only how to use a pad and that was all. They learned from their mothers and women around them that their first menstruation would be a transition from girlhood to womanhood, and they would then be capable of reproduction.

The girls reported receiving a strong message from their mothers that they are vulnerable to getting pregnant once they start to menstruate. So they must avoid going out with men. One of the girls' mothers, Som, told me she thought her daughters would know when she had her menstrual cycle because she told them that she would be irritable during her menstrual cycle. Som never taught her elder daughter, Dum, before she started to menstruate. Som said she didn't dare to start talking to Dum about it. But after Dum started to menstruate, Dum told her that the teacher had taught them something about menstruation. So she felt comfortable to ask Dum if she had any abdominal pain or symptoms during her period. Som also asked me if it were appropriate

for the teacher to teach the girls about menstruation. She was wondering if Dum was too young to know about this kind of thing.

In the school, the girls were told by the teachers that it was natural for girls to menstruate. Girls who don't menstruate are abnormal. Most of the girls had little knowledge about where the blood and tissue comes from and why it comes and why sometimes it hurts. They knew only that it was waste blood. Some of them said they remembered that the teacher had said something about an egg, and something that is ready to breed, and the egg died because it didn't breed, but they really didn't understand how it works. They were told by female teachers that they should go to see them if they started to menstruate and they would be taught how to use pads. The teachers also told them to be careful to wrap the used pads in a piece of paper and throw them out in a garbage can in the restroom. This message was given because there was a case in which some girls disposed of used pads in the restroom without wrapping them properly. It may be concluded that the cultural belief that menstrual blood is polluting and disgusting leads the girls to receive strong discipline to keep the used pads from being seen by others.

The taboos that a woman should refrain from exercise, and conceal the fact that she is menstruating and that menstruation is waste blood (เลือดเสีย) led the girls to view menstruation as a confining event and as something that is dirty and disgusting. Many girls said they were scared or even embarrassed when they first started to menstruate. Some girls described it as "a hassle." They were desperately afraid that boys in the school and others would notice when they had their period. They were afraid that they would stain their skirts with blood. Some of them were ashamed of letting others know and insecure

about going out to public areas. When I asked in the groups, "How do you feel when you start to menstruate?" They replied.

Nee: Scared!!

Tig: I worried that I would staining clothes.

Daeng: Afraid that others would know about it.

It may be seen that most of the girls are worried about keeping the "disgusting mess" from showing on their clothes, beds, or the floor. Two girls were accused of staining their beds. One of them said, "My dad told me that menstruation is dirty. You should sleep down there (not on the bed). At that time, my mom had her period. When my dad woke up in the morning, he scolded at me that it was mine(the blood stain on the bed)." Most girls said they would feel very ashamed if someone saw the blood stains on their clothes. Some girls said they would tend to confine their activities so they would not be noticed if something happened. As Dum said " I was very worried about the blood stains when I was sitting and playing. One time, when I was sitting in class, I didn't want to get up. I had a heavy period that day. I was scared of staining my clothes, and someone would see it. The other girl, Kase, said

"I don't want to have it. It's disgusting. It's a hassle. I was very scared of the bleeding during my first period because it flowed a lot. . . I was also scared the pad would slip out. . . I was scared of staining my clothes so I didn't want to go out. I don't want to run or play (in an uninhibited manner). I feel dull. But if my friends run. I'll run with them because I don't want to stand out."

Most of the girls told me that they would rather keep the used pads in their school bags to throw away at home. They were scared that the boys would see or hear about it and tease them. They were also scared that boys would notice when they often went to change their pads in the restroom. They

felt more secure if they had a friend accompany them while they changed their pads in the school rest rooms. Some girls were teased by the boys when they saw them carrying pads and throwing away used pads in garbage can (sometimes there were no garbage cans in the restrooms). Kai who had this experience said,

"The boys tease us about this kind of thing. Today you didn't bring the stuffed bread⁴ huh? . . . Sometimes they tease us with the brand names-like Modes, Whisper with Wings-Be careful, you might rise into the air. . . I feel embarrassed. I don't feel like being teased about that kind of thing. I told them that it's personal."

Dum was another girl who was teased by a boy when she took a pad out from a school bag and carried it to her friend who was waiting in the restroom. One boy saw it and teased her about her "bread with strawberry." So one girl went to tell the teacher. The teacher then told the students that it is not a shameful thing. It is natural.

There was one girl who got upset about having her first period. She didn't know anything about menstruation before she started to menstruate. She cried two or three days after starting her period and didn't come to school. When I asked, "Why did you cry?" she said "I didn't want this to happen to me (It's not supposed to happen to me)." One girl said she was very lucky to start menstruating at home so she would not have to experience any blood stains on her skirt while she was at school, because this would make her feel very ashamed. There were some girls in the groups who felt that they might not be healthy because they hadn't started to menstruate like the other girls.

⁴In Thailand, there are various kinds of breads stuffed with fillings such as chicken, cream, and taro.

Most of the girls said they were very embarrassed to buy pads. As they said in the groups

Nee & Duang: I dare to buy them at the school Co-op. I rarely dare to buy them at the stores.

Tig: The first time, I asked my mom to buy them for me. For the second time, I bought them by myself but hid them in my shirt.

Porn: Wrap them in a piece of paper.

Duang: Most of the time, my mom buys them for me. If I buy them by myself, I will bring a paper bag with me.

Pa: When I buy them, I hide them in my blouse.

Kai: I felt shy only at the beginning. I told the merchant that I was buying them for my sister and my mom. But after five or six times, I told the merchant that I was buying them for myself, when she asked me if I had started to menstruate.

When I asked "Why do most of you do like that?," they said "It's disgusting." Only one girl, Kase, insisted that she didn't feel shy about buying the pads. But she didn't ask the merchant for the pads. She went to get the pads by herself.

I also found in one group that the girls who had not yet experienced their menarche said they were scared of having it because of learning about it from other girls. They had heard about the discomfort from the girls who had started to menstruate already that they experienced abdominal pain as if they had to urinate. They also perceived menstruation as shameful. They said, "It's shameful, they'll tease (us about it). . . The boys think we are dirty or disgusting if they know. . . Boys, they don't have it. We are at a disadvantage because of having it. The boys like to tease us (about it). They don't have to

be shy (like us)." Some of them said they needed to prepare some pads in advance so they wouldn't get blood stains on their clothes.

Young Girls' Experiences of Talking about Sex

It is clear that the girls had very vague ideas about their own sexual vocabulary because learning about sex is not allowed. They are taught that they should refrain from thinking about sex unless they are older and ready to marry, when they should engage in sexual activity only for reproduction. The girls learn from their mothers that sex is bad, and must be concealed. They had learned to think of sex as forbidden, dirty, and shameful, and female genitals as something to be hidden. I also noticed that the female and male models that the school used for teaching about the human body detailed male genitalia explicitly, but nothing was shown of the female genital organs. Some teachers told me that the principal of the school had asked them to keep some parts of the external genital organs because they looked too much like the real thing, and some teachers had seen some girls playing with these parts. This led them to believe firmly that sex is corrupting and unmentionable. Most of the girls with whom I talked individually perceived sex or sexual matters as indecent (ลามก), and dirty (สกปรก). They believed that sex is a bad thing, particularly for children who are too young to know about it. Some of them were reluctant to share their experiences when I asked if they knew or had heard something about sex.

The girls were trained to talk about sexual organs, sexual behaviors, and sexually explicit materials in a negative manner. One girl, Duen said "It is not appropriate for women to watch pornographic materials, this is just for men."

Nid was another girl who was prohibited from talking about sexual matters or accessing sexual materials by her parents (and other adults). As she said:

" My aunt told me. You should not talk about this kind of thing (to any body). It's no good. It's not polite to use those kinds of words. (What kinds of things?) The thing about a woman losing herself (virginity) to a man. (How about our genital organs?) My aunt told me that's women's business. We should keep it to ourselves. You don't have to talk to anybody about it."

Another girl, Kase said "It is not appropriate to talk about it (sexual organs). But if it is related to health topics in the class, it is O.K. to talk about it." It is clear that they were taught by their parents (and other adults) that sexual matters are obscene and unmentionable. It is a thing that only adults can learn and talk about it in their own groups. As Nid said " When my mom wants to talk about this kind of thing with other adults, she'll tell me to keep away from them. She says it is adult business and that children are not involved."

However, some girls including Nid said they heard adults talking about sexual matters when they joined together in a group, particularly when they were drinking. Nid said she heard her aunt talking about sexual intercourse (การร่วมเพศ) and she didn't know the meaning of the words. Some girls said adults would use some euphemisms that hinted of sex, such as two sections of oranges (ส้มสองกลีบ) for female genitals, or three eggs (ไข่สามดวง) for male genitals. One girl heard adults asking a woman who had just remarried if her husband had a big one or a small one compared to her ex-husband. The girl said she knew that they were talking about his penis size. She also heard some men who would go out to visit prostitutes talking to other adults, saying

"Today, I'll do my utmost (เอาเต็มที่)" which she knew that they meant having sex. Some girls said adults would ask the small children about their genitals, "What is this thing called?"

From my observations, I also noticed that some adults would talk about these things in the form of dirty jokes (ตลกลามก) when they met at a coffee shop or funeral. In the dirty jokes, the genital organs were replaced by euphemisms, for example male genitals were compared to a monsoon (มรสุม) with one head and two tails which was in the process of hitting something. The women would allude to intercourse with words such as "เสี (to lose the body)", "เสร็จ (finished)", "ร่วม (join)", "นอน (sleep)", "เอา (need or want each other)", "ทำ (do)", and "ยุ่ง (meddle or become involved)."

Young Girls' Sexual Interest

It is clear that the girls in this period of transition had started experiencing sexual arousal when they were exposed to erotic materials. As Broderick (1966) pointed out, romantic interest, and an interest in the opposite sex, increases in this age group (12-13 year old). Several young girls admitted in the in-depth interview sessions that they felt full and experienced a wet feeling when they watched romantic scene on the TV, but they didn't know what was happening to them. One girl thought that this might be abnormal fluid but didn't dare to ask someone about it.

There was one girl, Duen, who explicitly shared her experiences with me. She spent time watching the program "Big Cinema," which shows Western movies late at night during the school vacation. She said most of this kind of movie would be R-rated movies that display hugging, kissing, and petting. When she watched these romantic scenes for a while, she felt ticklish

in her vagina, and felt something like mucous flow after that. These feelings happened on and off when she was watching this kind of movie. When I asked if she still had these feelings, she said: " Sometimes if I see a scene where they are about to make love or when they are kissing each other." She also liked to see this kind of movie sometimes because it's fun (ม่วนดี).

However, there are some girls who refused to admit having such feelings. They said they did not have any feeling (เฉยๆ). One of them, Kase, said when she was watching a love scene with her friends, she tended to think about it like a fun story (เรื่องสนุก). I would argue that some of these girls were sexually aroused by the movie but did not want to say so. This is because they were taught to be embarrassed or ashamed of their sexual feelings which made them deny having such feelings. Women are trained to talk about sexually explicit materials in a negative manner.

During my field observations, I also heard some stories about heterosexual interest among these young girls. They teased each other about boyfriends (แฟน). They had a crush on famous movie stars and singers. They sometimes dreamt about ideal boyfriends who would be handsome, smart, and responsible to their families. The girls who had heterosexual interests would try to keep their relationships secret, just only their close friends knew about this. Most of these girls were interested in boys older than them. One girl told me that she got three letters from an older boy who said that he liked her. She worried that if he continued to send her letters, it could make her think about this too much and she would not be able to concentrate on her studies sometimes. She said she liked him, but not much. She also replied to his letters. She asked me not to tell her friends and teachers about this. She told me a story about one of her friends who was going out with a boy at night.

Someone told the teacher about this, and the girl was warned about having a date. She was crying when she came out from the teacher's office.

Young Girls' Knowledge of Reproductive Health and Sexual Behavior

I have divided my discussion of young girls' knowledge of reproductive health and sexual behavior into two sections. The first concerns knowledge of reproductive health. In the second section, I describe knowledge of sexual behavior.

Knowledge of Reproductive Health

It is evident that most of the young girls learned about pregnancy and abortion from the television more than the other sources such as magazines, teachers, and mothers. They watched television programs for women which are broadcast on several channels. When I asked: "Do you know how a woman becomes pregnant?" most of the girls in the sixth and seventh grade mentioned that sexual intercourse leads to pregnancy. But the girls in seventh grade are more knowledgeable than the girls in sixth grade. This is because they are taught by teachers whose main interest is to prevent out-of-wedlock pregnancy. They also knew that semen must fertilize an egg. As some of them said in the group:

Porn: It needs to have sexual intercourse.

Daung: The man's semen must get inside.

Tuk, Nee, Tig: It gets into the egg. Then an embryo (ตัวอ่อน) is formed.

The girls in the seventh grade said the teacher tended to talk to them a lot about menstruation and pregnancy in the advisory class. They said that the

teacher drew something like buffalo horns (เขาควาง) or a flower (the uterus and ovaries) which they really didn't understand and could not remember. The teacher also told them that a girl who had started menstruating would get pregnant if she had sexual intercourse with a male. The teacher was always warning them to be cautious about their risk of pregnancy. As one girl said: "someone said that a teenage girl can get pregnant even if she has had sex only once or twice once she has started to menstruate." One girl who was very interested asked me "How does a girl get pregnant?" She had watched from a TV series in which a young woman became pregnant after she was raped. She asked me, "Can a woman get pregnant if she has that thing (sexual intercourse) only once?"

In fact, the girls probably don't understand how pregnancy relates to the menstrual cycle. They mentioned the term "uterus (มดลูก)" but they don't know anything about it. They knew that if a girls misses her periods for two or three months after having sex, she is definitely pregnant. One girl, Nid, said she had heard her mother tell her aunt, who was pregnant, that the baby would come out from the genitals, but she really didn't have a clear idea of the structure of female genitalia, and was not sure how a baby could come out.

Most of the girls knew about contraceptive methods including contraceptive pills, injection, intra-uterine device (IUD), and female sterilization. They learned from their mothers and cousins who used some of these methods. As one girl said, "My aunt said she took her birth control pills in reverse order once. A few days later she was suffering a headache and vomiting. She went to see a doctor and found out that she was pregnant." The other girl said, "My mom told me that she didn't plan to have my sister, but she took the oral pills that were expired. She bought the pills from a drug store and

never went to see the doctor. She didn't have enough knowledge about it." They knew that if someone wants to prevent or delay pregnancy, they need to take some oral contraceptive pills or injection. Only few of them knew that a condom is one type of contraceptive method. One girl in the group asked about condoms, "It can prevent AIDS, but can it prevent one from having a baby?" Some girls in the group replied, "It could be, I think so." Then one girl said, "If the bag leaks, it (sperm) can get into (the ovum)."

Most of the girls knew that induced abortion is to remove the fetus. They said most young girls who had abortions were from the rich families. They were taken advantage of by young men (เสียทำผู้ชาย), so they needed to have an abortion. Most of them said they had heard the news on television that there were some hospitals which provided illegal abortion (การทำแท้งเถื่อน) for young women who were still in school.

Based on discussion about AIDS in the focus groups, there is evidence that most of the young girls' general knowledge regarding modes of transmission and prevention were accurate. It is striking that most of them identified AIDS as the only sexually transmitted disease (STD) they knew. Some of them had heard about Gonorrhea (หนองใน) but didn't know that it is an STD. Only three girls of the 36 girls knew that Gonorrhea is transmitted through sexual intercourse. One of these girl was Kase who was the oldest girl in the class and another girl, Kig who was Kase's close friend. Kase told me that she had learned from the leaflets that she got from the hospital. Another girl, Kai told me that she knew only that Gonorrhea is transmitted through sexual intercourse from leaflets that her father got at home. This might be due to the Thai response to the AIDS epidemic, which has placed emphasis on nationwide programs of public education on AIDS. Some girls said they

actually knew someone with AIDS. Some of these AIDS victims are their male cousins who had visited prostitutes. The majority of the girls identified sexual intercourse, and contaminated needles as the predominant sources of transmission of AIDS. Few girls identified blood transfusions, and transmission from mother to new born as other modes. When I asked who was at risk for the disease, the girls most frequently responded that men having sex with prostitutes were at risk. Some of the girls even mentioned that their fathers, brothers, and uncles were at risk because they visited prostitutes (เที่ยวผู้หญิง). When I asked if women were at risk for the disease, it is notable that most of the girls identified the housewives (แม่บ้าน) whose husbands visit prostitutes as a group at risk. As some of them said:

Mol, Ji: Sometimes, husbands visit prostitutes.

Noi, Ying: Unfaithful! (นอกใจ) When they come home, they then want to have sex with their wives.

Auan: Women don't know if men will bring the disease to them.

Kase was the only girl who said that women are the most at risk group. She felt she herself will be at risk of becoming infected if she grows up to be a housewife. When I asked her why she thought women are at risk more than men, she said, "Because anytime when I watch the TV and they talk about AIDS, they 'll estimate the number of HIV infected women higher than that of men."

Most girls obtained their information about AIDS from television, print media such as magazines- - pamphlets, short stories, comic books, or posters. Their teachers also taught them about AIDS transmission, and methods of prevention--not having sex, using condom, not sharing the needles, and wearing gloves if you have wound and have to contact people with AIDS.

"The teacher told us that AIDS is not transmitted by mosquito," they said. It is interesting that girls in one group said they knew about the female condom from television. "It was in the Twi-light Show, and in the women's program. . . It's a wide sheet , looks like male condom but the width is larger than the male condom. They showed how to use it with a model," they said. It is clear that the girls had heard little about AIDS from their parents. They said their mothers would only warn their brothers that they will get AIDS if they visit prostitutes.

There is evidence that the young girls have internalized their sexual identity as passive receptacles of men's sexual passions as it is ideologically constructed by Thai gender role expectations. When I asked them if women can ask men if they visit prostitutes, some girls replied:

Kai: Women should tell men to be cautious if they want to visit prostitutes.

Kase: They might be annoyed if women ask them about visiting prostitutes.

Kug: Absolutely! In case if they didn't go and were tired from overworking
(rather from seeing prostitutes).

Kase: Women should ask, but they should ask men indirectly.

Knowledge of Sexual Behavior

It is clear that young girls have heard or have learned something about sexual intercourse during their childhood. Most of them knew that sex involves penetration-- a man's "thing" should get inside a woman's "thing." Only a few girls said they knew that there is something more to sex than just lying down together and hugging each other, but they really didn't know how a man's thing could get inside a woman's thing. I found that young girls in sixth

grade enjoyed talking about sexual matter in the group, while young girls in seventh grade were reticent to share their experience in the group.

A few girls admitted in the groups that they had seen their parents having intercourse. In each case, the girl was about three to four years old when they were first exposed to it. One girl said she woke up to nurse at her mother's breast. The others girls woke up because they wanted to urinate⁵. A few girls said they had seen their cousins having intercourse. Lack of private quarters in the houses made it impossible for some villagers to avoid making love with their children around. One girl said once when she went to visit her friend's house with a group of girls, she accidentally saw her friend's parents having intercourse. "At first the woman lie down, then the man lie on top. Then the man put his thing inside the woman's. It had a loud noise while their genitals hit each other." When I asked how she felt about it. She said, "I was shocked. It's disgusting. How could they do this kind of thing? Kissing each others' lips." Another girl told me, in the in-depth interviews, that she had seen a boy and a girl from her class having intercourse in an old abandoned house. "It was on the weekend. . . I saw both of them naked. The boy lay on top of the girl," she said. She said she had seen their genitals but didn't want to say if she had seen the penetration.

The girls in seventh grade avoided talking about human sexual intercourse by talking about the sexual behavior of dogs. As some of them said, "The dogs cannot talk. If we talk about it, someone might tell others about it. So we better choose the animals because they cannot talk." When I asked if they knew about sexual intercourse, they replied:

⁵It is customary in Thailand for a child to sleep in the same bed with its parents at least until it is weaned at about 3-4 years of age.

Porn: Just look at the dogs.

Tig: One sex hits against the other sex and then they are having sex.

Porn: The opposite sex encounter each other and they are having sex.

The girls also brought up the sexual behavior of dogs, which they saw with their rear ends together. When I asked what they thought about this, most of them replied that it is disgusting. Some of them even tried to hit them with a stick to separate them. They also said that it is very disgusting for humans who aren't married to have sex. But this is not hold for a married couple, such as their parents, who had to have sex in order to have them..

One girl, Tuk said in the group that she didn't understand what the other girls were talking about. Then Luang said to her that, "Tuk, haven't you ever watched dogs? It's natural." Then the group continued the discussion:

Porn: They are playing cymbals⁶(มันตีฉิ่ง).

Tig: The cat jumps through the hoop⁷ (แมวลอดห่วง).

It is interesting to find that the girls who raise dogs tended to discuss a lot in the group. They also said they had noticed that the female dog's genital spread and swollen, and had some bleeding after having sex. I found that it is common for the children to see dogs having sex in the village--on the roads, in the backyards, and in the school yard. Most of the girls said they had seen dogs beat their rear ends together, and some teachers had told them that they were having sex (หีน). One girl said she had seen dogs having sex in the backyard, and her mother told her that "You should better not look at it."

⁶A slang term that Thais use for lesbian partners. The young girls might have heard about it and thought that it is the term for sexual intercourse.

⁷A euphemism that Thais use for heterosexual intercourse.

The girls in sixth grade would use euphemisms to talk about sexual intercourse in a funny way. They used the terms "Frog"⁸ (กบ); and enjoyed the double entendre of referring to "ถ่านตรากบ" - "Frog" brand batteries, which used to be an actual brand in Thailand. They also enjoyed euphemisms such as "the cat jumps through the hoop (แมวลอดห่วง)," "They're all done (เขาเสร็จกันแล้ว)," and they do it (เขาเอากัน). One girl said, "in the comic book for AIDS education, it has a sausage and an orange. The sausage gets into the orange when the orange didn't start to protect herself. So the orange got AIDS from the sausage." They said they imagined (จินตนาการ) from reading in the pamphlet for AIDS education which showed a man and a woman sleep on the bed that something like penetration should happen.

Additionally, gender stereotypes are based on the notion of opposites and that perceived norms of sexual behavior involve only heterosexual sex. The girls have learned that sexual intercourse is restricted to female and male relationships and only for the purpose of procreation.

Most of the girls said they heard the term "masturbation"⁹ (การสำเร็จความใคร่ด้วยตนเอง)," but there few of them who knew what it was. Some of the girls said they had seen the term in the newspaper and magazines, but really didn't understand it. Only one group of girls shared their learning experiences about masturbation. They had learned from television- -Twilight show, pamphlets for AIDS education, and newspaper columns that answer readers' sexual queries. As they shared in the group,

Kig: It's a way to do by oneself.

Kase: It was said on the TV. that if we have sexual desire, we can do by

⁸A slang term that Thais use for female genitals.

⁹Masturbation is commonly called "helping oneself (ช่วยตัวเอง)."

ourselves with our hands.

Kig: Use water. Use a shower nozzle to make a forceful stream inside it.

Kug: In the Japanese magazine, there was a thing like the male genital to insert into it. . . My aunt brought the magazine from the hotel where she works.

When I asked their opinion about someone who masturbates, most of the girls thought that it was bad. Only one girl in the group expressed a positive attitude toward masturbation. As they replied:

Kai: It's bad like people who have mental illness.

Nee: It won't get AIDS though!!

Kug: Nee said that it's good if they can help themselves, so they won't get AIDS.

Kig: It's bad because they will be addicted to it until they get older.

Kug: Yah!! Addiction (ติดนิสัย).

Kug: If they want to do it, and someone come to their house, they won't be able to do it.

Kase: Then they'll be annoyed. . . Most Thais don't have sex with themselves.

Kug: It's shameful (น่าอาย).

Kase: It's embarrassing to one who do this.

Kig: One who never does it, but wants to do it, is also ashamed.

Some girls had heard that boys had done something with their genitals, which the boys called "pull a rubber ring (ตื้อกว๊อง, จี้กว๊อง)"¹⁰, but they didn't know that it meant that the boys were masturbating. As one girl said, "The boys said 'ตื้อกว๊อง or จี้กว๊อง,' They said it in class. They weren't ashamed to talk about it. One of them gestured and said, 'When I pulled my thing like this, the semen spouted out.' The other boys said that it didn't spout out very far

¹⁰This is a northern Thai slang term used to describe male masturbation.

because their things were small." Only two girls, Kase and Kig, knew that the boys had practiced masturbation. They said it was a way that boys would release their tension when they had some sexual desires. They would pull (၈၈၈) their genitals when they had such feelings.

Young Girls' Experiences of Sources of Sexual Messages

It is evident that sex appears to be an uncomfortable topic for parents (or other adults) to communicate with their children about because it is considered inappropriate according to cultural norms. Parents tend to have distorted communications about sex with their children. They avoid saying anything and attempt to distract the child by redirecting the child's attention. The child then learns that something is vaguely wrong with sexuality. Most of the girls' mothers said they never explained to their daughters about changes associated with puberty. Some mothers told their daughters only how to use the pads when they started to menstruate. They would observe the changes in their daughters' bodies, particularly when their breasts began to develop, and tell them to wear brassieres. They would insist their daughters not exhibit their bodies, be permanently clothed, and be ashamed of revealing their bodies. When the girls started having their periods, the most common message that they received from their mothers and elders was that contact with boys could lead to pregnancy. And what that contact entailed was left to their imagination. Furthermore, the mothers said they would increase their supervision of their daughters' behavior.

Som is an example of a mother who felt reluctant to discuss sex with her daughters. She always forbade her daughters to talk about sexual matters. As she shared her experience with me:

"When my daughters heard our neighbors talking about indecent things, they would talk about it, too. So I told them not to talk about it. It's disgusting. (What kind of indecent things did they talk about?) Things such as hugging, kissing and the like. (Did you explain anything to them?) No. (Why not?) I don't want them to know about it now. One thing that I really worry about is that they will "fall in with a bad crowd" (ใจแตก), and think too much about this kind of thing. . . . (When will you teach them about it?) I'll teach them little by little. And the teachers will teach them too. If I see something happen, I will tell them. But I don't dare talk to them directly. For example, my elder daughter, Dum, said something about her friend who had intercourse (เสียดัว, to lose the body).¹¹ And her mom took her to have an abortion. I suspect Dum knows about it but she might not know in detail. So she never asked me if someone slept together, how would they do such a thing? I still think about it. But I don't talk to her. . . (Have they ever asked you why someone gets pregnant?) Dum never asked me. But her sister asked me where did she come from? But I didn't tell her. I just told her that she came out from my belly button. . . (Do you think she believed it?) I think so. (How about Dum?) I think she didn't believe me, and she might know where she did come out. I think she knew about it but didn't dare to ask me. . . I only felt comfortable to talk to her about the menstruation when she asked me about it and told me she had learned something from the teacher. One more thing occurred about my younger daughter. On that day, the dogs were having sex (หีน)¹² while she was playing with her friends. She ran to tell me that the dog's rear ends were fixed together. She then took a stick with her and tried to separate them. The other girl asked me what they were doing? I didn't know how to explain them what the dogs were doing, so I kept quiet. Then one of my neighbors came. We were looking at each other. After that she told them " the glue stuck their bottoms together(กาวมันติดกัน)". And the girls didn't ask any more about it. . . My younger daughter used

¹¹This is a term that women commonly used to describe coitus.

¹²This is a northern Thai slang term used for dog meaning to have sex.

to complain that she'd have breasts like the other girls in her class. I didn't respond to her. I am not quite sure if she still wonders about it."

The responses obtained in the focus groups as well as in the in-depth interviews brought out clearly that most of the young girls first acquired information about sex from the media. They specifically talked about R-rated and X-rated videos, pornographic magazines and printed material, and television. Most girls said they had heard about X-rated movies (หนังเอ็กซ์), which they describe as films with people naked (หนังโป๊) and with "too much sex." As I discussed earlier, X-rated videotapes have become a fad in the villages. Men organize small parties around the viewing of these tapes, but some women and even children may watch the tapes as well.

Some girls received information about sexual intercourse from watching hard-core pornographic videos. Some watched them when their cousins or neighbors were watching them, others at social gatherings as after some guests had gone home for a wake. Two girls accidentally saw pornographic movies when they turned on the videos that were mis-labeled as cartoons and Chinese movies. They said they saw different kinds of sex including petting, intercourse, and oral sex. The videocassettes sometimes portray rape and other forms of sexual aggression against women as well. One girl in the group said, "It was in the funeral. At first I didn't know that it was a X-rated movie. He took a girl and raped her. He took off her clothes and closed her mouth, then raped her. He raped and killed a girl each night. . . When my grandmother realized that it was such kind of movie, she took me and my brother to sleep in the house. But adults kept watching it."

In another group, one girl said: "My neighbor turned on the videocassette, so I walked to watch it from the window and I saw it. I saw a

woman was sucking a man's thing." After this girl brought up the topic, four other girls in the group also said that they had seen such kind of movies when their cousins or neighbors turned on videocassettes at New Year's or other parties, and even in a grocery store. "Most of them who watched it were men," one girl said.

One girl who didn't share her experience in the group told me in an interview that " It was at the end of the cartoon that I watched it with my elder and younger brothers. There were no adults at home when we watched it. It was a movie about a man licking the woman's thing while a woman was sucking the man's thing. Then they had intercourse."

Some girls who had never seen movies also said they had heard their fathers, brothers, or some neighbors talk about watching X-rated movies. They were told by their mothers or other adults to keep away from the houses where adults were watching such kinds of movies. One girl said, "My neighbors would close the doors when they watched these kinds of movies. They said that children were not allowed to watch them. It's a film with too much sex." Another girl was told by her grandmother that her grandfather and another adult were watching X-rated movie, so she should stay in her room. One girl was warned by her mother that "If your friends persuade you to watch X-rated movies, don't go. It'll make you fall in with a bad crowd."

Pornographic magazines and printed materials were other sources of sex information for some of the girls get their sex information. They mentioned different types of magazines that were available in the village such as Japanese cartoons, short stories, sex magazines, and criminal magazines that had short stories about sexual intercourse and oral sex. Some girls had seen these magazines among these that their fathers, brothers, and cousins left at home.

Some girls had seen magazines that boys brought to school and magazines that were thrown away or left in public areas. In a focus group, some girls talked about these magazines as follows:

Yai: In the book, they took turn, sucking each other's genitals.

Porn: There was a picture of a woman sucking a man's thing. It was posted on an electric pole in the village. On the next day, someone ripped off the middle part of it.

One girl shared with me what she had read in a magazine that belonged to a boy's father: "His father went to the field, so other girls and I stole it to read it. It was a story about a woman who ran away and was caught by a group of men. Then they had the woman suck the man's genitals, and the man lick the woman's genitals. . . It was a very explicit picture. At first they made woman lie down naked. The other men were petting her. . . (What did you feel when you read it?) It's disgusting."

The girls who had not learned about intercourse from X-rated videos and magazines had learned some kinds of sexual acts from watching soap operas and TV. They imagined what would happen after kissing and hugging. Some girls talked about what they had seen on TV:

Tai: They lie down together.

Ying: They hug each other.

Noi: They take everything off, then they cover up with a blanket.

Tai: There's more, but they don't show it.

Noi: They show a quick scene. The couple throws their underwear out from the bed. Just a quick watch, they shift to another scene.

From my observation, I noticed that most young girls spent time watching television while they were staying home. Most girls spent time

watching television during the weekend while their parents worked outside their home. Only a few girls said their parents had imposed some rules about when or what they might view. One mother told me that her daughters liked to watch television all day during the weekend. The only thing that she had done was tell them to pay attention to their homework as well. Some parents complained to me that their children had spent too much time watching television. They could not find any clues to manage this because they must go out to work.

There is evidence in the US that adolescents who depend on television for information about sexuality tend to have high standards of female beauty and believe that premarital and extramarital intercourse with multiple partners is acceptable (Brown, Childers & Waszak, 1990). This could also occur in northern Thai villages. On the basis of my fieldwork, my findings are consistent with Brown, Childers & Waszak's (1990) that "young adolescents may not be prepared to interpret sexual media content in a cognitively or morally mature way because they have had relatively little experience dealing with sexual issues in other contexts" (p. 63).

Boys were also cited as another source of sexual information by some girls. Some girls heard boys in the class talk about sexual matters. "The boys are fondling and showing their genitals to each other in the restroom. In the class room, one of them showed his thing to other boys and said all boys would have such thing (pubic hair) when they grew up, and one girl had seen it," the girls said. "Boys would talk about this indecent thing. They dare talk about it. One of my friends said she heard one boy asked another boy about the growth of his pubic hair. He wondered why he had it and asked another boy if he also had such thing (pubic hair) like him," one girl said in the group. The girls also

mentioned that boys would bring some pornographic materials to the school and hide to read them. Sometimes the teachers found out and took the books from them.

The girls received no or very little information about sexual matters from their mothers and from the school. This is because of their fear that sexual education would lead to promiscuity. Female sexuality has been conveyed by parents and teachers as violence and victimization as it was found in a previous study in the US by Michelle Fine (1988). The parents and teachers believed that by not teaching or talking about sexuality, adolescent sexual behavior will not occur. Sexuality as victimization is concerned with the young girls' learning of their vulnerability to potential male predators.

There was a strong message from both parents and teachers that girls should not to be interested in opposite sex and in sexual matters. They are too young to know about these sexual matters. "My mom told me to avoid associating with boys if it is not necessary. But if they are good, I can contact them as a friend. . . One of my friends told me that her mother forbade her to talk to boys in the school," one girl said. Another girl said,

"My mom told me that I must be concerned about the studies first. I should not interested in boys. Just wait until I reach the appropriate age that I graduate and have my own job. . . The teacher would separate girls and boys in different groups when he taught what girls should do. He would warn us not to go out with boys because they might be taken advantage of by boys (พลาดทำผู้ชาย). We should think about our future. We should not interested in having boyfriends. . . . The teacher told us that sexual intercourse started when a couple was getting married."

These responses were congruent with the responses from focus group discussions. As the girls replied in the group when I asked "What did your mothers and grandmothers teach you to behave as a girl?"

Mol: Mom said not to go out with boys. Don't be infatuated with boys. She said I am a girl so I must stay home. Not to hang around and do the housework.

Tai: If I want to go out, I need to go out with my mom or dad.

Noi: Go out with some adults.

Tai: Not to go out alone.

Au: My mom told me not to go out with boys otherwise I will be spoilt (เสียคน).

Mom: Not go out with boys. We will be spoilt.

Ying: Not allow men to touch our bodies, so we will be spoilt.

Auan: Mom told me that if boys visit me in the house, don't allow them to sit near me. People will gossip about me as a bad girl.

The girls also received the same message from the teachers in school.

As the girls said in the group:

Nee: The teachers told us not to be interested in opposite sex otherwise we won't be able to concentrate on our studies.

Tuk: It'll bring us to be spoilt.

Porn: Yes, they (teachers) told us not to be interested in opposite sex. Just pay attention to the studies first. Not to be wise beyond our years (แก่แดด).

The girls also received a strong message about their vulnerability to potential male predators from home and from the school. They were warned

by being the victims of rape if they went out alone. As some girls said in the group:

Tai: My mom said I should not go out alone. Some men might rape me. I'll lose my virginity. And they might also kill me.

Mom: Mom said do not go out alone. Someone might rape me, and I'll lose my virginity.

In the school, the teachers would warn the girls about their risk of being the raped victims. Most of the female teachers that I talked to had said they would warn the girls by not using the term "rape" with them. One teacher told me what she had said to the girls,

"I told them that they should be cautious about protecting themselves. They are about to become women who are in danger from surrounding environment. I won't tell them directly by using the term 'rape'. . . I told them that if women had gone into this situation, they would bring with them the "sinful blemish, ตราบาป" forever. . . . The most important thing that I told them was that girls about their age should not go out of sight from their parents. They should not go out alone. They should ask their parents if they want to go out or what do they want or where do they want to go and whom they want to go with. They should not follow their own thought (mind)."

Chapter 8

Conclusion

Summary

The scope of this study is a consideration of the impact of gender socialization on young girls' perceptions of their gender roles and sexuality in a peri-urban northern Thai community. In Thailand, there has been a considerable amount of survey and some ethnographic research geared toward sexual activity among men, both married and unmarried, prostitutes, married women, truck drivers, military recruits, and to some extent adolescents aged 15-19 years old. To my knowledge, no study has been concerned with the early teen group. This study concentrates on the normal developmental process, rather than being driven by the AIDS epidemic as are other studies on sexual behaviors in Thailand. The prevalence of HIV infection in developing countries, which is higher in young women than young men aged 15 to 25 and than among women in other age groups, demonstrates the need for implementing prevention programs for girls before they enter their womanhood. Adolescent girls are among the most vulnerable groups confronted with STDs and AIDS because of their emerging sexuality, and because of double standards for the sexual behavior of women and men, as well as rapid capitalist penetration.

Modernization has contributed to socioeconomic transformation and changes in economic power which doubly exploit women both in class structure and in gender bias, and has also contributed to the lessening influence of the ancestral spirits in the local villages. This traditionally agriculturally self-subsistent society has developed into a consumer-oriented society, whose members are regularly stimulated by nightly advertisements on new televisions.

These new influences fit a traditional Northern Thai proverb which places a high value on external appearance: "If you have no food, no one will shine a light in your stomach (to see that it is empty). If you have no good clothes, make-up and jewelry, your siblings (community) will look down on you (บ่มีหยังกินบ่มีไฟเอาไฟมาตำต้อง บ่ได้นุ่งบ่ได้ของปี่น้องดูแลน).

These transitional changes have resulted in changes in the status of women , a high rate of migration of women to cities which is associated with sex becoming commercialized and commoditized, and changes in the sexual behavioral pattern of people in the local community in recent decades. The young girls experience conflict between adopting new status symbols of modernity, often set by Western standards diffused through advertising, and maintaining ideal gender roles of female beauty and grace as expected by Thai social values. In her study of young women migrating to Bangkok, Mills (1991) found that the pressure of young women to present themselves as "modern," to wear make-up and stylish clothes, and to purchase modern consumer items for their families is considered part of the lure of engaging in the commercial sex industry. The development of the tourist industry in Chiang Mai city has also provided a large number of jobs in the hotel and restaurant sector, in commercial enterprises, as well as in the commercial sex sector. This has contributed to the recruitment of young women into the city where they have to rely on wage jobs (Gray, 1990). Their confrontation with the dilemma of low-paid urban jobs and the absence of the strict parental and community control may influence these young females to enter prostitution.

Cultural meaning and social structure condition male and female roles and personalities in each society. There is evidence from this study and previous studies that Thai culture emphasizes the notion of male superiority in

politics and religion. This socially and culturally constituted relation of power impacts the construction of sexuality, which tends to place rigid controls on female sexuality. Traditional Thai culture is characterized by rigid gender roles and restrictions on female sexuality, in comparison to much greater tolerance for and expectation of male sexuality. Both sexes carry into adulthood a vision of sexual relations based on what they have heard in public discussions and on their internalization of the prevailing ideology of male domination. It is quite common for Thai men to spend an evening drinking with a group of companions and to then visit the local brothels in a heavily intoxicated state (Muecke, 1990). Results from this study, and many others, identify as social norm that Thai men be socialized in sexual gratification with prostitutes. A study by Tangcholapip & Ford (1993) reflects the social norm of Thai society in which the reproductive and pleasure dimensions of sexuality were separated between wife and prostitute. The responses from both female and male interviewees revealed that prostitution performed an important role in Thai society, "in providing a readily available outlet for the release of males' sexual drives,' and thus reducing the incidence of rape" (p. 125). Jackson (1989) states:

"Thai men have traditionally been given three models of sexual relations: of taking a wife and being a husband-father, of taking a minor-wife or concubine and being a lover-father, and of being the client of a prostitute. . . Thus a man may take both a wife and a minor-wife or minor-wives as well as visit prostitutes without necessarily facing social opprobrium" (p. 37).

Thai women, in contrast, are expected to be sexually innocent and disinterested. They are taught that sex is disgusting and embarrassing. "Good" women should repress their sexual feelings and reactions, not display sexual

pleasure or display sexual desire, so they won't be accused of being like a prostitute who has sexual skills and can provide pleasure to men. Women in the mother and grandmother generations said they were expected to discuss sex less openly and go to their wedding beds as virgins. Ideal types of women, the double standard of expectations for husbands and wives, the lack of equality in relationships between husband and wives, and the negative valuation of female sexuality are all factors that contribute to lower status for women in Thai society, to the presence of the commercial sex industry, and to the difficulties in negotiating their sexual encounters.

In childhood socialization, girls were raised with the intention of becoming mothers and staying in the domestic spheres, and boys were given more freedom for hanging around and pleasure-seeking (รักสนุก) with their peer group. The girls were undergoing important training to be "feminine" and a wife and mother, which is embedded in her conscious and unconscious development. Girls are expected to take on more responsibilities than boys as a means to keep them closer to the home. This restriction on girls' activity stems from a fear that given too much freedom a daughter would be enticed into premarital sex, or that even if the daughter had not engaged in premarital sex, she would be accused of being "loose," and bringing shame to her parents. This concurs with Pramualratana's study (1992) of parental expectation in a rural community in Thailand, conducted in 1987-1988. This confinement of girls' activities led them to develop negative feelings about being a woman. Some of the young girls expressed their feelings of being born as a woman as bored, disadvantaged, inferior, and having less freedom.

It could be concluded from this study that Thailand is a society which is dominated by a heterosexual ethic. Heterosexual meanings have become

central to gender symbolism that girls and boys have been socialized to, which involves "teen" and "adult" styles of femininity and masculinity. The labels female and male carry powerful notions of how an individual should behave in order to conform to the normative expectations of one's social environment. The Thai feminine stereotype is characterized by gentleness, weakness, dependence, emotionality, and is responsible for taking care of the house and children. According to this stereotype, a woman's beauty is also a major asset. The masculine stereotype, on the other hand, is said to be characterized by accomplishment, and leadership, and is the head of the household, and the financial provider. Parents and teachers show a disapproval of gender deviance by mockery and teasing-- of girls who prefer to associate with boys, climb trees, go on adventures, and want to be strong and tough; and of boys who prefer to associate with girls and act gently like a girl. Even though there is no history of explicit anti-homosexual prohibitions in Thailand, this does not indicate a liberal view towards homosexuality in Thai society. Jackson (1989) points out that many Thai homosexuals experience ongoing tension and anxiety regarding the relation of their homosexuality and their participation in a society dominated by heterosexual assumptions.

There is evidence that these young girls experience conflict between adopting new status symbols of modernity, often set by Western standards that have been diffused through advertising, and maintaining ideal gender roles as expected by Thai social values. They entered the preadolescent period with ambiguous feelings about their gender stereotypes. On the one hand, they perceived that women should be strong, independent, and equal to men. They don't want to be "girly-girls or goody goody girls" who are weak and easily humiliated by boys. On the other hand, they want to preserve their socially

constructed feminine role as gentle and proper women. They still want the men to be strong, and to be the leaders who act as providers and protectors for their family members .

It is evident that these young girls enter their sexual lives with silence and with the ambivalence associated with being a woman. This is because of the social constraints on sexual socialization process that do not allow or prohibit sex education. They are told that they should refrain from thinking about sex unless they are older and getting married, and that they should engage in sexual activity only for reproduction. Most young girls experienced negative and shameful feelings of their changing bodies and menarche. They had negative experiences of self-consciousness and embarrassment about their developing bodies. The girls have difficulty in understanding their own bodies. They internalized ambivalent feelings about their developing sexuality. They have vague ideas about their own sexual meanings. These negative reactions seem to occur when the girls have not been prepared for menarche. They are ashamed of letting others know and insecure about going out to public areas when they are menstruating.

I also found that women in the mother and grandmother generations had received no information about their developing sexuality until they married. It is therefore not surprising that mothers may have a hard time becoming sex educators for their daughters. There is evidence that women are not able to talk openly with their children about sex. Premarital sexual relations and dating were the topics about which mothers, grandmothers, and teachers most frequently disciplined their young girls. The girls were warned to avoid going out with males or staying alone with males. My results are supported by a study by Sethaput & Pattaravanich (1993) who indicated that average score of

sexual knowledge of rural mothers is lower than that of their daughters. They point out that rural mothers do not talk about biological aspects of sexuality because it is a rather difficult and technical subject for them (p.89).

Menarche has been symbolized within the discourse of heterosexuality that generally emphasizes its importance in the relationship between reproduction and sexuality. There is a strong message from mothers and teachers that girls who start menstruating are capable of getting pregnant so they should be careful when coming into contact with males. In a related study of the meanings women attribute to menarche as a central aspect of body politics in the US, Janet Lee (1994) arrived at a similar conclusion. She states:

"Within patriarchal and heterosexist societies menarche simultaneously signifies both emerging sexual availability and reproductive potential. . . . Sexualization implies heterosexualization, meaning that women are taught to live and discipline their bodies in accordance with the prescriptions of heterosexuality, experiencing themselves as sexual objects for heterosexual male viewing, pleasure, and also as mothers of men's children" (p. 344).

The young girls' inadequate learning from their parents or other adults has led them to explore sexuality from other sources, such as friends, pornographic materials, or even by peeking at others' bodies. Some girls reported having conversations with their friends about subjects like menstruation and breast development. They also heard boys talk about some sexual matters in the classroom; they knew only that the boys meant something about sex but they didn't understand the details. Television and pornographic materials were cited as the main sources of their sexual information. The depictions of the bodies of "attractive" woman in a movie, and the romances that pass across the screens on television may lead girls to place high value on

female beauty and romantic love. They are in a period of transition and are experiencing many emotional, physical and social changes. They are interested in their bodies and the changes that are taking place. They are curious about sexual behavior. Some of them may begin dating. This transitional change makes them more vulnerable to environmental forces or social pressure than adults.

There is evidence that the capitalistic penetration which has brought modernization and a commercialized semi-urban life style to the community has resulted in lessening the power of maternal ancestral spirits and thus has contributed to the emerging of multiple sexual patterns or sexual and social liberation in this local community. It is increasingly common for adolescents to start sexual intercourse at a younger age. However, it was the young girls who went to study in the city on a daily basis who were more liberated in engaging in premarital sex. My findings concur with Chris Lyttleton's study in Northeast Thailand. He concluded:

"The impact of perceived freedom of 'Western lifestyles' (emulated in numerous television soap operas) on village youth coupled with either personal sojourns in Bangkok or the direct influence of a close relative who has spent time in the city act, in concert, to suggest that being 'modern' means being more sexually active" (p. 147).

This transitional change in village sexuality, with sexual mores gradually becoming more permissive, could lead young girls to be at risk of contracting STDs and AIDS, or experiencing unwanted pregnancies and abortions because of their lack of sexual information, their emerging sexuality, and double standards for sexual behavior of women and men. The passive, non-initiative-taking role of the girls suggests that they are almost powerless in

addressing, discussing or demanding safe sex techniques. Data from the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) showed that in 1989 the prevalence of STDs among female adolescents of 15-19 years was 34.8 percent, and 34.7 percent in the age group 20-24 which were higher than the prevalence of other age groups (Soonthornhada, 1992b, p. 9). There is evidence from two surveys that pre-marital sexuality is becoming more common among young people, particularly in an urban sphere like Bangkok (Soonthornhada, 1992a).

Poor women and women in minority groups are the most at risk. Economic marginalization and poor education make them less able to negotiate safer sexual practice with male partners. A recent study by Tangchonlatip & Ford (1993) found that female construction workers felt that they would not want to perform active sexual acts like prostitutes. They had never asked their husbands whether they used to go to prostitutes. They also felt that respectable women should not show any enjoyment of sex, and feared that if they did so, their husbands would not trust them. Compounding these gender-specific risks, public health campaigns have tended to expect women rather than men to take responsibility for negotiating safer sex, particularly condom use with their partners. These campaigns have failed to take account of the power differential between women and men in sexual relationships that is transmitted through childhood socialization. These preventive efforts cannot be effective unless the complexities of heterosexual encounters and gender inequities are addressed.

There has been controversy about sex education and public health risk-reduction education both in the school system and among the general public, as reflected in the national media coverage. Educational administrators still believe that sex information will lead to promiscuity. The Principal of the local school in my study told me that he was at first reluctant to expand the

school to lower secondary grades because he was afraid that teachers are not ready to handle the problems of courtship and sexual encounter among girls and boys. He said the school had organized sport activities for the students in seventh grade. He hoped that in consequence the boys and girls would not have much leisure time for courting and dating. He told me about an incident in which teachers found a girl and four boys in grade eight of a school in the city having sex in a dormitory. The teachers asked the girl why she was doing this. The girl replied to the teachers that she did it because she was curious about it. This story, which I received third-hand, did not include any mention of how the boys involved were treated. Most teachers whom I conversed with seemed to agree that providing sex education in the school would be good, but they had no idea about what kind of sexuality-related information should be included in the curriculum.

In Thailand, parents' groups have strongly criticized television educational campaigns about AIDS and condom use, arguing that the TV spots are alarming children by exposing them to sexual matters they are unable to understand. Recently, there is mounting criticism of an AIDS prevention book published by the Office of the Permanent Secretary under the prime minister's office because it contains several jokes regarded as dirty. There is a picture which suggests that teenagers should play "sports" so that they do not become obsessed with sex --a boy is flying a kite (ชักว่าว), a girl is fishing (ตกเบ็ด).

These are colloquial expressions that describe men and women masturbating. Lack of factual information and positive interpretations of sexuality from their parents or teachers might lead teenagers to learn negative role models from the media and pornography, and thus lead them to engage in sexual activity at a young age.

It may be concluded that environmental context, including the social, political, and economic barriers women face, must be taken into consideration in order to critically examine the power relationships and gender roles that affect the lives of Thai adolescent girls, and limit their ability to negotiate their sexual encounters. This insight will help nurses to realize the importance of "the sociopolitical and economic aspects of the social world that produce conditions and relationships related to stress, crisis, poverty, malnutrition, and illness" (Chopoorian, 1986, p. 45). We need to consider gender and class inequalities, unequal power relationships, political interests, and economic policies that produce classism, and sexism that interfere with safer sex practice and cause adolescent girls to be at risk for contracting AIDS (Stevens, 1989). My conclusions support Kleffell's notion of critical social nursing which attempts to uncover relations of dominance and to demystify the ideology that rationalizes unequal power relations in the society (Kleffell, 1991).

Implications

The findings of this study have implications for continuing several studies with this study population, as well as for further exploration of some issues related to the transitional changes of Thai adolescent sexuality. It is important to conduct a longitudinal study of these young girls in the same cohort in order to follow the patterns of socialization processes which influence attitudes and opportunities related to gender relations and sexual behavior. It is important to include boys in the study in order to provide a comprehensive picture of gender socialization, particularly as it affects gender relations.

Cross sectional comparisons could be made using samples from other age groups in order to amplify the chronological changes during each specific age group. It is also important to include parents, sisters, brothers, cousins, and peers, in order to provide a "triangulated" perspective of the influences and processes through which sexual attitudes and opportunities are developed and the conditions under which patterns of sexual behavior are formed.

A comparative study of sexual knowledge and attitudes between youths in urban and rural areas would be useful to identify the influence of socioeconomic transformation that impacts their sexual behavior.

Implications for Nursing Practices

Explication of processes in gender and sexual socialization within the theoretical perspective of a feminist ethnographic approach contributes to nursing science by adding knowledge of social and cultural contexts that structure the meanings of gender and sexual experiences of young Thai girls. It provides direction for a nursing approach that should take account of the social environment as a powerful influence force which places women in Thai society in a particularly vulnerable position in contracting of STDs and AIDS. Nurses must realize that the restrictive social structures that limit women's economic, social, and legal independence, and allow men to maintain strong control over female sexuality could lead women to have no power within the sexual relationships to negotiate a change in behavior in those relationships. This gender inequality and Thai women's traditional role expectations encourage women to be passive, obedient, and self-sacrificing with their primary partners, and this limits female freedom, and places the control of female sexuality out

of women's hands, for if they insist on change, they very well may lose their partners.

In Thailand as in many other places, poor women and women in minority groups are the most at risk. Economic necessity and social responsibility are among the factors that motivate Thai women to migrate to the cities and engage in commercial sex industry. Meanwhile, most of these women are young and are poorly educated. This makes them more easily exploited and difficult to reach through AIDS education campaigns (Muecke, 1990).

The findings from this study provide some strategies for nursing research and practices in Thailand. It may be concluded that sexuality has been ignored in dealing with the issues of women's health, particularly in STDs and AIDS in Thai society. This is because of the cultural norms which value lack of sexuality or sexual neutrality as a feminine quality. Women's attitudes are deeply shaped by cultural norms that good women do not talk about sex. Little empirical research exists in Thai nursing literature about the issues of women's health in relation to women's sexuality. There is a need for studies that focus on the specific needs of women themselves, and on a variety of sexual experiences which are expressed in different ways in order to identify potential sexual health problems that women experience. Specific information from these research findings can be used to provide education and counseling regarding unsafe sexual behavior to women in all health care settings.

Results from this study identify the need for nurses to participate in planning policies and programs in sex education for early teen and teenage women. It is evident that lack of young girls' knowledge of their developing sexuality might have a negative impact on the girls' views of their bodies and

on the girls' feelings of being women. In addition, girls' inability to relate to boys might become a constant source of frustration. I would agree with Martinson (1994) that for the child to develop a healthy sexuality as he or she matures, the encouragement and/or explicit training of sexually appropriate behaviors is required (p. 105). The girls need to be made aware of their own sexuality and trained in communication skills in order to promote their ability to negotiate safer sex.

An increase in the number of reported HIV infected cases in adolescents is an indicator of the urgent need to develop some strategies for STDs and AIDS prevention among this age group in Thailand (Soonthornhdhada, 1992b). It is evident that Thai youths are being encouraged by the mass media to experiment with their sexual attractiveness. Advertisements urge them to lure the opposite sex by the use of cosmetics and clothes. These messages tell them that being sexual is being modern. Adolescents are becoming sexually active at a younger age. Negative role models from the media and the stress of sexual abstinence in HIV and AIDS education is an important source of conflict that might lead them to explore bits of information from other sources.

I would agree with Whipple (1992) & Bernhard (1995) that nurses must be comfortable with their own sexuality in order to help their clients be comfortable with their bodies and their sexuality. Nurses need to realize that sexuality has changed as the result of changes in culture and social structures. Women's sexuality is not static. It includes a variety of experiences which are expressed in different ways at different times. So it is important that nurses should accept their own sexuality and be aware of their sexual biases in order to provide effective sexual counseling and client care.

Sexual content needs to be incorporated into the nursing curricula in order to help nurses gain accurate knowledge about sexual health, and an awareness of their clients' sexual health concerns. Additionally, nursing students should be encouraged to overcome their own embarrassment about sexuality. Guided group discussion among nursing students could be used both to insure their grasp of course content and to provide them an opportunity to discuss sexuality in a clinical setting.

Limitations of the Study

The goal of this study was to describe in thick detail in order to understand the young girls' experiences of their gender formation and their emerging of sexuality in a northern Thai community. There were limitations inherent in this approach. The most obvious was lack of generalizability. This study comprised only girls aged 11-13 years old in a peri-urban Northern Thai community. This diminished generalizability of results to school-age children in general.

Another limitation was that some informants might be represented more fully than others because of the nature of the method which depended on the relationship that I was able to build up with my informants. However, I tried to include all voices in the multiple reading of interview transcripts and the selection of examples.

Finally, my interpretation of the young girls' experiences in this study reflects my understanding, my critical thinking of the data, my field work experience and ongoing relationships that I was able to make with my informants at this point in time. As I continue to grow and develop intellectually, and gain further experience, this interpretation could change.

The Research Experiences

My experiences can be summarized into growth in relationships with the people in these Northern Thai communities, and the experience of doing field work. My experience of field work allows me to understand the life of women who are in an underprivileged group. I used to blame prostitutes as bad women who sell their bodies for money and do everything to serve men's sexual desire. I often heard women in my middle class group blame prostitutes, saying that they deserved to get AIDS because of their sinful and deviant behavior. It is painful to see these women struggle to earn money in order to support their parents and children. They have little opportunity to find other jobs because of their illiteracy, limited education, and limited economic resources.

I view with regret the way some of the young girls with whom I had a close relationship have been exploited by the penetration of commodification and monetization into these local communities. Is it wrong for them to dream about having houses, money, clothes, and consumer items and to think about continuing their education in the city like their friends or other villagers from rich households? It is very painful to realize that social constraints would make them vulnerable to be lured into prostitution in the near future.

This experience makes me realize how privileged I am, and how Thai people have been exploited by consumerism. I began to see how women in underprivileged group have been stigmatized as primary carriers of STDs and HIV transmission, sources of infection rather than victims of society. I had attempted to minimize the superiority of my position in Thai society, as a well educated privileged woman, in my relationship with these women. I conducted interviewing sessions in a collaborative manner by encouraging sharing information. However, I would not claim that I was able to achieve the

maximum degree of reciprocity because of the constraint of time and my minimal experience in doing this type of research.

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Appendix A: Letter of Permission to Conduct Research on Site

คณะพยาบาลศาสตร์
มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่

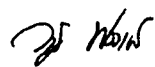
18 กุมภาพันธ์ 2537

เรียน หัวหน้าการประถมศึกษา อ. (ก) จ. เชียงใหม่
เรื่อง ขอความอนุเคราะห์เข้าไปเก็บข้อมูลวิจัย

ข้าพเจ้า นางวารุณี ฟองแก้ว ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ประจำคณะพยาบาลศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่ ประสงค์จะเข้าไปสำรวจเก็บข้อมูลวิจัยเพื่อปริยฐานิพนธ์ ปริยฐานิพนธ์เอก ของมหาวิทยาลัยวอชิงตัน ซีแอตเทิล สหรัฐอเมริกา ในหัวข้อเกี่ยวกับ "ความนึกคิดของเด็กนักเรียนหญิงในเขตชนบทภาคเหนือ ที่เกี่ยวข้องกับบทบาทความรับผิดชอบของสตรี" โดยจะเลือกเก็บตัวอย่างข้อมูลจากนักเรียนหญิง ชั้น ป.6 โรงเรียน ข ในช่วงเวลาตั้งแต่ปลายปีการศึกษา 2536 ติดตามต่อเนื่องไปในช่วงปีภาคเรียนฤดูร้อน และจนกระทั่งถึงต้นปีการศึกษา 2537 ในกรณีที่นักเรียนกลุ่มที่ถูกสำรวจได้เข้าเรียนต่อ ชั้น ม.1 ณ โรงเรียนเดิม ดังกล่าวข้างต้น ทั้งนี้ ข้าพเจ้าได้ติดต่อประสานงานกับ อาจารย์ใหญ่เป็นการส่วนตัวแล้ว

จึงเรียนมาเพื่อโปรดทราบ และพิจารณาให้ความอนุเคราะห์ จักเป็นพระคุณยิ่ง

ขอแสดงความนับถือ



(นางวารุณี ฟองแก้ว)

ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ระดับ 6

February 18, 1994

To: Chief District Elementary Education

District A

Chiang Mai

From Warunee Fongkaew

Faculty of Nursing, Chiang Mai University

Chiang Mai, Thailand 52000

Dear Sir,

I am an assistant professor in the Faculty of Nursing, Chiang Mai University. I would like to obtain some information for my Ph.D. thesis at the University of Washington, Seattle, U.S.A. entitled "Early Adolescent Girls' Perceptions of Gender Role and Sexuality in a Rural Northern Province, Thailand." Data will be collected from female students in the sixth grade in a B school from the end of 1993 academic year. I will follow those students who continue on to the seventh grade of the 1994 academic year (the Thai academic year begins in May 16, 1994). I have personally approached the Principal of the school.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,


(Warunee Fongkaew)

Assistant Professor

February 23, 1994

To: Principal of the School

B school

A District, Chaing Mai

From: Office of the A Chief District Elementary Education

A District, Chiang Mai

Dear Sir,

I have been informed by Mrs. Warunee Fongkaew, an assistant professor from the Faculty of Nursing, Chaing Mai University that she would like to obtain some information for her Ph.D. thesis at the University of Washington, Seattle, U.S.A. entitled "Early Adolescent Girls' Perceptions of Gender Role and Sexuality in a Rural Northern Province, Thailand." Data will be collected from female students in the sixth grade in a B school from the end of 1993 academic year. She will follow those students who continue on to the seventh grade of the 1994 academic year (the Thai academic year begins in May, 16, 1994).

The office of the District Elementary Education, A district has considered her request and agreed to cooperate. Please give her appropriate assistant accordingly.

Sincerely yours,

(C)

Assistant Chief,

incharge of the District Elementary Education

A district, Chiang Mai

Appendix B: Interview Guide & Household Survey Form

แนวการสัมภาษณ์เด็กวัยรุ่นหญิง

ประเด็นที่ศึกษา

ลักษณะคำถาม

1. ความรู้สึกนึกคิดเกี่ยวกับความคาดหวังในบทบาทของผู้หญิง

1. ผู้หญิงไทยควรจะวางตัวลักษณะอย่างไร? บทบาทของผู้หญิงในสังคมไทยควรจะเป็นอย่างไร? คุณได้รับการสั่งสอนเกี่ยวกับการวางตัวของผู้หญิงจากใครบ้าง เช่น มารดา ย่า ยาย พี่สาว ญาติ ครู ฯ?

2. มีความคิดเห็นอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับลักษณะของผู้หญิงไทย? ตัวอย่างเช่น ผู้หญิงไทยมีลักษณะงานเฉพาะที่แตกต่างไปจากผู้ชาย

3. คิดว่าพ่อ แม่คาดหวังให้เราปฏิบัติตัวอย่างไร ในฐานะที่เราเป็นลูกผู้หญิง? คิดว่าพ่อ แม่คาดหวังให้ลูกผู้หญิงมีความรับผิดชอบมากกว่าลูกผู้ชายหรือไม่ อย่างไร?

4. ผู้หญิงดีมีลักษณะอย่างไร? ลักษณะอย่างไรที่บอกว่าผู้หญิงคนนั้นไม่ดี? เราเห็นด้วยกับคำกล่าวของคนทั่วไปเกี่ยวกับ ‘ผู้หญิงดี’ และ ‘ผู้หญิงไม่ดี’ อย่างไร?

5. มีความคิดเห็นอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับคำกล่าวที่ว่า ‘ผู้หญิงเป็นช้างเท้าหลัง’ ‘ผู้หญิงมีหน้าที่ต้องปรนนิบัติและเอาใจสามี’?

6. มีความรู้สึกอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับการประกวดนางงาม? คิดอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับความงามทางร่างกายที่เน้นทรวดทรงและแฟชั่นการแต่งกาย? รู้สึกอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับคำกล่าวที่ว่า ความสวยงามของสตรีเป็นสิ่งที่มีความสำคัญอันดับแรกและจะทำให้ผู้หญิงมีความมั่นใจในตัวเองเพิ่มขึ้น?

2. ความรู้สึกนึกคิดเกี่ยวกับเรื่องเพศซึ่งรวมถึง
ความรู้สึกทางเพศ การแสดงออกทางเพศ
ความสัมพันธ์กับเพศตรงข้ามและการปฏิบัติทาง
เพศ

1. มีความรู้ความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับเรื่องเพศอย่างไรบ้าง? เคยได้ยิน ได้ฟังมาอย่างไรบ้าง? และ
จากแหล่งใด? รู้จักวลีวลามกอะไรบ้าง?

2. คิดว่าผู้หญิงและผู้ชายเป็นเพศที่แตกต่าง
กันอย่างไร? จะดูได้อย่างไรว่าผู้ชายหรือผู้หญิง
เริ่มเข้าสู่วัยรุ่นแล้ว? *รู้มาจากแหล่งใด?*

3. เคยมีความรู้ที่อยากรู้อยากเห็นเกี่ยวกับการ
การเปลี่ยนแปลงของร่างกายตัวเองบ้างหรือไม่?
เคยพยายามที่จะค้นหาด้วยวิธีใดบ้าง? จาก
แหล่งใด?

4. มีความรู้ทุกอย่างเกี่ยวกับการเปลี่ยน
แปลงในร่างกายของเรา (เช่น หน้าอกเต่งตึงขึ้น
ตะโพกผาย ฯ) ?

5. เห็นด้วยหรือไม่ที่ผู้หญิงควรจะพยายามปิด
บังซ่อนเร้นการเปลี่ยนแปลงในอวัยวะของตนเอง
ไม่ให้เปิดเผย (เช่น สวมใส่เสื้อผ้าหลวมๆ ไม่ให้
รัดรูป)?

6. มีความรู้ความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับความรู้สึกทาง
เพศอย่างไรบ้าง? เคยได้ยินคำนี้บ้างหรือไม่?
เคยดูการ์ตูนโป๊ นิตยสารโป๊และวิดีโอโป๊บ้างหรือ
ไม่? มีความรู้ทุกอย่างหรือไม่ได้เห็น?

7. มีความคิดเห็นอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับการเสียตัว
การเสียพรหมจรรย์ หรือการมีความสัมพันธ์
ทางเพศก่อนแต่งงาน? ไม่เป็นที่ยอมรับใน
สังคมไทยหรือไม่? ถ้าเกิดกรณีนี้ขึ้นผลจะ
เป็นอย่างไรกับผู้หญิงเหล่านั้น?

8. มีความเห็นอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับการแสดงออกถึงความสัมพันธ์ใกล้ชิด เช่น การถูกเนื้อต้องตัวกัน การไปไหนมาไหนด้วยกันตามลำพัง ในแง่ที่เป็นแฟนหรือคู่รักก่อนวัยอันควร?

9. เคยคาดหวังหรือไม่ถึงผู้ชายในอุดมคติว่าควรจะเป็นแบบไหน? เช่น รูปหล่อเหมือนดาราดาวภาพยนตร์? เคยจินตนาการเกี่ยวกับผู้ชายในกลุ่มเพื่อนๆ หรือไม่ ในหัวข้อเกี่ยวกับเรื่องใด เช่น ความประทับใจในรูปร่าง คิดว่ามีใครเป็นวัยที่สมควรจะมีแฟน?

10. มีความรู้ความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับการสำเร็จความใคร่ด้วยตนเองหรือไม่? เคยได้ยินคำนี้มาก่อนหรือไม่? รู้มาจากแหล่งใด?

3. ความรู้สึกลึกซึ้งเกี่ยวกับพฤติกรรมสุขภาพทางเพศ

1. มีความรู้ความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับประจำเดือนอย่างไรบ้าง? มีความรู้สึกลึกซึ้งอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับเรื่องนี้? ทำไมจึงมีความรู้สึกแบบนี้? ควรจะดูแลตนเองเกี่ยวกับการมีประจำเดือนอย่างไรบ้าง?

2. รู้จักโรคติดต่อทางเพศสัมพันธ์ และเอดส์ไหม? ใครที่เสี่ยงต่อการติดโรคนี้?

3. เอดส์มีความรุนแรงอย่างไร? เราจะมีบทบาทความรับผิดชอบในการป้องกันเอดส์อย่างไร?

4. ใครควรจะเป็นผู้รับผิดชอบในการใช้ถุงยางอนามัยเพื่อป้องกันการตั้งครรภ์ โรคติดต่อทางเพศสัมพันธ์และเอดส์? ชายหรือหญิง ใครควรจะเป็นผู้ตัดสินใจ?

5. รู้จักวิธีคุมกำเนิดอย่างไรบ้าง?

6. รู้สึกอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับคนที่ซื้อและใช้ถุงยางอนามัย?

7. ได้รับข้อมูลข่าวสารเกี่ยวกับการมีประจำเดือน การตั้งครรภ์ โรคติดต่อทางเพศสัมพันธ์ และเอดส์ จากแหล่งใด?

แนวการสัมภาษณ์ผู้ให้ข้อมูลที่เกี่ยวข้อง

1. มีความคิดเห็นในเรื่องการให้ความรู้เรื่องเพศในโรงเรียนอย่างไรบ้าง? ควรจะมีเนื้อหาในหลักสูตรการเรียนการสอนในโรงเรียนอย่างไร? เคยสอนนักเรียนหญิงเกี่ยวกับการปฏิบัติตัวเมื่อมีประจำเดือนหรือไม่?
2. มีความคิดเห็นอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับการวางตัว การปฏิบัติตัวของเด็กวัยรุ่นหญิงในสังคมไทย? เคยสอนอะไรบ้างให้แก่เด็กนักเรียนหญิงเกี่ยวกับการวางตัว?
3. มีความคิดเห็นอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับพฤติกรรมทางเพศของเด็กวัยรุ่นหญิงในหมู่บ้าน?
4. ใจแตกหมายความว่าอย่างไร? มีความแตกต่างกันอย่างไรระหว่างเด็กวัยรุ่นหญิงกับเด็กวัยรุ่นชาย?
5. เด็กผู้หญิงในหมู่บ้านได้รับข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับเรื่องเพศจากแหล่งใดบ้าง?

Interview Guidelines for the Young Girls

Topics of interest

Questions

I. Perceived expectations of
gender roles

1. How should Thai women
behave in Thai society?
What roles should women play
in Thai society? From what
sources have you been taught
about your roles such as
your mother, grandmother,
sisters, cousins, teachers
etc.?

2. What is your opinion
about the characteristics of
Thai women? For example: Do
Thai women have specific
jobs compared to Thai men?

3. What do you think your
family expects you to do as
a daughter or what are you
expected to be as a
daughter?

4. In your opinion, what
are the characteristics of
being "good" or "bad" women
in Thai society?

Topics of interest

Questions

5. What do you think about the Thai social values which address women as "the hind legs of the elephant," serving and pleasing men?

6. What is your opinion about beauty contests?

What do you think about physical beauty by having fashionable dress and stylish coiffure? For example: Do you view women's beauty as women's primary worth or as the way to increase women's confidence?

II. Perceptions of Sexuality including Sexual Feelings, Sexual Expressions, Relationships with Opposite Sex, Sexual Activities.

1. What do you know and understand about sex? Have you ever heard about this, and from what sources? Do you know any joke about sex?

Topics of interest

Questions

2. What are the differences between the male and female body? How do we know if he or she has reached puberty, and from what sources have you heard about this?

3. Have you ever want to find out about the changes in your body? How and from what sources?

• 4. How do you feel about the changes in your body (e.g. breast enlargement, menstruation etc.)?

5. Do you feel that young women should try to conceal the changing parts of their bodies (e.g. using loosely-fitting clothes)?

Topics of interest

Questions

6. What do you know about sexual feelings? Have you ever heard about this term? Have you ever seen pornographic cartoons, magazines, or video? How do you feel when you see such material?

7. How do you think about virginity and premarital intercourse? Is premarital intercourse strictly unacceptable for "respectable" women? How about the reputation of young women? What will happen to them?

8. What do you think about having some affectional acts among couples such as touching each other or dating?

Topics of interest

Questions

9. Do you ever dream or fantasize about your ideal boy friend? What type of person should he be, such as handsome? Do you gossip about young men among your friends? What do you talk about, such as like their appearance, impression of their personalities and characters? When is the time for you to have boyfriend?
10. What do you know about "masturbation"? Have you ever heard about this term, from what sources?

III. Perceptions of sexual health-related issues

1. How do you understand menstruation? How do you feel about this? Why do you have such feelings? How should you take care of yourself?
2. What do you know about STDs and AIDS? Who are at risk?

Topics of interest

Questions

3. How is the severity of AIDS? How can you be responsible for AIDS prevention?

4. Who should be responsible for condom use in preventing pregnancy, STDs, and AIDS? man or woman? Who should make the decision?

5. What do you know about contraception?

6. How do you feel about the person who buy and use condoms?

7. What sources of information have you received about menstruation, pregnancy, STDs and AIDS?

Note: The topic II "Perceptions of Sexuality" will be used only in in-depth individual interviews with the young girls.

Interview Guidelines for the key informants

1. What is your opinion about teaching sex education in the school? What types of content should be incorporated into the curriculum? How about the knowledge of menstruation? Have the young girls ever taught about taking care of themselves in the school?
2. How do you think that young girls should behave in the Thai society? What have you taught to them about their gender roles?
3. What is your opinion about the young girls' sexual behavior in the villages?
4. What is the meaning of the word "Jaitak"*? What are the differences between boys and girls?
5. What sources of sexual information you think the girls receive in the villages?

*This question is intended to clarify a term often stated as the undesirable characteristics for Thai teenagers, particularly for young women.

แบบสำรวจหมู่บ้าน

บ้านเลขที่_____ หมู่_____

จำนวนสมาชิกในครอบครัว_____ชาย___คน หญิง___คน

(ชาย) อายุ_____ปี จบชั้น_____

อาชีพ_____ รายได้เฉลี่ย/เดือน_____

(หญิง) อายุ_____ปี จบชั้น_____

อาชีพ_____ รายได้เฉลี่ย/เดือน_____

เช่าที่ทำกิน (ระบุ)_____

การถือครองที่ดินของตนเอง จำนวน_____ไร่_____งาน

ไม่มีที่ดินของตนเอง_____

เลขขายที่ดิน (ระบุ)_____เมื่อไหร่_____

สิ่งอำนวยความสะดวก

___โทรศัพท์___เครื่อง ___รถมอเตอร์ไซด์___คัน

___ตู้เย็น___เครื่อง ___รถยนต์___คัน

___วิทยุ___เครื่อง ___รถไถ___คัน

___พัดลม___เครื่อง ___อื่นๆ_____

การออกไปทำงานของสมาชิกในครอบครัว

___หญิง___คน ___ชาย___คน

ทำงานที่ไหน_____เมื่อไหร่_____

การเรียน/เรียนต่อ

___หญิง___คน ___ชาย___คน

เรียนที่ไหน_____ชั้น_____

Household Survey Form

Address _____ Village _____

Number of Family Member _____ Male _____ Female _____

(Male) Age _____ Year _____ Education _____

Occupation _____ Income _____

(Female) Age _____ Year _____ Education _____

Occupation _____ Income _____

Tenant _____

Landowning _____

Landless _____

Selling land _____ Year _____

Consumer items

_____ TV _____ piece (s) Motorcycle _____ piece (s)

_____ Refrigerator _____ piece(s) Car & Pick-up truck _____ piece(s)

_____ Radio _____ piece (s) Small tractor _____ piece (s)

_____ Electric fan _____ piece (s) Other _____ piece (s)

Occupation of Family Members

_____ Male Number _____ _____ Female Number _____

Type and Place of Work _____

Education _____ Male Number _____ Female Number _____

Type of Education _____

Appendix C: Female Teenagers' Assent Protocol

FEMALE TEENAGERS' ASSENT PROTOCOL

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON SCHOOL OF NURSING, SC-72
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH CARES SYSTEMS

TITLE: Early Adolescent Girls' Perceptions of Sexual Responsibility in a Rural Northern Province, Thailand

Warunee Fongkaew, RN, MS, 66-53-211-552
Investigator: Doctoral Student
Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai, Thailand 50002

I would like to ask you to help me with a study of what young girls' perceptions of gender roles and sexuality. If you say you will help me, I will ask you questions about your perceptions and experience as follows:

- 1) Sources of information about roles and sexuality;
- 2) What kinds of sexual information they want to know more?;
- 3) Perception about sex and sexual obligation;
- 4) Perceived expectations about sexual roles such as What it is like to be a Thai woman?
What do you think your families expect you to be a woman?;
- 5) Attitudes and perceptions about fertility, the role and status of women.

Our talk will take about 2 hours each time. The interview with you will be open-ended interviews (no more than five sessions).

I would like to tape record our conversations in order to ensure that I have everything you say. I will also take some notes so I can remember why you answered as you did. I will not tell your parents, teachers, or friends about what you said. The tapes are to be listened only by the study staff. The audio tapes will be used only for this research project.

The reason for this study is so that this information would help provide a basis for developing more effective health education related to AIDS prevention for young women in Northern Thailand.

If you start and decide in the middle that you do not want to answer more questions, just tell me to stop and I will stop. You can ask questions at any time. You are free to refuse to participate and to withdraw from this study any time without discrimination.

Do you have any questions?

Do you think you would like to help me?

Appendix D: Parent Consent Protocol

PARENT CONSENT PROTOCOL

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, SCHOOL OF NURSING, SC-72
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS

Title: Early Adolescent Girls' Perceptions of Sexual Responsibility in a Rural Northern Province, Thailand

Warunee Fongkaew, RN, MS, 66-53-211-552
Investigator: Doctoral Student
Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai, Thailand 50002

As a nurse, I am interested in understanding Thai adolescent girls' perceptions of gender roles and sexuality. This information would help to provide a basis for developing more effective health education related to AIDS prevention with young women in Northern Thailand.

Participation in this study involves visiting your child in the school or other places if it is convenient to your child. I will want to interview and ask her to express her own opinion. Your child will be interviewed for about 2 hours each time.

The interview with your child will be open-ended interviews (no more than five sessions). The first session will be conducted as relationship session. The following sessions will be conducted by using discussion guides as the following:

- 1) Sources of information about roles and sexuality;
 - 2) What kinds of sexual information they want to know more?;
 - 3) Perception about sex and sexual obligation;
 - 4) Perceived expectations about sexual roles such as What it is like to be a Thai woman?
What do you think your families expect you to be a woman?;
 - 5) Attitudes and perceptions about fertility, the role and status of women.
- Your child may refuse to answer any questions during the interview.

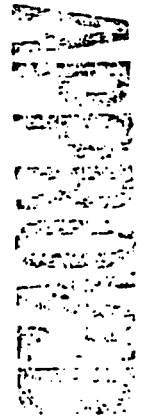
There is a minimal risk to participate in this study. Some children may feel temporarily discomfort in discussing their perceptions about gender roles and sexuality.

The information that your child provides will remain confidential within the limits of the law, and, therefore, I will not share the child's responses with you. No names will appear in any reports. I will, however, be sharing the general nature of the responses in professional publications and for presentations. Code numbers will be used on all forms so that analysis of the information is conducted without knowledge of the child's identity. When reports are written, summary information will be provided and it will not be possible to identify any individual or family. All notes, and tape transcriptions will be retained indefinitely. The tapes themselves will be destroyed after they have been transcribed. Only the investigator and the supervisors/consultants working on this study will have access to this material. The tapes are to be listened only by the study staff. The audio tapes will be used only for this research project.

Your child participation in the study is voluntary, and she have the freedom to withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefit to which your child is otherwise entitle. You have the opportunity to ask question before consenting, and in the future, regarding the research and your child's rights as research participants. Involvement in this study will cost only time. Your child will not be paid for her participation.

Do you have any questions?

Do you permit your child to participate?



Biographical Note

Name: Warunee Fongkaew
Birth: June 5, 1956
Birthplace: Lampang, Thailand
Education: Mahidol University
Bangkok, Thailand
Bachelor of Nursing and Midwifery, 1978

Mahidol University
Bangkok, Thailand
Master of Nursing, 1983

University of Washington
Seattle, Washington
Master of Science, 1992

University of Washington
Seattle, Washington
Doctor of Philosophy, 1995