

The Utilization of the Knowledge from the ex-Communist Party of Thailand in Community Development: The Case of Community Leaders in Phonthong Subdistrict Administrative Organization, Senangkhanikhom District, Amnat Charoen Province, Thailand

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Abstract

The objective of this study were (1) to find out that the ex-members of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) had been trained what kind of knowledge during their working in the base camps of the 444 Working Area in the time of insurgency, and (2) the community leaders who were ex-members of the CPT in the 444 Working Area had utilized what kind of knowledge gained from the CPT in the successful community development. They were village headmen, village headman assistants, members of Subdistrict Administrative Organization (SAO) Council, public health volunteers of the village, and the presidents of various groups in the village. They had received many prizes in administrations, for example, the consolation prize for middle-size SAO.

This qualitative research used in-depth interviews, structured interviews, non-participated observation, and field research in collecting data. The informants were 15 ex-members of the CPT in the 444 Working Area. They were consisted of 5 community leaders and 15 villagers in Phonthong Subdistrict Administrative Organization, Senangkhanikhom district, Amnat Charoen province.

The study founded that to gain the knowledge from the training of the CPT, (1) the villagers must be selected by CPT to work as mass worker in the villager for 1 year. (2) The probation stage, they will be trained the political ideologies of Marx, Lenin, and Mao, to be able to use the knowledge to mobilize the mass to join their ideology. (3) After they had passed the probation, they were posted to various units. During this stage they were trained the official military knowledge of the CPT: political lessons, strategy, and warfare. (4) Those who were able at work and brave will be promoted to higher ranks and will be sent to be studied in foreign countries, such as Laos, China, and Vietnam. Besides the official training courses, they were socialized by the daily living to have the characteristics of a leader: unity, speaking skills, sacrifice, not taking advantage,

and assertiveness. The knowledge from the training of the CPT used in the community development were the leadership, speaking skills, decision-making, assertiveness, unity, and responsibility.

Keywords: Communist Party of Thailand, Community Development, Community Leaders, Knowledge

Introduction

The genesis of the Marx-Lenin movements in Thailand was the result of the movements of Marxism in Asia, influenced by the Great Russian Revolution in 1917. It was accepted that the introduction of Marxism into Thailand was indirectly through Chinese and Vietnamese. (Prachuab Amphasawet, 2546: 3)

The Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) was established in 1931 in the name of "Siamese Communist Party". In the first party assembly on December 1, 1942, at a house in Trok Chan Saphan Song (Chan Lane, the second bridge), Bangkok, with 57 members and the first Secretary was a Chinese teacher named Li Hwa, the party had changed its name to "Thai Communist Party". In the second party assembly in 1952 it had changed its name to "Communist Party of Thailand". (Thikan Sinara, 2548: 22)

The aims of CPT were to destroy imperialism and feudalism, and to establish proletariat and farmer State of Siam, following the doctrine of Marx-Lenin-Mao. The highest purpose was to set up the communist system as the society without exploitation, classless, plentiful and prosperous. The members of CPT had to change their consciousness to that of the proletariat because members of CPT were considered as the vanguards of the proletariat to be the core of revolution to siege the state power, and to serve the exploited mass. (Prachuab Amphasawet, 2546: 7)

In the second party assembly in 1952, CPT had turned the emphasis of its activities from urban to rural areas, to mobilize youths, students, and intellectuals to arouse the farmers to be ally. Those farmers who joined the fight with CPT will be educated in political lessons, such as, class consciousness, ideology of communist party, political and military policies, and military techniques, such as, the using, maintaining, and producing of arms, including military strategy. (S. Somphong, 2554: 74-94) The aim was to increase the force to be able to demolish the military dictatorship because the workers and farmers were important forces in revolution. (Prachuab Amphasawet, 2546: 43)

After the coup in 1958, the government of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat implemented the policy to block the influence of the communists so the suppression was done by violent means under the charge of being communist. CPT had to move into the jungle to use rural areas as base to fight with arms. Then, CPT moved its commanding center from Bangkok to Isan (Northeastern region) to avoid the suppression

of government. It turned out that the more suppression of the government the more increasing of the CPT both allied forces and operational areas. The people was resentful with the violent operations of the government, they united with the revolutionary forces to fight with arms. (Prachuab Amphasawet, 2546: 69-70)

In operations, CPT divided its working areas in different region, the north Isan region had 7 working area as follows: (Prachuab Amphasawet, 2546: 223)

111 Working Area: the borders of Nakhon Phanom, Kalasin and Mukdahan provinces.

222 Working Area: the borders of Sakon Nakhon and Nong Khai provinces.

333 Working Area: the borders of Kalasin, Mukdahan, Yasothon and Roi Et provinces.

444 Working Area: the borders of Ubon Ratchathani (now in Amnat Charoen), Yasothon, Mukdahan provinces.

555 Working Area: the borders of Kalasin, Sakon Nakhon, and Udon thani provinces.

666 Working Area: the borders of Khon Kaen and Kalasin provinces.

999 Working Area: the borders of Kalasin and Sakon Nakhon provinces.

The CPT started to siege the state power in 1942 and ended with failure in 1980. The government had declared 66/23 policy to allow the members of CPT. to surrender without guilty and made them "co-developer of the nation" to let them be able to live a normal live.

Later, the ex-members of CPT had the roles of community leaders and core-leaders in community development. They had received many prizes, such as, the community leaders in the area of Phonthong Subdistrict Administrative Organization (SAO), Senangkhanikhom district, Amnat Charoen province. They were village headmen, village headman assistants, members of SAO Council, public health volunteers of the village (PHV), and the presidents of various groups in the village. They were ex-members of 444 Working Area "Phu Sa Kokbua" of the CPT in north Isan region. They received many prizes in administrations, such as, the excellent prize for small children development center, the excellent prize in village level for organic fertilizer pellet production project, the consolation prize for middle-size SAO in Amnat Charoen province.

These people, the ex-members of CPT, should had brought the knowledge trained by CPT to develop their communities with success. So, this paper tried to find out that what were the knowledge the ex-members of CPT had been trained and used in community development, and how they received the knowledge.

Objectives

The objective of this study were (1) to find out that the ex-members of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) had been trained what kind of knowledge during their working in the base camps of the 444 Working Area in the time of insurgency, and (2) the community leaders who were ex-members of the CPT in the 444 Working Area had utilized what kind of knowledge gained from the CPT in the successful community development.

Concept theory framework

This study had two framework: (1) the knowledge training of the CPT, and (2) the utilization of knowledge from the CPT in community development.

(1) The knowledge training of the CPT. CPT was seen as an organization that had to recruit personnel with desired qualifications to work in the organization. It provided training to develop the personnel to be able to work efficiently. Personnel administration especially the staffing activities were used to analyze the staffing of the CPT including: job analysis, human resource planning, recruitment, initial screening, selection, orientation, training, performance appraisal, and probation. (Suphaphorn Phisanbut, 2550: 71)

(2) The utilization of knowledge from the CPT in community development. The concepts used were leadership and community development. The characteristics of the good leaders include: healthy, good knowledge, good personality, creative, good decision, and decisive. (Kitti Phayakkhanon, 2521: 29-32) In community development the community leader should be: determined, faithful, truthful, kind, adaptable, confident, democratic, and loyal.

The related literatures were the history and movements of CPT (Prachuab Amphasawet, 2546), the experience of high-level training from CPT of Mr. Lat Saori (S. Somphong, 2554), the operations of the mass (Hinpha Phubanthat, 2554), the role a communist leader in mass mobilization (Nitirat Sapsombun, 2552), the spreading of communism in Thailand (Somsak Satrod, 2516), and ideological conflicts of the student movements and CPT (Thikan Sinara, 2548).

Materials and Methods

This study was a qualitative research with in-depth interview, structured questionnaire, non-participating observation to collect field data. The population was 237 ex-members of CPT in north Isan, the 444 Working Area, now in Phonthong SAO. They were 106 leaders (member of SAO council, village headmen, village headman

assistants, public health volunteers of the village, presidents of community groups, community volunteers, and subdistrict security officers), and 131 villagers. The snowball method was used to identify 15 samples from Phonthong village and Ponghin village; consisting of 5 leaders (2 village headmen, member of SAO council, public health volunteer of the village, head of household group, and president of community group), and 10 villagers (5 persons from Phonthong village and 5 persons from Ponghin village). The field data were collected by 5 research assistants (Ms. Mewika Kosarak, Ms. Chanwipha Duangsi, Ms. Daruni Phongpha, Ms. Chintana Chaichaliao, and Ms. Nutthida Horam), during June-July 2013.

Results

Phonthong Subdistrict Administrative Organization (SAO) was situated 31 kilometers to the north of Amnat Charoen province. Phonthong subdistrict was 9 kilometers to the east of Senangkhanikhom District Office. Phonthong village and Ponghin village were among the 10 villages of Phonthong subdistrict. In 1975 Thailand was ruled by military dictatorship. They caused a lot of trouble to the people. When there was movement of CPT to destroy the government, and the violent policy of the government to both who were oriented and not oriented toward the communists, the villagers had to join the CPT. Before joining the CPT, they were ordinary farmers without certain political ideology, and did not know about communist ideology, only heard about CPT movements.

They joined CPT at different time and had different position according to the CPT membership period. Everyone was trained the socialist thought. They left CPT after the ideological conflict incident among CPT members and the 66/23 policy of the government. At present all the 15 informants still had a good memory of the knowledge they had been trained by CPT.

The Training of CPT consisted of the following process:

1. Recruitment. The CPT will recruit villagers to be its member by the following 2 stages:

1.1 Forming ally. CPT will mobilize the villager mass to be ally and having the same ideology to get rid of the government and to change political system. First, the villagers will come voluntarily to the CPT, then villagers must prove themselves by doing the duty as supplying mass; sending rice, water, medicine, arms and information for the CPT with secrecy, to keep the secret of the CPT.

1.2 Proving mass. The duty of the mass was the stage to prove the villagers to CPT with confident that they had the same ideology to get rid of the government and to change the political system. During the villagers worked as the mass, the CPT will sent

out spies to observe the behavior of the villagers all the time; to prove that the villagers performed the mass duty with sacrifice, brave, and endure. The most important was that they must not be spies to the government. The villagers must perform as the mass for 1 year. After CPT was convinced that the villagers could be trusted, it will send agent to receive the villagers to the base in the forest.

2. Probation. The villagers will be trained by instructors who were members of CPT entered the forest before them. They studied in foreign countries and after finished the courses they came back to be unit leaders or instructors to pass on knowledge to members of the CPT in their unit. The knowledge trained will concern about the ideology of the Communist Party, the observing of the 10 disciplines of the People's Liberation Army of Thailand, and how to persuade as follows:

2.1 Ideology of the Communist Party. The ideology of the Communist Party consisted of Marxism, Leninism and Maoism, to indoctrinate the members of CPT with the ideology to change the political system.

2.2 The 10 disciplines of the People's Liberation Army of Thailand. (1) In every operation the order of the commander must be obeyed. (2) Do not take any thing of the mass without permission. (3) Respect the mass and help the mass. (4) Trading with justice, borrowing must be returning, damage must be compensated. (5) Do not damage the crops of the mass. (6) Do not have alcoholic drinks during working. (7) Speaking with politeness, no scolding and beating to others. (8) Do not molest women. (9) Do not be cruel to the surrendered captive. (10) After the war finished deliver everything to the common. Every member of the CPT must observe these disciplines.

2.3 Persuasive talk. The use of tones, the selection of words, and the application of actions in persuasive speaking.

2.4 Mobilizing mass. After the above trainings the villagers will work to mobilize the mass for ally and crating motivation for the mass to have the same ideology with the CPT. In persuasion for the mass to become the member of CPT, the contents will be the ideology of the CPT and attacking the government. For the CPT, it will not exploit the people and wanted to change the political system for the good living of the people. For the government, the military dictatorship used violence in suppressing people and exploited people.

3. Appointment. After finishing the probation stage, the new members of the CPT will be recruited in the 6 units of the CPT: (1) Mass unit: mass mobilization or psychological operation. (2) Military unit: combating unit. (3) Red soldier unit. Female soldiers doing transporting army provisions. (4) Production unit. Children, old aged and married persons who grow vegetables, rice and other to support the army. (5) Mail unit. Transporting arms, ammunication and military materials. (6) Medical unit. Curing the

members. Each unit will recruit and appoint its members according to the ability and suitability of the members. The lieutenant of each unit will observe the behavior of the members during the probation and proposed the names of members who had enough knowledge and ability to be appointed.

Besides the above knowledge, there was basic gun operation training because the situation during that period was a lot of fighting with the government. So, the members of CPT must have personal arms and know how to use, disassemble, assemble and solving the problems of arms firing.

4. Official training course. The official training course of the CPT consisted of political lesson, military lesson, war tactics and strategy from personal, unit, squad, and platoon levels; also, the using and testing of arms, and foreign country training.

4.1 Political lessons. The course was from the Chinese and Vietnamese texts of Marxism, Leninism, and Maoism, the comparative study of government systems of Thai, Chinese, and Vietnam. They were taught every day in the evening.

4.2 Military lessons. The use of arms, including disassemble and assemble of parts, ability, movement and maintenance of arms, for example: pistol, rifle, machine gun, mortar, bazooka, artillery and grenades both Capitalist and Socialist manufacturers.

4.3 War tactics and strategy. The theory and practice of war tactics and strategy were taught from the personal, unit, squad, and platoon levels. Personal level: how to move in approaching to the target, tactical operation, how to move into position, target attacking, how to retreat. Unit level: according to the characteristic of the 6 units of the CPT above. Squad level: assault and guerilla warfare, and the everyday duty of the soldiers. Platoon level: division of operational area, level of command, and the commanders of the district and provincial levels.

The military lessons will be studied alongside with political lessons. The war tactics and strategy will be studied after finishing the political lessons. The duration of study was 3 months.

4.4 The using and testing of arms. Following the military lessons was the practical training of the lessons.

4.5 Study in foreign country. After the practical training of the military lessons, those members who were clever, able and brave will be chosen by the leaders of unit and squad to study in Laos, China and Vietnam. The study will be intensive learning of advanced arms usage, war tactics and strategy. Some will receive advanced learning according to the characteristics of the unit. The duration will be 6 months to 4 years.

5. Learning from experience. Besides the official course, there was the unofficial learning or experience. It was the knowledge gained from the daily living, including:

5.1 Unity. The CPT members had love and unity in working together. They helped each other. Their success depended on cooperation of many people in many units. Those who knew the using of arms well will help teaching those members who did not good in using arms. By living the jungle, they had to love, sacrifice, and depend on each other, thus forming unity in the members of the CPT.

5.2 Speaking skills. In working with the mass, they had to speak to persuade people to trust them. They knew how to talk so that the villagers will become the members of CPT. They could speak with sweet tones and suitable with time and place. The speaking skill was the most important communication in working with the mass.

5.3 Sacrifice. They sacrificed themselves for the happiness of the common. Working in the jungle, everyone was in the same family. They had to solve the other's problems. In helping each other, they had related to each other and became ready to sacrifice for other.

5.4 Not taking advantage. Everyone joined CPT to live in the jungle voluntarily. So, they lived with a lot of people with happiness. They would like to help other and to be trusted by other in working together. They did not take advantage with other. They loved and lived harmoniously with the other in the jungle.

5.5 Assertiveness. They were confident in making decision. They dared to express their ideas. Their thinking, speaking, and doing must be right, suitable and acceptable for the mass, and adaptable with the mass. The leader must be a good model in creative thinking, be able to lead the activity to be successful and be able to build good relationship in working with the mass.

The utilization of knowledge from the training of the ex-members of the CPT in community development, including the leaders of the community: the utilization of the knowledge, and the villagers: opinion on the community development of the leaders.

The leaders of the community: the utilization of the knowledge. The community leaders who were ex-members of the CPT used the following principles from CPT in community development:

(1) Leadership. They were able to lead community members to join in activities for the common willingly and with enthusiasm for the success in community development.

(2) Speaking skills. Persuasive speaking skills were used in motivating the community members for love and unity of the community. The speaking with reason for the community member to be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of the following outcomes.

(3) **Decision-making.** The decision-making with honesty, to have meeting with the community members for decision-making. The community knew the working process thoroughly and making decision together.

(4) **Assertiveness.** The creative thinking was used to offer new project for the benefit of the community. The leaders were the voices of the community to bring the need of the community to the authority.

(5) **Unity.** Everyone in the community helped each other and joined together in community activity.

(6) **Responsibility.** They worked for the common with responsibility. They helped community with voluntary spirit.

The villagers' opinion on the community development of the leaders. Most of the skills of the leaders used in community development were sacrifice, speaking skills, assertiveness, creativeness, decision-making, ability, strength, and sharing.

An example of ex-CPT member as community leader: Mr. Sor Phimsen or Comrade Wirat, aged 76, now living in Phonthong village, Phonthong subdistrict, Senangkhanikhom district, Amnat Charoen province. He joined CPT at the age of 17. He had worked in mass mobilization for 2 years before received training for 6 months as a surgeon, later he was trained as a soldier for 1 year. Then he had continued training for almost 4 years in China to be a surgeon. After joining CPT for 10 years, he left the party and was a farmer for 1 year. Then he was interested in community development, so he worked in local politics and was elected as village headman for 5 years and subdistrict headman for 9 years. He utilized unity and justice from his experience with CPT in his working. He tried to avoid fighting in his community and helped them to be unity. He applied justice in his work even his relatives who did wrong without discrimination.

Conclusions and Discussion

The former study on community development tried to find out the factors of the success of the community development from the personal quality of the leaders. No one try to find out where the leader gained such important characteristics for community development. The researcher found out from the former experiences in field surveys in the northeastern part of Thailand that most of the successful community leaders were ex-members of the CPT. They had the outstanding ability in working from the training and experience in working with the CPT. Some of the openly declared that they once were the member of the CPT, but many kept the fact as secret.

It is interesting that many of them, though they were defeated in the war against the government. They successfully turned their big-scale aim from changing the political system to work in small-scale aim in the development of their community. They used

the same skills that they used to fight with force with the government to work with the government in community development. Many of them won the official elections and were the officers working under the name of the democratic government. They were able to keep their ideology to change the society but not from top down, to change the political system, but bottom up, to change from the community upwards.

For the abilities of the leader leading to the successful community development, the results found were not dissimilar with the study of the others, only the source of the abilities were explained.

The suggestion for further research is that the leaders in other working areas of the former CPT should be studied to be compared with the present study. Another one may be the process of changing from innocent farmer to be professional revolutionist.

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