



Tsunami Impact:

**The world of Morgan, Morglan and
Urak-Lawoi sea gypsies after the waves**

by Sumroeng Choeychuenjit

in cooperation with Save Andaman Network

Tsunami Aid Watch is a Program of the Southeast Asia Regional Office of Heinrich Böll Foundation, in co-operation with Southeast Asia Consult and Resource Co., Ltd.

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Krabi Declaration on Sustainable Post-Tsunami Rehabilitation

The participants of the forum would like to extend their gratitude and heartfelt thanks to all individuals, communities, national and international groups, parties and organizations for the help and aid they have provided for the individuals and communities affected by the tsunami of December 26th 2004. We hope that they will continue to give us unwavering support during the remaining task of long-term rehabilitation. The tsunami has left Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, the Maldives and other countries with devastated coasts, shattered communities, economies and hundreds of thousands of people in need of support. This destruction was, however, only the initial direct impact of the tsunami disaster. The ensuing aid efforts were part of just the first phase of tsunami rehabilitation.

Nine months have now passed since the tsunami and in most affected areas treatment has been delivered to the wounded and basic shelter is available for the surviving victims; in many cases the boats and fishing gear needed for livelihood restoration of the fisher folk have been provided; the remaining tasks are ready to be overseen by restored community structures and local administrations. The situation can, thus, in most instances be described as approaching stability. However, it is a far cry from being normal.

The tsunami recovery now enters a second phase of transformation that is the recovery from a disaster into a more permanent and functioning economic and social set-up, i.e. the mitigation of the secondary tsunami impact. While the aid to rehabilitate from the initial direct impact of the tsunami was characterized by speed and efficiency, the recovery support effort needed for the indirect impact recovery must strive for long-term effectiveness and sustainability. Taking into account livelihood, economic recovery, disaster management, issues of land and housing for the displaced, the landless, women, children, gender issues as well as migrant labor problems. In order to achieve this, a number of measures are urgently needed. Based on past aid delivery experience we therefore ask the international community and supporting NGO's and GO's to mobilize all available resources to:

- Ensure that the long-term rehabilitation of the tsunami affected area is based on definitions of fairness, justice, sustainability and stability as perceived and defined by the tsunami affected communities and individuals;
- Develop the secondary tsunami recovery support into an opportunity to address and solve pre-tsunami problems that have been worsened and/or exposed by the disaster;
- Deliver assistance and support in an accountable and transparent form that ensures participation of those affected in planning, implementation and execution of long-term rehabilitation programs;
- Establish – a vitally important point - a proper, honest and forward-looking information system and data-base on the tsunami disaster for the use and to the benefit of its affected individuals and communities, independent of nationality, race or religion;
- Initiate an aid-tracking system / mechanism to avoid the misuse of aid-resources or its appropriation for something other than aid purposes;
- Ensure that the remaining rehabilitation becomes a stepping stone for further development of the affected areas leading to better conditions than before the tsunami disaster.

If the international community, governments and civil societies help to continue with the tsunami recovery support based on the conditions given above, the tsunami disaster itself can be turned into an opportunity for development that is in line with sustainability needs and economic progress of all mankind. We believe in the strength of cooperation, coordination, openness and solidarity in times of need.

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Acronyms

BAAC	Bank of Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives
EGAT	Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SAO/TAO	Sub-district Administrative Organization (Tambon Administrative Organization)
SAN	Save Andaman Network
SEA-C.R.	Southeast Asia Consultant & Resource Co., Ltd.
TAW	Tsunami Aid Watch

Preface I

This publication looks at the lives of Morgan, Morglan and Urak Lawoi sea gypsies in the Andaman Coastal communities that were affected by the 2004 Tsunami. The author presents us with his experiences of these minority groups by recounting stories from their daily lives and ancient traditions, with special regard to their current plight after the Tsunami.

One reason for their predicament is their difficult economic situation. Some Morgans have still not received ID-cards from the Thai Government and have consequently been missing out on some of the available aid. To draw attention to their grievances, as well as to contribute to disseminating knowledge about these minority groups' specific background and current situation is of particular concern to the Heinrich Böll Foundation.

To analyze and bring into the rehabilitation discussion some of the issues that have arisen during the long-term Tsunami reconstruction process, as well as to link them to the broader development process in the affected areas, has been one of the main objectives of the Tsunami Aid Watch program (TAW) of the Heinrich Böll Foundation's Southeast Asia Regional Office. But it has also been of particular interest for TAW to identify and to highlight good practices that can be implemented in the future, by providing a stage for the views articulated by the local communities to be heard.

The Heinrich Boell Foundation wishes to thank the author Khun Sumroeng Choeychuenjit and all the help given by Save Andaman Network (SAN). We hope that this publication provides the reader a clearer understanding of the Andaman coastal communities' culture, ways of life and current challenges, as well as a possible starting point for further investigation.

Chiang Mai, March 2008

Dr. Heike Löschmann

Director of the Heinrich Böll Foundation's Southeast Asia Regional Office

Preface II

This publication offers you, the reader, some insights into the lives of the Morgan sea gypsies of the Thai Andaman coast. Some stories uncovered by the author about these unique communities are presented, as well as a window on to their current predicament after the 2004 Tsunami, along with their living conditions.

Concerning sea gypsies and their culture, TAW looks at the Tsunami rehabilitation process with its positive and negative dimensions and takes into account the fact that some of the communities impacted by the Tsunami do not fall into the group of people that can easily be categorized. Consequently, Tsunami recovery help, provided by bureaucracies that are used to be dealing with a more readily recognized culture and behavioral structure, needs to adapt to the specifics of this target group. It takes a great deal of flexibility on the part of government departments plus international and local NGOs to find appropriate means of sustainably helping them in the long term.

Arising again and again are problems around the issue of land conflicts. As sea gypsy habitats have become popular tourist destinations, the sea gypsy communities have had to fight for their rights within their immediate environments, threatened by developers who want the land for their own purposes.

We hope the reader will find this publication both informative and enjoyable as an introduction to a community of people both mysterious and misunderstood, whilst providing useful material for those people involved in the Tsunami rehabilitation process and sustainable development beyond.

Finally, I would like to thank the author, Khun Sumroeng Choeychuenjit, for all his efforts writing this publication.

Chiang Mai, March 2008

Karl H. Segsneider

Director of the Tsunami Aid Watch programme

The Sea Gypsies of the Andaman Sea

Thai sea gypsies or sea nomads, live in the southern part of Thailand, along the Andaman Coast. The Thais give these people various names, but in the Malay language they call them *Orang Laut*, which means sea people. However, they themselves, prefer to be called Morgan (or Moken). In the past they used to live on land, but later took to living on boats due to incursions on to their land by Malays. Since then, the sea gypsies have lived life on the sea. There are three groups of sea gypsies in Thailand; the Morgan, Morglan and Urak Lawoi. Their languages are part of the Austronesian language family.

The Morgan have two sub-groups living around the Mergui Archipelago Islands, as well as in areas along the coasts of both Thailand and Burma. The home of the first group in Thailand covers an area in Ranong province and around the Similan and Surin Islands of Phang Nga. The second sub-group of Morgan, called Morgan Tamab, live from Koh Prathong in Phang Nga province, to Takua Pa and Thalang in Phuket.

The Morglan people live around the Lam La area in Phuket and also Taimuang and Takua Pa in Phang Nga province. Urak Lawoi people live and sometimes wander around Koh Sirae, Rawai beach, Lam La, Bahn Nua and Bahn Saba in Phuket province. Some scholars believe that the sea gypsies were the original people living in these areas.

Previously, these sea gypsies lived on the sea in boats and in groups of ten to 40 people. In each group, there would be a skilled leader who knew the sea routes well and thus helped in navigating. Their traveling went in the form of temporary migrations, looking for food and for better places to live. The best areas to settle down temporarily, tended to be along the coastline, or at the mouths of rivers. Seasonal changes were another factor that made them move from place to place, especially during the monsoon seasons. Furthermore, sea gypsies might sometimes be forced to leave their habitats due to natural disasters such as plagues, or being forced out by other groups of people. The houses of the sea gypsies were boats, about 20 to 25 feet in length. However, some groups built temporary huts on shore as well. The huts were built using palm or coconut leaves. They were all in a bungalow style, supported with short poles, but with no terrace in the front.¹

¹ <http://www3.sac.or.th/ethnic/Content/Information/moken.html>

Nowadays, the sea gypsies build their houses with better materials and closer to the Thai style. Also, they tend to stay in their houses permanently, rather than living on the sea, or in temporary shelters. They have small to medium sized families and regard having daughters as better than having sons. This is because when their daughters marry, the men who marry them have to move into the family home. As a result, the family receives additional help with their labor. The men are leaders and laborers who work for money, for food and who even do household tasks, such as cooking or washing clothes. The women have a more comfortable life than the men. They simply gather around the beach, talking. The groups have several family names such as Thaleyluek, Channam and Pramongkij.²

Their livelihood relies mainly on shallow water fishery such as trapping crabs, or collecting plants growing along the coast. They exchange what they get from fishing for rice. In addition to rice, they also eat wild yams, coconuts, sweet potatoes and bananas. They now also carry out laboring work for outside investors, such as boat owners, who hire them for fishing. Other activities they do for money include diving to collect items on the sea bed such as rare sea shells, and also trapping shrimp.

The religions and beliefs of the sea gypsies are not clearly defined. However they believe in ancestral ghosts or spirits, called *Da To*. They have spirit houses which contain small human-like figures. They also believe in and respect the power of nature. They believe that in nature, there are many spirits or ghosts, such as crab spirits, wood spirits, water spirits and meteor spirits. Meteor spirits play a role in directing them to areas where they can find fish. The sea gypsies also believe in fate, fortune and omens. Their fate is controlled by the spirits and they believe that the spirits and ghosts are a powerful force that can make their life better or worse.³

Sea gypsies also have shamans in each sub-group. These shamans are important, because they are fortune tellers and predict auspicious times to do things, such as building houses or practicing traditional rituals.

² <http://www.andaman-island-hopping.com/articles/seagypsies.htm>

³ Kruahong, P, 1996, Chaowlay (Chaownam) Nai Muang Thai, Bangkok: Banakij Printing house.

One of the most important events or ceremonies for the Thai sea gypsies is the Floating Boat Ceremony. This ceremony is an opportunity for the sea gypsies to let their bad luck float away from them into the sea. Model boats are floated out into the sea, but if the boats float back to land by chance, the communities have to carry out the ceremony again. The ceremony lasts four days. The first day is for people to purge the bad luck from their houses. They fill a bowl with water and cassumunar and then add money, believing this will chase the bad luck out of both their houses and their bodies. On this first day they also bring coins, lemon and betel nut to the ceremony. On the first night, the leader of the ceremony will pray while villagers play music and carry out performances, inviting the guardian spirits to protect them. Old women perform traditional dancing, which goes on all night. The next day, they start by bathing in the water they prepared the day before, then in the night they help each other to make the boats. On the afternoon of the third day, they hold a parade, carrying the boats they have built around the villages to the point where they will launch them the next morning. Popped rice is again used to clean the boats. Early on the final morning, it is time to launch the boats. Once floated on to the water, they then observe the boats until they disappear beyond the horizon. This is an example of just one of the rituals performed in the sea gypsy communities. Inside the book you will find details on more such ceremonies.

The Thai Sea Gypsies and Their Problems after the Tsunami

When Earth, Water, Wind and Fire played a Joke with the Sea Gypsies at Rawai Beach, Phuket

“We thought that this land had belonged to us since our ancestors’ time, but actually the land title belongs to others, so what can we do with it.” This was one opinion reflecting the confusion of the Urak Lawoi people regarding land title, during a meeting at Koh Kaew Pissadaan, on March 17th and 18th 2007. At that time, villagers did not understand about land title, as before the Tsunami in 2004 they had never heard of it. After the Tsunami, they suffered oppression and exploitation at the hands of business investors and some government officers, who claimed the rights to their land. Villagers did not have enough knowledge and strength to claim their rights and were thankful to the development workers from different organizations and projects, who helped and inspired them to fight for their rights on the land where they once thought they would live forever. Before, land ownership was not important to them, but the draw of money from outside had forced

them to fight back. From now on, the Urak Lawoi people would need to have a clear understanding about land ownership, in order to claim rights to the land upon which they had lived for so long.

“You do not need to shower today, because the well is far from here. I will tell the kids to fill up sea water in the toilet for you.” Mae Ning, a kind Urak Lawoi woman told me, while I was setting up my tent in front of her house. “No problem. I am not going to shower today. I can use the drinking water I just bought for washing my face and brushing my teeth.” I answered courteously. Although I had been through a long day on the sandy beach and the winds had made me feel sticky, I had to stand it because on the island, fresh water is difficult to get hold of. That night, before I fell asleep, I thought to myself how strange it was being so close to the sea and yet not be able to get a bucket of drinking water.

Far into the night, I heard the thud of falling coconuts and this woke me up. At first, I thought someone had thrown something on the roof. I realized that it was a coconut after I heard the subsequent rolling sound. That night was very cloudy with only a little sea breeze, yet that breeze was strong enough to make the dry coconuts fall with ease. I went back to sleep in the tent and my mind brought me to a conversation I had had with the villagers at Koh Kaew, regarding these coconuts. “Coconut trees are one of our problems. They used to fall down on villagers’ houses and injure them. When we tried to cut down the old coconut trees, some people intimidated us, as if the trees were their property.” Actually, these coconuts had been growing for a long time and nobody knew exactly who owned them. During the monsoon season, villagers had to run away from the falling coconuts. If unfortunate, a coconut tree would fall down on their house. When they tried to cut down a coconut tree for their own safety, they were intimidated. In the end, they had to put up with the possibility that a strong wind might blow, and bring a coconut tree down on their property.

I do not know what time I fell asleep. I woke up again when it was almost dawn, with the dogs barking and with an urge to visit the toilet. Afterwards I walked along the beach. I thought to myself that it was nice to see and feel the morning atmosphere. Some households had started fires, with wives cooking for their husbands before they went to sea. The electric lights shone so brightly that I could see a shop owner preparing food to sell. I was interested in the electricity here, because some houses had electricity while other houses farther out, did not. From my own reckoning, the number of

houses with electricity and those without was about half and half. Perhaps it was because some houses were not permanent and did not have house numbers and as a result, could not ask for an electricity supply. While some people were lighting up candles or lamps, houses and shops on the opposite side of the road were lit with electricity. This island is a heaven for tourists, yet this heaven can not equally fulfill the needs of the people who live here permanently.

The Urak Lawoi people may not be able to fully describe their self-sufficiency, but they have practiced living off the land and sea for a long time. Nevertheless, after the Tsunami at Koh Rawai, the land and sea seemed to play a cruel joke on them. As has been highlighted, there was not always enough water for them, on some days the wind would bring coconut trees down on their houses and furthermore, some did not even receive heat and light from electricity (Note: the word for electricity in Thai is pronounced as '*Fai faa*', with the same pronunciation as 'Fire').

Problems at Koh Rawai

The Urak Lawoi told us that their ancestors had migrated from islands along the Malayan Coast and settled at Koh Hae and Koh Bon. Later, some 100 years ago and for the convenience of communication with the traders at Phuket, they had re-located to Rawai beach. The Sea Lion or Singha Talae people, who some called *Chao Ngam* due to the pronged shape of their boats, told us that originally they lived in an archipelago on the Burma border, at Koh Song, but then migrated to Rawai beach during the Second World War. There are now about 1,000 of these people. The original settlers of this area said that the Urak Lawoi and Singha Talae group lived together and got on very well, even though they could not communicate with each other at the outset, because they spoke different languages. Later on, they cross-married and developed a kinship. As a result, the Thai sea gypsies at Koh Rawai have shared family names, such as Haad Sai-thong, Rak Nawa, Pramongkij and Rakprakarang.

Some Urak Lawoi people were left out of the Tsunami survey, because the village headman had not advised them to get an identity card. Without an identity card, many issues became hard to resolve, for instance, applying for electricity and water supplies, or making requests to government organizations.

On 18th May 2006, Mr. Niran Yang Pan and ten *Thai Mai* people sent a letter of justification to Phuket province City Hall, regarding the case of four families and twenty people adversely affected by the road expansion project in Tambon Rawai. Mr. Niwit Arunrat, deputy governor of Phuket province, had accepted this matter for investigation and promised that he would work on it, as soon as possible. Mr. Seksan Bangjak, one of the representatives of the affected people, said that they had no intention of obstructing the project, because they understood it would support tourism in Phuket. However, some villagers received no help from the government and said that demolition was undertaken using threats and force. "This community belongs to the Morgan, who have lived here for more than 100 years. We can trace their history in the neighborhood. I'd like to ask the government for the temporary postponement of the project, in order to first resolve the villagers' issues" said Mr. Seksan at the meeting.

Mr. Son Bangjak, a 67 year old man affected by the project, said that they had sent their request to the Highway District, but the agency had not accepted it. As a result, they now needed to make their request at the provincial level. "We had not known about the project before and as a result we were not prepared for it. Although this land does not have any land title, it is the land we lived on since our ancestors' time. Most of us are *Chao-lay* and are uneducated, but we do have house numbers which were issued from the government." Mr. Thanit Sakiya, Director of Phuket Highway District, stated that the implementation of the project received financial support from the Tour Nok Kamin Project (a policy monitoring project of Prime Minister Thaksin) for about 300 million Baht and that the construction was divided into two parts; the first part, about six kilometers from Tai-Nan intersection, to Cha-Long temple; and the second part, about seven kilometers from Cha-Long temple to Rawai beach. The construction started in January 2006 and continued until March 2007. At the beginning, they did not have any problems with the *Chao-lay*, because the villagers understood and agreed to have their houses torn down, without even asking for compensation. However, the Kamin Project was only able to demolish their houses not rebuild them, as rebuilding them was the responsibility of other agencies. It was this problem that they took to the provincial governor.

On 7th June, 2006, 100 villagers from Rawai in Phuket province descended on Phuket City Hall, to make a request to the government agency regarding financial aid for the Tsunami affected people there. They claimed that sea gypsies at Bahn Rawai had been adversely affected by the Tsunami, yet had

not received any aid. At that time only some villagers had received the 2000 Baht compensation, because they had no work. Most of the help they had received was from NGOs, not the government.

Mrs. Panya Rodphan, a 50 year old woman who came to make the representation, said that up to this moment villagers at Bahn Rawai had only received a little aid for education. However, at Bahn *Chao Lay*, the government agencies responsible had given support to 100 students affected by the Tsunami, helping them to open bank accounts in order to receive money from the Tsunami Relief Fund.

The sea gypsies at Rawai claimed they had received no assistance, though four months had passed. They had received no positive answer from any government agencies, only rejections. Mr. Damrong Boonchoat, the director of Phuket Education Service Area Office answered an accusation from the sea gypsies at Rawai, that education assistance for students who were affected by the Tsunami, had been inconsistent across two groups; orphans and affected children. About 93 orphans had already received a subsidy of 25,000 Baht each, but only 316 affected children out of a total of 2,440, had received a subsidy of 1,500 Baht each. As a result, there were still about 2,124 children who had not yet received the subsidy.

The reason for this problem was because the budget for the relief fund had now finished. They had distributed 115 million Baht to six provinces. At that moment, the whole fund was in the process of being approved by the Education Ministry. After they had received approval, they would transfer money to the students directly, because they had already opened bank accounts.

From this, we can see the kind of unfair treatment the sea gypsies have received. If left to face these problems alone, it is difficult for them to change for the better, especially as the problems have become so familiar to them. We were told by the sea gypsies, "When Thai officials or Thai people tell us to jump off our boat when we meet in the sea, we jump." Although they do not know why they have to jump, they still do, because they are so used to following orders. Perhaps, they have been oppressed for too long. Others need to be alerted to this, in order to ensure they receive the same treatment as other Thai people, treatment to which they are entitled. If they can develop a concern for these issues they will be able to join forces to try and

solve them, not just by themselves, but also with the support of other organizations.

Differences in Culture, Language and Perception between the Thai Sea Gypsy Community and Outsiders

“We do not understand the word ‘Government’ and we do not know who ‘the State’ is.” This sentence was uttered by the Urak Lawoi people at Rawai, when the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand visited Koh Kaew. When we talked about the Provincial Governor, they still referred to him as ‘King’. One member of the working group told me; “In this area, we need to make a new understanding with the Thais, because our languages are different.” “Do the villagers understand what human rights are?” I asked the secretary of the National Human Right Commission of Thailand. “I am not sure, but I do not think they do,” he replied. Some villagers thought that government agencies were only located in Bangkok and that if they needed any help from the government, they had to go there. The reason for this may be because although they are familiar with the words ‘Government’ and ‘Congress’, they think these only exist in Bangkok.

Many of them still do not know the word ‘Community’. However, the definition of community needs to be explained, because after the Tsunami definitions of it varied between development workers, academics and also officers from different organizations and projects. Furthermore, all these people came with new words that either they translated from English or simply invented. Villagers were only familiar with the words they used locally. Many words or phrases had only recently arrived, such as; social space, integrate, forum, intend to (do something to someone), support and community visit. To ensure villagers understand these words takes a lot of time and requires them to understand broader issues as well. The academics who translate these words should also translate them into the local language, in order to ensure the same understanding within the village communities and so that the academics might understand their true feelings. I think this is the right approach for the future development work.

The Strangers who took over Koh Leepae

“The village head came from Petchaburi province,” a sea gypsy man who cuts his hair said. “Oh, really?” I exclaimed and recalled the image of a middle-aged pale man, whom I had just met in the north of the village. He

spoke Thai fluently and also differently from the other sea gypsies. His appearance was more Chinese. He took his guests, who came here to make a tourist documentary, to see their lodgings in the village and explain the way of life of the sea gypsies, as well as to tell them he was also a sea gypsy. "He is the son-in-law of the former *Kamnan* (head of the sub-district)," the same man told me. "Everyone is scared of him, even when he speaks or gives orders to people using just one word." I listened silently and with anxiety. "People who live in this island are not confident. His family is the most powerful in the province." He expressed this with sadness. I was considering my earlier conversation with a monk at the priest house on the mountain, at noon that day. "There is a gap in the law here, because it is located in international waters. There are the best and the worst of people here." His words had a significant meaning, which I had to re-consider. I answered him, "I have tried to see everything in an equitable way, without bias toward any group or side." He said, "*Kamnan* also had a good side and a bad side. Who created everything for people living on this island? Who brought tourists and resorts to this area? This has generated a big flow of money in this area." This picture of resorts, shops and tourists everywhere on the island, had assured the words of the monk. Since I had disembarked from the ferry, the picture I had seen most was of the sea gypsies servicing tourists, of restaurants and massage houses opened by outsiders from Southern and North-East Thailand. Was this the gap in the law, that also allowed investors and people who wanted to open businesses on the island, take advantage of the sea gypsies here?

The Urak Lawoi people are sea gypsies, expert at fishing. However, they know very little about business and service work. "The sea gypsies have no self-confidence," the same man told me. "I am thinking of studying again and applying for the TAO (Tambon Administrative Office) Officer position here" he said, describing his dream. "That is good to hear", I replied. "Then, villagers will have a leader who is also a sea gypsy". I encouraged him, as I knew that at that time there was only one TAO assistant who was also a sea gypsy. The others were outsiders and most of them were relatives of the former *Kamnan*.

I had a negative image of the former *Kamnan* before I came here, but the words from the monk who had stayed here for three years, made me think. "My first impression of him was the same as you. However, after I had known him longer, I understood him more, as the people living here are destroying themselves." This issue about self-destruction was the same issue

as the sea gypsy man had mentioned before. “Many of the sea gypsies here fight with each other and do not share. For instance, they do not find mutual solutions to the small land arguments they have. They do not live in solidarity. When this happens, they cannot say that the outsiders are seizing their jobs or taking advantage of them, because they do not help themselves.” He also told me, “The villagers here are impatient. They give up easily when they encounter problems, but the outsiders who come here, they are strong and patient.”

Sometimes, it is this gap in solidarity, that paves the way for outsiders and investors to run their businesses here. The state cannot solve these solidarity problems, so the most important thing is that the villagers learn to cope with the problems themselves. The community leaders need to consider all of the social, economic and cultural dimensions. At the moment, this area is concentrating solely on economic issues, as money was the main factor that created a gap in the law. The traditional norms are weak and the social structure is weak too. If the villagers wait for help from the government or other organizations, it will be difficult for them. If the sea gypsies do not cooperate with each other, live in solidarity and so share, build and grow their capacity and power, they won't be able to strengthen their community.

Opposing Opinions between Outsiders and Insiders

“Why don't you live as you did in the past. It was very good.” These were the words of outsiders, of academics, researchers and development workers who entered this area and spoke to the villagers. A sea gypsy man told me, “The same academic who is doing research in this area asked me the reason why we do not live as we did previously. I do not understand why we have to go back to that past life. How far we should go back? Is it ten years, a hundred years or a thousand years?” he said with resentment. “Many tourists who travel to this area also tell us that they do not like villagers to change and that they want us to keep our traditional way of life. I would like to ask them if they would like to live without modern comforts. Those who come from the city, never think of going back to how they lived before.” This was his opinion, on the day we were discussing the differing needs of people in the city and those on the island. I agreed with the man, yet on the other hand, I also understood why people from the city talk about living a traditional way of life. It is because these people come from the developed areas and realize that this development is moving them neither forward nor backward. When these people see the life of those on the island, they believe they still have a chance to go back to their old way of life. As a result, they

wish to tell those on the islands that people there should not develop as they did. Villagers, especially the young people, are rushing to reach this 'dream' of consumerism, having been influenced by television, news programs and game shows. As a result, there are now many motorbikes on the island, although the distance from one end of the island to the other, is only three to four kilometers. Some girls listen to MP3 players while they take water from the well. So, while 'civilized' people would like the villagers to maintain their traditions, the villagers in the community itself wish to leave their traditions behind and move on. The goals of these people are therefore in stark contrast.

Wider Society and Facts about the Morgan

After the Tsunami, the mass media sought news about the lives of the Morgan, to present to wider society. However, to search for the truth in a community, requires many different pieces of information. Though it may be the intention to help all the affected people, there is a risk that sometimes only some of the people will benefit from what is portrayed.

Because there were both Morgan and local Thai people living together in Koh Lao, the information gleaned from them and then published by the media, varied a lot. Following are some examples of information drawn from the internet regarding the Morgans' problems.

Example 1: "The Tsunami caused the Morgan at Koh Lao to starve for two years. Women sold their children and they were told only lies"⁴

The lives of the Morgan were ruined after the Tsunami, as they could not go fishing and as a result, had no income, had to sell their children and become beggars just to stay alive. They said that government agencies and NGOs lied to them. They visited them because they were producing OTOP products, but then moved out quickly.

Mrs. Naowanit Jampit, consultant of the committee of Bahn Morgan Koh Lao, Ranong province, commented on the Morgans' situation after the

⁴ Website of Aids for Human Right and Personal Status for minority people who were affected by Tsunami (southern Thailand) of Mirror Foundation:
http://www.tobethai.org/autopage/show_page.php?t=19&s_id=464&d_id=463

Tsunami. At that time the lives of 75 Morgan families and about 300 people were very difficult, because they could only catch a few fish and did not have enough income to pay for their food. Many people found that the only solution was to beg in the cities of Ranong province and then send food and other essentials to their families on the island. Soon after the Tsunami, many government agencies and public organizations arrived and all of them promised that they would provide aid. Two years on and things are worse than before. "At the moment, eight Morgan families have sold their children for 500 Baht or 800 Baht each, depending on their attractiveness. If they are white, the price will be higher," Mrs. Naowanit said. About 132 Morgan children lacked almost everything, even clothes. There were 24 orphans and many of them had dermatitis. Some of them also had a problem with their legs, without knowing the cause, yet they still had not received any healthcare.

Mrs. Naowanit said later that the Morgan did not really want a high income, just enough money to buy food. However at that time, most of the families had almost no income. In the past, their main source of income was renting out fishing boats, to be used for bombing fish along the Burma coast. For this, they earned about 500 to 1,000 Baht per trip. Later, the fishing boat owners were caught and the Morgan lost their main income. Soon after the Tsunami, a team of senior policemen donated a concrete pole for each house and promised that they would give another eight poles. Yet to date, the villagers had received none. The private organizations and NGOs were also not serious about the Morgan. Many organizations treated the Morgan village merely as owners of vegetable plots, or as producers of OTOP products. They would visit the village and promise to help, yet they did not take it seriously. Perhaps it was because the Morgan in this village did not have identity cards, that the government agencies did not pay much attention to them. However, they were entitled to receive aid, because they had lived in the village for about thirty years.

The reporter stated that from the survey, as well as from interviews with the Morgan households who sold their children, most were families where the husband had died, or had been caught bombing fish. Each family had many children due to a lack of birth control and so had a low income. As a result, they decided to sell their children to strangers.

"We know that we do not have any food to provide him with", a Morgan woman said, as we discussed her son. "He may get a chance to survive if he

stays with other people.” She said this as two of her neighbors who were still pregnant, were also preparing to sell their children.

Example 2: “Koh Lao today. The Bullet is Cheap Here”

Koh Lao is a small island in the Andaman Sea in Ranong province. The people who live here are Morgan, or as they are also known by the town people, *Chao Ngam*. These people had been affected by the Tsunami as others had. Many things had happened at Koh Lao since the Tsunami came. Mr. Ekkarath Chaidhamrongrit or Pae from Action Aid, one of four development workers who had visited the Koh Lao community, revealed to “Prachathai” (*Thailand News Online*) that there had been a lot of work to do to help the villagers here, such as helping with boat repairs and providing health care. There had been new problems every day to solve and this had later led to conflicts, because some work had gone against the personal well being or interests, of people in the area.

Mr. Ekkarath said that in one Morgan village on Koh Lao, there was one family who had moved from Ranong. People on the island knew this Thai family, yet they were uncomfortable to say their name. Sometimes, they called this family *Khon Thai* (*Thai people*). After the Tsunami, many of the fishing boats, considered essential for the lives of the people here, were damaged. When ActionAid and the Foundation For Children arrived here, one *Khon Thai* had acted as representative of the villagers and coordinated with the aid organizations. Whilst there was plenty of financial aid and donations, the level of conflict also rose. The *Khon Thai* had charged for the commissioning of boats, and also had not managed the finances and donations transparently. Things had become more violent, with some villagers harmed because they had revealed the suspicious behavior of the *Khon Thai*. The conflict became even more serious, after the NGO that worked in the area re-organized the finances, donations and boat purchasing system, in order to make it more transparent. The target then changed from the villagers to the NGO officers. “One day, someone sent word to me and my friend that we should stay alert, because bullets are cheap here and so someday *Khon Thai* might chase us away from our island.” When he heard this the first time, he admitted that he had felt insecure, because recently villagers at Phang Nga had also been intimidated over land issues and some reporters had been shot. However, at the time he thought to himself that visiting the area was part of his job and that he could help people here to live their own lives. They had worked together on the boat repair work and

the financial management, in order to make it more systematic and transparent.

Mr. Ekkarath told me that after he had talked with his two friends who worked together closely on the island, they had concluded that no matter what, they would continue working according to their responsibilities. "We think that this is only a warning. Although our work goes against others wishes, we do not think it is serious. The situation at Koh Lao is not as serious as in other areas, where villagers and investors are seizing the land. There are some problems at Koh Lao, but they will not lead to people killing each other," said Mr. Ekkarath. Aor, a Muslim woman working at the Foundation For Children, also stated that the situation on the island was not so serious as to lead to violence. However, people working on the island were careful, because they had been intimidated many times already. "I am not nervous about working in this area," she said. "I am working with children here. I am helping them with nutrition and also teaching them. Even with these problems, I still want to help people here so I have to tolerate it, because if we left this place we would be downhearted." Lek, also working at the Foundation For Children, said that sometimes she also felt downhearted, but thought it would be unfair to stop working here, having already started. "We have worked hard to this point. We have a small school under a tent with some tables, yet we have had many students attend, from children to old people. They want to learn. If we leave here due to intimidation, it won't be fair on our students. We should not start the work, if our hearts are not strong." Na, an officer from Action Aid, said that many things had happened at Koh Lao. Recently, a child died from cholera and there were four more patients infected, yet they still did not know who the carriers were. Malaria was spreading and there were also problems with damaged fishing boats. "We have had to coordinate with the epidemiology organizations, because it is clear now that Koh Lao is the centre of the cholera outbreak. We also have to find solutions for stopping the Malaria and Dengue Fever and find new fishing boats and fishing gear, so that people here can live on their own and not depend on donations. There is still plenty to do helping people here," said Na.

Na also told us about working life on the island. "With all the obstacles regarding the location and the daily problems the islanders have faced, they have had to be strong, in order to find solutions." she concluded. In Koh Lao today the bullet might be cheap, however there are people still working hard here in order to help the villagers.

A Story from the Sea Gypsies

Koh Lao is a place where the Morgan people have lived for a long time. The Morgan here do not use zalacca wood for building their boats, they use Kabang. The boats are about three to four meters wide and eight meters long. They also use a *Lam* for fishing, a sharp iron pole about two meters long and similar to a harpoon.

Mrs. Hien, the formal name for a lady I call Auntie Hien, told me that initially people at Koh Lao did not have family names, therefore, they used the family names of their relatives on Phuket and Phang Nga, such as 'Pramongkij'. These names had been conferred on them by the Thai Kings, mostly King Rama 6.

"Our relatives did not mind if we used their surname, therefore our surname was 'Pramongkij'." Auntie Hien explained to us. Regarding their presence on Koh Lao, Auntie Hien told us that previously, during her father's time, they had always moored their Kabang boat at this island, until eventually it had become the location of their village.

"We were independent, living on the sea. We followed the way of life of our ancestors. Our ancestors taught us how to collect food in the deep sea, such as cockles, top shells, oysters and sea cucumbers. No matter how deep down they were, we would go and find them. The most interesting thing about the story from Auntie Hien was the way in which people on this island fished, because they weren't familiar with any common fishing gear, but had used the 'Lam' instead. "We swam deep down into the sea and we caught fish for our own consumption. Later, we also caught fish to sell.", Auntie Hien told us that this fishing method sounded easy, but it would be difficult for us to use the small iron stick to catch a big fish. Auntie Hien said that her parents had also lived this way and caught many big fish over the years. Her generation had then followed this way of life.

"Lately, there have been many sails, fish traps and fishhooks for sale. At first, we thought it wasn't fair on the fish. However, fish have been more difficult to find, so we have to use these tools," said Auntie Hein, as she continued telling me about life for her people. There were some *Thao-kae* (rich Chinese), who hired people in this island as laborers on the 'Fish-bombing boats', the boats they used for bombing fish in Thai-Myanmar territorial waters, where there is a deep water channel and so many to catch.

“In the beginning, the *Thao-kae* told us to use Kabang boats to fish. However, we knew that if we used their boats we would be shot by the Police, so we used our own,” Auntie Hien told me.

Later on, the fish-bombing boats were prohibited by law. Before the Tsunami disaster, the *Thao-kae* hired villagers on the island to go fishing when the Police were not patrolling. After the Tsunami, the *Thao-kae* disappeared for a long time and only returned last week.

Auntie Hien continued. “We went fishing for about five to eight days. The wage for the men was about 1,500 Baht per day, for the women 400 to 500 Baht and for the children, about 100 Baht. However, if the amount of fish we caught was lower than 2.5 *Hong-Rua*, we would get less money.” She then explained that one *Hong-Rua* was 1,000 kilograms.

“Fish-bombing is dangerous nowadays, because they shoot at us. It is different from the past. The Morgans from Myanmar also carry out fish-bombing like us, but they have to do it secretly. Thai fishermen have not dared do this kind of fishing, because it is so dangerous. So, the *Thao-kae* hired us and we used their boats, due to the high income,” said Auntie Hien. A female sea gypsy also told me that, during the Tsunami, their boats had been destroyed and so they could not go fishing as their boats had to be repaired. After about one or two months, some donations came to the village, so they were able to get food. Before they received the donations, they had had to find their food in the sea.

After the money arrived, problems occurred. Auntie Hien told me that a Thai woman from the mainland had acted as a representative and helped in communications between the villagers and outsiders, because the villagers did not speak Thai fluently. Later, she had kept donated goods and money to herself. She then sold these same goods on to the villagers and they were very unhappy with this.

“We were unhappy, but nobody said a word. Everyone was afraid of her,” Auntie Hien added. Afterwards, some volunteers came to the area and helped villagers coordinate with outsiders. The Thai woman was very unhappy with this. When officers came to monitor the volunteer work, this woman complained that the volunteers had changed the villagers’ way of life for the worse. “I was scared, but I also wanted to say something. The other villagers also wanted me to speak up, therefore, I told the truth to the

supervisor” added Auntie Hien. She had been physically abused two times already. Every villager knew about this, yet nobody dared to help her at that time. They helped her only when the woman left, because they had been so scared of her and did not want any trouble.

“I do not know how many times I was abused. I was afraid, but I had to say something, because if I did not, no one would have had a voice,” said Auntie Hien.

This was the plight of the sea gypsies at Koh Lao. No one knew what was going to happen to them. They had managed to survive giant waves and disease, but then had to deal with an uncaring person, living off other people’s pain.

Interview with a Big Woman at Koh Lao

“I am a sharp-tongued person, but I am kind.” These were the words from a big woman in Koh Lao, describing herself to me after I had told her the reason for my visit to the island. She told me that she had seen me a few times already, yet she did not know what I was doing here. “I heard about your story from somebody who is working here, but I want to ask you in person.” I replied. She listened intently. “It is nice that you ask me. I like an honest person,” she told me directly. “What do you think about the agencies and organizations working in this island?” I asked. She said, “If I want to live here and run my business, I have to get along with the villagers and I have to help the community. These organizations that come into the area claim they help the villagers, but they have actually caused conflict instead. I would like to reproach their work. First of all, I would like to ask the head of each organization, why they do not cooperate with each other? They are currently working separately and sometimes their work over Larbs. Furthermore, they do not respect the villagers and their communities because when they work, they do not consult the Community Committee, even though this represents the lead group of villagers. They work as if they are trying to out-do each other and this leads to disunity amongst the villagers. Officers from one organization will listen to one group and not others.” The woman expressed her opinions eloquently, as I listened. I agreed with her about the uncoordinated work and the lack of a single purpose. Although some organizations were granted funds from the same source and were working in the same area, they were still working separately. In cases where there was a conflict in the community, the

organizations supported only those villagers with whom they were specifically dealing. As a result, each group of villagers had their own back-up organizations, causing divisions and yet more conflict. Instead of creating solidarity in the community, these organizations had actually caused further divisions.

"I would like to ask you about your interview with a newspaper that villagers here were selling to their children. What is the truth about this?" the woman demanded. She then went into her house and returned with a both a big and a small notebook. "These are the records I have kept," she told me, opening the big notebook. "Look, here is a list of parents and also people who took their children." I saw about ten names of children and parents. "Actually, there were more children taken than I have reported", she added. I saw a word on the top corner of the page, *Look-yok*, meaning adopted child. I was not sure if she had meant to say 'sell' or 'adopt', but the woman insisted to me that they had actually sold their children.

"Look at this, I have information regarding the date they started to repair the boat, who visited the village and who received aid. I have recorded everything," she explained, while she opened the small notebook. The information was written as she said, and in the big notebook, there were family pictures from every household and also everyone on the island who had moved in, moved out or was born in the area. While we were talking, her husband joined our conversation and gave more information; "We are helping people here to survive. For example, someone said that we persuaded villagers to convert to a new religion in order to get the boats. Well, we really did do this, but only because we had to do anything we could, in order to help. It is not a problem whether they truly believe or not. After they have received the aid, they can decide if they wish to continue believing. As you can see, only a few villagers went to church this morning. Most of them were children, induced to go with snacks." I nodded at this, because before I came here I had dropped by the church and there were about ten children joining in the singing. "The snacks are the trick they use to lead the children to join the activities. Some organizations provide only snacks. I used to suggest to them that they should give the children clothes or school bags instead," the woman added. "Also, we want the organizations who are working in the area, to coordinate with each other, not divide the villagers into small groups. Now, as a result of the behaviour of these organizations, the villagers are divided," she said angrily.

After the Tsunami passed from this small village, many organizations provided aid. There were many different reasons for the villagers to cooperate or work with any given organization. However, the key question is; were the villagers involved in making decisions about the aid, or did only a small number of people decide on their behalf? If only a small number were making the decisions, this might explain the disunity in the village and so, the subsequent conflicts and problems. Some villagers had decided to move away. The woman told me about some villagers who moved to Koh Chang and lived on land that the Reverend of the Christian organization had bought. "About thirty villagers moved to Koh Chang. I know about it and I have noted the names of all the people who moved there." This was the last issue we talked about that day.

When 'God' Helps the Sea Gypsies

A few days after the Tsunami disaster on 26th December 2004, aid had flooded into the area, but in a disorganized way. There was financial aid, goods and help with house repairs from government and non-government organizations. There were positive and negative effects of this. Some aid was not relevant to the villagers' needs. The villagers did not want to reject any aid, yet some aid came at a price. For example, aid came from some religious organizations, with the intention of changing the villagers' beliefs and culture. Some villagers who had previously worshipped as their ancestors had done, converted to other religions, whether intentionally or unintentionally. This change in beliefs affected their culture and their traditions.

Although they did not have an official religion, their existing beliefs were real enough, as I could see from their rituals and traditions. For example, they had the Lorbong Pillars celebration (*see the TAW-publication "The Origin and Culture of the Morgan Sea Gypsies"*), the Ancestor Worship ceremony and the Boat ceremony. These ceremonies had been practiced for a long time and represented the respect of the Morgan for their ancestors. If someday the younger generation turned to a new religion or belief, the root of the sea gypsy culture would disappear. It is not to say that these new religions are either good nor bad, but simply that they differ from the community context in which the sea gypsies' beliefs had grown, over many generations.

To criticize the aid coming from these organizations was a sensitive issue, because it particularly affected those who believed in their religions. Of

course, nobody knew how much the aid would change the sea gypsies' way of life and their beliefs, except the organizations themselves. After I investigated the aid process within the religious organizations, I saw the purpose of their work and the response from the community.

The following information was taken from a news clipping and represents the opinions of villagers in the affected communities and their situation at this time. The clip clearly shows the changes that took place there.

The news reporter said that Thai and Foreign Christian organizations had opened about 25 centers, used primarily as churches in the affected areas at Khao Lak, Phang Nga province. At Bang Nieng market, Tambon Kuk Kak, there were about seventeen Church and Christian centers, used as Baptist Gospel churches, including the Mercy Foundation, the Phang Nga Victory Church and the Operation Blessing Foundation. People came from Christian organizations to provide aid for Tsunami affected people in the villages of Phang Nga province, especially in the four most severely damaged villages; Bahn Thungdap in the Prathong Islands, Bahn Thabtawan, Bahn Nahm Khem and Bahn Bangsak. They persuaded villagers to believe in Jesus. One head of an affected village revealed that from January 2005, about forty Thai and foreign Christian organizations had 'persuaded' villagers in the village to convert to their religion, so that they might then receive aid. Most of them claimed that they were Christians from a foundation or organization with a foreign name. Then, they gave the villagers between 500 and 5,000 Baht each and promised that they would re-build their houses, but only on the condition that they visit church and start to believe in God. They then built houses for those villagers who went to church regularly, but if any villagers did not go or join in their activities, the help would be cut off.

"At the beginning of this year, there were many groups of foreigners who came to the Tsunami affected villages and offered a deal to the village head. If he could persuade his villagers to believe in their God, they would get free new houses. Sometimes, about five organizations came into the village at once and nobody could remember who they were, because they had long foreign names. Many villagers converted to Christianity, simply because they wanted to receive the donations. Those who did not go to church did not receive donations. Even some of the people not affected by the Tsunami got new houses, as long as they converted to Christianity" said the village head.

Mr. Prom Khatalae, a 64 year old Morgan man from Bahn Tungdab, Koh Prathong in Phang Nga province, revealed that at that time the villagers quarreled and were divided into groups. This was because the Thai and foreign organizations came into the village and, especially those who came from Christian organizations, persuaded villagers to stop worshipping their ancestors or monks and instead, believe in their God. Villagers who went to church received more compensation and goods, including new boats and new sails. This made the group of villagers who did not convert to Christianity feel very unhappy. Many families had internal arguments and this split them apart. "There were about 22 families here. After the Tsunami, about fourteen families converted to Christianity. Only eight families have not changed their religion yet. In my family, only my daughter-in-law has converted to Christianity. I do not mind, but I feel sad that she cannot now join our Ancestor Worship Ceremony. There are not many people who join in the traditional ceremonies of the village anymore. Now it is only the old people. People in the village have changed and are divided into two groups. These groups do not interact, do not hold conversations, nor do they help each other as they did before. I worry about our future, that there is going to be no one who inherits our traditions," said Mr. Prom.

The news reporter said that on 3rd December, the Morgan at Bahn Tungdab had organized a *Ching Pet* or Tenth Month Festival⁵, and that the number of participants had decreased from previous years. Mr. Supoj Sukhanrot, village headman of Bahn Thungdab, admitted that less people had joined the ceremony this year, because some villagers had converted to Christianity. They went to church every Sunday instead. He wanted villagers to live in harmony as before yet did not have a solution, because ultimately what religion people followed was a personal decision. Mrs. Somjai Kratalae and Mrs. Kanlaya Lae-awut, two Morgan women living at Bahn Tungdab, who had converted to Christianity, said that after the Tsunami, they had felt frightened and could not sleep. When they were staying at the temporary shelter, there was a Reverend from a church in Phuket. He had soothed them and supported them until they felt better. If they had a nightmare, they would pray to God and this made them feel better. So, they started to believe in God and had been taught to love others,

⁵ This festival is taken from Buddhist beliefs, that the tenth month is the time when the ancestors' spirits are allowed to visit their descendants. The ceremony is for making merit and paying homage to their ancestors.

to not drink alcohol and not to gamble, which they thought was good teaching.

After they had converted to Christianity, they did not have to worship their ancestors, for which they had had to organize a ceremony each month and so spend a lot of money on local whisky (*Lao-kao*), boiled chickens, food and desserts. After drinking the whisky, some couples would fight and hit each other. "Since I was young, I had witnessed my parents fighting after drinking whisky. We used all of our money for the ceremonies and had many debts. After the Tsunami, many people helped us and it made me realize that there are many religions in this world. Since that time, my family has believed in God and my life is better. All of us have stopped drinking. About twenty Morgan in the village have converted to Christianity already. They also set up the Morgan development group in the village, to help villagers with their fishing equipment. To say that some people persuaded us to convert to this religion is not true. It was voluntary," said Mrs. Kanlaya (Kom Chad Luke newspaper, 10th October, 2005).

Life at Koh Lao: Some Stories to Consider

After the Tsunami hit at the end of December 2004, the life of the Morgan at Koh Lao Nork changed in many ways, but some things remained the same. Two Morgan nomads, A-puk and Bai were still living as they had before. They would find fish to eat and stay in their boat in all weathers, whether it was raining, sunny or cold. When the monsoon arrived, they would cut down Pandan leaves to use for shelter. In the morning, while the fog surrounded the top of Nang Hong Mountain in Ranong province, the lives of these two Morgan continued as before. They still swam for fish and seafood to eat. In the late morning, they would sail to the village and talk with their friends about their lives. They did not know much about economics, politics or social disorder. They did not feel that these problems had any effect on them.

Two Morgan women at Koh Lao who were always concerned about money, were Mo Loi and Bu Yun. They were working as beggars in Ranong province. They continually went back and forth between Koh Lao and Ranong town. Their children often asked them to stop working as beggars, but they did not listen because it had become their livelihood, providing money for them every day. However, their children still had to seek out small sea animals to eat. On the day I met these two old women, I noticed

that they kept some of their old clothes in bags, which they used as begging uniforms. In their bags they also had food, such as dry fish and shrimp paste, which they got from their children on the island. The next time I met Mo Loi at a bus stop in Ranong town, she was eating rice from a yellow plastic bowl. Both these old Morgan women lived in the city, and earned their living by begging money from city people. Someone said that they earned about one hundred Baht per day and they could earn more money during festivals. Of course they did not understand the meaning of economic and financial appreciation or depreciation, they only knew that this money is what they used to buy things for their children. In this way, they could earn more money than their friends who were still living in the island. Many people consider begging as a low-class job, yet for these two old women, it was the job that brought them much needed funds.

Uncle Jo's family was familiar to the other Morgan villagers, as a result of the arguments between him and his wife. Partly, it was the whisky he drank. Some people spread the rumor that he drank too many energy drinks, and then had to release his excess energy on his family. The morning I saw him he was sitting sadly, whilst scooping water out of his boat. "He may want to get *Katom* (*Mitragyna speciosa*)," one of his neighbors told me. Besides from whisky and energy drinks, he was also addicted to *Katom*. The leaves enabled him to tolerate the sun for the whole day, while he was sailing in the sea. Sometimes he did unbelievable things. One such story I had heard from my friend, who worked in one of the recovery projects and lived next to his house. "Recently, he helped his wife to deliver their baby by himself." However, this man could be a devil when he fought with his wife. Once, I was close to the fighting between Uncle Jo and his wife. I heard the scared cries of his wife, together with the noise of things being thrown inside the house. "Uncle Jo was drunk and hit his wife again," said someone who was there. Some neighbors told Uncle Jo's son to stop him, but it was useless because he did not listen to anyone. Some neighbors acted as if nothing happened, because they were so familiar with the fighting. The scariest scene occurred when Uncle Jo tried to tie his wife's neck to the joint of the roof. Some villagers could not stand to see this cruel scene and they tried to stop him, but Uncle Jo threatened them with an axe, saying that this was a family issue and they should not get involved. Finally, the situation came to a head, because Jo felt sorry for the developer who was trying to stop him. So, on this one day, the same man's hands that had helped to bring life, had also almost brought death.

For the Morgans here many things remained the same as before, such as the lives of A-puk and Bai, still living as nomads on the sea with their small Kabang boat. However, some things had changed in a way that the Morgan in the past could not possibly imagine; for Mo Loi and Bu Yun, the two old Morgan women begging in Ranong town, for the life of Uncle Jo and his wife, whose destiny changed according to the level of alcohol in his blood, for the officers who worked in the recovery projects, the child developers, the big woman of Koh Lao and the Reverend who persuaded villagers to move out from the island and join his religion. We can not ever know if any of these people really wanted to help the villagers, or if they had some hidden agenda. We saw changes in the communities, yet some of these changes took time. Although people here did not like competition or possessions and were not ambitious, many of the people and organizations that arrived in this area after the Tsunami, were ambitious and did have their own agenda. The Morgan were not able to understand everything they were shown and how to make use of it all. Now, almost all the houses have televisions and stereos. The people watch soap-operas after the news, game shows and music shows, without realizing they are all fake. Sometimes, television presents violence. At the moment, the young people focus on what is being shown on television. This has become part of their way of life and is leading to change. They still do not realize that their identity is being shaped through this small box.

Cross-Border Life and Love

At Koh Sinhai today I visited a Morgan man, Uncle Anat, who had only one arm left because he had had a marine accident. When I went up into his house, the picture of a Morgan man and a pale woman attracted my attention. "Who is this in the picture?" I asked him. "It is my nephew and his Burmese wife. He comes back sometimes," he answered me. "His wife is a pretty woman. He is a lucky man." After I took a seat, Uncle Anat continued, "He comes back and forth between Koh Lao and Koh Sinhai. Sometimes, he works as sail labor on the fishing boats."

At Koh Sinhai, there were three Morgan families and about fourteen people in total. They had built houses next to each other and there were also huts which belonged to the Burmese who earned their living here. Koh Sinhai was not far from Burmese territorial waters. Entering or leaving Myanmar (Burma) was not difficult for the Morgan. Many of the young Morgan men went to work in Myanmar, but their wives and children lived at Koh Lao or

Koh Sinhai, in Thailand. Some families had moved to Myanmar. Some Morgan women also had Burmese husbands. For the Morgan, either in Thailand or Myanmar, the word 'border' or 'territorial waters', had only been established in law recently. Their ancestors had traveled as nomads on the sea and between the many islands, for more than a hundred years. Borders and territorial waters were not demarcations that kept them apart. The Morgan at Koh Lao and Koh Sinhai had many relatives and friends in Myanmar. Their culture and way of life covered a wide area.

In the past, when there was no border line or territorial water to demarcate the state areas, sea gypsies, both the Morgan and Urak Lawoi, were one family. Urak Lawoi people who lived at Koh Leepae, had friends and relatives at Koh Lao and Koh Lanta. The Morgan at Koh Surin, had siblings at Koh Thabthong or Thabtawan village. They always visited each other during festivals; the fourth month festival, in which they celebrate and pay respect to *Po Ta*; the fifth month festival of Lorbong Pillars (the Morgan Ancestor Worship Ceremony); the sixth month festival of *Boon Klang Ban* (a ceremony paying homage to spirits and making merit in Buddhist beliefs) and the Boat ceremony. Sea gypsies from other places would join these ceremonies. In the past, the sea gypsies from Koh Marid in Myanmar, also sailed their Kabang boats to join the Lorbong Pillars Ceremony at Koh Surin.

Nowadays, there is clear territory controlled by law which, under the principle of human rights, is supposed to give everyone equal rights and duties. There have been many legislative words and a lot of academic language introduced recently, which the villagers still do not fully understand. Human rights' training has been given to the sea gypsies. Most of the sea gypsies in each village now have an identity card and Thai nationality. As a result, the Thai sea gypsies are officially Thai people, called *Chao Thai Mai*. Their houses have been built or renovated, in order to look like the resort buildings in which those from 'outside' want to live. A culture center for tourists has been built and they now get 'respect' and attention from politicians during the community festivals and at election time, as they are eligible to vote.

The new selection system for community leaders represents centralized social control. They used to choose a local leader, who practiced forgiveness and shared benefits within the community. Now they have a legislative system to manage conflicts. Community self-dependency and relative-dependency, has changed to become a formal government agency system, a

big reform of the sea gypsies' society and culture. The state now enforces laws to control the sea gypsies. After the Tsunami, Non-Government Organizations tried to push them to call for their Human Rights. The Human Right Committee told them that everyone has equal rights, yet now they are still wondering if they have these rights. They are still curious to know whether it is the former traditions or the new rights that are more applicable to their society.

So how did all these changes take place, beyond the control of the sea gypsies? Was it because, at the time, all the issues and the new academic terms were too difficult for them to understand? Where can they hope to find answers to these questions?

Traditions of the Sea Gypsies

The traditions and rituals outlined below are examples of practices that reflect the beliefs of the sea nomads in Myanmar and Thailand. Most of these traditions, which pay respect to their ancestors, are still in existence today and are practiced in the same way as they have been for the last hundred years or more. I just hope these traditions can continue to survive the current pace of change.

Ritual One: 'Tapo' – A ritual practiced in Woods and Villages

One morning around 9am, I departed from Bahn Bon Rai. My destination was the house of Uncle Neaung, an old man respected as a traditional local leader, and at whose residence an ancestor respect ritual was to be held. Next to Uncle Neaung's house, was a rubber orchard. There was a rubber drying house located there, too. A warm atmosphere was created through the cooperation of the people preparing items to be used in the ritual. Bamboo tubes were cleaned, local dishes called *Keang Bon Na* were prepared and cooked. Chicken blood was prepared in banana leaf vessels and turtle meat was also cooked. First, villagers boiled or grilled the turtles, in order to remove the flesh from their shells. Another old man – Hede, was giving instructions to those working there.

Many bonfires had been constructed and near one, a set of candles and joss sticks was placed; 'to worship the goddess of fire', as I had been told earlier. In another corner, chicken was being grilled. People were smiling and talking the whole time. Aunt Larb, a middle age woman playing a

significant role as a spirit channel, also gave advice on preparing the food and the offerings. Knowing I had plenty of time until 3pm, when all the preparations would be complete, I decided to go and see how people make a local dessert called *Kanom Khi Kwuang*, balls of rice flour boiled in syrup. For some time, I observed how people enjoyed themselves making this dessert.

At nearly 3pm, I went back to Bahn Bon Rai. There I found Uncle Neaung sitting and talking with the other elders, in front of his house. Most of the people joining today's ritual were relatives. Some were from other areas like Rawai and Phuket. I accepted an invitation to partake of a delicious smelling dish, already cooked in the kitchen. It was a curry, with many kinds of herbs and vegetables added and I could not resist helping myself to two plates! After thanking them for this excellent meal, I went to see the elders who were discussing the ritual. I learned some ritual terms, such as *Boh Koh Tan* ('ritual done in the forest') and *Boom Ta Mok* ('ritual done at an anthill'). The anthill ritual was carried out to show respect to the goddess of land. "An anthill also symbolizes an island" Uncle Neaung added. Another term was *Boh La Ta Ah Mak* ('ritual at the village').

When the time of the ritual had arrived, Old Hede and Uncle Neaung lit candles in front of the offering. They poured whisky into small tumblers and drank it in order to tell the ritual guardian spirit that the ritual was about to take place.

They then went to the rubber orchard nearby. There were three small altars built, each raised about a foot from the ground. The three altars belonged to three families; the families of Old Hede, Uncle Neaung and Aunt Larb. Each altar had four poles to support it. They then put the offerings on these altars. First, they began with the altar that belonged to Aunt Larb's family. The elderly poured the curry made of turtle meat on to the rice and then placed the pieces of chicken on top. Candles and joss sticks were lit and placed beside one another by the bonfire, which had been made to the side of one altar. Others in the ritual offered whisky to drink and powder was smeared on the elderly people's faces. All three elderly spiritual leaders started whispering prayers, for the guardian spirits to protect the ritual. This took quite a long time because, as I was told, they collect many guardian spirits both from near and far, such as from the Tanaosri mountain range, Khao Lak, Kapong, Taimuang and also from the Sarasin coast. Throughout the prayers whisky was poured on the offerings.

After nearly one hour, Old Hede suddenly started shaking and in his eyes, there was a sharp and angry look. This was the sign telling us that one or more spirits had entered his body. He drank the chicken blood in one go and then started smoking, eating the cooked chicken and turtle, and then finished by drinking the water. Old Hede then gave the rest of the offering to his family members sitting nearby. After they had all eaten the offerings, the first altar was pulled down. They then continued with the ritual at the other two altars. By the time the last altar had been pulled down, it was nearly dusk. There was then a pause before going on to the next step, the anthill ritual, to take place at night time.

The three spiritual leaders proceeded with the anthill ritual by surrounding an artificial anthill, made previously. Old Hede led the ritual as usual. There were a lot of fumes from the many joss sticks that had been lit. In the past, they used Gum Benjamin instead of joss sticks. Old Hede and the other elders walked around the anthill holding their offerings. Old Hede mumbled in the Morgan language and again started shaking, then smoking and eating the cooked chicken and turtles.

Aunt Larb too, had been unexpectedly entered by a guardian spirit. She made a loud noise while rubbing her head against the anthill. At first I thought this was part of the ritual, but later I was told it was a warning from the spirits saying that there was something wrong with this step in the ritual. However, it seemed to be an insignificant mistake.

After the ritual in the woods, Old Hede regained his normal awareness. We then moved to the village, to hold the ritual there. The atmosphere at this village was more relaxed and the ground where the ritual took place was prepared in advance, giving a feeling of celebration to the proceedings. The hosts, members of the three families, welcomed us with large meals of curry, served with black sticky rice (a special dish only offered on a special occasion such as this).

After the meal, offerings were set on the altar in front of Uncle Neaung. A group of children drew a circle around the altar, whilst looking at the offering and giggling. Even though the children were still full from their previous meal, the special occasion made them interested in the offerings and they wondered what they would get to eat after the ritual finished. This was an occasion to teach them to be generous with each other, because after the ritual they had to share the offerings amongst themselves. This was not

formally practiced as part of the rules, but was carried out in order to teach the sea gypsies' children how to share their possessions.

The 'parade of ancestors' memorial ritual moved first to Old Hede's and then to Aunt Larb's house. All the practices, having happened at Uncle Neaung's house, occurred again here. The same group of children enjoyed themselves with the chicken and the dessert, before going to bed sometime before midnight.

Floating Boats Ceremonies

I arrived at Koh Lanta Yai, on the ferry from Koh Lanta Lek. I rushed to Bahn Sang Ka-U, in order to observe the Floating Boats Ceremony, called *Pra Hu Pra Jak* – a ceremony that I had only seen in pictures some years before. This year I intended to observe it in person. However someone told me that I had arrived too early. The only thing that I could see today was the villagers making the boats to be used in tomorrow's ceremony. That was not a serious problem for me, as it meant I would be able to enjoy observing the ceremonial processes from beginning to end. This would mean watching the villagers making the boat, the way they then constructed the parade, the atmosphere at night before the ceremony, right up to the time the boat was put to sea, early in the morning.

It was raining but that was also not a big problem for me. I had a motorcycle with me on the island, so I could drive here and there to observe what was going on at different sites. The boat to be used tomorrow was made of zalacca wood. When I arrived at the site where they were making the boat, rain was falling heavily. As a result, I stayed there for hours.

The bark of the zalacca wood was peeled out. Then the villagers used the yellowish wood, which is like a solid and dense foam, to make the structure of the boat. The structure of the boat was almost completed by dusk. When finished, the ceremonial boat was to be on a smaller scale than the real boat. At night more people came to help in making the boat decorations, and the place where they worked almost seemed too small. There was excellent music and the violin player of a local band entertained us with delightful melodies. One group who arrived, were from a television company making a program. A familiar face amongst them was Mr. Tod Thongdee, a foreigner who had fallen in love with Thailand over many years. Together with the music, we also had a chance to enjoy folk dancing called *Rong Nneng*. All the sounds; the music and the hammering of the boat

construction, were in harmony. Later that night when I had enjoyed enough, I slipped away to sleep in a quiet corner of the pavilion nearby.

I woke at dawn. Rain clouds still lingered on and now there were only a few people left. The structure I had seen last night was now in the shape of a real boat, about four meters in length. However, there were still more details to be added. The special part of the boat was a small house in the middle. This boat imitated the real boats usually found around Koh Surin. People of all ages participated in the construction. The elderly gave suggestions, while the young people, both men and women, helped in the construction itself. Children sometimes passed on materials to the adults. Thus the children learned about the ceremony through both teaching and practice. When they were about to launch the boat, a ritual was held to prepare the guardian spirit. There were colorful ribbons and pieces of paper cut and decorated throughout. There was also a raised platform constructed, for people to enjoy dancing and for performances.

At nearly noon, the atmosphere at the boat construction site came alive again. On the boat, there was a sculpture depicting a man stabbing a turtle with a harpoon. Many things such as pestle and mortar were placed on the boat. Figures of birds and fishes were hung around it too. Even an artificial gun was placed on the boat. By now, the boat was waiting to be carried to the launching point at Bahn Hua Lam. The distance between Bahn Sang Ka-U and Bahn Hua Lam was about four kilometers. The reason why people needed to launch the boat at Bahn Hua Lam was that their ancestors had lived there in the past. At Bahn Hua Lam, another group was preparing equipment and other necessities. Near the ceremony pavilion, there were constructed some *Bakuds*, or small bungalow style houses, for the visitors who came from other areas to reside in. Someone told me that this ceremony is held twice a year, during the sixth and eleventh Thai months.

At 3pm, the villagers of Bahn Sang Ka-U gathered around at the center of the village. They were due to leave as soon as their spirit leaders signaled the appropriate time. Music from the local drum was played and mobile loudspeakers were set on a truck. Many firecrackers were lit, in order to signal the time to depart. People in colorful dresses paraded loudly, shouting, singing and smiling along the way to the launching point.

At the launching point, it was now 5pm. Loud music began to emanate from the dance floor opposite the pavilion and many men were already drunk

and danced. The parade took about an hour to get there and approached from the far side of the pavilion. The parade then made three circles around the shrine of the spirit guardian. The boats that had been shouldered by some of the men, were laid in front of the pavilion. All the people joining in the parade then dispersed to the dance floor, or to have dinner in another corner.

The time for the ceremony to begin was around 8pm. Imam Siten would lead the ceremony having inherited knowledge about its rituals, from his adopted father, another Imam. He would also act as a spirit channel, to facilitate communication between their ancestors and the children at Bahn Sang Ka-U. When night came, the Imam lit candles and placed *Mak-phlu* (betel and betel nuts) here and there. A pot of Gum Benjamin was placed in the rear part of the boat facing to the sea, and a drum was beaten. Two old women sang in time with the drum beat. Some people put pieces of their nails and their hair on the boat, symbolizing the bad luck that could be brought to the sea. The Imam spread popped rice on the boat.

The ceremony continued for nearly another hour, whilst outside the pavilion, the sounds from the dance floor and the performance on the platform all mixed. Having been told that in fact it was tomorrow morning that the boat would be floated, I decided to find a place to rest, as by now it was already very late. Therefore, I had to find a room to sleep. Finally I found a room, offered to me by villagers not far from the ceremonial site.

It rained again for a while after I fell asleep. The rain was accompanied by high winds, thunder and lightning. The wind shook the house in which I slept. The wind made me worry about tomorrow's ceremony. However, the sound of the rain sent me into a deep sleep. At 5am, I was woken by my alarm clock and then drove my motorcycle to the site. The blue morning light caught the horizon. Villagers followed one after another to the launch point. The same Imam appeared, in order to do his duty again. He recited words, blew on the popped rice, then placed it on the head of the children. The popped rice was then thrown in the boat. This process reminded me of another ritual called *Long Sa Pao*, in Chiang Mai province. In Chiang Mai, people rub powder against their bodies and let boats take their bad luck away along the Mae Jam River.

The Imam gave a signal for the men to shoulder the boat and then faced the sea. Everyone sat silently. The old Imam recited prayers in the sea gypsy

language, then ordered that everyone should turn around three times, alternately facing the land and the sea on each turn. A group of men shouldered the ceremonial boat and placed it on a bigger boat. Many firecrackers were again lit before the real boat was launched into the sea, with the ceremonial boat on board. After being allowed to board the boat, I accompanied those men toward the sea. Under a cloudy sky, and after we had proceeded from the shore for a while, I asked the man sitting beside me where we would launch the ceremonial boat into the sea. The man replied that there is no exact rule, but that it should be three to four kilometers away from the shore that is, far enough for the model ship to be delivered to the middle of the ocean by the waves. After another fifteen minutes, one of the team asked the others to launch the boat. They made a *wai* (the way to show respect, by putting right and left palms against each other on the chest), before launching the model boat into the sea.

The boat drifted toward open water. “When we arrive at the shore, do not forget to walk over the line drawn on the beach by the Imam. Do not step on the line”, one man on the team told me. When we reached shore, I looked for the line and as per my instructions, stepped over it.

The last part of the ceremony involved placing seven poles on the beach, with crosses fixed to their tops. These poles would be left there until the eleventh month of next year. The poles would protect villagers from bad sea spirits. The villagers then went back to their houses and as the day drew to a close, I hoped that the details of the ceremony would last long in the memories of those who attended.

From Life Roaming the Sea, to Life on Land

Kabangs, the name for the boats used by the sea gypsies, were tied around Aaow Bon beach, in Koh Surin. The boats had houses built in the middle, which served as homes. These kind of floating houses were permanent homes for many sea gypsies. Now living on land, many sea gypsies have built their own houses, using local wood found in the area. The houses are usually roofed with Nipa Palm leaves, while the roofs of the houses on the Kabang boats are made of water screw pine leaves.

The houses on the beach at Aaow Bon were typically supported by poles, 1.5 metres high, with stairs. In one house, there might be many rooms, such as a kitchen, or bedrooms. All were separated from each other by cloth walls. The floors of such a house would be made of strips of split bamboo. The sea

gypsies here were different from the Morgan or Urak Lawoi on Lanta beach or Bahn Thabtawan, in that sea gypsies in these other two areas now had their houses made of concrete. After the Tsunami, a large number of concrete houses had been built, with the support of aid organizations such as Malteser International. The new houses were in better condition than the traditional ones, but all looked like government residences. On Koh Lanta, in Bahn Sang Ka-U, new house patterns were similar to the ones in many other housing development projects. So the Morgan or Urak Lawoi living in other areas had better houses than the Morgan on Koh Surin. However, the houses of the Morgan at Rawai beach were worse, even than the ones on Koh Surin, because the houses on Rawai were made of galvanized iron built roughly into the shape of huts. However, that was enough for the sea gypsy families, who did not want anything more than food and a place to protect them from the rain and wind. Before, when sleeping, they had been crowded into small shelters. Their normal way of life had trained the sea gypsies to feel at ease living in these small huts. The different styles of houses built by organizations or government agencies after the Tsunami, could be seen throughout affected communities, including these sea gypsy communities. The houses were built in house kit style (also called 'knock-down' houses – easily assembled and in a square shape); town-house style; or bungalow style. The houses of the Morgan on Koh Surin were, after the Tsunami, built or repaired by government agencies and other organizations. The patterns of these houses maintained the old style. From the evidence of photos showing houses of the Morgan at Sai En beach or Chong Khad, prior to the Tsunami, they were supported by poles and were a bit taller than the houses at Aaow Bon. Because these houses were usually built protruding into the sea, in the monsoon season it looked as if they would be swept away by the waves. However, unbelievably, these houses could bear such waves for years before they would need to be repaired.

The houses of the Morgan at Koh Sinhai were also built in this style, but were built stronger than those on Surin. Here, one could see how the houses could be called 'houses in the sea', as the sea water was half way up their poles. The same could also be seen at Koh Lao Nork, though on Koh Surin they were much denser than ones on Koh Sinhai.

From the evidence available, the Morgan had lived permanently on land for only a century or less. The pattern of their houses was thus still developing to suit their life style. The houses on shore were temporary sheltering only, as the expensive price of materials used to build the houses limited the

permanent development of Morgan houses on land. The difficulty in conveying materials to the shore also made building these houses more difficult.

The Morgan cut sufficient wood to build their houses, no more. They relied on what nature gave them, whilst the people from outside exploited the resources. When the National Park arrived, this “sufficient use” was suddenly regarded as illegal forest exploitation.

Bakads; Landmarks and Residences on the Sea Gypsy shores

The temporary shelters of the sea gypsies, called ‘Bakad’ (huts), were built for when they went fishing; catching squid, sea leeches or shell fish. These shelters were spread out throughout the islands and then used by sea gypsies during the monsoon seasons. Bakads were constructed using medium hardwood and were big enough only for a few people to live inside. They also had easily-made terraces in front of them and kitchens at one end. Bakads could be seen in coastal areas such as at Kao Kuaiy Bay and Phak Wan Bay. Bakads were the alternative to living on the Kabang boats or in real houses on land.

In a meeting dealing with the rights of the sea gypsies, Professor Narumon Arunothai highlighted the importance of the Bakads and their use as landmarks and temporary shelters. According to the Professor, examples of areas where Bakads were located, were Bahn Thabtawan and Bahn Thabpla, Amphoe Taimuang, Phi Phi, where groups of about thirty Bakads would be seen around Kao Kuaiy and Phakwan Bay.

In the past, though permanent possession of the land had not been important for the sea gypsies, as their families had expanded they had needed to specify their living areas. Bakads then worked as informal landmarks. After the Tsunami many Bakads had been swept to sea and so the sea gypsies thought these areas were not safe any more. As a result, some of them moved to higher ground. However, there were still a number of Bakads left, but these were often seen as offensive to the eyes of tourists, as ugly huts to be removed to make way for hotels and resorts.

Past and Present in the Sea Gypsy Communities

Nearly three years to the day, I have come back to Bahn Sang Ka-U. The afternoon sun is reflecting off the sea. I am behind Bahn Sang Ka-U Hu school, enjoying the scene in front of me, with many boats moored on the sea. Some fishermen have arrived back to shore, having been fishing since dawn.

North of the village, I see a group of houses along the coast. You can see that when the sea rises, the water level is half way up the house poles. At the far end looking from here, I can also see small islands. From here, on some houses, I can see traces of the damage from the Tsunami, even though it has been nearly three years since it happened.

I still remember the first time I was here. A group of us came from Chiang Mai to exchange our Northern traditions with this village in the South. The first night, we enjoyed folk dancing, as well as music in both Southern and Northern style. Two different art traditions were combined and produced a chemistry that I could not really describe. The musical instruments were the *Saloh* (a violin-like instrument), the *Soung* (a plucked lute from the Lanna region of Northern Thailand), pipes, a *Rummana* (a one-sided drum with a shallow body) and the violin. *Rongnengs* (Southern songs) were sang. These were the days before the Tsunami.

Even though in this village, no one died or was severely injured by the Tsunami, the psychological effects were not different from other areas. To these people, the sea was still frightening. A few months after the Tsunami, I had a chance to visit this village again. What particularly stuck in my memory was a conversation I had with an old man. What he said may or may not be true. "We could consider the destruction caused by the wave as pay back, seeing as we had been taking from the land for years. Nature only took back a small portion of this. Damaged objects can be repaired in the long run." After the Tsunami a lot of people come to help the villagers, from both the government and private sectors. There was a large pile of clothes at the village school, but other things more urgently needed had not been given. Villagers met with local government officers and discussed how to rebuild damaged boats and houses. Besides the problems caused by the Tsunami itself, there was a problem with how to prepare for and manage the equally large wave of aid provision.

Today, it is nearly three years since the Tsunami struck the coastal villages in Thailand. I am back here in one of the affected villages, and realize that new houses have been constructed. Some have already been built in the foothills, in the villages, or along roads. Some are still in the process of being built. The local Cultural Center is a new building that has been erected at the center of the village. From the refuge where I sit and look around, other things have not changed a bit. Some things look exactly the same as the first day I came here. However, soon there will be a refuge built at the other end of the village as well, supported by yet another organization. There are now many projects being implemented here and all these projects encourage developers to come and earn their fortune.

The roads leading to the village now welcome groups of tourists every day. The new Cultural Center building will be yet another interesting place for visitors to see. In the near future, building work on this will finish. "It will be a place to show tourists our traditions and other aspects of our unique culture", a local government officer said.

Aphorn Ukrid from the Southern Culture Landscape Project, has collected information about the history and beliefs of the sea gypsies, including the Urak Lawoi. The Urak Lawoi people believe that Koh Lanta was the first place their ancestors settled on land, because Koh Lanta used to house a large community of Urak Lawoi, before they left for other islands. The average marrying age of Urak Lawoi men and women is between 19 and 20 years old. Sometimes they marry younger than this but their age must be over 15 years, as this is the age when they can have ID cards. The Urak Lawoi might marry within their own group as is normally practiced, or with someone from another group. Nowadays, more and more Urak Lawoi marry people from other groups or other areas. Old Urak Lawoi people might even marry if they need someone to take care of them in later years.

After marrying, Urak Lawoi men live with the brides family. When they have children, the couple move out to their own house. However according to tradition, the youngest daughters and sons have to take care of their parents in the home, until the parents pass away.

In the past, the Urak Lawoi had no possessions except their boats and fishing equipment. However, land is now also regarded as a necessary possession. Land is passed to the younger children who take care of the parents. Older sisters and brothers with families, have their own land and

property located nearby. For this reason, the Urak Lawoi have a close family network centered around their parents and they continue to all help each other with the food, with work and with child care.

Urak Lawoi family names were granted to them by His Majesty The King's mother. These family names are: Thalaeluek, for the Urak Lawoi at Koh Lanta and Bahn Hua Lam; Channam, for those at Bahn Rai and Klong Dao; Pramongkij, for those on Phuket and Koh Sirae; and Hanthaley, for the Urak Lawoi at Koh Leepae and Koh Bulon. The Urak Lawoi respect their family system and after marrying stay close to relatives on both sides of the family. Some of their words show the relationship between the people in the community and their acquaintances, for example Sabai, meaning close friends and Anaphito, meaning adopted sons or daughters. Women in the Urak Lawoi community have an important role in taking care of household activities, such as managing the money and expenses. They also play an equal part with their husbands in the decision-making. Sometimes a mother might even find a partner for her son. Therefore, a woman's role in the Urak Lawoi community is very varied, more so maybe than in other communities. It is believed that this is because in the past, when fishing on their boats, the men rowed and steered, whilst the women sat in the front of the boat giving instructions. Then, when arriving on shore, the women would take their catch to sell at the market, whilst the men sat waiting for them.

The Urak Lawoi also have a spiritual leader, called 'Tokamad' ('To' being the short version of 'Dato', meaning grandfather). Tokamads are considered spiritual and community leaders as well as doctors and are normally relatives of people in their communities. When there are problems in the community, the Tokamads are invited to judge and offer solutions. The wives of the Tokamads also work as midwives. Urak Lawoi people regularly make contact with those in other communities, such as Muslims, known as *La Yu*, Thai-Chinese people, known as Chana and Thai people, called *Siam*. Contact is made with these people mainly through trade and working as their laborers.

The Morglan Communities on Koh Prathong

It takes three hours to get from Thung Rak port to Pae Yoy port on Koh Prathong. Koh Prathong contains communities of Thai-Chinese, Burmese, Thais from other regions and also the Morglan. There are some interesting stories regarding the history of the name Koh Prathong, which means 'island

of the gold Buddha image'. The first story tells of a ferry containing valuable goods, which sank in the sea around Koh Prathong. A gold Buddha image was on the boat and when the boat sank, it was laid on the sea bottom. One day a man went diving for fish, but instead of fish found the gold Buddha image. He then took the Buddha image to the island and since that time the island has been called by the name 'Koh Prathong'.

In another story, a cave somewhere on the island contained a golden Buddha image. When somebody by chance found the Buddha image, the island was named after it.

On the island there are many places that inspire Thai folklore and stories. One such story is of a man called Pra Sang Thong. On one side of the island, there is flat ground, so flat in fact that it looks as if it is man made. This is thought to be the ground where Pra Sang Thong sat and recited a fishing spell, when he needed to catch fish to win the hand of the King's beautiful daughter. As a result, this area is now called 'Pra Sang ground'.

Poh Ta Hin Kong is another sacred spirit with a story attached. This story states that there was once a man who one night had a dream about an old man, who came and told him that there was a cave of treasures on the island. The old man told him where the cave was, but prohibited him from taking other people with him. After he had found the treasure he was to build a house for the old man on the hill, where the cave was located. When the man woke up, he went to find the cave. However, he disobeyed the old man and took his friends with him. To enter the cave he had to use bombs to carve an entrance, but finally found all the treasure the old man had told him about in his dream. He and his friends brought all the treasure back home. Seven days later and as a result of their disobedience, the man and his friends suffered from an unusual disease and died, bleeding profusely. After that, people built a small spirit house for the old man, at the entrance to the cave.

Besides folklore, there are stories relating to how villages on the island got their names. Three villages on the islands are Bahn Tha Pae Yoy, Bahn Tungdab and Bahn Pak Jok. Bahn Tungdab is said to have got its name from the legend of the Thai heroines, Thao Thep Krasattree and Thao Srisunthorn, great warriors in Thai history. 'Dab' means sword and 'Thung' means field, so the name Tungdab is believed to be derived from the time the warriors left their swords in this area, as they retreated back to the city.

Other villages have got their names from the people who settled in them, or from the surrounding geography. For example, the name Bhan Tha Pae Yoy is derived from the name of Chinese people who settled in the area and Bahn Pak Jok derived its name from the nearby Pak Jok strait.

The Morglan on Koh Prathong also believe in spirits, or ghosts. These beliefs have been passed down throughout their history. Believing in ghosts plays an important part in driving the Morglan to move from place to place on land. When a member of their group dies, they believe that it is a ghost that has caused it, so the place where the death occurred is not suitable for them to live anymore. Therefore, in order to escape the ghost they move to a new area.

The stories that tell the history and legends of the islands and of the Morglan people, would be impossible to pass down from generation to generation without language. The Morglan language makes it possible for them to communicate amongst themselves, but might now be at risk of extinction, because Morglan children prefer to speak Thai. Some children can speak the Morglan language, but only to a minimum degree. Social and cultural changes have triggered this. The Tsunami brought changes to the Morglan people in the name of rehabilitation. Both government and private agencies set up in the area and outsiders came with these agencies. The Morglan culture has had to change in response to these environmental factors and as a result, it is possible that one day their history too might be just another legend. If this happens, no one will know for certain that there was ever a group of people such as this on earth.

The Morglan on Koh Prathong respect the Thai Royal Family immensely. This respect began when two of the Thai Kings, King Rama 5 and 6, visited the south of Thailand. At that time the Morglan had a chance to get to know the royal family. The person they now respect the most is the mother of King Rama 9, because when visiting Koh Prathong in 1971, she granted family names to 3000 Morglan on the island. After that, the Morglan on Koh Prathong received Thai nationality. As a result of this, they had the opportunity to send their children to school and had their land rights recognized. Now with their new family names, they do not live life on the sea anymore and mostly adapt themselves to Thai traditions and ways of life. For example, Bahn Pak Jok was the first school on the island to accept Morglan children.

In the past, the Morglan did not only rely on the sea for their source of food, they also farmed in the hills. Unfortunately, the shifting cultivation system they used was seen by some as a chance to grasp their land. Thai-Chinese people supported the Morglan in their shifting cultivation, so that they might take more and more of the fallow land away from them. The fallow land was used by the Thai-Chinese to plant rubber trees and then they claimed their own rights to it.

Many other cultures have woven their way into the Morglan way of life, from Malaysia, China and Thailand. However, as the Morglan have adjusted themselves to these new influences, their own culture has weakened.

The kindness of the Thai royal family made it possible for the Morglan on this island to obtain the same rights as other Thai people. This was how they were able to combine their culture with the Thai culture, and therefore settle down on land. They were then given the name *Thai Mai* (new Thais), instead of simply being called 'sea people' as before. When they first settled on land, the Morglan were able to carry out farming according to their needs. However, data collected in 1983 showed that vast areas of forest had been torn down. The areas in the foothills and around the coastal areas of Phang Nga province are now made up of rice fields and rubber or fruit orchards. Some of these areas have been claimed by the Morglan.

Some Morglan people still remember the time when the land was not legally occupied by anyone. If you wanted land for planting crops, you could simply make a boundary yourself. Few Morglan people could add much value to their land whilst using only their own labor. However, after demarcating their land, those with more money and using hired labor, could add value. Furthermore, these people usually asked for title to their land and if granted, could then pass it on to their ancestors.

Koh Prathong is declared a National Park: The conflict starts

When the Government declared that Koh Prathong was to be designated a National Park, the villagers living there knew that sooner or later they would face the same fate as those in other areas under the control of the National Park Authority. Under the National Park regulations, there are 'restricted' areas. In these areas, people such as the Morglan are prohibited from carrying out activities such as fishing and collecting plants, activities critical to their way of life. With these inflexible laws, they have limited rights of access to their sources of food and income.

The traditional way of life is looked down upon by outsiders and charged with encouraging activities that might be harmful to nature, even though it is based only on self sufficiency. At the same time, the Government betray their own motives by allowing many tourist businesses to come and set up in the area. Therefore, it is only business owners who are able to take advantage of the National Park policies, not the Morglan.

Nukul Kokij, a volunteer at the Wildlife and Plant Protection Foundation of Thailand, reported that there were a lot of wild animals such as boars or deer, when he first arrived here. Local people had always hunted these animals but as a result, they had reduced in number. Discussing this amongst themselves, the local people decided to stop hunting the way they had before. They agreed a compromise amongst themselves. The adverse impact of their actions could be clearly seen by them, so they decided there was no further reason to hunt, as the animals might all be eradicated from the area. Later, they came up with a rule themselves to prohibit deer hunting. This was also motivated by common sense. One can see therefore, that it does not always require strict regulations to drive people to protect nature in this way.

Mining and the mangrove forest concessions caused the destruction of a huge area of forest. According to villagers living on the islands, concessions caused much greater destruction than the public realized. Information revealed to the public about the area of exploited forest, was in stark contrast to the actual scale of deforestation that had taken place here. In the past on this island, there were plenty of trees growing in large mangrove forests. Fish and other coastal creatures were also abundant, so that the villagers found it easy to catch their food. When the mangrove forests were destroyed, the number of coastal and sea animals also reduced.

At present, the Government has not officially declared the island to be part of a National Park. However, they are preparing to announce that in the future, 70,000 *rais* of Koh Prathong will be under the control of the National Parks Authority. It is certain that conflict will then develop, between the Government and the local communities. The idea of making this area part of the National Park began in 2000. When the plans were published, 3000 villagers joined forces and protested against them. The situation got worse and worse, until one group of villagers burned down the National Park office building, being built at that time. The experience they had gleaned

from other such cases, such as at Koh Surin, taught them how bad it would be in the future if they did nothing.

Nukul added that the plan to make the islands a National Park was sneaked into the community in the form of a letter sent to the head of the village. The letter was from “the Head of Koh Prathong National Park”. The news then spread like wildfire. Every household questioned how this decision could be made without their participation. The issue grew, but the villagers could not understand why no one from the National Park Authority came to explain to them what was happening. The villagers movement began in late 2000. This was the first time that they had showed their unified disagreement. At first, Nukul himself was not involved, as he was working on a local fishing project. However, the issue was of sufficient interest to him and so he decided to join the movement. However, the issue was very sensitive. Once, a magazine documentary team visited the area, taking pictures and collecting data about wild boar and deer. However, they eventually published a story describing the unspoiled nature of the island, having jumped to the conclusion that the island would be preserved, if part of the National Park system. That viewpoint made the local people very angry and so they then decided not to trust any outsiders arriving on the island asking for information. Evidence of the mass destruction of forests now exists in the form of fields of tree stumps, around the coastal concession areas. These stumps can be clearly seen when the sea level falls. Previously, there were a lot of Hopea wood trees, but now they are very few in number. Villagers realize that they need to do something to preserve the forest and their communal resources. The problem is that they do not know how to do this and how to proceed. It is unfair for them to be denounced for destroying the natural resources around them, as these resources are critical to their way of life. They could try and manage a preservation system themselves, but this might not be enough, as they need guidance from others to help them. They need information from communities who live in harmony with the forest, in order to see how they themselves might manage. Nukul himself tried to find examples of such communities and on some occasions took groups of his own villagers, to observe their methods of sea and forest preservation.

It is shameful that a head of the National Park was himself involved with forest destruction on Koh Surin. This corruption was revealed, when a ship carrying illegal logs from Koh Surin accidentally sank. The head of the National Park was suspended and later discharged, however for him it was not a big problem as he continued to enjoy life at his own resort on Koh Ra.

It is hardly a surprise therefore, that the villagers do not believe the promises of the National Park Authorities.

In Surin National Park, there are restricted areas around the island. Villagers are not allowed to go fishing in those areas. This is another lesson that the villagers in Koh Prathong have learnt and believe will be a similar problem for them in the future. The protest held by the villagers against the National Park plan was considered by the National Park Authorities, but this same plan was supported elsewhere by potential investors with land on the island. The National Park did not move its position and did not explain anything clearly, so the scale of the protest by the villagers grew. After the first office was burned down, the National Park built another office on Koh Prathong and to prevent another riot, had teams of policemen to protect the construction site until it was finished in early 2001. The office has since been completed though there has never been an official announcement.

It is possible that if the island is under the control of the National Park, what the villagers here are most afraid of, will come true. A promise has come from the authorities that villagers will still be able to fish in most of the areas they were able to before. However, in reality the villagers know that these are just sweet words, which the fishermen in Nopparath Tha Ra and Koh Phi Phi National Parks believed to their cost. Their rights will be restricted, despite the area being open for public use. It is not only the ordinary villagers on Koh Prathong who disagree with the plans, but also land owners, land investors and politicians, both in the national and local government. Some land owners have to stay quiet, because they have bought their land with illegal documents. Some of the owners were clever enough to buy land with a Sor Kor 1 document, a document that allows owners of the land to use it, but not to sell it. If Koh Prathong were declared a National Park, this document could be used to claim owner's rights to the land. Previously, land with a Sor Kor 1 cost around 30,000 Baht per *rai*, however land without any legal documentation cost only 5,000.

In the past, some heads of communities began clearing the forest to sell. As people started to make money in this way, more people followed. Villagers on Koh Prathong do not care much about money, because they live mainly on food from the sea. The economic boom lulled them into the trap of consumerism and consumption. Now every square *rai* of land on Koh Prathong has been occupied and claimed by companies or individuals. Much of the land is not suitable for cultivation, because the quality of the

soil is too poor for planting economic crops. 400 *rais* of land around the beach front, is well-known as belonging to people from Bangkok who have many business, hotel and resort interests. Once in a blue moon the owner might visit their land. Villagers know of one owner who has a coconut orchard on the island, but are not sure what his future plans for it are.

Besides the areas that already belong to individual land owners, more areas on this island are to be prohibited under the National Park Authority. This means that the Morglan will have access to fewer resources, such as the food for their daily existence. Nukul said that even though land on this island should not be used for profit, there is every possibility it will be.

Access to money makes it easy for investors to buy land, whilst villagers with little or no money, face many difficulties simply claiming rights to their own land. Morglan communities have been living around Thalay Bun National Park in Satun province for around a century. We can see evidence of this in the mosques built on the islands. Villagers have gathered as much evidence as they can to support their claim to the land, but so far it is been useless. The National Park Authority has not listened to them. One problem is the remoteness of the Central Administrative Divisions. They receive proposals from local authorities and then do not even bother to visit the affected areas and see what it is really like at the local level. Projects such as the National Park are promoted from this Central Administration Division.

Nukul has himself been seeking out opportunities for the villagers on these islands to join in public debate and give voice to their experiences, such that they might empower themselves in future negotiations. Villagers themselves do not know how to publicize their problems, as they lack knowledge and experience in this area. However, they are willing to do anything to improve themselves. A plan was therefore developed to hold regular meetings, at which villages confronted with similar problems could meet and discuss them. Some villages have never had an organization look after them and their problems, despite having had these problems for a long time. Nukul added that, instead of striking a compromise with local communities, the National Park Authority had already started issuing brochures to promote tourism in the area. As a result of a magazine published by the Tourism Authority of Thailand, both Koh Ra and Koh Prathong had become known to a wider audience. Some villagers believe that tourism will bring them a higher income. However, they do not appreciate what the adverse impacts of this so-called development might be. What will be the long term changes

to their physical environment and even their way of life? In many ways, tourism has the same adverse impacts as other kinds of development. It grows and consumes local resources, until there is nothing left except remnants of the previous existence. Where will the next big tourist destinations be after Phuket? The unspoiled environments at Khao Lak, Koh Lanta and Krabi might be next in the queue. Koh Prathong is no exception. It is this point that Nukul needs to make clear to all the villagers. They have to participate with and be informed by those who have had experience of the real impacts of tourism. What Nukul has also been doing for a long time is encouraging the villagers to become more active in environmental protection work, such as the prohibition of deer hunting.

Government agencies need to adjust their top-down working methods and support the participation of local communities in natural resource preservation. The communities need to acquire knowledge on how best to manage communal resources. The Government must empower communities and accept their ideas. It will be most effective, if the communities can show the public that they can live amongst nature whilst causing minimum damage to the environment. However, to do this they need clear guidelines. Any channel through which they can tell the public about the harmonious relationship between their community and the environment will be welcomed. For example, they could tell the public how the wild life preservation program on Koh Prathong has now been expanded, to include both deer and wild boar.

Koh Ra has unspoiled mangrove and upland forest. Most parts of Koh Ra are mountainous, with few flat areas. The beaches and bays which contain shallow-water coral reefs, have thus far not been disturbed by tourists. Some government agencies try to encourage natural preservation projects in these areas. However, their top-down approach to planning causes problems, as from the beginning they do not consult with the local communities. Nukul is one of very few people whose work here is not driven by money, but the limited salaries available for voluntary work often hinder positive activities taking place. Even though a budget for developing these activities is sometimes available from the local administration divisions, it is normally enough only for small-scale activities such as field work observation, rather than for implementing big projects. The best that Nukul has been able to do for these communities, is encourage groups of villagers to claim their own rights under the National Park proposals. Minority groups, such as the sea gypsies, do not fight unless encouraged to do so, because they think it is

impossible to win against the National Park Authority. However, if they are given the knowledge and support they need to fight, then the Government might consider their issues. In Thai society we have learnt that this is possible, for example in the case of the Pakakayo hill tribe group who now fight for themselves.

The Lessons Learned from Post-Disaster Rehabilitation and Development

No one can argue that the sympathy and aid provided to those who suffer from disasters is admirable. However, help must be provided in an appropriate form and be delivered at the right time and to the right place. If not, there might be adverse side effects and negative results in the long term. As a result of the devastation caused by the Tsunami in the six affected provinces in the south of Thailand, we witnessed a huge wave of aid provision rushing into the affected areas. However, one important question we must ask regarding the provision of that aid is; 'did the victims actually receive the appropriate help, at least cost to themselves and their communities in the long run?'

Two years after the Tsunami, rehabilitation projects are still present in the affected areas, though many have already 'completed' their work and left. Where once there were active projects, now there are only the legacies left of the work they carried out. Some of these legacies have turned out to be mistakes; such as the disaster warning signs installed in the wrong place and the hastily built buildings, now showing signs of wear and tear.

Certain groups of people were neglected in the aid process, because they had no documentation to prove their Thai citizenship. The sea gypsies are a marginalized group who, even two years after the Tsunami, have not received due attention, particularly with respect to their land rights. They need documentation to show the number of their houses that were damaged and to aid them in legal proceedings. Land conflict issues have become complicated by the claims of investors, who previously had permission to use the land around the affected areas for their mining businesses. During land conflict cases, they used this permission as a means to claim ongoing rights to the land.

These land cases caused other problems. Villagers in some communities ended up in conflict with each other, because they had different ideas on

how to proceed. They also joined up with different organizations when they came to help after the Tsunami. Some organizations received their budgets from the same funding source, but had different and sometimes conflicting objectives. As a result, they needed the support of different target groups in the communities and this would sometimes lead to groups of organizations and villagers opposing each other. Furthermore, some organizations wanted to change the religion of people in the affected communities. Those who chose to maintain their traditions and beliefs had to stand against those who had already changed theirs. This issue also split villages into groups. Material changes might not be such a problem, but when people choose to believe in something new, it is very hard for them to go back to their traditional beliefs. Some organizations had a genuine desire to make life better for local communities. These organizations sometimes formed their own networks, exchanging information to find the most effective and suitable ways to help the affected communities. However, if organizations provide too much help and for too long, there is always a risk that the local people will never learn to help themselves. An approach needs to be found that provides a balance between direct help in the short term, and allowing communities to fend for themselves in the longer term.

Another problem encountered during the aid process, was the lack of transparency and the dishonesty of some of the community leaders. Working as middle men, they received a lot of materials and money and some gave in to a desire to cheat on their own communities. This problem was widely criticized by the villagers during local discussions. It is not surprising, when we learn that the aid management system has many gaps, that some take advantage of this. Even though aid is provided out of good intentions and with the hope that it will facilitate the swift recovery of affected communities, sometimes the form of the help and how it is managed needs to be better thought through, in order that the most effective and satisfying results can be achieved. We now know that badly targeted help often causes more problems and creates more complexity. In order to ensure that future disaster rehabilitation projects are well managed and benefit all members of the community, lessons learned from the Tsunami aid process need to be recorded and made available as a ready-to-use guide. In the future, if both Government and private organizations spend even a short period of time attempting to understand the requirements of each community affected by a disaster, it will create much better long term results for all concerned.

The Tsunami: A Postscript

Information describing the way of life of the Thai sea gypsies prior to and after the Tsunami, has appeared in many books and documents. These documents inform us about the numbers of families affected, the number of family members lost and gives us a picture of the destruction in the affected areas. Sometimes the information varies from book to book, due to the methods of data collection used or the movement of the local population.

For this book, I have decided to collect stories and information that differ from these other publications. Utilizing information gathered between early 2006 and mid 2007, this book tells the unique story of the sea gypsies, their ways of life, their traditions, beliefs and their culture. During this time many changes occurred in the sea gypsy communities, though certain aspects stayed the same. We saw their ceremonies and rituals, such as the spirit houses at Bahn Bon Rai and Bahn Nai Thong and the Loh Bong pillar and floating boats ceremonies at Bahn Sang Ka Hu. We saw how leaders in each community were selected, based on a virtue system. We saw how the villagers cooperated with each other, with everyone willing to offer help and participate based on a common set of beliefs and a common purpose. Outsiders who come to work with these and similar communities must be mindful of and understand their unique culture, in order that they might help whilst minimizing any adverse impacts in the long term.

In the future, the sea gypsies' identities will gradually and inevitably give way to the new tidal wave of globalization. Capitalism, through tourism and large scale fishing, will always place Thai sea gypsies as victims. As a result, knowledge and experience should be offered to these people through active learning, and to encourage their full cooperation and participation. Only organizations who act in this way, will be able to label themselves true friends of the sea gypsies. However, the sea gypsies have to also adjust themselves to the realities of a modern, 'globalized' world.

Publications of Tsunami Aid Watch

Forthcoming publications

1. Communities in Limbo: Land profiteering after the Tsunami. By Sayamol Kaiyoorawong, Somyot Tolong and Dawan Sanlee.
2. Evolving from the Waves: Future prospects and tasks for a post-Tsunami NGO. By Phakphoom Withanthirawat.
3. Three years of Tsunami rehabilitation in Bahn Nahm Khem: Opportunity in crisis. Compiled by the community of Bahn Nahm Khem, written by Somsak Suriyamonthon.
4. Bridging the expectation gap: Lessons learnt from three years of Tsunami aid delivery and rehabilitation in Thailand. By Karl Segschneider and Lars Krause.

Previously published

1. TSUNAMI. A study on disaster response in Sri Lanka, with a contribution on the situation in Thailand by Karl Segschneider, Director of the TAW team, published in cooperation with Heinrich Böll Foundation, Brot für die Welt and medico international, July 2006
2. SCOPE-Charters. Sustainable Community Owned Professional Eco-Charters. Edited by TAW, Chiang Mai, December 2006. ISBN 978 974 88189 7 9
3. Renewable Energy Options on Islands in the Andaman Sea. A feasibility study for hybrid renewable energy/diesel systems in two Tsunami impacted communities. Edited by TAW, Chiang Mai 2007. ISBN 978 974 7093 51 3
4. Seal of Fair Recovery (SoFaR). A support tool for post disaster rehabilitation. A concept paper – Siegel „Fairer Wiederaufbau“. Zur Unterstützung des Wiederaufbaus nach Katastrophen. Ein Konzeptpapier. Edited by TAW, Chiang Mai 2007. ISBN 978 974 8266 12 1
5. Tsunami: CROSS-Effects? Christian Religious Organizations' Support and its Socio-cultural Effects on aid recipients in Tsunami Rehabilitation. A case study at Thungwa, Thabtanwan and Nahm Khem villages of Phang Nga's Takua Pa district. By Pikula 76 Sithiprasertkula, in cooperation with Save Andaman Network, edited by TAW, Chiang Mai 2007. ISBN 978 974 8410 258

6. 78 Weeks later: A descriptive, quantitative and qualitative summary after the Tsunami in Thailand. By Karl Segschneider and Walaitat Worakul, edited by TAW, Chiang Mai 2007. ISBN 978 974 8410 24 1
7. The Tsunami Early Warning System in Thailand. A resource book, including a synopsis of comments by Tsunami impacted communities 30 months after the disaster. Edited by TAW, Chiang Mai 2007. ISBN 978 974 8418 26 1
8. Andaman Communal Development and the Tsunami. Part 1: The origins and culture of the Morgan Sea Gypsies. By Sumroeng Choeychuenjit. Part 2: Changing Coastal Ways of Life. By Somyot Tolang. In cooperation with Save Andaman Network. Edited by TAW, Chiang Mai 2008. ISBN 978 974 13 8162 3
9. The Ecology and Environment of Bahn Nahm Kehm Three Years after the Tsunami. By Thiwawan Chaikao, Karl Segschneider and Romlee Maeroh. Edited by TAW, Chiang Mai 2008. ISBN 978 974 05 1622 4
10. Building for the Future: A communal approach after the Tsunami. Case study 1: Building houses. By Chalinee Sathanboa. Case study 2: Establishing and managing community shipyards. By Witthaya Aphorn. In cooperation with Save Andaman Network. Edited by TAW, Chiang Mai 2008. ISBN 987 974 8410 241

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