CHAPTER IV
RECONCEPTUALIZING COMMUNITY: NARRATIVES AND LIFE STORIES OF STRUGGLES FOR LEGITIMACY, RECOGNITION AND SECURITY

> Good fences make good neighbors…
> Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
> What I was walling in or walling out,
> And to whom I was like to give offense.
> Something there is that does not love a wall,
> That wants it down…
> (Robert Frost, "Mending Wall," 1949: 47-48)

4.1 Introduction

Ban Sai Ngam is a village in the forest, a home, and a contested site of protest and struggle that symbolizes Lisu negotiation and interaction both internally and with outside agencies. It is also a location for the expression of identity within a particular framework of interaction and articulation with state agencies and NGOs, as well as spirits that simultaneously correspond to and transcend physical and imagined spatial boundaries. As such, this chapter argues that the formation of alliances, networks and relationships internally and with external agencies by means of contestation and strategies of resistance are dependant on the conceptualization of boundaries and locality that are constantly defined and redefined by Lisu and the state alike. However, as this chapter will show, not all of the members of Ban Sai have equal access to or participate in these networks and alliances. Essentially, the construction of Ban Sai Ngam has been a process where its very meaning and objective reality has shifted according to time and situation. This creates a position where the village, through historical processes with the Thai state, is seen as a fixed administrative entity. However, it is perceived differently by various actors and village members themselves, as symbolic, ritual, developmental, backward, marginal, traditional or connected to other communities through networks and clan lineage. For instance, as a village in the forest, the notions of community are experienced as both a demarcated physical space and the setting for social interaction. It can also be seen that the identity of particular places emerge through connection with outside structures and organizations of space along with internal processes of culturally-specific action.

Building on this analytical and empirical perspective, the following chapter has two major objectives. The first is to explore the concept of place and locality as related to the conceptualization of a Lisu community. This, I argue, has resulted in a situation of multi-consciousness of the meaning and experience of community for the Lisu of Ban Sai Ngam. It has also meant that village members, through historical interaction with the state and NGOs, identify with and connect to local and national development goals, are Thai citizens, use the language and text of conservation to negotiate collective rights with state agencies, and form resistance communities to fight against relocation. The second objective is to analyze the complex set of relationships that exist between state policy discourse and the actions and experiences of various social actors. The history of the village is interlinked with experiences with its boundaries through ritual practice, natural resource management and protests that situate the local community in the wider framework of chains of interaction and association.

4.2 History of Place: Land and its People

When asked about the history of the village, elders from Ban Sai Ngam nominate the construction of the school, the arrival of teachers, the building of the road, logging, the birth of their children, NGO development projects, conflict with state officials over resources, and the arrival of the telephone as constituting significant markers in the lives of village members, punctuating periods of change and interaction. "Tell me about the history of the village, start anywhere and include any details you wish," I asked a village traditional healer and spirit medium, or *nee pha* in Lisu. He led me to his bedroom and pointed to a corner in his room. On the floor were two vases. He said that they were made by Lua, and he had found one in a cave not too far from the village, and the other he found buried in the area where the foundations for a new house were being laid at the old village site. "The Lua lived all over this area a long time ago, I do not know where they came from or where they went" (Interview with a village traditional healer, *nee pha*, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004).

Members of the Lua ethnic group were the original inhabitants of the area, as is evident from the many artifacts found in caves, fields and the forest surrounding the village. Artifacts have been found on the mountains in the surrounding area, including burial sites consisting of piles of rocks in a dome shape at about waist-height. Local Lisu villagers have said, "They are very old, not Thai, ancient people" (interview with village elder, Ban Sai Ngam, March 2004). When the house mentioned above was being constructed in the old village, many ceramic jars and plates were uncovered, including a box and knives. Most were broken, but some were intact. The broken ones were thrown away and the others were sold. These two particular jars were kept in the bedroom of this *nee pha*, and his children had used one as a moneybox and the other was being used as a candleholder.

The environment surrounding *Ja Zu Na Khuaw* has been shaped historically by the consecutive management systems of different ethnic groups. Lua originally practiced shifting cultivation and moved throughout the area. Previously, Shan, Lahu and Lisu practiced swidden farming. The surrounding forest and natural resources are now managed and administrated by the central Thai government, based on scientific practices, biodiversity conservation, and the demarcation of national parks and conservation areas enclosing the highlands and the people who live there. This has resulted in the territorialization of space, the formation of fixed boundaries where the village is administered as a fixed and bounded entity using maps and conservation discourse. The ecology of the area has also been dramatically affected by logging; Lahu, Shan, Thai, Karen and Lisu received 12 baht per day to work for a logging company, a government sponsored "open forest" policy organized by a Chiang Mai entrepreneur in 1972. Indeed, "the sound falling trees could be heard all day long. Trees bigger than this [showing his arms opened wide in a circle] were cut down one after another" (personal correspondence with a Lisu elder, Ban Sai Ngam, February 2004).

The old village was established in 1973 and was known as Tang Ngo, situated two kilometers to the northwest of the current village site (Map 4.1). In 1981, the year of the chicken according to the Chinese calendar, Pho Yee Ko Lao Yee Pa, a

member of the Ngua Pha clan, moved from the old village site with his family to the current location since available land was insufficient for the growing community. The current village site, *Ja Zu Na Khuaw* was originally a Shan village known as Ba Tha Ngua.[1] Ten rai of land was purchased for 7,500 baht. Over time, the current village site grew to 30 to 40 households; the area was "good for rice, good for opium, good for corn and good for life" (interview with village elders, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004). Before the enforcement of government-demarcated boundaries, land was divided and used according to the needs of the community; "there was no district governor, police or forestry officials, no national parks, no wildlife sanctuary. We lived in peace" (interview with village elders, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004). Presently, given the restrictions placed on available land in Ban Sai Ngam, it is difficult — if not impossible — to expand the settlement and agricultural areas. In this respect, components of the village have become fixed due to increasingly restrictive intensification of government forestry policy and its enforcement.

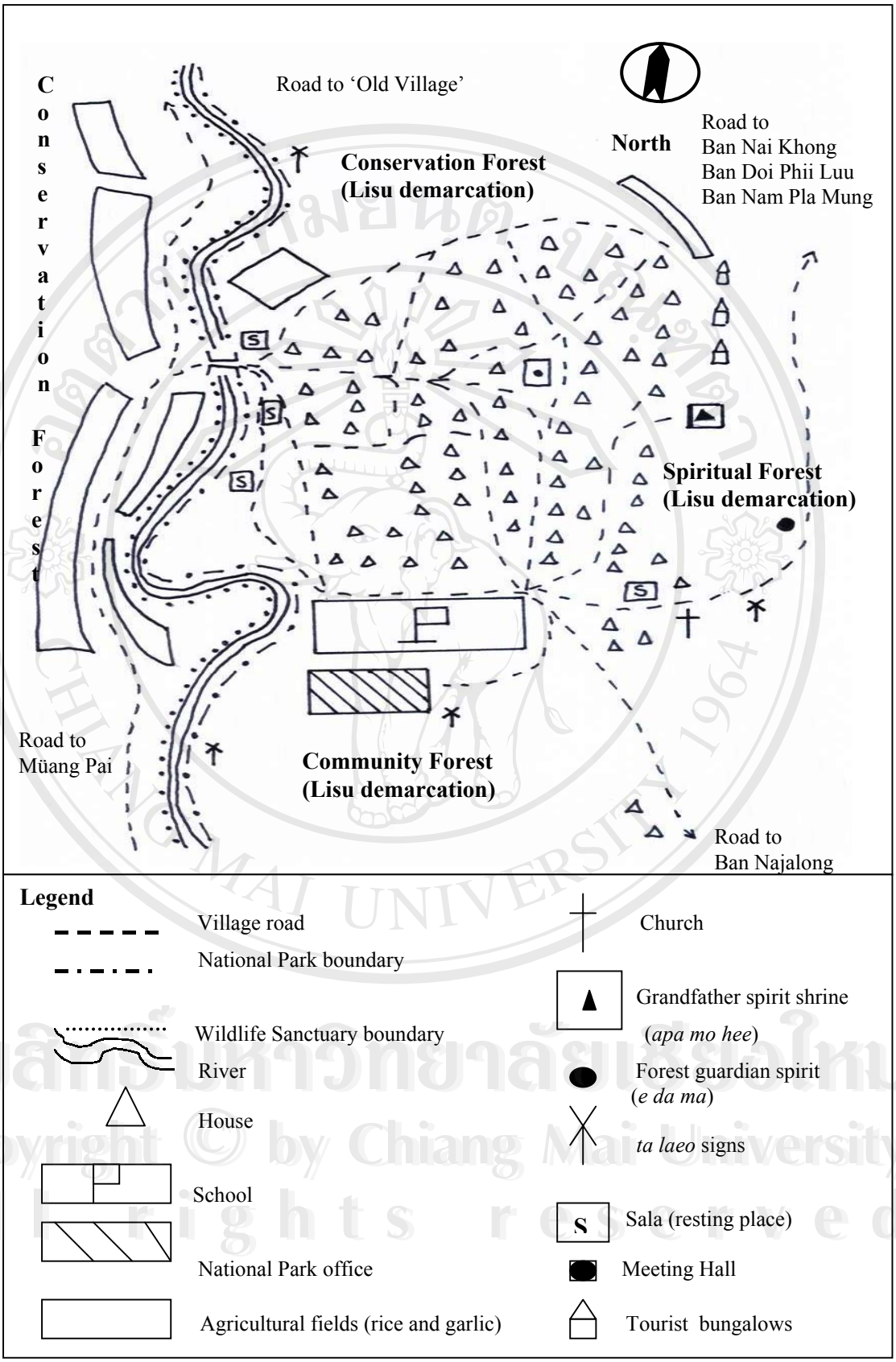
The first families to move to *Ja Zu Na Khuaw* were Pho Yee Ko Lao Yee Pa, Nai Sarn Lao Yee Pa, Nai Luang Lao Mee and Nai Sai Lao Yee Pa. Before establishing the new village, Lisu moved to this area from many different provinces, including Chiang Dao and Fang provinces in Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Mae Hong Son:

> The area had strong spirits, many Shan people became ill. They had a sickness that they could not cure, they were not good at performing ceremonies. Lisu can stay because we can perform the correct ceremonies. When I first came into the area and had contact with the Shan village there were over 40 households. When I bought the land from them a few years later there were less than 10 households. After selling the land they moved away.
> (Interview with village elder, Ban Sai Ngam, February 2004)

Land was divided between these four families. To the present day, these families control much of the land in the village, dividing it within the family and distributing it to families who have no land upon which to build their houses or grow

[1] Previous research has stated that the land for the current village site (Ban Sai Ngam) was originally purchased from *khon müang* (Wichean 2001). During my interviews regarding the history of the village, I was told that the area was a Shan village and not a *khon müang* village. Tracing the history of the area using both life histories of the village and official government documentation, there was information supporting both positions. However, in a later interview it was explained to me that when the Lisu moved to the area, it was in fact a Shan community, however, these people had over time moved to lowland villages and lived with *khon müang*.

rice and maize. Soon after the new village was established, the district governor, local police, and teachers visited the village to conduct the first official village survey on children of school age. The survey found that there were over 40 children who could attend school. A village member contacted the district governor and education department and called them to the village for a meeting because there were enough children in the village to warrant the construction of the school. An area to build the school was decided upon. The land for the school's sporting field and the land for the construction of the school were donated by two families in the village, and the villagers constructed the school themselves. Once completed, two government teachers from Bangkok came to teach in the village. There was no separate place for them to live so they stayed with the villagers. After some time, the villagers got together, purchased some land and built a house for the teachers.



Map 4.1 Spiritual and state boundaries of the research site, Ban Sai Ngam

The school was completed in 1983 and the village was officially registered three years later, so that in 1986 Ban Sai Ngam was created on the district map and registry, and in the minds of the government officials and villagers themselves. This saw the introduction of the Thai administrative term *muu ban*, used to designate the village as an official village in the provincial registry. It was given the name Sai Ngam because of the prominent Sai tree at the entrance to the village. The first village leader elected was Pho Yee Ko Lao Yee Pa in 1986, which was followed by the construction of a water tank and a clinic. After the construction of the school, the population of the village increased to 60 households and has remained around this figure until the present day (information provided in a meeting of village elders, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004).

In 1986, the Narcotics Suppression Division from the Office of the Sub-Committee to Facilitate the Solution to National Security Problems Relating to Hilltribes and the Cultivation of Narcotic Crops came to Ban Sai Ngam to eradicate opium cultivation. An elder noted: "Opium cultivation was used for supporting the family and purchasing necessities, it was also used as medicine. Now people say it is against the law. We no longer grow opium. We grow rice, chili and garlic, we raise pigs, chickens and cattle" (interview with village elders, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004). In 1987 a village clinic was established by the Department of Public Health, the responsibilities of which included taking care of minor aliments of the villagers from the surrounding villages of Ban Nai Khong, Ban Doi Phii Luu, Ban Nam Pla Mung and Ban Pang Wua. In the same year, the first rice mill was built in the village. After three years the clinic left the village. Construction of the road west of the village began in 1989, using labor from the village. "The most significant change has been the road," I was told (interview with village member, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004). In the past, people had to walk to the village and now during the dry season the village is accessible by four-wheel drive:

> When I first arrived, all of the houses were made of bamboo with thatched grass roofs; there were no wooden houses. There were only ten households in the old village site with no road, only a small walking trail. Water had to be collected from the river — we did not have pipes. We had to pound rice every day, only enough for two or three meals — there was no time to pound for long periods of time. All travel between villages was by foot.
> (Interview with village member, Ban Sai Ngam, March 2004)

Elders tell of the importance of clan lineage and history as Lisu move from village to village, state to state, and across national boundaries. Villages are today a representational entity, which symbolize the pseudo-permanence of place as a "village in the forest." In reality, the contested nature of the relationships between highland people and lowland government has created an image of a fixed community both in the minds of state officials and increasingly highland peoples themselves. However, this entity, including the imaginings of a permanent area as "the village" is anything but secure. In terms of social action, the villagers of Ban Sai Ngam have faced forestry staff in the forest, and in front of City Hall in Chiang Mai and in Bangkok, since "…villagers now understand the law" (interview with a village traditional healer, *nee pha*, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004). In this respect, the political and environmental consciousness of community members is promoted by both the Lisu Network of Mae Hong Son and local NGOs. However, not all members of Ban Sai Ngam understand the law; only a select few who have connections with NGO and access to participate in the Lisu Network of Mae Hong Son. Currently there is only one man from the village who attends Network-level meetings, his role is unclear and many village members remain skeptical about his motives: "Aler receives a lot money to join NGO projects" (interview with village youth, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004).

4.3 The Local World: Interpretations of *Ja Zu Na Khuaw*, a Village in the Forest

> When the Great Spirit came down to the land, peoples of the world, Chinese, Thai and Lisu received news that they must mark the boundaries of their territory. People from China used stones to mark the boundaries of their land. Thai used timber to make fences to mark their land. Lisu were lazy, and used woven grass matting to mark the boundaries of their land. There was a great fire across all of the land. All that remained was the stone boundaries and wooden fences marked by other peoples. The woven grass fences erected by the Lisu were gone. The Great Spirit told the Lisu that they must live with other peoples: You have no land, nor any country of your own.
> (Lisu story told to me by a Lisu elder, personal communication, February 2004)

Members of Ban Sai Ngam have collectively addressed environmental, economic and social change through varying strategies: through protest, the creation of community forestry management rules and regulations, participation in NGO development projects, introduction of garlic as a cash crop, and the formation of networks and alliances. These collective strategies have a greater holistic significance in the context of contestation between highland people and state authorities over

rights to place and resource management. Through these processes the Lisu are able to use their "cultural capital," their language of conservation, symbolism and "local knowledge," to show solidarity and unity with other highland groups, and in turn express solidarity in the terminology of the state classification of *chao khao*, hill-tribe. Representations of the community, Ban Sai Ngam and *Ja Zu Na Khuaw*, are a process wherein different actors construct a meaning of this particular place. The following section outlines certain observations collected by the author to indicate wider empirical and theoretical understandings of community and place.

When I looked out of the window from the house I stayed in during my research, the village looked still. It was hot outside in the sun, and even hotter inside under the newly-erected galvanized roof. Mother was weaving bamboo baskets in the cool shade under the house. Chickens and pigs were making noises, a dog was barking in the distance, and someone was chopping wood for the fire to cook the evening meal. Alu, the sixth son, had just come into the house after a day in the field. He rested until the other boys come back from the fields to play football at the school. I could hear the sound of someone calling their chickens, *kooo-kooo-kooo*, as well as a Lisu tune being played on a mouth organ in a nearby house, mixed with the latest Thai pop song coming from another house. Then the phone rang. The elder answered and told the caller (in Thai) to call back in five minutes so that he could call the person they wanted to speak with to come to the house. A young woman then came into the house to wait for her call. Over the phone she spoke Thai, making arrangements to meet someone in town and drive together to Chiang Mai to buy clothes for the New Year's celebrations. The phone rang again, but it was a bad connection and the line cut out. For a half an hour every morning and in the evening the radio is tuned to a Lisu broadcast that discusses national and local news and important events. After the morning Lisu broadcast is the Thai national anthem, and on Saturdays this is followed by the Prime Minister's weekly address to the nation.

Sounds are markers in the village; they indicate daily activity within the community and play important roles in the marking of time and the construction of everyday experiences. Messages are broadcast by loudspeaker regarding government

and community development plans, meetings, and upcoming rituals. Similarly, the start of the Lisu New Year is heard before it is seen, with firecrackers sent flying into the air. Likewise, the ring of the telephone: the history of the village telephone is significant for it represents the establishment of a certain ease of contact with other villages, family, friends, and kin, but only when it is working. The church bells chime to call worshippers. The silence of early morning is broken by the sound of roosters crowing, followed by dogs barking, and these sounds seem to act as an alarm clock for the village, marking the time when the day begins. The fire in the kitchen is then started, rice is put on the boil, and food is prepared for the chickens and pigs. These domestic sounds are interrupted by the arrival of a *khon müang* man who drives his motorcycle through the village honking the horn to inform villagers that he has arrived with foodstuffs to sell pork, vegetables and sweets. Villagers then make their way to the fields, and the sound of motorcycles can be heard throughout the village. In the fields, garlic is the preferred cash crop, and the hum of petrol-driven water pumps can be heard from every direction. After the day's work, youth and adults alike congregate in the houses that have televisions to watch the latest Thai drama or Thai kickboxing, *muay thai*.

The word explained to me by elders for a village in Lisu language is *ja zu*. *Ja zu*, a Chinese word adapted by the Lisu, essentially refers to a cluster of houses and can be viewed from several different conceptual and practical levels. The first and primary meaning of *ja zu* refers to the relationship between individuals, the community, and *apa mo*, or in other words between spirit and human worlds. The second level encompasses relationships between people within the community, or human-human relationships. The third can be seen as a representation between people of the community and surrounding resources. The word *ja zu* does not specify a specific number of houses or a distinct boundary.

Before a village can be established, an important question that elders must discuss is, "Where would be a good place for rice and for opium?" Reasons for considering migration for the Lisu include a lack of land, disputes between individual households, lack of water, and tightening restrictions on land. When interviewing

village members from Ban Sai Ngam who have migrated to the village over the past 20 years, all of these reasons were nominated as determining factors for leaving their previous villages. Factors, which made Ban Sai Ngam an appropriate location for migration, included the presence of relatives and clan members, and the availability of land, water and natural resources. One of the first questions a Lisu will consider before they move to a new location is whether they have close relatives or kin in the new location (Dessaint 1971).

Lisu classify land into cold areas, where opium can be grown known as *a ja muew*, and hot areas where rice and corn are grown, known as *lu muew*, and access to both are important considerations for a Lisu village. The first permanent building in a prospective new village must be the house and altar for *apa mo*. Only temporary dwellings are erected before this construction is completed, with ritual structures indicating permanence. Thus, each Lisu village has an *apa mo hee* (house), usually on a hill overlooking it or at another high point, for without the construction of a guardian-spirit shrine a community cannot be established. As Durrenberger (1971: 180-181) notes,

> *Apa mo* is addressed in naming ceremonies, and in first fruit ceremonies. He is given a chicken when a sow furrows, when a mare foals, and when a child is born. Unsettled disputes may be taken to him. When people leave the village for any length of time, they inform him. He is offered meat of the first pig killed in every litter. He is appealed to in soul-calling ceremonies.

Kinship has equal importance for the creation of a Lisu village with geography. There are many elements involved in location selection for the establishment of a community, such as determining appropriate geographical position and access to possible rice and opium fields, as well as determining ritual and spiritual appropriateness. A Lisu community must have at least three clan groups before *apa mo hee* can be erected, a condition that has significance for marriage and ritual rites. Every clan grouping recognizes different spirits; some clans have all female spirits such as Lao Yee Pa (Ngua Pha), while other clans have both male and female spirits. Although ceremonies at the household level differ according to their particular clan spirits, ceremonies and rituals performed for *apa mo* and *e da ma* are the same for all members of the community. This can be seen as a demonstration of variable yet

interconnected family, household, and community levels of worship and ritual practice. Lisu can perform a soul-calling ceremony for all groups of people — Lahu, Akha, *khon muang* or even Western peoples. Lisu in the same village are unified through allegiance to the village leader, to the same *moh muer* (village guardian-spirit priest), and worship of the same village guardian spirit, *apa mo* (Lewis 1970:51).

Listening to songs and stories of Lisu, the phrase "my father has no land" is often heard (Klein Hutheesing 1990a: 81-93). The opening monograph of this section recounts a story recited to the author by a village elder. Extensive migration and movement of the Lisu also underlie feelings of having no land or no country. Currently in Ban Sai Ngam the villagers have no legal land rights for their land; the village has a tenuous existence, punctuated by conflict and confrontation with state authorities over the use of resources. However, today the villagers of Ban Sai Ngam are fighting for their place, their land and the rights to manage natural resources following traditional practices. Their land can be seen on a three-dimensional model in the meeting hall below a sign indicating village rules and regulations for forest management, and there is much interaction with NGOs, including advocacy for changes to forestry policy. The village, and in turn the management of resources, have been codified both by outside officials and the villagers themselves: "If you break the rules you will be fined. All village members must obey these rules and regulations," reads the last line of these regulations. Forest ceremonies are performed using symbols of the state, intertwined with traditional practices of the community, for example pigs are sacrificed and offered to *e da ma*, the forest guardian spirit, and trees are wrapped in saffron colored cloth and adorned with a picture of the king.

The village exists in a ritual sense through the worship of the grandfather guardian spirit *apa mo*, and "the village dancing grounds during New Years become stages on which Lisu custom is enacted" (Klein Hutheesing 1990a:82). The village is a spiritual and symbolic site when symbols smeared with chicken blood are placed at the village entrance, upstream from and on the road leading out of the village, and when cleansing ceremonies are performed to rid the village of bad spirits. Such processes occur simultaneously at the village, clan and family level. Ban Sai Ngam

can be interpreted as a religious village, when on days selected by the village priest as 'rest days' every 15 days, the villagers take time off from work in the fields, or when Buddhist holidays are observed at the school that displays symbols of the Buddha, the king and the Thai flag in every class room, or when Christmas and Easter are celebrated by the Christian community in the village. These latter celebrations are centered at the church, a newly-constructed building on the eastern edge of the community, currently with 108 members from the village (interview with the village pastor, Ban Sai Ngam, June 2004).

Continuing this theme, viewing the village from a ritual perspective, the interaction between community members and the spirit world can be seen through practice. For example, the members of one household gave *nee pha* a pig's spleen. He held it in his right hand and slowly ran his left index finger over it. "The family will be healthy," was his first declaration. "However," he continued, "over the next few days a problem or conflict will arise for a family living towards the school and for a family living at the opposite end of the village, but not serious." Holding the spleen in his right hand and facing *apa mo hee* he saw small black spots on the either side of the spleen. These spots represent problems or conflict and also represent directional, social and spiritual divisions. This process is also representative of the significance accorded to the advice and observations of the *nee pha*, and it has been noted "during New Year's there are always problems with families *nee pha* has spoken about" (personal communication with a Lisu man, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004). The *nee pha* can foresee the general situation of the village, including its environment, social dimensions, problems, and general successes for all people within the village. He told me that even if something were to happen to me, good or bad, he could foresee it. No matter where the relatives of village members are he can read chicken bones or a pig's spleen and know how they are, or about future problems that may arise, showing that ceremonies cross fixed geographic village boundaries and encompass all village members wherever they may be.

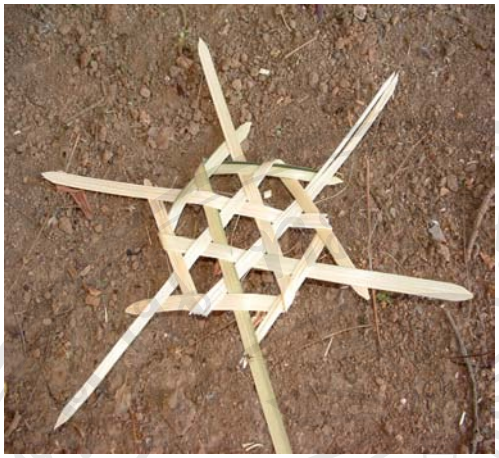


Figure 4.1 *Ta laeo* mark the boundaries when entry and exit from the village is prohibited

Figure 4.2 *Ko pur* bamboo rafts. These are used to send 'bad' things in the village outside

Examined from the viewpoint of interaction with outside agencies, the village is an administrative entity that was formalized in 1986, and a development-focused community beginning in 1992, with a local NGO and state agencies implementing development projects with equal enthusiasm. From an administrative perspective, the village is constructed for the purpose of control or "ease of administration," focusing on the creation of boundaries both physical and conceptual. Through the process of state-led development and policy implementation, the state promotes an ordered categorization of both territory and its population. The issues of territorial or spatial boundaries as they are perceived by villagers themselves cannot be dismissed, for at the most direct level of social relation, villagers interact with their territory, forest, water, and other resources. State policy mechanisms regarding highland people encompass the security and development goals of the state, and are embedded in historical and geographical interpretations of highland people. These interpretations and perceptions of highland people have recently moved into the realm of research. In this case, in order to conduct research in areas controlled by the RFD prior permission is required under the Forestry Department Regulation for the Purpose of Conducting Education or Research in Forest Areas. This regulation on education and research activities in areas under the jurisdiction of the Department of Forestry coincided, interestingly, with the mass rally of indigenous and tribal peoples in front of City Hall in Chiang Mai from April to May 1999 (Chapter I, Overview). It

encompasses educational activities, research, and the holding of workshops concerning natural resources, or biological and genetic material.

Over the past 20 years, since the formalization of the village in 1983, the state has been attempting to fix Ban Sai Ngam to a particular place, both ideologically through state policy and discourse regarding the classification of highland peoples, and physically through the demarcation of boundaries. Ban Sai Ngam is situated within the territorial administrative system of state authorities, within a National Park and a Wildlife Sanctuary. Ban Sai Ngam is a member of the Lisu Mae Hong Son Network that was established by a development NGO based in Chiang Mai in 1998. Work in the village preformed by this NGO has focused, firstly, on building leadership and knowledge in the community regarding government policy and law. Secondly, they have promoted the building of alliances between communities in Thailand, with tribal networks linking the community with national networks such as the Assembly of the Poor and the Assembly for Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of Thailand (AITPT). Beyond this, they have advocated broad policy changes. Through these connections the Lisu Network of Mae Hong Son, and in turn Ban Sai Ngam, is linked to other minority peoples' networks in Thailand, as well as through international alliances with international NGOs.

Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM), a buzzword of NGOs since the early 1990s resulting largely from increased international attention and available funding, is now part of the everyday speech of village members, creating a newly-defined knowledge community. However, the issue of agency is significant in this analysis. Non-governmental organizations give the impression that the community is homogenous, with all members of the community having equal access in development projects and a voice at the network level. Currently there is only one member of the village from the Lao Yee Pa clan that is a member of the Lisu Network of Mae Hong Son, and he is also on the executive board of an NGO. Two other village members from the Lao Yee Pa clan have had extensive experience working as staff for various projects funded by a NGO. Development work began in Ban Sai Ngam in 1992, focusing on education and resource management. Today, 12

years later, only selected village members can use terms like “local knowledge” and “traditional wisdom” in conversations with outside agencies, including researchers and academics. Villagers have created their own text for resource management to legitimate their rights to a particular locality: Ban Sai Ngam, “a village in the forest.” This process has evolved in an atmosphere of tightening restrictions on resource use and increased emphasis on particular cultural practices for maintaining biodiversity and preserving the forest and natural resources. This is not representative of a situation of local community and state agencies in complete opposition. It does, however, indicate clearly the use of language, rules and regulations that have resulted in a situation where local communities must continue to prove their rights to place and legitimize their existence, not only from a historical or cultural perspective, but also from a position of the identity of the Lisu and their village.

In this respect, knowledge can be thought of as a concept of power, as propositions that have effects (Manas and Turton 1991). This idea is furthered in the context of inclusion and exclusion that operates to produce and authorize statements which combine to form bodies of knowledge or discourses, which have been internalized by NGOs and community members to legitimize their resource management practices. By applying these techniques and strategies, the community has been able to negotiate with state officials and forestry staff extremely successfully, and a Lisu man was elected to local parliament, in March 2004. The political mobilization and representation of the community may be an effective force for change (Chapter V, section 5.7).

The physical representations of these epistemological processes can be seen from the construction of a three-dimensional model created in 1996 depicting the village and surrounding forest classification zones (Figure 4.7), and a year later in 1997, with the formulation of rules and regulations used as a template for forest management delineating distinct categories in the mind as well as in the landscape of the village. These specific representations of the community and natural resource management regulations assist in demonstrating and mobilizing the community and indicating “their” place. Additionally, with three tourist bungalows and a hot spring,

some members of the community promote Ban Sai Ngam as a tourist village. However, these manifestations of the community do not include or affect all people living in the village in the same way. Different people are included and excluded from the 'village' depending on the criteria of development projects, or the level of participation in networks.

The idea of community exists at multiple levels — religious, spiritual, symbolic, network, and developmental — encompassing paradigms of tradition, wisdom and resource management, tourism, and more recently, research. The village can also be seen as a community of resistance and a site for protest against forestry officials, as shown by the case of conflict with forestry officials (section 4.5.3). At the village level, relationships and networks created and maintained by villagers of Ban Sai Ngam encompass the immediate village and spread through clan and kinship to other communities in the surrounding areas and to other provinces in northern Thailand, and Bangkok. With four villages situated along the only access road, community members, army officials, and non-government organization staff come into regular contact with each other. Social relations and contact are created and maintained not only as a result of clan group affiliation and lineage but also as a result of through traffic to the nearby market towns of Pai, 15 kilometers away by paved road, Pang Ma Pa district, a 40 kilometer journey by paved road, and the central or müang district of the province, 98 kilometers away.

Once you turn off the Chiang Mai-Mae Hong Son Highway 1095 to enter the village, a distance of six kilometers by dirt road, you are faced with a checkpoint and then an array of signs: *Wildlife Sanctuary, School, "Long Live the King" 5th December, Hot Mineral Spring Sai Ngam Village 4 kms: Help Preserve Nature Please, Conservation Area, Fire Break,* and *Water Animal Conservation Area* (Figure 4.3). In terms of development, Ban Sai Ngam is a very popular choice for government, NGO and INGO projects. It has become a model village for NGOs in their promotion of forest management and cultural practices. The village is portrayed as a traditional community for funding agencies and national-level advocacy, with a history of successful negotiation with the state over resource use. Rich in natural

resources, it is also considered an ideal location for research on biodiversity. At the same time, the village has been a focus for the implementation of the government's "War on Drug's policy" and the related "Operation X-Ray" (section 4.5.4).[2] A drug rehabilitation program was initiated by the Special Forces Unit, Battalion 514 from Lopburi province, in the school at Ban Sai Ngam, for five nearby villages, four of which were Lisu and one Lahu. This program was conducted twice in 2003, the first time in March and the second in April. Those who attended the program were regarded as drug addicts, and identified by the village leader of each community, under encouragement from government and army officers "To Be Number One."

The village is not very difficult to locate on a map. It is situated in Mae Na Terng sub-district, Müang Pai district, Mae Hong Son province. Mae Na Terng sub-district has a total of eight villages: Ban Mae Na Terng is a *khon müang* village; Ban Mae La Noi is Karen; Ban Sai Ngam is Lisu, as are Ban Doi Phii Luu, Ban Nam Pla Mung and Ban Pang Wua[3]; Ban Nai Khong is Yellow Lahu, referred to as Bala Lahu by other communities; and Ban Bang Yang is Lahu, as is Ban Ya Po. Maps have a variety of purposes and objectives, including control and administration in the promotion of national ideology through the classification of people and resources (Anderson 1991, and Thongchai 1994). Aerial and satellite maps are used for strategic purposes, focusing on borders and boundaries both geographic and political. There are a plentitude of tourist maps available at guesthouses, cafés and tourist offices in the nearby town, showing trekking routes and off-road driving opportunities. On all of these maps Ban Sai Ngam is identified differently — as a hill-tribe trekking location, a tourist attraction with a hot spring, and as a site for the Huai Nam Dang National Park Office Number 7.

[2] "To Be Number One" was the slogan for the governments "War on Drugs" project and a phrase continually repeated by army officers when explaining the benefits of drug rehabilitation and a drug-free community. It is also the official slogan for the Thai Rak Thai (incumbent party of Thailand) policy for the "War on Drugs."

[3] Ban Pang Wua was relocated by the Royal Forestry Department and Army in 2001, villagers moved to Ban Nam Pla Mung and other surrounding villages. The rationale for the relocation was, firstly, that the villagers were destroying the watershed forest by performing shifting cultivation. Secondly, the army accused the village of being a trafficking point for narcotics. Third, there was no road and it was difficult for government agencies to enter.

Every morning there are Thai people (*khon müang*) who sell produce in the village, sometimes setting up small markets selling *som tom* and *luuk chin*. During New Year celebrations in the village, there was a Hmong family selling oranges as well as a Thai woman and her husband from Chiang Mai selling and repairing sewing machines. Occasionally Lisu villagers from Ban Doi Phii Luu will come by motorcycle to sell pork, and even a Karen man came to sell a pig to the village assistant leader for 3,500 baht. Lahu sell produce in Ban Sai Ngam only on a small scale, selling bamboo woven baskets.

Figure 4.3 Forestry checkpoint at the entrance to the road leading to the village

4.3.1 Social Organization of the Village: Structures, Kinship and Networks

When Lisu meet for the first time, they exchange details of their clan lineage, both patrilineal and matrilineal. This is done to decide on the reference terms which they must use to refer to each other. The most important information exchanged in this situation is which clan they belong to. During New Year's celebrations, or during other important occasions when Lisu perform traditional dances, the first question a young boy will ask before he holds the hand of a young girl is, "What clan are you from?" Men and women of the same clan cannot hold hands. The Lisu clans include: Bia Pha, Ngauw Pha, Suer Pha, Chua Pha, Wua Ja, Lee Ja, Suer Ja, Ur Chur, Kho Ja, Juer Pha, Jang Ja, Ju Ja, La Khuer Lo, and Yang Ja. Lee Ja, Ur Chur and Ju Ja are

considered traditional Lisu clans while the remainder come from Chinese clan names, and La Khuer Lo and Musur Kui are Lahu clan names. Ban Sai Ngam has 61 households with a population of 268, comprised of 145 men and 123 women, with 47 people between the ages of one and 10, 121 people between 10 and 30, and 100 people between the ages of 30 and 60 (collected by the village Sub-district Administration Organization representative August 25, 2003). The village can be divided into the clan groups of Ngua Pha (Lao Yee Pa), the largest clan group of the village with 28 households, Bia Pha (Lao Mee, Sao Mee), Suer Pa (Lao Muu), Kho Ja, Lee Ja (Lao Lee), Lo Lo, Ee Ka, and U Ja. There is also a Haw Chinese man who is married to a Lisu woman from the village, a Lisu married to a Lahu woman, and a Thai man who married a Lisu woman and opened a convenience store in the village. The following family chart, mapping the movement and interaction of one family in Ban Sai Ngam, clearly illustrates the connections and interactions between community members, NGOs and state agencies.

The family chart below (Figure 4.4) represents four generations of a Lisu family in Ban Sai Ngam. At the top of the chart A1, a village elder and a cultural advisor to the village committee, and A2 are first generation arrivals in Ban Sai Ngam. Together they have eleven children, three of which are deceased. They are one of the primary landowners within Ban Sai Ngam. Currently B2 is over forty years old and is unmarried, living in the family house. B5, the eldest son, was previously a village leader and is now on the village committee, in the Lisu Network of Mae Hong Son, and on the executive committee of a local NGO. B12 was the first member of the family to move to a tourist village in Chiang Mai in 1997, to sell handicrafts to tourists. Her brother, B9, and his family followed two years later. B11 worked for several years for a local NGO and now is a freelance tourist guide in Müang Pai. B14 is a current staff member of a local NGO. Currently C3, C4, C7, C8 and C9 are all attending school outside of the community. All members of the family maintain close ties. Through clan and kinship relationships, the family is connected to villages in Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Mae Hong Son provinces.

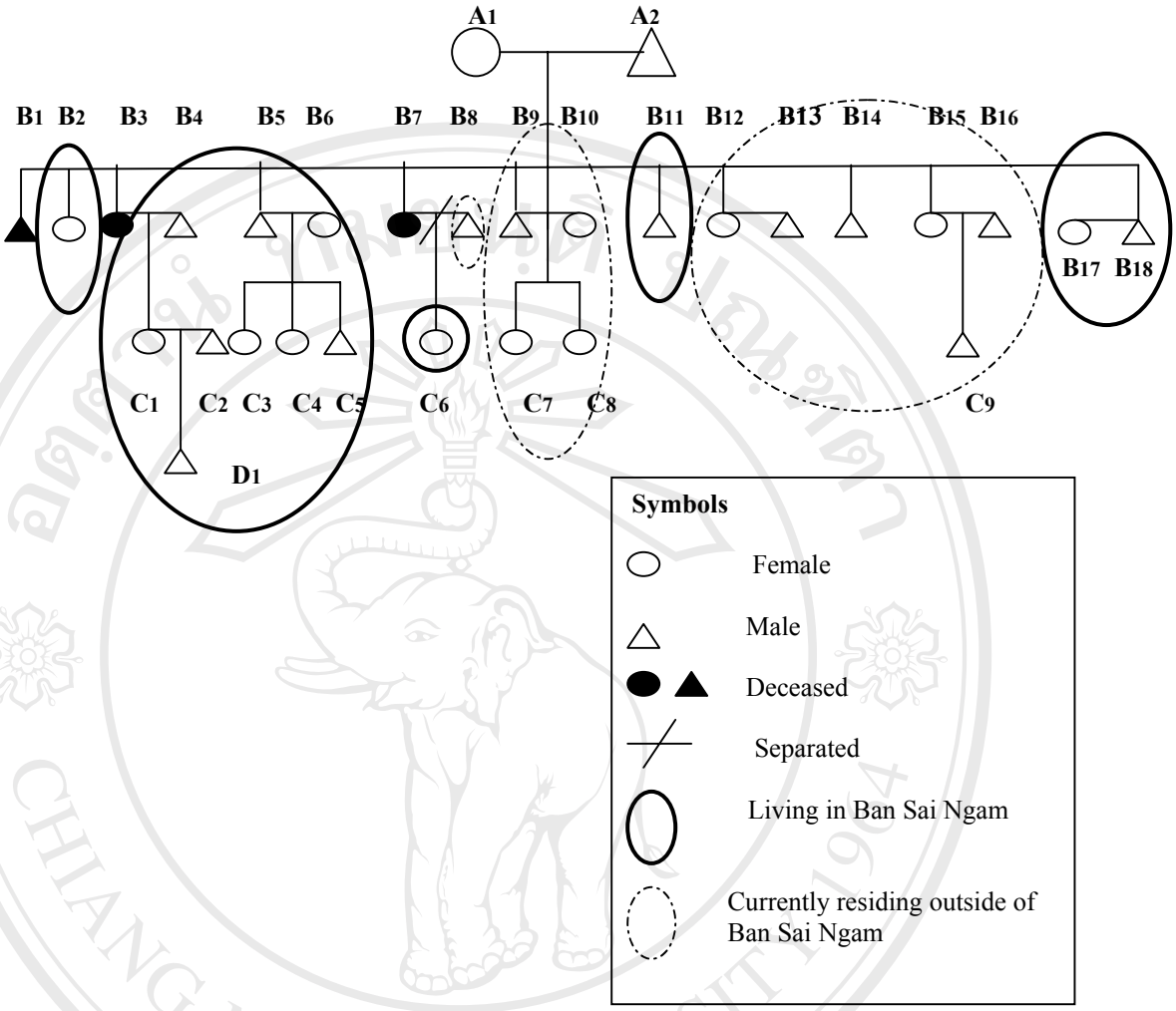


Figure 4.4 Case A: Family chart of a family in Ban Sai Ngam

Members of the extended family return to the community for rituals and ceremonies conducted at the family level. Economically, the family is also linked to outside systems; for example, A1 makes material and sends it to B12 to sell to tourist in Chiang Mai. In 2003, the rice harvest was 170 *tang*, not enough for the family to eat for the year (200 *tang* for the family is considered sufficient). The family supplements the lack of rice through several initiatives. The family invested between 30,000 baht and 40,000 baht for their garlic crop in 2004, including water pipes, a pump, pesticides and fertilizers. Although this was a labor-intensive venture, with a large family and many relatives within the community, finding labor within the village is not difficult. For example, there are six people living in the family house of

A1 and A2 including B2, C6, B17 and B18. They are involved in NGO projects to pipe water from a distant stream to the villager's fields. The family structure of this household is based not only on kinship and marriage, but also on outside factors such as involvement with NGOs and links to markets in Müang Pai and Chiang Mai provinces.

The second family chart (Figure 4.5) shows a family who has lived in Ban Sai Ngam for 20 years. However, they have very little land and have been affected both by the tightening restrictions placed on agriculture by the Lum Nam Pai Wildlife Sanctuary and the demarcation of the Huai Nam Dang National Park.

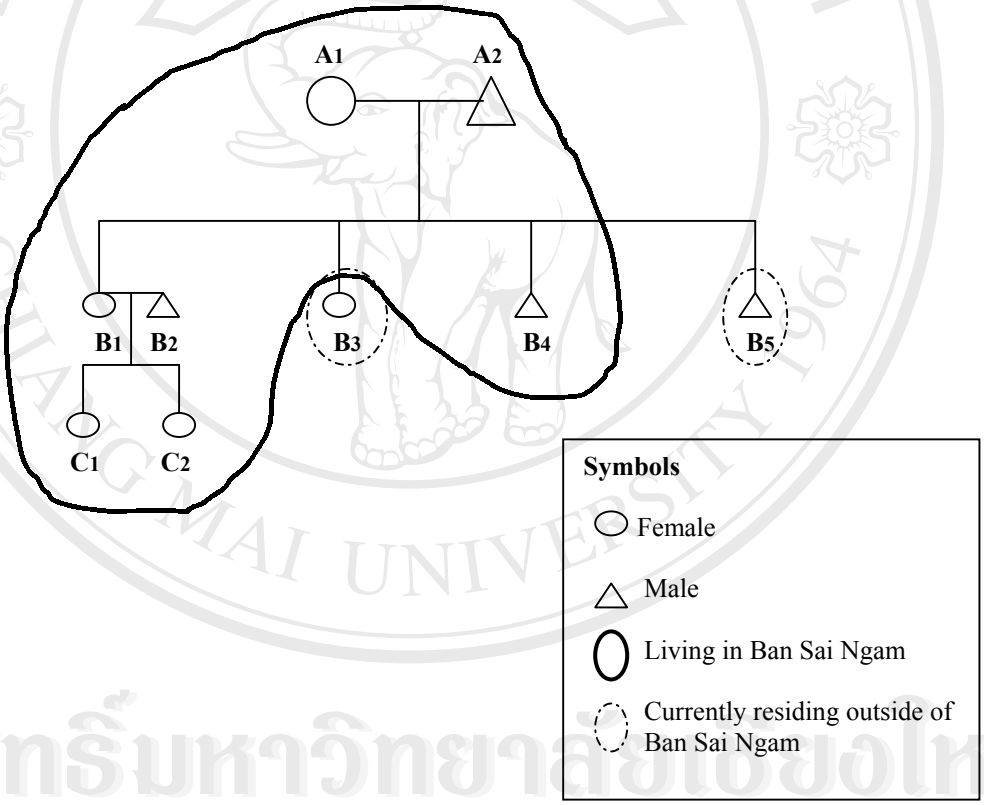


Figure 4.5 Case A: Family chart of a family in Ban Sai Ngam

The father (A1) is originally from Chiang Dao district in Chiang Mai province and has many relatives in Ban Sai Ngam and in surrounding villages. Currently A1 and A2 are not involved in any development project of the state or NGO. They have very little land and the father does odd jobs in the village for extra money. A1 was previously in the women's group, which makes handicrafts to sell in town, however

since falling ill, she has not been able to participate. The father is a member of a local NGO and has attended meetings held in the village, but has never left the village to participate in NGO workshops and is not part of any committee within the village. They have never participated in the rallies supported by NGOs in 1999 or in following years. The family grows rice (a total of 250 *tang*, which is sufficient for the family's consumption), corn, and chili, and raises pigs and chickens. In total they have eight rai of agricultural land. Although they have several relatives in Ban Sai Ngam, the father admitted that "some days there is no-one to help in the fields and I have no money to pay for labor" (interview, Ban Sai Ngam February 2004). The family has few connections and little access to outside resources such as involvement with the Lisu Network, NGOs or state projects. Currently B3 and B5 are studying at a public school in Müang Pai.

The village leader, *pho luang* in Thai, is elected by village members and is generally selected on the strength of personal characteristics and perceived repute within the community, with Thai language ability constituting a significant factor. Further, this person must juggle their role as government representative, with that of community leader. Indeed,

> Village leaders are under increasing pressure to follow state guidelines and implement change in the community. Sometimes they are on the side of the state and sometimes they are on the side of the community. If they want to be village leader for a long time they have to be on the side of the community more.
> (Personal communication with Lisu NGO staff, 2003)

The reason for this pressure lies in the enormous increase in community budget allocation, funneled through state and NGO agencies. Road development, the One Million Baht One Village Project, cattle raising projects, water tanks, solar energy panels, bridge construction, local knowledge and biodiversity research, and NGO development projects related to early childhood development and alternative agriculture are all examples of recent projects implemented in the community.

A village member was proud to show me a collection of nametags placed in a prominent position on his wall. They were collected from meetings and conferences he has attended in the past as part of "local peoples" delegations to conferences

organized by such groups as the International Labor Office, the National Commission on Human Rights, the United Nations, and others. Not all members of the community have equal access to participate in these networks, although participatory development models are promoted by NGOs. Only a handful of villagers are active at the network level, as members of the Lisu Network of Mae Hong Son, with just three directly involved. Through NGO links, these members are able to participate in training workshops on issues such as citizenship, land rights and personal development, and these select few are able to move from the village level to the provincial, national and even international forums. Locally they are respected as knowledgeable members of the community with close ties to both NGO and state authorities. At the provincial level, they have opportunities to meet and discuss issues directly with government officials regarding land rights and citizenship, while at the national level they join forums and meetings with senior government officials. However, there is little dissemination of information within the community; during interviews villagers explained that they were aware of both NGOs working in the area as well as the Lisu Network of Mae Hong Son, however very little was known about the specific activities of each organization (Chapter V, section 5.5).

Village elders, *cho mo cho ti*, are generally at least 50 years old and are responsible for conflict resolution related to problems in the family and the village. Advice is sought regarding rituals, ceremonies, and knowledge about the family and clan. A case in point occurred while I was staying in the village: a husband and wife had been fighting and the wife came to the house of a village elder to seek advice and ask permission for a separation. This process spanned many days and each day the elder was consulted. As well as playing such mediating roles, elders also provided advice regarding New Year celebrations:

> This year we must decide what day New Year celebrations will begin in our village — will it be on a chicken or a pig day [referring to the Lisu calendar, where all days are represented by an animal]? Before we decide on the appropriate day we must organize a plan for the activities. The previous year many villagers were sick, it was not a good year, we need to decide on the best day.
> (Village meeting, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004)

The village committee is made up of seven permanent members, five men and two women. There are also a number of elders on the village committee who hold certain ceremonial responsibilities, such as *pho luang* who is the village leader and from the Lao Yee Pa clan, as was the previous village leader, as well as two village assistants, an SAO representative, village elders, and a network committee member. Within the village committee, there is also a political section, a culture and education section, a financial section, a security section, a ceremonial leader, a social section, a development section, and health section. Responsibilities include the maintenance of unity, the resolution of community problems, and the promotion of community development. Since January 2003, another responsibility has been to ensure that the community is free of narcotics, a directive sent from the army. In addition to the village committee, there is an election committee, a committee established for the One Million Baht, One Village development fund, and a committee for the alternative agriculture project implemented by a local NGO, with a member of the community currently on the committee board of this NGO. If the village decides to join the government projects for rubber tree plantations and raising cattle, two new committees must be established.

Before a village can be moved to a new site or a new village can be established, there must be a *moh mue* (village spirit priest). A suitable person must be found from within the village. This process is not the same as electing a village leader, with the *moh mue* selected by the spirit *apa mo*. Once selected, a *moh muer* has the responsibility to take care of the ancestor spirits and the village spirit (*apa mo*) and perform various related ceremonies. *Nee Pha* is a male village member who is in contact with the spirit world, and in Ban Sai Ngam they are from different clans, Lo Lo and Laomee.

When Pho Yee Ko Lao Yee Pa was around 30 years old (he cannot remember his exact age) he was chosen through the above ceremony to become the next *moh muer*. He refused and left the village to stay in the forest. His reason for refusing to be *moh muer* was because he felt that he was not ready and no one was able to teach him the correct ceremonies (the previous *moh muer* had left the community). Once he

reached his field that night he stayed in his small hut, and had a fever and stomach pains. For two days he was unable to return to the village. Relatives and family members came to find him and brought him back to their home. He decided to accept the role of *moh muer* and performed a ceremony of appeasement for *apa mo*, sacrificing one pig and one chicken.

Apa mo is the village guardian spirit; when a child is born *apa mo* is notified and asked to choose a name, and during the New Years ceremonies, the most important one for the Lisu, *apa mo* is paid respect and worshipped throughout the celebrations. *E da ma* is the forest spirit. Unlike *apa mo*, who watches over the community and village area, *e da ma* watches over the forest, the fields, and 'everywhere else'. The shrine for *e da ma* is situated above *apa mo hee* and just off the road leading to the next village, approximately one kilometer from Ban Sai Ngam, and situated on a ridge overlooking the village and the surrounding valley. The ceremony is performed every year during the third day of the New Year's festival (section 3.2).

Figure 4.6 Village guardian spirit shrine, *apa mo hee*

Figure 4.7 Shrine constructed for the forest spirit, *ed a ma*

4.4 Conceptualizing Boundaries: Sites of Interaction

> Lisu must understand that it is not their land; it is the King's land! Lisu say that they have local wisdom in forest management, but local wisdom is only successful in some circumstances. On the road to Ban Sai Ngam there is an area of primary forest. When you enter, it is always cool with large trees. This area needs to be protected. Just look at the road between Ban Sai Ngam and Ban Doi Phii Luu [pointing to an eight kilometer stretch of dirt road connecting the two villages]. There is not one tree bigger than this [putting his thumbs and index fingers together making a circle]; local wisdom does not always work.
> (Personal discussion with Pai deputy district governor, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004)

While I was living in the village, I had to broaden my perception of boundaries and territory. When I asked people what are the boundaries of the village, I would receive rather perplexed looks. These boundaries for the Lisu, solidified in the view of the outsider by fences, checkpoints, national parks and wildlife sanctuary sign posts, are interpreted differently. Although aware of such boundaries, their environment, social organization and relations are experienced as more fluid and symbolic. When entering Ban Sai Ngam for the first time, it appears to be a rather unordered collection of wooden houses with confusing lanes that twist and turn through the village. There is no entry sign or gate to pass through. There is only one road and it passes directly through the village. A closer look reveals that all of the houses are facing south, away from the *apa mo hee*. In the center of the village is a meeting hall, although this was only built in the past few years. Rice, corn and garlic fields surround the village. The school holds a prominent place, and the Thai anthem can be heard every school day when the flag is hoisted up the flagpole in the morning. To consider the village from the perspective of a two-dimensional map, boundaries divide territories on the ground.

The following case, told to the author, illustrates the spiritual significance of boundaries in the research site. There is minimal interaction with the Lahu village situated six kilometers away. During the four months the author stayed in the village, Lahu were rarely seen at the research site.[4] Some Lahu men did come on one occasion, though, to sell bamboo woven baskets. Generally Lisu look down upon Lahu. Many times during the author's research period, such references to the Lahu

[4] The interaction between Lisu and Lahu has been documented in previous studies with relation to ethnic boundaries (Klein Hutheesing 1990a, Durrenberger 1971 and 1989, Lewis 1984).

were made: “Lahu have no culture, they do not understand shame like the Lisu (personal communication village elders, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004).” Village sexual affairs are taboo and forbidden within the village, for they will upset the Grandfather spirit. If the case is known, then a large ceremony must be performed to appease the Grandfather spirit and ask for forgiveness. In the case explained to the author, a Lisu man had sexual relations with a Lahu woman. In this circumstance I was told it did not offend the Grandfather spirit because the act occurred outside of the village spiritual boundary, at a distance of only several meters on the opposite side of the river.

When reciting stories of the village, historical, physical and spiritual markers are laid before the listener. Spatial divisions of the community, through place and time, are significant metaphors for understanding the relationships and interactions between history, social relations and the spirit world of a Lisu society. The physical and spiritual environment is divided into “places.” The village is called *ja zu*, the living area (place) is known as *ja ku*, rice fields are called *za me*, and the ceremonial forests is called *e da ma ja zu*. In a spiritual sense, “land or territory is temporarily ‘borrowed’ for use from the supernatural lords” (Klein Hutheesing 1990a:173). The idea of who ‘owns’ land is a relatively new phenomenon for Lisu, as a result of state forest classifications, increased market interaction and involvement in NGO and state development projects (this issue will be discussed in following sections). Since spirit owners oversee the land, as outlined above, land is traditionally used or borrowed but not owned.

Areas that are inhabited by spirits are referred to as *nee kur*, land and territory used at the personal level is known as *ngua kur*, and land used by other clans is known as *yaw kur*. The forest has a spirit, *e da ma*, as does the village, *apa mo*, and the water, known as e *ja nae*. A ceremony for the water spirit is performed at least once a year and on various auspicious occasions. The water spirit in Ban Sai Ngam is ‘strong,’ since the village is situated on the banks of a river. The ceremony is performed on the banks of the river and at the household water source. If this ceremony is not performed, then it is believed that people in the village will fall ill.

When Lisu build a house they must pay respect to *e da ma* (Figure 4.5), when they cut down trees to construct a house in the village they must call on *apa mo* (Figure 4.4), and for houses with an altar, family members must pay their respects to their ancestor spirits, all of which indicates both external and internal representations of cosmology and belief.

Currently, the villagers of Ban Sai Ngam hold no land title for agricultural fields or living areas. This situation poses a major problem for villagers in terms of the security of livelihood and legitimacy of the community, and is underscored and intensified by financial insecurity. Development projects, investment in cash crops such as garlic and fruit trees, participation in state projects of raising cattle and establishing rubber plantations, NGO development programs focusing on alternative agriculture, irrigation and also the raising of cattle, building houses, meeting medical and school expenses all require cash and are increasingly accompanied by the accumulation of debt. Many of the families I interviewed from January to May 2004 in Ban Sai Ngam listed debt as their greatest problem and concern. During the information-gathering meeting for the new policy for poverty alleviation initiated by the district government, villagers also noted that debt and lack of land title were the two most serious problems affecting livelihood security (district level meeting, Pai district government office, February 2004). A villager recounted that:

> I grow one rai of garlic. To do this I needed to borrow a water pump from relatives in Chiang Mai. The pump uses 100 baht of petrol per day, plus the cost of fertilizers and pesticides. Altogether, I have four rai of land for my family and myself. I borrowed another three rai from villagers in Ban Sai Ngam. I have made no profit this year, but can make a living from the land. Currently I am in debt 60,000 baht, I attend meetings for the government, and have increased responsibility in the village. I do not have time to work in the fields.
> (Interview with a village member, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004)

Land within the community has increasingly been seen as a commodity with an owner, as land and territory that can be bought, sold, rented or borrowed. An older member of the community commented that, "I own a lot of land in Sai Ngam, I could sell it all for 100,000 to 200,000 baht and buy land in another village in Chiang Mai, then I would have land title" (interview with village elder, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004). A Thai family bought seven rai of land from a Lisu family in Ban Sai Ngam

five years ago for 100,000 baht. They work these fields all year using a petrol-driven pump to power irrigation from the nearby stream.

Another level of boundary making is based on the construction of fences, a sign of development. These fences are prominent and visible boundary markers. I was told that fences had been built because in the past there was an abundance of available timber, and villagers let their pigs roam free in the forest areas surrounding the village. When the community moved to the current site they began to enclose their houses with fences and raise pigs in pens: "It is good to have our own space" (interview with village elders, Ban Sai Ngam, June 2004). Fences around the houses all seem to be in dire need of repair, and tend not to keep others out or family members in; they are in fact open for family, kin, relatives and visitors. When Ban Sai Ngam was established in 1981, no fences were built around the houses. At this time rice and maize were grown several kilometers from the village:

> We would walk over three hours to our rice fields, work all day in the field and return to the village late in the afternoon. Pigs we free to roam in the forest surrounding the village, when we needed to catch a pig the men would go hunting. After the arrival of the army in 1986 we could no longer grow opium. Previously we grew small patches on a mountain very far away. Over the next few years forestry officials began to close our land, we had to move our rice fields closer to the village. Some are very close only five minutes from the village. To stop pigs from eating our rice we had to build fences and pens to keep them in. This is when we began to build fences. Land close to the village is very expensive now, everyone wants it. Most of it was mine but I have given a lot to my sons and other relatives. Land is now very important in the village. Many conflicts over land have began, not only with the forestry officials but also inside the village. People come and consult me about land problems very often. My clan is the largest and I have the most land, but we can talk and negotiate so everyone has land.
> (Interview with village elder, Ban Sai Ngam, February 2004)

In an atmosphere of land accumulation, with an increasing population, land ownership is a tenuous subject in the village, and has heightened the importance of land as a commodity, and in turn, how people use their resources individually and on a collective basis. Several years ago, a village elder had given land to a family who had moved into the village and had no land. They worked on the land for several years and then sold it for 50,000 baht without consulting the elder or giving him any of the money. Cases such as this are increasingly common in the village. In another example, a man purchased the land where his house stands for several thousand baht from a family who had moved to another village. Later in March 2004, it was

discovered that the original owner had only lent this land to the other family, and they therefore they had no right to sell it. Presently, land is divided between the original settlers of the village. Over the past year, increased attention has been placed on land title by NGOs, and recognition of ownership by village members.

In Ban Sai Ngam no family is said to be landless; "all village members have land, the difference is some have a lot and some have a little" (interview with village elder, February 2004, Ban Sai Ngam). They do not, however, hold title to this land:

> Up to the present, only some people sold their land. Most of the land in the village is mine. I give land to newcomers in the village or to people who have no land. Sometimes they rent the land but most of the time I just give it to them. When they move to other villages they give it back to me.
> (Interview with village elder, Ban Sai Ngam, January 204)

This constitutes a major shift in terms of the traditional use of land for Lisu, implemented through the unofficial transfer of land ownership to 'later-arrivals' in the village. For example, one village elder who owns a large portion of the land in the village, including living areas where houses have been constructed and agricultural fields established, has begun selling plots of land. Some are sold for 2,500 baht, while for others the asking price is upwards of 20,000 baht.

A river neatly divides Ban Sai Ngam. On one side is the Huai Nam Dang National Park Section 7 (Figure 4.6), encompassing the community's houses, school, the village's grandfather guardian-spirit shrine *apa mo hee,* the ceremonial forest, and burial sites. On the other side of the river are the villager's fields of rice, maize, garlic, some fruit trees, a spiritual forest, a conservation forest, the road, and access to the market and town, a fish conservation area, sites of ongoing confrontation and contestation with forestry officials, the old village, and the Lum Nam Pai Wildlife Sanctuary. Rivers do make good boundaries. The Huai Nam Dang National Park was formerly known as an area of Doi Sarm Muern Highland Development Project that was initiated by his Majesty the King to solve the problem of forest encroachment and poaching, as well as to enhance the lives of local highland people. Huai Nam Dang National Park was declared the eighty-first national park of Thailand by the Royal Forestry Department on August 14 1995, and by 1998 had extended its boundaries to

encompass Ban Sai Ngam. The area of Huai Nam Dang National Park covers the four districts of Mae Taeng, Chiang Dao and Wiang Haeng in Chiang Mai province, and Pai district in Mae Hong Son, while its northern-most boundaries lie on the border with the Shan State of Myanmar, covering a total area of 1,247 square kilometers.

The wildlife preservation zone in the Pai river basin is also a national preserved forest zone known as the Lum Nam Pai Wildlife Sanctuary, the largest in Mae Hong Son province, and its northern-most boundaries also border Myanmar's Shan State. The area was designated a wildlife sanctuary on December 13 1972, and was the sixth wildlife sanctuary of its kind in Thailand, covering an area of 1,181 square kilometers. This area covers six districts in the province, encompassing much of the research site for this study. Considered an area of importance to national security, with approximately 35 villages and over 10,000 people living within the jurisdiction, administration and management of the sanctuary, extensive projects were undertaken to determine and restrict agricultural practices and damage to the biodiversity of the area (Office of Natural Resource Management 1998). The boundaries and the activities permitted within wildlife sanctuaries and national parks are not as fixed, though, as one may imagine. In 2004, Müang Pai district office began a rubber tree plantation project (Chapter III, section 3.4.2), the construction of a bridge using wood from the conservation forest, and development of a road (section 4.5). Intertwined in this spatial frame are references to other categories of bounding, using a different cognitive mapping process and language — Thai. As one villager explained,

> I have lost land to the wildlife sanctuary and to the village community forest. In the past I was fined 500 baht by the village headman for growing opium in my field in the area that was designated community forest by the village. I finally had to 'donate' the land, two rai, to the community.
> (Interview with village member, Ban Sai Ngam, February 2004)

Figure 4.8 The sign reads "National Park" and is placed on trees in the forest surrounding the village

When ceremonies are being performed, symbols are placed at the entrance of the village and in surrounding areas to inform people both within and outside the village that a village-level cleansing is taking place, and the bad spirits are being driven out. These symbols, referred to as *ta leo*, which means hawk's eye in Thai (Figure 4.1), are "no entry" signs covered in chicken's blood and mark the boundaries when entry and exit from the village is prohibited. The placing of these markers is a significant ceremony performed on New Year's day and on other occasions when there is a serious problem within the village. One is placed at the entrance of the village at the bridge, and another is placed on the road leading from the village. A third symbol is placed behind the school near the Royal Forestry Department office and a final one is placed several hundred meters upstream from the village. At other times *ta leo* symbols are placed in front of the houses of women who have recently given birth, for the first seven days. This informs people that strong spirits are in the house.

During the year, particularly at New Year, villagers make bamboo rafts called *ko pur* (Figure 4.2). These are used to send bad things in the village outside. After the ceremony is completed at *apa mo hee*, these rafts are placed on the road entering the village and three other places to be specified by the village priest. This serves as a

cleansing ceremony for the community, and such practices give the 'road' both developmental and spiritual meaning.

There are several places of importance in the village; spiritually, these are the grandfather guardian-spirit shrine and the church, and administratively they are the headman's house, the school, and the community hall. Other places given significance by the villagers include the house with the telephone, and houses with a television. The town of Pai is increasingly important in the daily lives of the community, with its hospital, the Wednesday market, and the district government office (Chapter V, section 5.9). The school's sporting field is where young boys, and myself, gather to play football in the late afternoon. This is significant in terms of the historical and political context of the village regarding official and vernacular relationships and interactions, and indicative of the complexity of the land and its people. The area, over 10 rai, was once a field of rice and corn where pigs and chickens grazed. The land was donated to the school, and is now "owned" and "controlled" by government agencies. Directly behind the school is the Huai Nam Dang National Park Office 7. The land occupied by the school is the only land in the area that has any legal acknowledgement of ownership from the government.

4.4.1 Community Places

The meeting hall is located in the middle of the village. All village announcements are made using the loudspeaker inside. Meetings are held between community members on occasions when certain issues that affect the entire community need to be discussed or explained. This includes meetings with NGOs to discuss development projects and upcoming events, village preparations for New Year's celebrations, discussion of government policies, and meetings with representatives of government agencies from the town regarding such things as electricity projects and road development. Placed along the inside walls of the meeting hall are photographs, rules and regulations, and a three-dimensional model of the village and surrounding areas depicting forest classifications. The hall is a wooden building with a galvanized roof and cement floor, which holds approximately 50 plastic chairs, a table and a loudspeaker. The electricity for the loudspeaker and

one florescent light is provided by nearby solar panels and a battery. Once people's eyes have adjusted to the dim light inside the hall, the first thing that they usually notice is a chart depicting the current village committee structure (section 4.4.1).

The three-dimensional model of the village was constructed in 1996 and denotes various spatial relationships and modes of territorialization, showing the village, the road, the river, the conservation forest, the community forest, agricultural land, and the living area. The land is divided into zones, each with a symbol and a label. On an adjacent wall in a prominent position is a board outlining the village rules and regulations. These rules and regulations are directly related to the three-dimensional model, and both reinforce spatial and normative dimensions of the village and their relationships with outside agencies, including the government and NGOs:

Village Rules and Regulations

1. The selling of any type of narcotics is strictly forbidden within the boundary of the village. If this rule is violated the offender will be fined 2,000 baht.
2. Cutting wood and destroying the forest in the Conservation Area or Community Forest is forbidden. If this rule is violated the offender will be fined 500 baht.
3. Gambling is forbidden within the boundaries of the village. If this rule is violated the offender will be fined 1,000 baht.
4. Catching fish using bombs or poison is forbidden. If this rule is violated the offender will be fined 1,000 baht.
5. Firing a gun within the boundaries of the village is forbidden. If this rule is violated the offender will be fined 300 baht.
6. Stealing is forbidden. If this rule is violated the offender will be fined 500 baht
7. Fighting and arguing is forbidden. If this rule is violated the offender will be fined 300 baht.

Every villager must believe in and abide by these village rules and regulations.

(Translated by the author, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004)

Figure 4.9 Three-dimensional model of the village and surrounding forests

Figure 4.10 NGO meeting with villagers, Ban Sai Ngam

Displayed around the hall are boards depicting photographs of village activities. There are no dates on any of the boards or pictures, although some appear quite old and others very recent. The pictures help to construct a visible timeline of the village with past images of New Year's celebrations, forest conservation ceremonies, meetings with NGOs and state agencies, various conflicts with the forestry department, sporting activities, a beauty pageant in Pai town, road development, activities with the army, village members cutting down opium poppies, and protests held at Chiang Mai City Hall. A poster on the door of the meeting room claims that the village is drug free: "Victory Over Narcotics Problem, Office for the Protection and Solution to the Problems of Narcotics."

4.4.2 Fish and Forest, the Natural Resources of the Community: Shifting Paradigms of Natural Resource Management and Development

"Smoke is always rising from the mountain…"

(Interview with the director of the Lum Nam Pai Wildlife Sanctuary, Pai district headquarters, April 2004)

The parameters of resource management and conservation, or exploitation and degradation, lie in the imagining of the state and wider society. Changes in social and economic relations between both internal and external actors and institutions cause changes to the way resources are perceived and managed. From the perspective of state agencies, one dimension of the community identity of Lisu in Ban Sai Ngam,

and thus their legitimacy and security, is based on how they use their resources, resulting in a situation where rights are conditional upon sustainable outcomes and are negotiable according to specific practices such as moving from shifting cultivation, ceasing to cultivate opium and community development models based on natural resource management and local knowledge. These practices locate them in fixed territorial units and they have been historically linked to the Thai state through the administrative unit of *muu ban*.

In response to external pressure in the form of tighter restrictions placed on forest and natural resources, and the demarcation of a national park encompassing half of the village and a wildlife sanctuary covering the other, Ban Sai Ngam created management rules and regulations governing the classification and use of the forest surrounding the village, as described in the above section. In terms of classification of land surrounding the village, there is 1,473 rai of agricultural land, 300 rai for the living area, 8,000 rai of conservation forest, and 3,000 rai of community use forest. Rights of the community codified in the 1997 Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand are situated in the context of the political, social and economic milieu of the state. However, national acceptance and recognition depends of the ability of Ban Sai Ngam to codify their traditional knowledge in terms of written systems supported by research and in many cases requiring scientific evidence supporting their claims. The success of such a process is connected to the concept of legitimacy and public image. Local forest practices often remain invisible, only coming to light when there is a clash of interests or conflict over land and resources, within or between communities and national government authorities. Indeed,

> Soon after the road was completed, villagers began to have problems with forestry officials over agricultural land. Forestry officials came into the area, fired guns and arrested several of the villagers. A plan was needed to solve this problem. This land is ours but we are not the owners. If we give up, this land will be in the hands of outsiders. We have to help each other. We have to conserve the forest and the surrounding area. If we do not conserve and protect the forest there will be no trees left. We built a model in 1996 and began working on the conservation and protection of the forest. The first impression of the government was that we could not do this, Lisu cannot look after the forest. The villagers created rules and regulation for forest use. If villagers themselves or outsiders break these rules then they will be fined. (Interview with NGO worker, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004)

Not long after, a young Lisu man told me,

> When it is time to conserve the forest we conserve the forest, when it is time to cut trees we cut trees.
> (Personal communication Lisu youth, Ban Sai Ngam, February 2004)

The village rules and regulations are clearly posted on notice boards, broadcast over loudspeakers, and placed on the walls of village meeting halls for all to see. Visitors, state officials and community members alike are all bound by the "text" of community resource management, and 'offenders will be fined'. Through the work of NGOs and the Lisu Network of Mae Hong Son, many community members are now able to clearly outline government policy regarding forestry management and explain in detail the traditional knowledge of the community in resource management. Decisions regarding the ecological viability and thus legal legitimacy of such systems do not lie with the community members themselves, but are in the hands of state officials. As one village member succinctly pointed out,

> Forestry officials are in air-conditioned offices in Bangkok, they do not understand the real situation. To know the real situation you have to taste it yourself. Is it spicy? Is it sweet? Is it bitter? You have to taste for yourself to know. They only believe what they are told.
> (Personal interview, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004)

If a resource is viewed as a relationship between the user and the object, and the conservation of this particular resource is dependant on the type of management system adopted, in this case moving from the individual to the community level management regulations, models of CBNRM redefine both the resource and the community. On the one hand, this management system changes the relationship between people and the resource, and on the other it changes the management system that is manifested in dichotomies of inclusion and exclusion, internally and externally. This process of supporting natural resource management and forest classification has drawn attention to the life of Lisu in Ban Sai Ngam. National and international attention has been placed on this small community through the dissemination of information regarding the community's struggles with state agencies for their place and their village, with funding provided to the community by NGOs and INGOs for research into local knowledge and biodiversity: "we needed to show the state that

Lisu can preserve the forest" (personal communication with a NGO worker, March 2004).

Such action is embedded historically in state and community narratives of resource management; while ethnic identity is constructed largely from perceptions of resource management practices, of "forest destroyers" or "forest guardians," local communities must continually prove their legitimacy of place, a situation that is inherently conditional. How state policies fix highland people to place has impacted on notions of security, legitimacy and struggles to live, and on the level of internalization of these discourses and narratives of the bounded entity of "the village" for the Lisu of Ban Sai Ngam. This relationship can be better understood through an analysis of both government policy implementation and classification regarding highland people, and of the internalization of these concepts within the community.

The villagers attempted to implement conservation measures to protect the river and its fish populations that flow past their village in the past, but were relatively unsuccessful. The river was divided into three separate conservation zones. In reality, these areas were quite small and there was no limit on the amount of fish villagers could catch outside of the protected areas. This management scheme did not work well, and after four years it was abandoned. Currently, a stretch of one kilometer of the river is designated as a fish conservation zone, established with the assistance of the army in 2003. The village committee monitors the area, and those caught fishing there are fined 500 baht per fish. At one point, villagers caught 10 Lahu people from a nearby village, Ban Ya Po, fishing in the conservation area. A boy who had returned to the village late at night had seen them and notified the village leader. Four army personnel stationed in the village and six villagers then went to confront them. They fined the Lahu people 2,000 baht in total, and the money was divided as follows: 1,000 baht for the village development fund, 500 baht for the person who notified the village leader, and 500 baht for those who had helped catch the offenders.

4.4.3 Engagements With the State: Processes, Action and Outcomes

When spiders unite they can tie down a lion.
(Ethiopian proverb)

Thailand has a King and a Queen, it is a democracy and everyone has equal rights to land. They [the RFD and government officials] discriminated against me and tried to control me. They say Lisu are ignorant and that we have no education. They see us as not Thai.
(From an interview with the village leader, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004)

During the summer of 1998, members of the forestry department entered the village in two four-wheel drive trucks and fenced off an area of five rai behind the village school. The villagers were then told that this land was now the property of the RFD and they would construct the Huai Nam Dang National Park Office 7. Villagers refused to give away the land. The owner of the land declared: "It is my land. I have been growing over 60 mango trees here for the past six years" (interview with the villager affected by land seizure, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004). The forestry officials responded by declaring the land as the "land of the Thai government and the King. You have no land title and no rights to the land" (statement made by forest official, as described in an interview with the villager affected by land seizure, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004). The forestry officials left and returned the following day with police, army officials and government staff. They called a village meeting and expressed once again that "this land is the land of the government and the responsibility of the forestry department, your village is in a National Park" (statement made by forest official, as described in an interview with the villager affected by land seizure, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004). Threats were also made to villagers that if they did not agree they would be sent back to Myanmar, even though the villagers were born in Thailand and have Thai citizenship. Village leaders contacted a local NGO and asked for assistance and advice, and they spoke with the district governor and the head of the RFD, but no agreement could be reached.

Villagers, along with a growing body of support that included Lisu from surrounding villages, NGOs, and academics, traveled to Mae Hong Son's provincial capital to meet with the provincial governor. The answer was the same: "the land is not yours, it belongs to the government of Thailand." The villager directly affected by the land seizure responded by declaring, " I worked on this land for the past 20

years and inherited it from my father ” (interview with the villager affected by land seizure, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004). Negotiations were at a standstill. During this time forestry officials continued construction within the disputed area. These forestry officials were seen cutting large trees (over 200 individual pieces) within the community’s conservation forest area and the Lum Nam Wildlife Sanctuary (Piya and Rickson 2003). Villagers from Ban Sai Ngam, Ban Doi Phii Luu and Ban Nam Huu joined together to discuss a possible course of action. They decided to confiscate the saws and wood and accompanied the responsible staff from the forestry department to the district police station. On a separate occasion, state official and forestry department staff were caught by villagers fishing in the river using electric shocks and bombs. The villagers confiscated the equipment and took the offenders to the police station.

In this particular case, the offenders were fined and the fish were distributed among the villagers. To advance their case in the more recent dispute over the illegal logging and seizure of land by the forestry department, the villagers traveled to Bangkok and met with members of the National Commission on Human Rights. An agreement could not be reached in the village and representatives from each side packed their bags for a trip to Bangkok. The villagers requested 100,000 baht compensation for the land and the mango trees, while the RFD considered 4,000 baht to be more than a reasonable offer. It was decided by the National Commission for Human Rights that, regarding the land that was taken by the RFD, the RFD would compensate the villager who had lost the land 40,000 baht and provide an additional 60 mango tree saplings.

There is still some resentment felt by the villagers for the loss of this land. But with a smile I was told that, “ forestry officials are now afraid of us. We no longer have any problems with them. The reason we are able to fight is because the village has unity. If we give up our land today, what will our lives be like tomorrow?"(Interview with the village leader, Ban Sai Ngam January 2004). This case shows multiple levels of local response to conflicts over natural resource management and the use of different mechanisms and methods to promote Lisu rights

to land and community. The first level of response included local contestation of land and biodiversity management by outside agencies that had led to the degradation of local resources. A second level included the seeking of assistance and advice from a local indigenous peoples organization that supported the establishment of links between the local community and the Commission for Human Rights. These links extend to advocacy for legislative change:

> Cooperation comes from conflict! A Wildlife Sanctuary and a National Park divide the village, they [the villagers] must fight for their rights. The village cannot develop the road and cannot have electricity. The problem is with the law, if you don't fight to change the law then your situation will not improve.
> (Interview with NGO worker, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004)

A radical dimension of community is expressed in protest, in the quest for an alternative society, or the construction of collective identity in social movements. This represents a communicative model; "communities of resistance" are essentially communicative in their organization and composition. Major theorists in this field include Habermas, Touraine and Bauman, all of whom proclaim distrust of the idea of community. What is suggested by the notion of community in social movement research is that the community is something constructed; it is not an already existing set of values that are essential for social integration and the identity of the individual (Delanty 2003:123). In this way, community is not an underlying reality but is constructed in actual processes of mobilization. Indeed,

> This incident [conflict with RFD] was a catalyst for the establishment of the Lisu Network, originally involving Ban Pang Paek, Ban Nam Huu, Ban Doi Phii Luu, Ban Nam Pla Mung and Ban Sai Ngam. After this incident government officials from all departments began to understand the villager's plight. Now when villagers cut wood for their houses they are not arrested or fined. The villagers can explain systems of shifting cultivation and forest conservation. In the past this would not happen — villagers would be arrested. The Lisu Network acted as an information point for outside agencies regarding Lisu culture and agricultural practices. The Network began in 1995 and today includes 10 Lisu villages in Pai district and Pang Ma Pa district Mae Hong Son. There are even villages in Chiang Mai that would like to become members of the Mae Hong Son Lisu Network.
> (Interview with NGO worker, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004)

With Thai identification, villagers in Ban Sai Ngam can travel anywhere in the country. Many community members' work or study in Chiang Mai or Bangkok. The population of the village is thus highly mobile, with large numbers of youth working in urban areas. Networks and alliances based on clan, kinship and friendship spread

throughout Thailand, often providing work opportunities and other support. Internal social relations help to determine the dimensions of boundary crossing for members of the community. Various boundary-crossing actions, I have discovered, are influenced by and dependent on several factors, including age, gender, clan, order of birth, and individual economic and social status. The boundaries of the community are simultaneously constructed and reconstructed through the experiences and actions of different members of the community. The Lisu of Ban Sai Ngam are expressing their rights to fundamental elements of democracy — participation and advocacy for change.

4.4.4 Operation X-Ray and the Creation of a Transparent Community: *Muu ban chum chon khem khaeng*

"To Be Number One" and "Operation X-Ray" were policies implemented by the central government of the Thai Rak Thai party, led by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra in the country's fight against narcotics, or the "War on Drugs" campaign. The terminology is significant and illustrates the state text of security and development. In Ban Sai Ngam the physical representation of this policy was seen through the positioning of army personnel in the village and surrounding areas for several months during 2003, with checkpoints established at the entrance to the village, and village committees established to control and monitor narcotics in the community, and provide information to government authorities. Alongside these processes, a drug rehabilitation program was held by the army at the school in Ban Sai Ngam two times, the first in March and the second in April 2003, and the village youth were targeted for workshops and seminars related to government policy and ideology. Village leaders were required to provided lists of names of community members who were addicted or involved in the narcotics trade for the rehabilitation program. Youth from five Lisu villages, including Ban Sai Ngam were taken on study trips by the army to learn about various occupations, such as weaving and car maintenance. The villagers setup checkpoints and road blocks at the entrance and exit points of the village. Following a roster, men from the village were required to 'stand guard' at these posts and record the cars and motorcycles that entered and exited the village. These village members were also given shotguns by the district office Village

Volunteer Program, to maintain the peace in the village. These events can be analyzed from a number of conceptual perspectives.

By situating the events historically, they follow a pattern of control and classification implemented by state agencies. From the late 1960s, the military presence in highland communities was the result of projects to reduce and prevent the threat of the spread of communism in highland areas. Since the establishment of Ban Sai Ngam, community members have had continual contact with state agencies including the military, which has been involved with the collecting information and conducting workshops and drug rehabilitation in the village. In 1986, the Narcotics Suppression Division from the Office of the Sub-Committee to Facilitate the Solution to National Security Problems relating to Hilltribes and the Cultivation of Narcotic Crops came to Ban Sai Ngam to eradicate opium cultivation. As a result of this presence, different actors, such as the village leader, his assistants and the village committee are inescapably tied into wider political frameworks through their relationships with state agencies.

The state, through processes of collecting census data, placing wooden nameplates on the front of all houses, conducting village-level workshops and training, and establishing committees, are emblematic of state efforts to create and control a totally visible community and landscape. Ban Sai Ngam is now considered a *muu ban chum chon khem khaeng*, a strong village community, because it no longer has a problem with narcotics. The army has now left this village but remain in other Lisu villages in the area. Throughout the village, there are signs that make reference to the community's fight with narcotics: "A happy family is the best defense against narcotics"; "Welcome to all those people who are not involved with narcotics"; and "Hill-tribe people will have dignity if they are not involved in narcotics" (posted by Special Army Battalion 514).

Local government officials speak of the success of Ban Sai Ngam in eliminating narcotic use in the village and promoting development. In this sense the terminology surrounding the community has become a text, which, in this context is

also connected in a web of discourse and counter discourse, where on one hand the community is viewed as underdeveloped, involved in narcotics and essentially not Thai, and on the other Ban Sai Ngam represents itself as a strong drug-free community that has created natural resource management rules and regulations, and has created alliances and networks on both political and cultural levels. This then brings discussion towards the notion of citizenship, for all peoples of Ban Sai Ngam have Thai citizenship. However, they lack basic rights such as land title. Citizenship is therefore, something that is open to interpretation and in many cases becomes conditional (Chapter V, section 5.5.1). These dynamics clearly highlight the interaction and linkages within state ideology between development and security, for the army was involved with workshops for village youth and the creation and demarcation of the water conservation area with the village's geographical boundary. This situation helps to unpack the complexities involved in understanding the relationships between the state and local communities, in this case a Lisu village (Chapter V, section 5.5).

4.5 The Road: Spiritual and Development Interpretations

The road is a significant spatial symbol and development indicator for the village; it represents a timeline for community development and their struggle for rights. Over time, the road has undergone significant transformation, as has the village. For much of the village's early history, the only access was by foot. Later as the village increased in size, the road was improved to enable motorcycles to travel the distance from the highway to the village. The construction of the road marked different periods of development. External funding was originally provided for minor work on the road in 1995 as part of a special project of the Narcotics Suppression Committee. However, little improvement was achieved, as a result of tightening controls over the use of resources and forestry policy implementation in the area. Later the four surrounding communities joined together to improve the road, which allowed the first four-wheel drive vehicles to enter the village. Interviews with villagers regarding changes in the village have included mention of the road as a major point on the community development timeline, due to the increased ease of access to the hospital and markets in town. This avenue for entry and departure to the

village is also facilitating the out-migration of youth and labor to urban centers in search for work.

The road that enters the village remains a major priority for community development. It stretches along 5.8 kilometers, with the entire length of the road falling within the boundaries of the Lum Nam Pai Wildlife Sanctuary. During the rainy season from June to October, the road becomes very difficult to navigate and almost impossible to travel after heavy rain. There are currently many obstacles facing the community with regards to developing the road further, though. Government policy regarding the construction and maintenance of roads within national parks and wildlife sanctuaries is strict. Levels of actors involved in the construction and maintenance of the road to Ban Sai Ngam include forestry officials, the department of forestry, the director of Lum Nam Pai Wildlife Sanctuary, the director of the Huai Nam Dang National Park, the district governor, deputy governor, SAO, villagers, and the army, all operating within frameworks of national policy.

"Hullo, Hullo, Hullo…nung, song, sarm, nung, song, sarm (1,2,3,1,2,3)." The announcement on the village loudspeaker, one morning in January 2004, was in Lisu and I understood little. I could, however discern certain phrases when the Thai language was used, including *"… phathana thanon…"* — road development. One member from every house was required to help improve a particular section of the road. After breakfast, villagers started to emerge from their houses with picks, shovels and hoes and congregated at the bridge. Some walked and some went by motorcycle. It had been agreed upon days before that one person from each household from Ban Sai Ngam, those with a car from Ban Doi Phii Luu and also some from Ban Nai Khong and Ban Nam Pla Mung would help work on the road. There was a small budget provided from the SAO for a lunch of canned fish and chili paste, and villagers brought their own rice. In total, there were between 50 and 60 people who joined the work that day, young and elderly, male and female. The village leader and village assistant divided everyone into three groups and recorded the names of those who attended, and work began with enthusiasm.

A stretch of approximately one kilometer between the main road and Ban Sai Ngam was improved at that time. Everyone worked from eight in the morning and finished around four in the afternoon. The road was widened and smoothed out with the help of the army, bombs were used to explode boulders, and trees were cut down. This construction all took place in an area designated as the Lum Nam Wildlife Sanctuary and Conservation Forest. As such, some obvious questions came to mind; I asked villagers how they thought the forestry department would view the road development, especially in a conservation area. One response was: "They do not dare to come and bother us anymore. We had a problem with them in the past but not anymore, the Lisu won" (interview with Lisu youth, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004). "What about the army?" I asked. "They are happy to help, they want to help develop the road" (Village leader, Ban Sai Ngam, January 2004).

Improving the road leading to the village is against forestry regulations. During 2004, Ban Sai Ngam was allocated a budget for community development by the SAO and district government. The community decided to use the budget to construct a 200-meter cement road leading directly into the village. This section of the road is not difficult to pass even during the rainy season, however it was decided to build in this location so that if there was any problem with forestry officials the villagers could gather and protect the equipment and road if the conflict should escalate. It is rumored that a special budget has been allocated through the district government and SAO to construct a cement road one kilometer in length later in 2004.

Construction of a bridge crossing the river into the village began in early March 2004. Previously, to enter the village by four-wheel drive, it was necessary to drive through the river. A small bridge was used for motorcycles. Large trees from the surrounding forest, in the Lum Nam Pai Wildlife Sanctuary area of jurisdiction, were cut down for use as support beams for the bridge's foundations. Tractors were used to bring the trees from the forest into the village. Villagers worked on the bridge's construction on a rotational basis, ten men per village per day for 133 baht. A deputy district official, the head of the village volunteer service, a private business

entrepreneur from Pai who owned the tractors, along with two people to drive them provided the outside labor and money. The communities in the area have been petitioning for a bridge over the river for many years but have met with continual bureaucratic red tape and political maneuvering between government departments.

The dilemma for government administrators no doubt went something like this: if a bridge was to be constructed, then wood must be gathered from the Lum Nam Wildlife Sanctuary area of jurisdiction, which is prohibited. This project would involve improvements and development of the road leading into a village which itself is also prohibited in Conservation Areas. As the bridge crosses the river, it enters into an area under the jurisdiction of the Huai Nam Dang National Park Office 7, where community development is strictly monitored, and the budget would need to come from the district and sub-district government departments through various channels including the SAO and the community development fund. For the bridge to be constructed thus required negotiation and cooperation at the national, provincial, district and sub-district levels, including the community level, with villagers who would provide the labor for construction. With the assistance of district government officials and the village volunteer service, these channels were passed, circumvented or avoided to varying degrees in order for the bridge construction to commence. As trees were cut, forestry staff were nowhere to been seen, and as the bridge was nearing completion, no official statements were made regarding development activities in National Parks; "My car got stuck in the water twice already this year. I helped with the budget and now the bridge will be completed before the end of the week" (interview with deputy district governor, Ban Sai Ngam, March 2004).

This situation highlights the complexity and varying positions of different government departments regarding resource management and development in forest areas. While the director of the Lum Nam Wildlife Sanctuary has opposed any development in the area (personal communication, Pai district headquarters, April 2004), and forestry department staff have arrested members of Ban Sai Ngam in the past and continue to arrest villages in surrounding communities, the district governor

and the army are promoting development in the village including the construction of roads and bridges:

> If you have difficulty with the RFD you can come to me and ask for permission to repair the road. Funding can come from the SAO as in other districts such as Ban Sai Ngam, Ban Doi Phii Luu and Ban Nam Pla Mung. Villagers must understand the differences that exist in the power and responsibilities between the RFD and government officials at the district level.
> (Speech by the district governor, monthly district meeting, district government office Pai district, February 2004)

The budget for the bridge came from the district emergency fund, which is normally used for cases such as house fires and other disasters. By using money from this fund in this way, there is now no money left for community emergencies. None of the villagers I spoke with, though, were certain where the funds had come from, "…from the government, from the district officials" one villager suggested, as he hammered nails into planks of wood. Information regarding development activities is passed on at night in discussions by the fire, but little is discussed on a community level. Few people have expressed concern over the construction of the bridge. There remains a great deal of confusion over the budget, and despite the eagerness of the villagers to build the bridge,

> When it was announced that men would be paid 133 baht per day everyone wanted to help and did not ask details concerning the budget. We hear and speak about development every day. To develop we must think more about the long-term future of the community and not just 133 baht per day.
> (Personal communication with a village youth, Ban Sai Ngam, March 2004)

4.6 Transcending Boundaries: Conversations Between Traditional Ritual Practice and Modernity

The lives of individuals, like society as a whole, can change in profound ways in a very limited space of time. The high mountains and deep forests are integral elements of the Lisu way of life and identity. However, as the level of migration rises and external pressures on the community increases, such as integration into the market economy, population growth, and land use restrictions, the mental and physical maps of Lisu are expanding to encompass urban centers such as Chiang Mai, Bangkok and southern Thailand.

Changes at the family level are indicative of wider changes taking place at the community and national levels. Such things as the purchase of a stereo, a television or a VCD player, a new motorcycle, or the latest dance' album, changing from grass matting to a galvanized roof, deciding on priorities for the 'One Million Baht One Village' development fund, construction of a bridge, or a 200-meter cement paved road are all profound changes that have a significant impact in the daily lives of community members. These changes also affect the way the community is perceived and the extent to which tradition and modernity are interconnected.

The telephone first came to Ban Sai Ngam in 1998. It was installed by the Telephone Organization of Thailand (TOT), the rural telephone service. The phone uses three large solar-cell panels and a battery/receiver the size of a small refrigerator for its operation. Before the telephone came to the village, communications and information were received by radio. If villagers wanted to make a phone call they had to walk almost six kilometers to the main road and then travel twelve kilometers into town. The village has also received solar cells for personal use, under the provisions of a government Solar Cell Project. The project established six points, or panels, throughout the village, with each point consisting of four solar cells. Village members can use these points to recharge their batteries to run televisions, radios and lights for a few hours per day. These solar cells came before the telephone, in 1997. A sign declares:

Rural Development Project
From the use of Solar Energy
Community Electricity
Ministry of Internal Affairs
(translated by the author, Ban Sai Ngam, February 2004)

Before the New Year's festival began (January 2004), staff from the Telephone Organization of Thailand (TOT) entered the village with news that a new pay phone was to be installed. There was considerable discussion regarding where they would install it. At first, the TOT staff wanted to put the phone in front of Pho Yee Ko's house. It is in this house where the current village phone is located, and the TOT workers wanted to use the same wiring from the solar panels only 20 meters away. They did not bring enough wire to install it elsewhere, however Pho Yee Ko

disappeared into his house and came out a few minutes later with a roll of wire, blowing off the dust and cobwebs as he handed it over to the TOT staff. It was enough to reach the community hall. A Shan man was sent up a nearby tree to thread the cable through the branches to reach the community hall. The village reaction to the project seemed positive: "It will be good to have a telephone booth in the village, cheaper and private" (personal communication with village youth, Ban Sai Ngam January 2004). Previously, with the only phone in the village in Pho Yee Ko's house, "it was difficult to speak with young girls" (personal communication with village youth, Ban Sai Ngam January 2004), a young Lisu man told me with a smile. By late afternoon the phone was installed and there was a queue. Two days later the coin holder was full, and the phone no longer worked.

The following is a story that relates to a personal communication with a Lisu elder (Ban Sai Ngam, June 2003). This story is significant for a discussion of community and identity, providing possible links between the traditional and modern dimensions of everyday life of Lisu in two villages. Particular attention must be paid to the overall context of the story, the method of transmission, the actors involved, and the specific theme. [5]

At that time, there was only one phone in the village, in the house of a village elder. While I was recovering from the four-hour trip from Chiang Mai, the phone rang many times. People entered and left the house. After one rather lengthy call the elder who answered the phone told me about the conversation. He said that a relative (a grandson), from another village had called to ask for some advice. He was planning on purchasing a new motorcycle, the latest model and silver in color. Before purchasing the bike, he had performed a ceremony which entailed the reading of chicken bones (Figure 4.9). After performing the required tasks of such ceremonies, certain elders can tell of impending ill fate or fortune by reading sharpened bamboo

[5] Originally presented by the author as a paper titled "Everyday Articulations of Power: Narratives of a Lisu Community in Northern Thailand", (2000) International Conference on Politics of the Commons: Articulating Development and Strengthening Local Practices, Regional Center for the Social Sciences and Sustainable Development, Chiang Mai, Thailand.

sticks placed into the bone.[6] Once the grandson had done this, he called his grandfather. Over the phone, the grandson explained how the sticks were positioned and other details of the ceremony. After listening to the explanation it was determined that his grandson should in fact buy a new motorcycle, just in a different color — blue.

This narrative is a representation of everyday practices and articulations of power. It presents a cognitive map and tells a story of a process of decision-making based on interactions between generations, and between tradition and modernity, and the relationships between Lisu and the spirit world in a particular situation. Highlighting the debate between tradition and modernity, this particular event can be seen to affect the human condition in terms of technology and the transmission of information (the motorcycle and telephone), but not the underlying philosophy. In this respect, the performance of the ceremony over the phone indicates a situation where Lisu are still able to control particular aspects of their life. However, this story is open different interpretations. The grandson in the story decided to purchase a motorcycle, and found a model and color that he liked. At this point, the young man, with money in his hand, had a decision to make. This decision was both social and cultural, and embedded in the every day life of Lisu, and the outcome was determined by a ceremony. The young man chose to perform a chicken bone ceremony as related in the above story. The setting for this story involved a young man, an elder, a motorcycle, two villages, the village guardian spirit (*apa mo hee*), a male chicken, and a telephone.

Why did the young man choose to perform the ceremony? This question can be explored from many perspectives. First, his choice shows that traditional cultural beliefs remain important for this particular man's self-identity. Second, the act of

[6] Those who can read chicken bones are mostly those who can perform community ceremonies and hold respect within the community. The chicken bone reading ceremony is performed by Lisu on important occasions, such as New Year's, new corn festivals, and before people or things are accepted into the house (including a daughter in-law, cattle or a motorbike). It covers economic situations, health, and social and political aspects of an individual or community. Many elder women are also skilled in the art of reading chicken bones, although it is generally a male elder who will be sought for a reading. This indicates a relationship between people (individual and clan), spirits and the community.

contacting an elder in another village indicates the maintenance of and respect for clan lineage, and the importance of this occasion in seeking a 'correct' reading. This was, in fact, not the first time that this particular elder had offered advice regarding transport. In the past, this ceremony was performed before the purchase of a horse or cow, or other modes of transport.

Figure 4.11 An elder reading chicken bones, Ban Sai Ngam

The story about the motorcycle is reflective of the importance of maintaining and respecting clan and kinship ties and traditional cultural practices, what many social scientists consider social capital. As we move from this story to a discussion of identity, it is relevant and important to consider the extent to which such modes of thinking and interaction still exist. Such an investigation inevitably touches upon modernization and globalization approaches to discussions of change at the community or local level. The grandson decided to follow the advice of his grandfather. He chose a blue motorcycle, but before he purchased it he performed another ceremony to make sure it was safe. This example poses critical questions

helping to explain linkages between traditional identities and modern situations in Lisu communities.

From the analysis above, as shown by the case of the young Lisu man and his decision to purchase a motorcycle, it can be said that the articulations of power, or linkages, are quite clear and flow past the level of the community (local) to the inter-community level, spirit world, and further — through the expression of one's identity as indigenous there are international networks of relations. This conceptualization of relations, both formal and informal, form the basic social unit for Lisu communities through which the fluidity and ambiguity of Lisu society becomes evident. This shows that Lisu communities are not closed and isolated from the Thai state in a purely geographical sense. It is evident that relationships between communities, other ethnic groups, and the state are multiple and complex.

4.7 Summary

Analysis into notions of community for Lisu, in particular those living in Ban Sai Ngam, is both strategic and locally relevant. Through a process of historical interaction and contemporary relationships with the state and NGOs, the meaning of community transcends previously-held interpretations of organic or egalitarian wholes, and can be seen as constructed locally in conjunction with, and in opposition to, outside agencies. The entity known as a Lisu community is experienced differently by different members based on age, gender, social position and access to information and other resources in the formation of networks and alliances.

The relationships between community and place are illustrative of state ideology through projects of territorialization as well as development programs, with state agencies defining communities as fixed places, with the village as an administrative tool. In a similar vein, NGOs promote the idea of homogeneous and unified communities based on distinctive cultures (Chatthip 1994). It is through these various processes that state control over local places is established and formalized, which is in turn intrinsically linked to the hierarchical political and social structure of the state. These experiences of community have produced feelings of place-consciousness relating to multiple sites, or a multi-consciousness of community, in an

increasingly integrated society. This is shown by minority people's relationships with locality, and the interconnection between identity, community, migration, clan and kinship networks, along with membership in alliances and organizations.