

CHAPTER III

FEMALE LAHU VENDORS IN URBAN CHIANG MAI

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the everyday practices of the female Lahuvendors. With the introduction of globalization and governmental highland development programs, many of the Lahu in Thailand began to interact with the lowlands more actively. Among them, and like many of the other highland ethnic groups, many Lahu people chose urban Chiang Mai as their resettlement area, as well as other places, with the aim of earning cash income. While various occupations have been practiced since they arrived, I chose to study an occupation which is practiced mainly by the married Lahu women. The life of female Lahuvendors is diverse in terms of settlement patterns and cannot be seen as a one-way migration from the village towards the city. Indeed, they are vendors in Chiang Mai city, as well as being farmers, daughters, wives and mothers at home. To sell is simply one of the choices they make to improve the lives of their families.

First, I will describe the multi-ethnic characteristics of the local markets in Chiang Mai, and will aim to explore the reason why the female Lahuvendors are attracted to work in the city. Second, the general setting of those Lahu living in urban Chiang Mai will be introduced. Third, I will narrow down to the story to focus

on the female Lahuvendorsin Chiang Mai and ChiangRai; describing their lives as vendorsinthe marketplaces, as well as their roles at home.

3.2 Chiang Mai as a Trading Hub in the Northern Region of Thailand

Chiang Mai, the capital city of the former Lan Na Kingdom and the second biggest city of Thailand, has been the stage for highland-lowland relationship for a long time. Looking at the commercial activities that take place in Chiang Mai not only helps us to understand its development as a trading hub in the region,one with multi-ethnic characteristics, but also to see the continuous interactions that have taken place between the highland and lowland peoples.

Since the establishment of Chiang Mai in 1296, many ethnic groups have contributed to the prosperity of this lowland city, especially after Burmese rule ended in 1774. As a result of “collecting vegetables for the basket and the people of the *mueang*”, Chiang Mai was re-established in 1796 and was made up of various ethnic groups, including the Tai Yuan, Shan, Tai Lue, Khoen, Kha, Lua and Burmese³⁷(Sarassawadee 2005:221). They gathered and developed their own ethnic communities in each area. Among them, artisans engaged in specialized occupations, particular to each group, such aswood carving, lacquer ware and gong making, which was carried out by the Khoen, silver work, which was undertaken by the Tai Lue, and pottery and tanning, which were carried outby the Shan. Thesepeople and their products were treasured by the local rulers, as they supported the rituals in the city and helped with tributes to the SiamKingdom (Vatikiotis 1984:54).

³⁷A policy was implemented to take people from different *mueang*, because the city had been deserted and lacked manpower after the long war between Siam and Burma.

Chiang Mai became a tributary state of the Siamese Kingdom in 1774³⁸, and thereafter the population of the city grew more diverse, due to traders moving into the city. Since Siam allowed Lan Na to trade with colonial British Burma, Burmese, Shan, and Indian traders moved into the Kingdom and settled there to conduct business. ThaPhae Road in Chiang Mai was full of traders from Burma³⁹, supported by an overland trading network “from Moujlmein to Rahaeng, Lamphun, and Chiang Mai, and on to Chiang Rai, Chiang Saen, and Chiang Tung, ending at Dali in Yunnan”, which was regarded as a significant trade route (Sarassawadee 2005:67). In order to ease the trade process, rupees from British-controlled India were used in Lan Na until a policy was introduced by King Rama V (1853-1910) ordering the use of the Thai baht (Sarassawadee 2005:167). Long-distance trade between Yunnan, Lan Na, and Burma was implemented mainly by the Yunnanese Chinese and Shan traders, who used draft cattle and ox carts as part of a caravan trade. Wax, honey, *miang* (fermented tea leaves to chew), hide, betel nut, dried chilies and cotton were brought from the Shan States by Shan traders, while honey, silk, wool, musk, opium and kitchen utensils made of brass were brought from Yunnan by the Yunnanese Chinese traders (ibid:234).

³⁸ In 1774, Lanna became a tributary state of Siam, during the Thonburi Dynasty. Chiang Mai was then colonized by the Rattanakosin Dynasty, when Phraputtayodfa Chulalok reigned as King in 1782. Chiang Mai was then renamed Mueang Ratanasinga Aphinwaburi Chiang Mai in 1796, when Phaya Kawila was appointed as its ruler. 102 years later, in 1894, Chiang Mai became a part of Monthon Lao Chiang, and in 1899, it became Monthon Payap. Finally in 1933, Chiang Mai became a province of Thailand (Duongchan 2007:73).

³⁹ ThaPhae Road as well as Chiang Moi Road were popular settlement areas, suitable for trade and communication after the foundation of the city (Sarassawadee 2005:67). According to oral history, Vatikotis found that the Shan contributed to the development of these roads (Vatikotis 1984:83).

Moreover overseas Chinese⁴⁰ began to move from Bangkok to Chiang Mai, as river trade gradually replaced the overland trade with Burma. They first settled and built shophouses around the WatKet area, on the east side of the Ping River, during the 1880s (Vatikiotis 1984:87). In parallel with the expansion in trade, the number of the overseas Chinese living in Chiang Mai increased; many of them took up an important role as tax collectors, as use of money increased. They expanded their communities, starting from the area in front of WatKet and moving out towards the Tonlamyai and Warorot market areas, as well as around ThaPhae Road. Chinese traders had largely replaced the traders from Burma by 1932, and as they expanded their communities, their wealth did also, utilizing their close connections with the Thai authorities, and they eventually became an influential presence in Chiang Mai⁴¹ (Sarassawadee 2005:245). Among many different ethnic groups in Chiang Mai, it is obvious that the overseas Chinese had power, since they engaged closely with the local authorities. In contrast, the development of political power among the Shan and Yunnanese Muslims was slow or non-existent, since they had little influence over the local authorities, although they interacted with Chiang Mai over a long period.

After the 1950s, a number of refugees of Yunnanese and Indian⁴² Muslim origin fled from Burma to Thailand⁴³. Many of them moved to Chiang Mai and started

⁴⁰ Vatikiotis uses the term “to denote groups of Chinese who migrated literally overseas from Southern China into Siam mainly via Bangkok” (Vatikiotis 1984:87)

⁴¹ For instance, the Phathong “monopolized gambling dens in Chiang Mai with the support of King Inthawichayanon” (Sarassawadee 2005:241). The Shinawatra, Chutima, Nimmanhemin and Wibunsantifamilies were known as moneylenders, based on wealth generated by tax collection activities (ibid:243).

⁴² The Thai Government recognized people who migrated from India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon, as “Indians” (Suthep 1977:32).

⁴³ This was a result of the World Wars and the oppression of ethnic minority groups by the Burmese Government. During 1942-1943 when Japanese troops invaded Burma, a large number of Indians as well as Pakistani Muslims in Burma fled towards India. On the way some of them moved to Thailand and other neighboring states. After World War II, Burma regarded anything

to trade there. Yunnanese Muslim refugees usually traded vegetables, fruit and motorbikes; they also opened shops, such as restaurants, gift shops and so on. Meanwhile, Indian Muslim refugees developed a community based on the cattle trade and other work related to cattle, such as slaughtering activities. The Muslim community expanded its prosperity and its network, and Chiang Mai eventually became a center to connect with other Muslim communities in Thailand, as well as other Muslim countries (Suthep 1977).

Chiang Mai has encouraged the commercialization of agriculture and tourism through regional development policies introduced by the Thai Government since the mid-1960s. Moreover, in the Fifth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1982-1986), Chiang Mai was designated “as the commercial and service center of the upper north, with special emphasis on the promotion of tourism” (Panadda 1998:4). As a result, infrastructure developments and service sector facilities were introduced, and this led many highland ethnic groups, as well as Burmese migrants, to come to work on construction projects, in restaurants, at gas stations, and at other service areas in the city.

3.3 Marketplaces in Chiang Mai

In the last chapter, the development of multi-ethnic relations through trade was explored, and the markets currently used are made up of such interactions. At the local markets, not only is the produce diverse but so are the people, ethnically. In this section, the history of the marketplaces in urban Chiang Mai, especially along the Ping River, will be traced.

Indian, including Pakistani, as alien. Between 1962 and 1966, trade by aliens was prohibited and many Indians had to move out of Burma (Suthep 1977:41-42).

3.3.1 The Establishment of Warorot and Tonlamyai Markets

The development of marketplaces along the Ping River in Chiang Mai began in parallel with the development of river trade in the 1880s. The WatKet area, on the eastern bank of the River, became the center of economic development, since people from outside of Lan Na, especially the Chinese, settled in this area. Many goods from Bangkok were unloaded here by Chinese traders. After a wooden bridge was built over the Ping River by a British teak company in 1884, the goods brought in by Chinese traders began to be traded with the northern Thais who had settled on the western side of the river. In 1889, local people rose up against the Chinese tax collectors, known as the Phraya Phrapsongkhram Revolt. They banished the Chinese traders and tax collectors from the WatKet area, as well as Siamese officials who allowed the Chinese to monopolize tax collection activities. The Chinese then fled to the area on both sides of Wichayanon Road, on the western side of the Ping River⁴⁴ (Serin 2004:28). Later on, this area became a large marketplace, developed mainly by the Chinese.

Warorot Market was constructed by Chao Dara Rasami, the consort of King Rama V, and managed by Mr. Arthur Lionel Queripelat the location of an old cremation ground, from 1910 (Siam Commercial Bank 1999:242). Later on, the nobility in Chiang Mai managed the market before it came under the control of the Chinese. Formerly, the eastern side of Warorot Market was a place for breeding elephants, those used to carry wood from Burma. The owner of the elephants,

⁴⁴ Before 1897, land in this area was granted to the overseas Chinese by King Inthawichayanon (1873-1896), the last king of the Lan Na tributary state (Vatikiotis 1984:87).

Luangyong Kanphichit⁴⁵, settled the Burmese, Shan, and Khamu in the area, to work alongside the Ping River. The local people started to sell food and goods to these workers, and this developed into an open-air market called *Kad Luangyong*⁴⁶. This market began to prosper more after Chinese traders borrowed the space at Luangyong Market and Warorot Market, and after the Chinese began to manage the market, it was developed into a market housed in a two-story building (Serin 2004:32-33). The market is now called Tonlamyai Market, but is also called *Kad Luangyong* by local people, when combined with Warorot Market.

In the same year as the establishment of Warorot Market, Nawarat Bridge was built and as a result, Mae Oi Road to the east and Tha Phae Road to the west side of the river were connected. The arrival of the railway in 1921 led to this bridge being rebuilt using iron and this was utilized for transportation between the city and the railway, particularly after Mae Oi Road was developed in length and became Charuean Mueang Road. After World War II, the markets were renovated under the management of influential Chinese families, such as the Nimmanhemmin, Chutima, and Liao families (Serin 2004:30, 33).

A huge fire broke out at Tonlamyai Market in 1968, and spread rapidly to burn down Warorot Market as well, and due to this incident, many traders fled from the area, though some remained. During the reconstruction of the two markets, people were allowed to trade on the sidewalks of the markets, and after the reconstruction,

⁴⁵His actual name was Mongpan Yow Upayokhin, he was from Burma and he supported the business interests of the British Borneo Company and the Bombay Burma Trading Corporation, which began logging in Lan Na in 1889 and 1892 (Sarassawadee 2005:235). Because of his contributions, he was given the name Luangyong Kanphichit by the King (Serin 2004:32-33).

⁴⁶'*kad*(กาต)' means market in northern Thai; but markets are usually called *talad*(ตลาด) in central Thai.

traders began to come back to do business in their old spaces. However these spaces were already occupied by newcomers from other areas. As the number of traders expanded, the sidewalks continued to be used and until now almost half of Wichayanon Road is occupied by traders who sell cooked food and other items during the morning and at night, but not during the daytime.

The *KadLuang* area experienced more development in the 1980s. After Chiang Mai was designated as a center of the upper northern region in the Fifth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1982-1986), the Government improved the infrastructure around Warorot and Tonlamyai Markets. A community situated along the river was relocated and a new road parallel to Wichayanon Road was constructed. A part of the area between the river and the new road, named Praisani Road, is now occupied by flower shops. Since this period, Warorot Market, especially the main buildings, has developed into a tourist spot, replete with northern Thai products, such as *khepmu* (fried pork skin), *saiua* (northern Thai spicy sausage), and *namphriknum* (northern Thai green chili paste), as well as northern Thai style clothes.

There are also jewelry shops, plus daily, expendable items, school costumes, bedding, items for festivities and rituals, herbs and spices, and utensils made of rattan, ceramics, aluminum and plastic sold in and around the building. Handicrafts and clothing materials can also be found at shops near the main Warorot Market building. Meanwhile, Tonlamyai Market sells utensils and materials for cooking, including dried food such as seafood, chilies, garlic and beans. There are also northern Thai luxury items sold here, such as *miang*, tobacco, betel nut and red lime. The main

building at Tonlamyai Market is surrounded with fruits shops to the north, flower shops to the east, and clothing shops and pharmacies as well as accessories shops to the west and south. The traders at Tonlamyai and Warorot Market are also quite diverse; Pakistanis participate in the clothing business, while the gold shops are owned by the Chinese. The majority of sellers on the sidewalks, as well as on Wichayanon Road, are northern Thais, while there are some Hmong flower sellers and Lahu vendors who rent space from northern Thai traders.



Figure 3.1: Shops in the Main Building at Warorot Market



Figure 3.2: Some of the Products sold at Tonlamyai Market

The products sold at Warorot and Tonlamyai Market come from factories and wholesale markets nearby; a wholesale market to the north of *KadLuang* is called Nawarat, or Srinakhonphing Market. This market was established by the Chinese, who received land rights in this area after World War II. It was firstly a movie theater, but later changed to become a wholesale market. The shops are on the first floor of an apartment style building. Nawarat Market sells food as well as pre-packed snacks, construction and agricultural utensils, bedding, clothing, stationery supplies and products from factories. Mueang Mai Market; however, is a wholesale market which was established in 1975. Vegetables, fruit and meat are brought from districts in Chiang Mai and other provinces, and distributed to many markets in Chiang Mai from here. *KadLuang* sells a variety of items from different locations in Chiang Mai, other

provinces and even other countries, especially China. Such diversity is supported by factories and nearby wholesale markets (Sasipas 2002:72-75). Not only a diversity of goods, but also a diversity of people can be seen at *KadLuang*, since transportation is provided from *KadLuang* to other nearby districts and provinces, particularly Lamphun and Lampang⁴⁷.

Since the logging boom began, the area along the Ping River has met customer demand and developed into a market area which provides a great diversity of products, plus holds a diverse range of people. The development of these markets has been strongly influenced by the Chinese as well as the development of tourism in the city, and there are several ethnic groups involved in business activities in the area.

3.3.2 Development of the Night Bazaar

Similar to the development of the *KadLuang* area, the National Plan to make Chiang Mai a tourist hub in the northern region has encouraged the development of Chang Khlan Road, which runs directly south from ThaPhae Road. Super Highway No. 11 was constructed in 1967, during the period of the First to the Fourth National and Social Development Plans (1961 to 1981). This caused bus business to prosper on the one hand, whilst on the other, the use of railway transportation reduced. This helped make the Chang Khlan Road area, where the bus companies located in order to replicate the prosperity of *KadLuang*. After 1967, a bus route between Bangkok and Chiang Mai was opened, and this brought many tourists to the northern Thai city. Later

⁴⁷Other transportation routes going to districts in Chiang Mai, such as Fang, Jomthong, Hot and Wiang Haeng, as well as Wiang Pa Pao in Chiang Rai, are provided at Chang Phuaek Bus Station. From Chiang Mai Arcade Bus Station, buses go towards other provinces, such as Chiang Rai, Mae Hong Son, Nan, Udon Thani, Nakonsawan, Sukhothai, Phisanulok, Khon Kaen, Tak, Ubon Ratchatani, Bangkok, Rayong and Korat. There are also some transportation services provided to nearby districts at Pratu Chiang Mai Market and at Chang Phuaek Market.

on, a Night Bazaar was established on this road, centered around Anusan Market, during the period of the Third National Plan (1972-1976), and this was expected to be the new tourist spot. In 1981, a three-story building was constructed as the new centerpiece of the Night Bazaar, but after this, many traders who could not rent space in the new center began to sell on the sidewalk and this led to a rapid expansion of the Night Bazaar as a whole. The traders here are diverse in terms of ethnicity, and include Indians, Burmese, Nepalese, northern Thais and the members of highland ethnic groups including the Hmong, Lisu, Karen and Akha (Duongchan 2007:81, 82, Pairote 2007). Tourists coming to the Night Bazaar are not only Thai but also those from foreign countries. Souvenirs, including Thai silk, jewelry, made-to-order clothes and various kinds of handicrafts are sold here. Now, the Night Bazaar with many hotels nearby as well as various kinds of restaurants could be said to be the most ethnically-diverse market in Chiang Mai.



Figure 3.3: The Main Building and Stalls at the Night Bazaar

3.3.3 Chin Ho Market

In any history of the development of markets in Chiang Mai, Chin Ho Market should not be omitted, even though the market is held only twice a week in a small area. This market is held on land which formerly belonged to the Luekiat family⁴⁸, and is located on CharueanPratheat Road, Soi (alley)1, which runs perpendicular between Chan Khlan and CharueanPratheat Road, running alongside the Ping River and located southeast of WatUpakhut. The market has prospered because of the contribution made by khunChuangliangLuekiat to the Yunnanese Muslims⁴⁹, as well as to Chiang Mai in general.

KhunChuangliangLuekiat was a Yunnanese Muslim who came to Chiang Mai as a caravan trader. After trading in many different *mueang*, he decided to settle in Chiang Mai and gained a piece of land in the area on CharueanPratheat Road, Soi 1, from Major General Chao Kaeonawarat (1911-1939), the ruler of Chiang Mai at that time. Living in Chiang Mai, he contributed his wealth to the development of the city, such as helping with the construction of the railway by lending his horses and by participating in the development of the postal service. Since he was one of the most influential traders among the Yunnanese Muslims, many other Yunnanese Muslim traders began to come and rest on his land. He then opened his house up to let other Yunnanese Muslims gather and carry out their religious practices. After the number of

⁴⁸The site has belonged to Kalae Night Bazaar Co. Ltd, since late 2009. The market expanded to a Tuesday about two months after the company started to manage the site.

⁴⁹ In Thailand, Yunnanese Muslims as well as Yunnanese Chinese are called 'Chin Ho' (Wang 2008:23).

Yunnanese Muslims gathering there had increased and the space around the house was not enough, he built a mosque, with other members on the northern area on the opposite side of the road from his house. This area gradually became a market at which mostly Yunnanese Muslim traders sell products, as many people who participate at the mosque consume products from the market (Jirijan 2005, Chumphon 2008).

Nowadays there are about 100 traders at the market and the majority of these are Yunnanese Chinese from Fang District in Chiang Mai Province. There are also some Lahu and Lisu who sell there, as well as Shan. They sell agricultural produce brought mainly from the Doi Ang Khang area, as planted by highland ethnic groups, plus dried food and other items. The dried food and other items are mostly brought from China or Burma, via Mae Sot in Tak or Mae Sai in Chiang Rai. These products are popular among Shan vendors and sold to Shan wage laborers at construction sites. Products sold here include agricultural produce popularly consumed by the Chinese and Burmese, as well as highlanders. Some produce is brought in to be sold at Mueang Mai Market. Consumers here include foreigners such as Westerners and the Japanese⁵⁰, as well as the northern Thai as consumers.



Figure 3.4:

⁵⁰ The Japanese who live in Chiang Mai are regular customers for the traders at Chin Ho Market, especially the Lahu Shi rice traders. They like to purchase hill rice since it is similar to Japanese rice.

Chin Ho Market

Most of the markets consist of a main building and small shops located around it. There are normally open-air markets to the side or in front of the main market building with portable stalls or booths in the morning and at night. Markets are not only a place for economic transactions, but also where various people and cultures can interact. Not only customers, but also sellers are diverse in terms of ethnicity, while northern Thai female traders occupy most of the selling space. This is a characteristic of not only markets along the Ping River but also of other markets in Chiang Mai. At the morning market, which opens to the side of Chang Puaek Market, among the northern Thai traders from nearby districts there are clothes sellers from northeastern Thailand, and Shan traders work at the *somtam* (papaya salad) shops in front of Tonphayom and Thanin Markets. The Hmong can be seen at Tonlamyai and Tonphayom Markets, selling flowers and fruit, such as persimmons. Though the emergence of supermarkets and shopping malls has damaged the local markets in terms of economics, they are still lively and help create networks of people as well as goods.

3.4 The Lahu in Urban Chiang Mai

I have highlighted the various ethnic groups related to the development of local markets in Chiang Mai, and the Lahu is one such group who have indirectly played a part supporting the development of the city. In this section I will describe the general setting of the Lahu in urban Chiang Mai.

Panadda and Meeyum (2006:16) have found that nearly 800 Lahu now live in Chiang Mai, which is about twice the number of Lahu when compared to a survey carried out by the Tribal Research Institute in 1990 to 1991 (1991:12). Their settlement areas are dispersed around the city and its sub-districts, such as in Sansai, Doi Saket, Sankamphaeng, Mae Rim and Saraphi. While many are scattered in slums and other areas in the municipality, there are large settlement areas in Doi Saket and Sansai, though they vary in size and pattern. Some areas have deliberately established a Lahu community, while others live mixed in with other ethnic groups, including the northern Thais. Depending on their economic status, some Lahu have managed to purchase land and have built houses made of concrete. During the early period of my research I met one Lahu Shi family living in a squatter area in the municipality. In my field notes, I described their lifestyle in urban Chiang Mai at that time, as follows:

They live in a squatter area near the Mae Kha canal in the municipality. Na Mii (pseudonym-33 years old) has a northern Thai husband aged 42 and they have five children. They moved from Mae Sot, in Tak, and have lived here for fifteen years. The land where they live is the property of the municipality. They built their house with a wooden frame and walls, and a roof made of galvanized iron. They have a sofa, TV, refrigerator, computer and audio player. Electricity is brought informally from a northern Thai's house nearby, so they do not pay any fees. Their neighbors are Akha, Lisu and Shan, while there are five Lahu households in the community. They attend a Sunday service, which is held in a tent at the center of the community. For work, Na Mii's makes garlands with her three daughters. The three daughters stopped their schooling as it became economically difficult for Na Mii and her husband to send them all to school. Her husband takes the youngest daughter, aged six, to sell garlands at an area in front of Chiang Mai University and *Suwan Luangthii 9*, a public park in the north of the city, after she comes back from elementary school and until nine p.m. Their elder daughters used to sell garlands as well, but they became shy when they grew up and so stopped selling. The son-in-law, the husband of the first daughter, lives together with the family and works at a rice mill.

(based on a personal interview: November 2008)

However, later on during my research, their life changed. In January 2010, Na Mii's family sold their house at the slum to an Akha family and moved to Sansai.

They bought a piece of land and built a house, costing 400,000 baht in total. Na Miinow works at a flower shop in Tonlamyai Market, along the Ping River. Her two daughters work at the Night Bazaar, and one of them, who is the eldest, also works at a company in the daytime. Since their income has increased, they have managed to buy a car on an installment plan, and Na Miinow no longer sends her youngest daughter to sell garlands on the street.

Lahu people with a low economic status tend to squat on the land of individuals or the municipality, where they build their own house, minimizing the cost spent on building materials. As soon as they are able to obtain a piece of land, they move to the suburbs. There are many cases in which missionaries and pastors firstly bought a large piece of land in a suburban area and provided it for the use of church members. Some missionaries have given the land while some have sold or lent. There is another group of Lahu who do not settle in one place, but move about the city. They live with other construction workers at makeshift shacks at construction site, or in apartments that demand a daily rent.

The jobs carried out by the Lahu in urban Chiang Mai are diverse. While many work at construction sites, there are other jobs undertaken, such as gardening, making handicrafts, collecting recyclable junk to sell at recycling shops, working as security guards at companies and apartments, selling garlands and roses on the streets and at restaurants, and working in factories, rice mills, restaurants and gas stations. When the Lahu work as wage laborers, looking for a job at Kham Thiang intersection in the municipality, females are paid 200 baht and males are paid 250 baht per day. In the morning, they have to go to negotiate with potential employers, whenever

they approach the intersection to hire workers, before others get a job first. The wage labor work found in Doi Saket is lower paid than that in Kham Thiang: 150 baht for women and 180 baht for men per day. A type of contract is formed, in which they exchange cell phone numbers with the employer and whenever the employer has a job, he calls them. There are also jobs available at Christian organizations and NGOs in the Chiang Mai area.

A number of the Lahu surveyed by Panadda and Meeyum (2006) are also students. Young students tend to stay with their parents, though there are several dormitories provided for older students, usually provided by Christian organizations, Buddhist temples (especially Wat Srisoda) and Chiang Mai Welfare School, among others. There is a Lahu dormitory which has been located in the city for more than twenty years. It is situated behind the First Church in Chiang Mai, on the opposite side of the Ping River from the city. In 2009, 34 Lahu students who studied at high school and up to university level were staying at the dormitory. According to the pastor who takes care of the dormitory, their Lahu sub-group division is diverse, as there are the Lahu Na, Lahu Nyi, Lahu Shi, Lahu Shehle, Lahu Bakiao and Lahu Bala staying there.

In terms of the sub-group divisions, many of the Lahus residing in urban Chiang Mai are Lahu Na and Lahu Shi⁵¹. They tend to be more visible than the other Lahu sub-groups, since most of them are Christian. Lahu settlements in urban Chiang

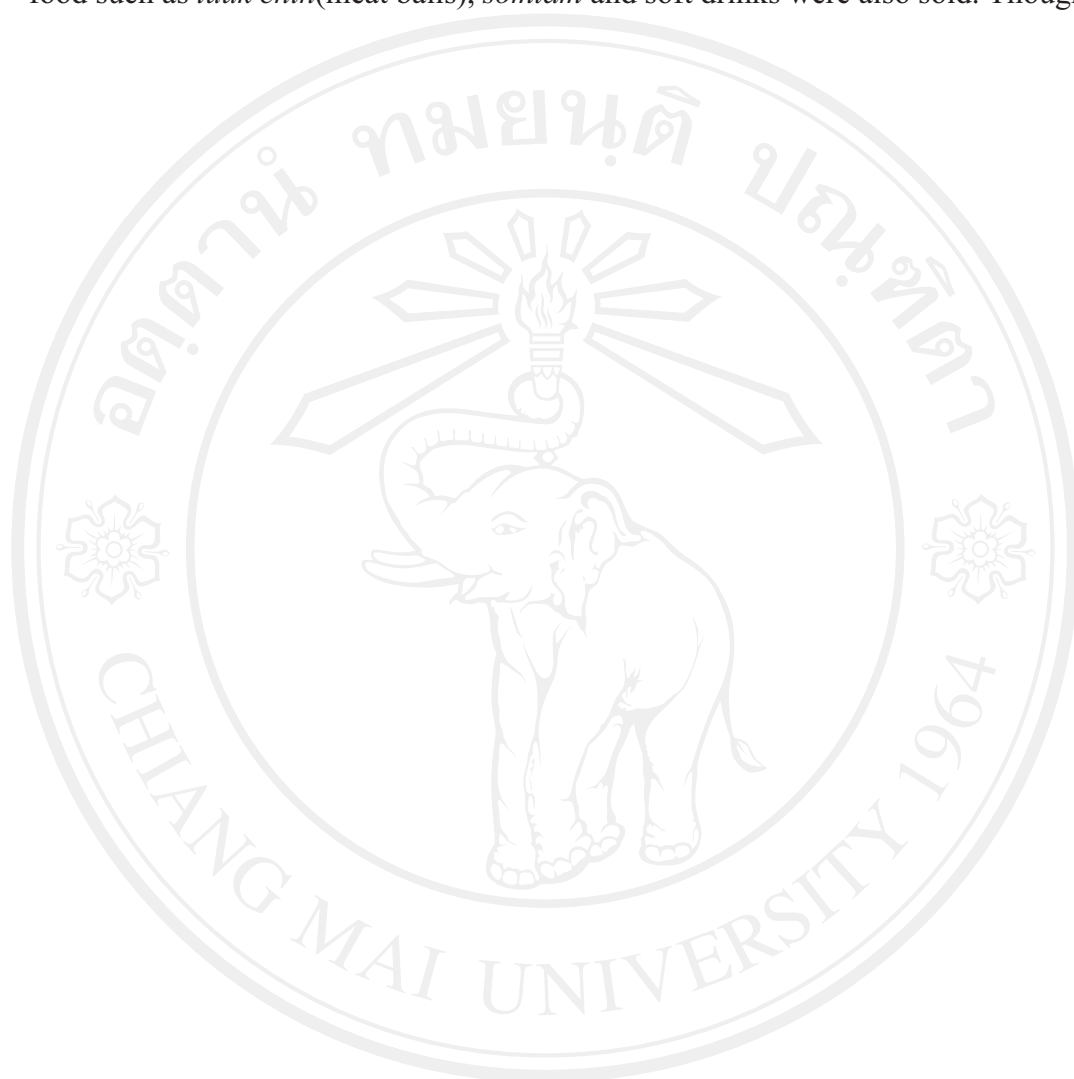
⁵¹ It is rare to meet the Lahu Nyi or any other sub-group other than the Lahu Na or Lahu Shi. Some of the Lahu Na female vendors told me to go to the Kham Thiang intersection if I wanted to meet Lahu Nyi. While I talked with seven Lahu there, four of them turned out to be Lahu Nyi and it seemed there were more. Most of them are seasonal laborers and do not reside in the city itself. In addition, I met some Lahu Nyi students at the Lahu dormitory in the city, as well as four novices and priests studying at Wat Srisoda, plus one who works as a teacher at a private school in Sansai District.

Mai are closely related to Christianity, as each community is focused on a church, many of which belong to the Thailand Lahu Baptist Convention (TLBC), the most mainstream Lahu convention in Thailand. Some churches in suburban Chiang Mai are supported by missionaries from foreign countries such as Korea, Singapore and western countries. Depending on the church, the Lahu in each community will hold a Sunday service, regular prayer meetings and yearly events at Christmas and New Year. Meanwhile, the Lahusquatter cannot be members of the TLBC due to their landless status, so they instead organize religious services by themselves and invite pastors from other areas.

Christianity also plays an important role in helping the Lahu in urban Chiang Mai maintain the Lahu identity. The Lahu New Year Festival was held in Sansai in January 2010; it started seven years ago and all the Lahu Christian organizations take part in the festival. This year (2010) the festival was sponsored by a Korean Christian organization, and the program on the first day included a concert by Lahu singers from Burma, an opening ceremony, a traditional Korean dance and Korean martial arts performance, a Lahu martial arts performance - split by the Lahu sub-groups, and a service with a sermon given by a Korean preacher. Throughout these festivals, the Lahu language is used, while there are Thai and English translations for some programs⁵². On the second day of the 2010 festival, after singing the Thai royal/national anthem, there was a performance of Lahu martial arts and Lahu traditional dancing, given by each sub-group separately. In the evening, a dinner party with a concert was held, costing 100 baht per seat with dinner and 50 baht per seat without dinner. Around the festival area, items such as hatchets, Lahu dress, music

⁵² At the sermon, given by a female Korean preacher, she used English, and a Lahu male preacher translated into Lahu. There was no Thai translation at the sermon.

CDs of Lahu singers, and Christian publications by the TLBC were sold, while fast food such as *luuk chin*(meat balls), *somtam* and soft drinks were also sold. Though



ลิขสิทธิ์มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่

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