

Abstract

This thesis has two objectives :

1. To study and compare the maintenance of identities of the Black Lahu and Yellow Lahu at Baan Balar village in Chiang Rai Province in the context of community development; and
2. To study the maintenance of ethnic boundaries of the groups.

The methodology used covers documentary - based and field research. The former research was conducted by gathering information from libraries. The latter was based on informal interviews with hilltribe development-concerned government officials and on the researcher's participatory observation by mingling with two groups during July 1995 and January 1996.

The outcome of this study is that the two groups of Lahu had their own different routes when they migrated from China's Yunnan before they finally converged on Baan Balar , resulting in loose relation between the two groups. It has also been found that these two peoples have differences in religion, values, rites and rituals and moral standards. All of which have determined a deviding line in terms of ethnicity, as evidenced by their separation in performing rites and rituals, the general social distance between them, no history of cross-marriages. A more distinctive deviding line can be seen after government development reached the village. Such distinction lies in the fact that, while the Black Lahu are more responsive to the development than the Yellow Lahu, the latter tend to be highly conservative culturally.