

## Symbolic Capital for the Construction of Social Space of the Thai Nation Co-Developers in Northeast Thailand

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**Abstract:** This study examines the use of the communist symbol as symbolic capital to create the social space of the Thai Nation Co-developers. The target group of this study is the Phu-Tai ethnic group in a village of the Northeast of Thailand, who previous joined the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) and later changed into the Thai Nation Co-developers. The CPT declared the event, when the authorities raided an armed group of villagers in this village as the first gun fire day, the official announcement of the CPT's intention to win state power using armed force. Consequently, villagers in this village and those who joined the CPT were labeled as communist insurgents. This stigma remains, albeit the government imposed a reconciliation policy (66/2533), under which the 'communist insurgents' were granted the status of 'Thai Nation Co-Developers' (TNCD). The researchers are interested in this group of people which are generally weak in terms of economic capital. The question guiding the investigation is to what extent these people can employ non-economic capital to create social space. This study employed qualitative methodology to obtain the required data. The study found that the word 'communist' was reproduced and given new meanings by the villagers through; making the village to become 'a historical village', revitalizing the history of the struggle through the ceremony of the first gun 1st day, commercialization of the communist symbol, incorporating the history involving the CPT into the local school curriculum and reproducing the history and social memories through academic papers, cyberspace, songs and movies. In this respect, the communist symbol has been employed to create the social space of the Phu-Tai ethnic group of this village.

**Key words:** Symbolic capital, ethnic identity, social space, Phu-Tai, communist

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### INTRODUCTION

During the Cold War, the infiltration of communism in the Southeast Asian region raised the fears of the leaders of these countries to becoming part of the Domino theory. Several countries joined the Western liberal camp to secure them from being annexed by communism. Nationalism was aroused as a means to deny and prevent the expansion of communism into these countries. In Thailand, nationalism was promoted under the government of Marshall Piboonsongkram (1949-1957), served to distinguish the communist ideology from national ideology (Lowe, 2009). National symbols such as national identity, national anthem, national costume and the change of the country's name from Siam to Thailand are among those actions promoting nationalism. In addition several laws concerned with communist prevention were issued and the severity of the penalties was increased. The use of laws to prevent the spread of

communism, under the government of Marshall Sarit Thanarat (1959-1963) and Marshall Thanom Kittikarjorn (1963-1973) was particularly extensive and acute. Fear of communism was created through the state mass media such as radio programs, posters or brochures. The message was disseminated across the country including to remote rural villages. Moreover, religious discourse initiated by ultra anti-communists suggested the idea of 'no sin of killing communism'. All of these indicate that communism at that time was dangerous to national security, and was prohibited. The discourse produced under the course of nationalism was successfully creating a negative image that was hateful towards the subscribers to the communist ideology. Consequently, the hate towards communism led to bloodshed at a political event on October 6, 1976. This event forced students to flee to the jungle, joining the Communist Party to fight against the state authority (Dilokratana, 2003).

Isan was one of the regions of Thailand where communism was widely spread and it was an important stronghold of the CPT. This region is adjacent to Laos PDR. The majority of the population of Isan share similarity of ethnicity with Laos, partly due to the fact that a great number of the population was forced to migrate from Lao PDR during the reign of King Rama III (1824-1851). However, Isan is also comprised of many diverse ethnicities. These groups of population have their own traditions and beliefs which are different from central Thailand. Isan was incorporated into the Central Thai state under the process of nation building which began during the reign of King Rama III. The incorporation of the Northeastern outposts met with resistance from the local population. One example of resistance and conflict was the millennium movement or 'the rebels of Pu Mee Boon' (or the spiritual leaders in rural areas). This indicates that resistance to the central state and conflict between the state and the local population of Isan has a history and this incubated the spread of communism in this region.

The spread of communism into Isan that began from 1950s increased the scale of conflict between the central state and the local people. Scores of local residents were accused of defecting from the state and violent means of suppression were employed. As a result, people living in the areas that were classified as red areas (highly controlled by communist insurgencies) fled to the jungle to escape or avoid being arrested by state authorities. Many of them left their families behind and maintained their daily life in the jungle with great hardship.

However, from 1977 the state began to change its approach to communism and this is commonly known as the 'political-led military policy'. During the GRIANGSAK CHAMANANT government (1977-1980), an official visit to China was made and both governments reached some agreements on cooperation. As part of this, the Thai government requested the Chinese government to reduce and stop supporting CPT. During the period of government of General Prem Tinnasulanont (1983-1988), the state policy known as the marked a fundamental change in the state approach towards communism. Under this policy violent means of suppression (employing armed military) were significantly reduced or not used at all. Those who joined the communist movement were no longer prosecuted. The 'communist insurgents' were then re-labeled as 'Thai Nation Co-developers' (from here in referred to as TNCD). This policy aimed to end conflict and violence between the government and the population over the issue of political ideology. In this circumstance, CPT was unable to obtain support from the, communist bloc as in previous times and therefore this policy resulted in a remarkable success,

especially in the reduction of violence. Most villagers and students joining the CPT returned to their villages and their universities. Students easily resumed their normal life, some of them managed to elevate to become academics, business owners and development workers. Unfortunately, for villagers who returned to their villages the stigma of communist insurgencies continues, albeit they were formally called TNCD. As a result, since the time when they returned from the jungle to the village, the exclusion of this group has continued. As this group is of lay people who are lacking in economic capital, the question that arises here is in what way or means can this group of people create their social space. This is a question this study is seeking to explore.

In order to examine the above question, a theoretical framework is required and will be briefly summarized. The mainstream approach to the expansion of state power is considered to be limited and insufficient. Analytical frameworks of the mainstream are generally centered on the idea of 'structural determinism'. This approach originated from the conventional theory of social order. Looking at the issue described above from this view, rural people as a social agency will be overlooked. Although, the limitation of the structural determinism approach is well recognized, this idea continues to dominate the analysis. For instance, the political divide, the color politics of Thailand, i.e., the red and the yellow is seen to be a symptom of the deficiency of the structure. Attempts to correct these problems are therefore the focus on drafting new Constitutional Law.

In order to understand and reveal the use of the symbolic capital of communism to create social space, the researchers hold that a theoretical framework that reflects social agency is an important key. According to Bourdieu (1989), the existence of the 'structure' or 'objective side' does not mutually exclude from the subjective side which can arise from the everyday practice of human agency. Social structure existed prior to the existence of individual agency (Giddens, 1984) which is manifested as categories of things governing individual actions. However, in everyday practice, one may act by trying to transform the categories of perception and appreciation of the social world, the cognitive and evaluative structures through which it is constructed. This is where the 'social agency' or individual humans can be seen as more active and dynamic roles, rather than as passive individuals. These categories of perception, the schemata of classification are therefore the key to understanding political struggle (Bourdieu, 1989). To put it in another way, political struggle is not entirely about dismantling the (state) structure. It can happen around cracking down on categories of words where the 'structure' assigned meanings to them and individual agency constantly contests and inserts new meanings. The contestation

around the meanings of words is in effect the creation of social space which can better convene or enhance actions of social agency. This study will make use of this group of approaches to shed light on the actions of villagers who previously joined the CPT in the jungle and continued to be excluded or marginalized, even under the new 'words' or policy of the state. This theoretical thought is seen to be better for revealing the relentless attempts of villagers to fight against the limitation imposed on them by the policy discourses of the structure.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The data behind the analysis and interpretation of this study will rely on Phenomenological Research Method of a village which uses a pseudonym given as 'Ban Pasuk'. This village was purposively chosen, primarily because the First Gun Fire Day event took place in this village, leading the CPT to officially declare their armed fight against the state. The first researcher conducted the fieldwork as part of a PhD research of Khon Kaen University, during the period of almost 2 years (August 2012-2014). This was followed with several rounds of visits to allow the researcher to attend important events such as the Memorial Ceremony of 'Wan Siang Puen Taek' (First Gun Fire Day of 7th

August) and 'Wan Phu-tai Lok' (The World Phu-Tai Day). During the visits, a series of in-depth interviews were conducted, key informants were village leaders, members of TAO, local authorities, school teachers, film producer and especially 30 TNDC of Ban Pasuk. The data obtained was primarily qualitative data and was descriptively analyzed. The following section presents the findings.

The studied village, Ban Pasuk is a village in Renu Nakorn District, Nakorn Panom Province. The village houses a population of 1,264. Like many other villages in the Northeast of Thailand, villagers from this village earn their living from agriculture. However, a number of the younger generations migrated to continue their education or to seek jobs. The livelihoods of villagers are therefore a combination of different sources in which agriculture has been gradually declining in its importance. The majority of villagers of Ban Pasuk are of Phu-Tai ethnicity, a major minority of the ethnic groups in the Northeast of Thailand. The exclusion of ethnic minorities of the central state in Thailand has long been common. However, the exclusion of the Phu-Tai ethnic group is obviously to a lower extent when compared to other ethnic minorities of Northern Thailand. The exclusion is mainly related to political aspects, where symbolic capital played a part and this will be further elaborated on in this study (Fig. 1).

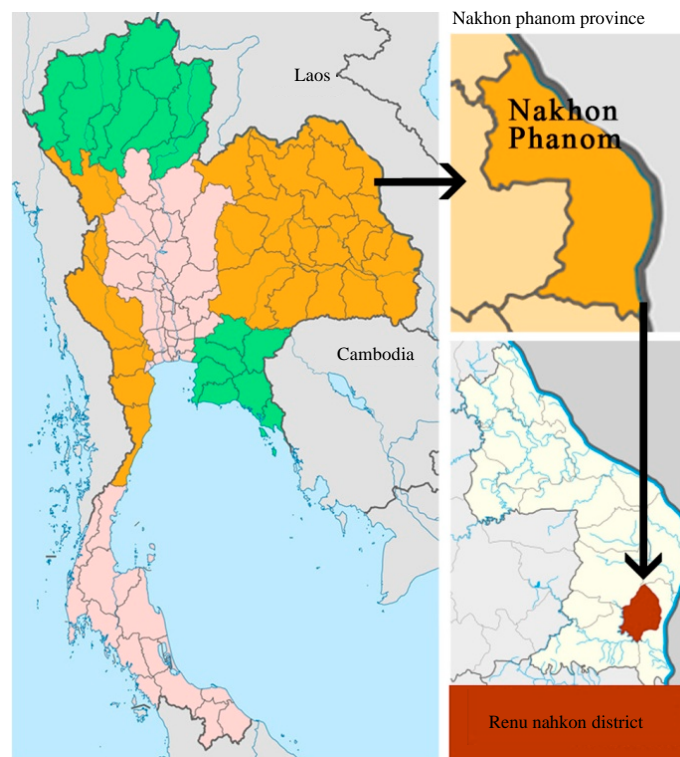


Fig. 1: Map of research areas

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Defining ‘historical village’:** Having fled to join the CPT in the jungle, the villagers had faced being labeled as a village of communism. As mentioned above, the state adopted a new policy approach toward communism from the early 1980s onwards. In 2000, the anti-communist law, issued in 1952 was abolished. This allows more freedom for the villagers who previously joined the CPT to voice and express their political views. As the village was the site recognized as the place of the occurrence of the First Gun Fire Day, the idea of establishing the village as a historical site was proposed and was agreed by the village committees, previous comrades and TNCD currently living in the village. The villagers therefore decided to put up a large nameplate, adding the words ‘historical village’, at the main entrance to the village.

The establishment of the historical village has the intension to transform and divert the perception of the village from being a communist village. The historical village is therefore a symbol conveying and convening a new meaning and perception to outsiders towards the village. The establishment of the historical village coincided with the promotion of local tourism by the state and therefore the state later supported this establishment. All of this suggests to outsiders and the younger generation that the historical events (in which villagers fled to join the CPT and the armed fight originated from this village) were not a bad thing. Rather, the history of the village is something that the younger generation should be proud of. A member of the village committee expressed his view that:

The idea was agreed by the head of village and comrades. This is because the First Gun Fire Day occurred on 7th August, 1965, the event leading to the declaration of the armed fight of CPT with the Thai State, that happened in our village. The fight of CPT was known to people around the world. At present, things have changed. We therefore decided to make our village to be a historical village’ (Interview, May 8, 2013)

The large nameplate erected at the main entrance to the village draws attention from outsiders and has become a thing of pride. Villagers expressed their views following the installation of the nameplate that ‘in fact, the villagers of our village were not as the outsiders thought. Villagers of this village are dedicated fighters’. The historical village can be an analogy of a big hall, a new space convening and generating a number of actions of the villagers. The new hall, the historical village does not only serve to convene and generate actions of the TNCD but

also effectively change the attitude of the state towards the village and the villagers. The village that was previously perceived by the state as having a negative image of communism has turned to be a historical site that has a great potential to attract tourists. As we shall see further, the historical village is the landscape of social space underpinning a number of events that took place.

### **A memorial ceremony on 7th August for the First Gun Fire Day:**

As mentioned earlier, Ban Pasuk is the site that is recognized as the place where the First Gun Fire event occurred. The CPT announced and symbolized this event as the official start of the armed fight against the state. In this respect, Ban Pasuk and the First Gun Fire Day of 7th August, 1965 are an important historical site and event. As, involvement with CPT is no longer illegal, memorial activities in other areas of the previous liberation zone of CPT were organized. Comrades are no longer prosecuted and therefore they can disclose their status. Khamporn, a veteran comrade said:

At present there is no more armed fight. The historical event shall be employed as a lesson to be learned for the younger generations. This is to preserve the historical events that could be lost along with the aging and passing away of comrades’ (Interview, May 9, 2013)

The memorial ceremony of the event of the First Gun Fire Day at Ban Pasuk was first organized on 7th August, 2002. However, the views towards this event were mixed. Those who disagreed with the memorial ceremony gave their reasons that the ceremony could bring back the conflict again. However, the memorial ceremony day attracted large audiences. This included veteran comrades who are currently TNCD throughout the country, academics, social activists and NGO workers. Local authorities were eventually involved in the Ceremony and the ‘Association of 7th August for Development’ was formed. Committees of the Association were comprised of veteran comrades and the mission of the association is to oversee the historical village activities and the memorial ceremony. In this respect, the memorial ceremony of the First Gun Fire Day provides a strong and solid foundation for the transition of the village from ‘the village of communist insurgencies’ into ‘the historical village of a dedicated peasant movement’.

Although, the ceremony was well recognized by the state authorities and local government, in this case the ‘Kok Hin Hae’ Tambol (sub-district) Administrative Organization (TAO) was barely involved at the beginning. The TAO staff viewed the ceremony to be for the

comrades and this to be outside the business of the TAO. Consequently the ceremony received no support from TAO. The Association Committee made efforts to mobilize funds to finance the event by themselves. Furthermore, Kok Hin Hae TAO also promoted some other events in competition to the ceremony. For example, the TAO organized an invented festival called 'Khaw lam yai ping kai sap' (the big grilled sticky rice in bamboo and delicious grilled chicken festival). The aim of this event was to promote tourism at the local level. The Mayor of Kok Hin Hae TAO expressed his view regarding the Ceremony as follows:

I viewed that the association of 7th August was too restricted. This is because the association is confined only to veteran comrades. Nobody wanted the history that the comrades are seeking to promote, to happen. But when this history happened no one can erase it. However, this history should belong to everyone, not be owned by a specific group. The 10 years ago our TAO led the villagers to introduce new cultural activities such as 'Loy Kra Thong' (floating lantern festival) and 'Khaeng Rue' (paddle boat racing) and the 'Khaw lam yai ping kai sap'. This will attract people only during the festivals. After the festival is finished nobody mentioned it. This is obviously different from the memorial ceremony of 7th August of the First Gun Fire Day. People are always talking about it. This is because this historical event actually happened, it's not invented' (Interview, October 24, 2013)

As the festival invented by TAO was not a successful, the TAO later turned to be involved in the ceremony of 7th August by financing the ceremony. The meaning of the ceremony of 7th August was eventually transformed to the history of all villagers from several villages of TAO, not only confined to comrades of Ban Pasuk. Some veteran comrades were not comfortable with this transition. They were concerned that the ideology of the ceremony could be distorted. The roles of female comrades were reduced to be only working in the kitchen and serving food to attendees of the ceremony. The essence of sharing their stories of struggle in the jungle in a public space was played down. However, a number of villagers also viewed the benefits of TAO becoming involved in the ceremony because their ceremony will now continue even after the comrades have passed away.

One of the ideas proposed along with the ceremony of 7th August was to build a memorial statue at the site of the gun fight. Mr. Khamporn, a veteran comrade said:

From 1981 my comrades, myself and colleagues discussed the issue that numbers of our colleagues had lost their lives. Who did these comrades fight for? They sacrificed and dedicated their lives for people and our country. They got no salary. They lost their lives without any compensation. Without a memorial statue, their loss of lives will be meaningless if the next generation will not remember and do not understand our dedication. The idea of building a memorial statue was therefore proposed along with the establishment of the 7th August Association (Interview, February 12, 2014)

Building a memorial statue requires a great amount of money. Members of TNCD first used a traditional way of fund raising called Pah Bah. The idea of building a memorial statue was also supported by TNCD in other liberation zones of South Isan (Surin and Sisaket Provinces). However, the funds mobilized from TNCD members and their networks were limited. This was due to the fact that these TNCD are mostly poor farmers in rural villages. The 7th August Association Committee therefore came up with the idea that the plan to build a memorial statue should be proposed to the state agencies at local level. The state organizations would adopt this idea as a part of promoting local tourism and the historical site will be one source of tourist attraction. In order to go with this idea, it is necessary to tone down the identity of communism on the memorial statue so that it will be acceptable for the state agencies. The Memorial Ceremony of 7th August also toned down the extent of communist ideology in the event and a wider variety of people attended the ceremony.

**Commercializing the communist symbol:** In Thailand, the symbol of communism has been commercialized since the decline of conflicts and armed fighting from the mid 1980s. This began with concerts of protest songs, these songs became popular and consequently the songs were recorded and sold in the form of cassette tapes and CD's. Later the symbol of communism was produced on t-shirts and caps and these goods were produced and sold for the purpose of mobilizing funds for the activities of TNCD. The symbol of communism was produced in different forms of consumer goods and became spread to the masses. However, the masses ascribed and consumed the symbol of communism for different reasons; some were nostalgic for the communist movement's history while some took it as a fashion preference.

When the first Memorial Ceremony of 7th August was organized, villagers of Ban Pasuk decorated the village with red flags. The local authorities came and asked the villagers to take down the red flags. Wearing a cap with the red star, a symbol of communism was also prohibited. Villagers obeyed the request of the authorities. However, the villagers negotiated, stating that these symbolic goods were for commercial purposes and the authorities eventually gave permission. Later on symbolic goods were allowed to be sold at the Memorial Ceremony of the 7th August event. A cap with a red star and hammer and scythe, t-shirts with the logo of the First Gun Fire Day were among the most popular goods sold at the event and the income was mainly for financing the event. The hammer, scythe together with red star became a symbol of the dedicated fight of the peoples movements within described historical contexts.

In promoting the commercialized communist symbols, the housewife's comrade group was mostly working closely with the government agencies. This group would sell symbolic goods at different events that the government agencies had organized such as the event of 'Wan Ruk Phu-Tai' (Love Phu-Tai Day), 'Wan Songkran' (Water Festival), 'Wan Loy Kha Tong Long Rue Kheng' (Floating Lantern and Boat Racing Festival) or Provincial Red Cross events. Along with the sale of symbolic goods, videos of the history of the fighting of the villagers were shown and belongings of the comrades used when they spent their lives in the jungle were displayed. In addition, local products such as cotton cloths and Phu-Tai ethnic silk cloth, produced by the villagers were also displayed and for sale. Customers purchasing these goods were varied; some bought these goods to revive their memories, some just to wear as they looked smart, others wanted to support the villagers. One of the housewife comrades gave her view that:

Actually at present no one would ascribe these symbols to the political ideology. Those who wear hats would not think they are at present a communist. These are only kinds of goods (Interview, October 12, 2013)

The growing commercialization of the communist symbol and history of the village has had a result that the village has become widely known to the public. This has increased attention of the provincial authorities to the village. Khamming, a veteran comrade of the village said:

Our village becomes popular and widely known. TAO can no longer stay away because the Province will order TAO to support us (Interview, August 20, 2013)

The growing commercialization of the communist symbol fitted well with the plan of promoting provincial tourism. In 2009, a bridge crossing the Mekong River, linking Nakorn Phanom of Thailand and Thakhek of Lao PDR was completed. The state views that tourism will be boosted following the completion of the bridge because this will be the shortest route for land transportation linking Thailand with Laos, Central Vietnam and Southern China. In this respect, the history of the village has the potential to be produced into a cultural positive for tourism, attracting tourists into the Province. The Provincial Organization Administration (POA) therefore decided to fund the building of the historical site and memorial statue of Ban Pasuk. The village is also assigned to be a village of ethnicity in addition to a historical village. A member of the Provincial Parliament of POA made an announcement during the event of the Memorial Ceremony of 7th August 2013 that:

We are preparing. If tourists flood to Thailand on this route, Nakorn Phanom Province will be the first entrance gate to Thailand. Tourists will start from Nakorn Phanom Province. We must prepare what we have to offer to them for visits. We have That Phanom Pagoda in That Phanom district. In Renu Nakorn we have a distinctive culture and ethnicity. Adding to these is that we have a historical village which we have not yet finished constructing. We will promote Ban Pasuk to be a tourist destination and we need to have a good plan for that (Interview, August 20, 2013)

From what was discussed above, it is evident that the symbolic capital, articulated through the history of Ban Pasuk has been commercialized in different ways. Villagers transformed the symbolic capital they were endowed with into economic capital. The state views Ban Pasuk as a tourism resource. This is consonant to what has recently and widely happened, under the globalization processes. In this process, culture has been increasingly commoditized (Giddens, 1984) and this process increases a greater and extensive scale of capital accumulation.

**Engaging with the state by using the symbol of communism:** In a certain period of history, villagers and the state were enemies. The revitalizing of the history, particularly during the gunfight period is precarious. However, the villagers of Ban Pasuk can effectively engage with the state by using the symbols of communism. The case in point is the involvement of Ban Pasuk in a contest for village projects called 'Krong Karn Petch Nai Thin' (Diamonds within Locals Project).

The government's village contest project has been common during the past two decades. The project is designed to select the best village and the selected village will receive an award. In the contest, the state will set criteria and these criteria will scope and guide the common efforts or actions of the villagers in order to win the contest. The village contest is therefore one of the nuance processes of inserting the control of the state over the rural village.

In the case of Ban Pasuk, the village contest project was implemented by the Provincial Community Development Unit. The project aims to build community strength and promote peoples participation. The project also encourages the village to coordinate with the TAO in applying for the contest. In running the contest, the association of the 7th August took a lead in coordinating with Kok Hin Hae TAO. The Project of Building a Historical Site for Local Cultural Education and Tourism of Ban Pasuk was proposed to the contest. This project won and was awarded the amount of 195,000 THB. The money awarded was for the construction of the historical site of Ban Pasuk as proposed under the contest project.

Entering into the contest is effectively entering into the field of state control. As mentioned earlier, the villagers of Ban Pasuk stood on the opposite side to the state in their history. Entering into the contest could be interpreted as the villagers of Ban Pasuk, the veteran comrades having submitted to the state power. However, if we consider it from another angle, entering into the contest could mean the engagement of the villagers with the state and this engagement would lead to enlargement of the social space of the villagers. While the contest constrains actions of the villagers in certain aspects, the active engagement also enables their actions in different ways. The village of Ban Pasuk is better recognized by the state and therefore, this opens new opportunities for them to present their image, voice and acquire more resources or financial capital.

**The reproduction of symbolic capital:** Symbolic capital has a distinctive quality and differs from physical capital in a number of aspects, one of which is that the use of the symbolic capital will enlarge its value. Conversely, storage of the symbolic capital without using it will result in depreciation. The symbolic capital of Ban Pasuk has been continually used and reproduced through academic works, the incorporation of village history into the local school curriculum, stories posted by the villagers on cyberspace and film. All of these are revitalizing the symbolic capital of Ban Pasuk, adding more value and enlarging the social space for the villagers which will be further discussed.

Academic debates on the socialist movement in Thailand were initially focusing on theoretical concerns of the modes of production of Thailand. The debates characterized the disagreement in the modes of production of Thai society, whether Thailand was under-developed capitalist, dependent capitalist, semi-colonial or semi-feudal, etc. These endless debates gradually withered from academia, after the end of the conflict in the mid 1980s. Later, academic writing and literature turned to focus more on the 'on the ground experiences' of the people involved in the movements.

The manifestation of Ban Pasuk in academic writing is recently centered on the history of the people's involvement with CPT. Among these, one important ethnography study is "A Village of Revolutionary Peasant of the Upper Northeast of Thailand" authored. The monograph of this ethnography details the ways of life of ordinary farmers during the 1960-1980s in Ban Pasuk. This study also broadened the academic views regarding peasant movements as previously much of the study focused on the violence or bloodshed of the fighting farmers. This study subsequently inspired a number of other studies concerned with the analysis of Ban Pasuk history.

Another important piece of academic work is the article titled '8 August 2508 (8-8-08)' written, a social activist and a lecturer at Thammasart University in Bangkok. In his study, Jiamtheerasakul indicated his surprise that although, the event of the First Gun Fire Day was elevated to provide a platform for ideological struggle, the event itself was barely recorded in the CPT official documents. Based on sources outside the CPT such as newspapers, Jiamtheerasakul suggested that the gunfight between the comrades and the authorities should have happened on 8th August instead of 7th August. The observation of Jiamtheerasakul reflected the differences within the CPT, primarily between those who were supported by China and Russia or Vietnam. The elevation of the event of the First Gun Fire Day that happened at Ban Pasuk indicated the influence of Maoism that favors farmer movements to labor or worker movements.

Whatever the debates of the academics were, these works enlarged the stock of symbolic capital of Ban Pasuk. Based on the history of involvement with Communism, the villagers of Ban Pasuk have established relationships with academia. Some of these researchers attended the ceremony of the First Gun Fire Day and return to the village every year. Another took their students with them to attend the ceremony and this is regarded as a part of the activities in the study program of their universities. The networks the villagers created with

academia are based on the symbolic capital of communism they are endowed with and these networks are effectively enlarging the social space of the villagers.

Another mode of reproduction of the symbolic capital of Ban Pasuk is that the history of their involvement with the communist movement in the villagers was included in the local school curriculum. Although local schools, from the past decades were permitted to teach local history and culture, most of the curriculums focused on the history of culture such as local costume, foods and local beliefs which are already familiar to students. Previously, local history that was dissident to the mainstream history of the state was not permitted to be taught in the school. A project of inclusion of Ban Pasuk history as a subject of study was initiated and funded by the Thailand Research Fund (TRF). The Project was called 'Youth Researching in Local History in the Northeast of Thailand'. This project supports students to research the history of their own locale and bring the findings of their research to be presented in the class room. Students proposed their research entitled 'The First Gun Fire Day: The Bloodshed, War and Lives for Political Ideology'. Under this research project they conducted interviews with those who were involved in the historical event they studied. The data collected was then analyzed and organized in the form of a paper. Apart from presenting their findings in the classroom, the study was also displayed at several important events in the district and province such as at the event of Phu-Tai World Day that is usually organized during the Songkran Festival. Furthermore, a similar research project was adopted by several schools in Nakorn Phanom Province.

The reproduction of Ban Pasuk history, through local schooling, indicated that views towards Ban Pasuk have changed in a number of respects. Firstly, there has been a certain level of acceptance, if not tolerance that the conflict in history was not the entire fault of the opposite side, those especially who were not on side with the state. Secondly, those wounded by the history have a space to tell their stories in a similar stance to the mainstream history. Thirdly, the lessons learnt from the history were told to the younger generation by those who were directly involved in the event which could prevent a repetition of the same faults. The story or the history as told through student research and taught in local schools becomes important social space for villagers.

Another aspect of historical reproduction that has become social space for the villagers of Ban Pasuk is cyberspace. As their network grew their stories appeared in cyberspace such as on facebook, blogs and other channels. An internet search using the keyword of "Wan sieng puen taek" (The First Gun Fire Day) in Thai letter

resulted in 687,000 hits (reported on 15th October, 2013). The items found include Wikipedia, the academic study of Jiamtheerasakul, Jaithiang and others. There are also records of the histories of Ban Pasuk that were casually and informally organized, available on the internet. These cyberspaces attract more people to attend the ceremony of the 7th August and in return increases the posts and stories of Ban Pasuk in cyberspace.

The next source of reproduction of the history of Ban Pasuk is the protest song. During the period of conflict, song played an important role in educating, inspiring and arousing the movement. The protest songs were broadcast through the radio station of the CPT from China called The Voice of The People of Thailand (VOPT) and these songs were prohibited by Thai State. After the end of the conflict, these songs were allowed and several concerts were organized, consequently the protest songs became popular. One concert organized on 15th August, 2009 at Pipitaphan Conference Hall of Kasetsart University in Bangkok was dedicated to remembering the events of 7th August. According to, there were 334 songs composted and broadcast during the period of conflict and only 3 songs are related to the 7th August. These 3 songs are particularly meaningful for the comrades who joined the CPT during this period. Although, the songs related to the 7th August are small in numbers all the protest songs saluted the communist ideology and the dedication of the revolutionary comrades of which the people of Ban Pasuk played a part.

Finally, the history of Ban Pasuk was reproduced through film. This is a particular work of the film producer Apichartpong Verasethakul, a film on this village, directed and produced by him won the award of Golden Palm at the movie contest of The 63rd 'Cannes Film Festival, May 2010' in France. The story of Ban Pasuk narrated in the movie was concerned with the memory of the past. Apichartpong disclosed that:

I made an attempt to collect the data because I am not academic. I was intrigued by the story I learned from the museum of a small village. In the museum there were Marxist books displayed. These books are passions of equality and people were passionate of Marxism because of the inequality they received. Marx promised to offer them equality. However, what I was interested in was the memory of the past that was told to the younger generations. I was particularly interested in the youth because they were not directly experienced in the historical events that were told which is also the case with me (Interview, August 6, 2014)



In order to make the film, Apichartpong studied the history of the village in detail. He also travelled to Savannakhet Province of Lao PDR where the people of Ban Pasuk who were involved in the communist movement in the beginning, got their training with assistance of comrade Khamming, to trace back the history of the movement. He wanted to learn how the communism was spread and what led to the event of 7th August. The memory of the past of the villagers in his film was an analogy of a ghost that is the political violence that happened in history is a ghost that has continued to haunt the villagers to this day. Several episodes narrated in the movie include the villagers who wanted to escape from the violence of the village which symbolized as aerospace or the red color used in the film which was prohibited by the state but the red color actually represents freedom. Apichartpong described his film as:

The film wants to communicate as symbolic. For example there is the story of Lung Boonmee who fled to the jungle. When he returned home he became a monkey ghost with extraordinary power. He is a symbol representing those who felt that they cannot be living in actual space and therefore, they must take themselves away from this space. That is the aerospace that will take them away from the earth. Aerospace is imagination, the story of escaping or moving away during the political situation of that period. This is a symbol of journey, the dream and shield of (Interview, August 6, 2013)

The film made the history of Ban Pasuk appear on the global stage, the context in which the history of the village is reproduced. This has had a significant result in the expansion of the social space of the villagers of Ban Pasuk. A veteran comrade of Ban Pasuk mentioned that through the film, the village became known and the history of the village can no longer be concealed by anyone.

## CONCLUSION

Ban Pasuk was previously confined in a space governed by the discourse of being involved in the communist movement. However, through their activities as a social agency they can turn the communism symbol into symbolic capital and this capital was employed to create their social space. This process was made possible in the beginning by the reorientation of the state policy of the Prime Minister's Office Order of 66/2523. With the window opened by the structure (the government policy), villagers of Ban Pasuk found ways to make use of the

policy and to create their social space. And with the symbolic capital of the village endowed; the one important event of the history of the struggle took place in their village and the villagers turned their village from a village of communist insurgencies to become a historical village. The historical village is a new landscape of social space on which the actions of the villagers can be convened or generated. As we have discussed through this study, the actions include the ceremony of the 7th August of the First Gun Fire Day, the commercialization of the communist symbol and the positive engagement with the state through entering into the village contest. The symbolic capital was further reproduced through academic works, the inclusion of the history of Ban Pasuk in the local school curriculum, protest songs, cyberspace and a film.

The symbolic capital endowed with TNCD became the symbolic capital of the village of Ban Pasuk described in this paper and is consonant with the habitus theory proposed by Bourdieu (1977). According to Bourdieu, habitus which has been developed and consolidated but can be transformed over the period of time with the old structure of habitus preserved. The habitus was socialized into rules, norms and becomes the social cultural bedrock of ethnics, nations and individuals subscribed to them. However, the habitus theory proposed by Bourdieu was applied mainly to the upper class. Through the socialization of habitus, i.e., socialization within the family or through education of high class schooling, the upper class can maintain their status. They can continue to accumulate social, cultural and economic capital. However, the findings of this study suggest that the idea of habitus is also workable with TNCD who are generally members of the lower class. The analysis that can be generated from these findings is that the orientation that TNCD received while joining the CPT in the jungle was intensive and significantly formed the habitus for TNCD. Such habitus becomes the bedrock for generating the communist symbolic capital, leading to the creation of the social space of the villagers.

The finding that can be considered to expand Bourdieu's thesis on symbolic capital is that in this study, symbolic capital can be used effectively by the poor or the lower class. Bourdieu suggests that the state monopolized the use of symbolic capital. However, what has been described in this study suggests that the villagers of Ban Pasuk are also able to make use of symbolic capital. But the process of building using symbolic capital has not happened under the binary opposition. After the end of the conflict, the people of Ban Pasuk did not view themselves as opposed to the state. Rather, it is under the space that was already available to them that people constantly negotiate with the state, insert their agendas where possible, assigned

additional or new meanings to categories of things. Such processes gradually transform the institutional landscape, on which the actions of the villagers are convened and enhanced.

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