Healthy community organization: escape from political dilemma.

A case of village in the north of Thailand.

Siwarak Siwarom

Faculty of Education, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai Province, Thailand

This research has its aim to study how villagers escaped from the political conflicts and two poles of civil movement. For 5 years ago, the word of “new politic” became the new hope of Thai citizens whose politic-society was under monopolized by politicians and political parties. Those politicians did not only develop the country based on the civil’s interests but they were political parties abusing legitimately election system.

Civil politic is as mechanism for political balance, to monitor and check all public system. Before coup d’etat in 19/9/2006, civil society in Thailand was very strong and had influentially checked government works. It is not refused that all corruptive mega projects were exposed by this civil movement and most of Thai discriminated the government and politicians.

Because of the coup d’etat, there were two opinions for this coup d’etat, the one was pro this coup and the other against. The one represented the civil movement; pro the coup, which checked and exposed the government named “yellow shirt” and the other represented civil movement which against the coup d’etat, asking for democracy and paid sympathy with ousted prime minister, named “red shirt”. It was said that most of Thai had jumped into each side of conflicts, especially intellectuals, social workers, NGOs and ex-political activists also had their own side commitment. It so was trauma social relation and broke away all trust.

This empirical research conducted in the small village named Mae Tha was also got effect from political conflicts, village members broke into two poles of opinion which had not compromised. It never had done before. How they solved this crisis?

Mae Tha located in Chiang Mai province, north of Thailand, surrounded by monsoon forest. The village leaders and some of village members were realized that waiting for political conflicts dissolved never had solve their poverty and each represented dilemma often abused their capital. They themselves revised that, before occurring political conflicts, all activities and all opinions openly discussed and democratized as cultural capital of their society. Their democracy is not from election but from community mode, life base and reciprocal relationship. It is their own civil society which is called mode of community.

Healthy life meant paying attention to physical, mind-spirit, society and intellectual as the whole. This is not the new concept but the main stream of development always separated whole life into parts and destroyed community capital. Their mode of life depend on the objects and official services. In 2005, learning community group jointly working with natural resources management network developed people organization named natural resources and sustainable agriculture institute. Its aims have were to improve their community’s healthy lives: being good physical, mind/spiritual, social and intellectual health.

This institute researched that individually community members jumping into capitalist market could not find the way out; producing for demands but price being under controlled of buyers!. Moreover, political tension and economic crisis gave effects on their members distress.

Stop running after market system by growing or producing organic vegetables, conducting self sufficient mode of life. Now, this village is famous on organic baby corn for export and monsoon forest reservation. How people organization managed, improved and changed consumerist paradigm to self sufficient mode of life.

This paper attempt to present the empirical lives of those who could escape from the tension and distress of politic and economic crisis. I was the monitor of the projects run by the people organization which got intellectual support from Healthy promotion fund of Thailand.
Then I researched as outside in agent and partial participated some activities. All empirical data are analyzed under approach of civil movement and critical theory.

References:

Institute of natural resources and sustainable agriculture of Mae Tha village.(2007). *Report on Knowledge management on Healthy community.*

Bangkok: National public health Foundation.
