Geo-Sociological Based Sustainable Development Study
in Mae Jo University

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Throughout the sixty years of His reign, His Majesty the King has devoted His strength, wisdom, time and financial support, as well as worked and taken part in activities for the development of the country and assistance to the deprived. Therefore, almost three thousand development projects have been undertaken on royal initiatives. The principles and concepts that lay behind these projects are limitedly known among senior officers who have directly worked with His Majesty. Mae Jo University with the graciously support of Dr. Sumet Tantivejkul, the Secretary-General of Chaipatana Foundation – initiated the establishment by His Majesty, has established the master of science study program in Geo-Sociological Based Sustainable Development in 2003. The aims of the program are study, disclosing and inheriting the principles and concepts of His Majesty the King on development. The title of the curriculum has been innovated from a royal concept – the implementing of developing works should be done in harmony with geographic and social/cultural structures of communities, by Dr. Sumet Tantivejkul. This royal concept was directly given to Dr. Sumet Tantivejkul in 1981 when he had the first audience with royalty before the beginning the work as the secretary of Royal Development Project Coordination Board.

Besides the basic courses on the philosophy of development, area analysis and administration of development project, the course on Royal Principles and Concepts for Development and the course on the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy are given. Examples of Royal Principles and Concepts are “new theory” on managing agricultural land and community development, self-reliance theory of development, “tricking the soil”, vetiver grass: preventing of soil erosion and degradation, forest rehabilitation and development, and flood management.

The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy is the key course of the program. The selected topics of the course are world economic systems; un-sufficiency behaviors and their impacts on various sectors and levels; the application of sufficiency economy in national development plans, business and industry. The last two topics are the application of sufficiency economy in agriculture families and communities, and sufficiency economy as a tool in development projects and rural rehabilitation. Due to the fact that Mae Jo is agricultural and rural based university the last two topics have been emphasized. Students have been assigned for field studies in communities, which have been considered as good example of “sufficiency economy communities” in various degree of achievement. Presentation and discussion on the outcome of the field studies have been done in the last day of the course.
Farmers in different villages who have already been happy with their new-sufficiency economy way of life, have concluded from their experience that the change in the way of thinking and having ethical spirit are the first and most important practices for individuals who want to alter their way of life to sufficiency economy way. Then they have to seek for knowledge. Consequently, the decisions for earning a living and other activities in the moderate and reasonable ways can be achieved. Therefore, the farmers’ conclusion is harmonizes in principle with UNDP (2007). Most of them said that prior to the change some of them might fall into the wicked cycle – be foolish, sick and poor. But most of them did not. They had ideas, were healthy and they also worked hard from the dawn till nightfall for years, nevertheless, they were poor, had big debts and unhappy. That because of their decisions for earning a living was not in the moderate and reasonable ways. Their ideas did not be cautiously synthesized from the acquired knowledge. They did not recognize the changes, externally and internally, and did not prepare themselves to cope with the changes.

This conclusion is also harmonizes in practice with the idea of Mr. Ennoo Suesuwan, Senior Executive Vice President of Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives, who has several year experience in solving the non-performed loan of the bank. He has concluded from the experience that the farmers’ problems are enormously complex; finally, farmers have to re-thinking and solve their own problems. He has studied the principles and concepts of His Majesty the King on development. Solving the NPL he has followed the royal concepts: help them to help themselves, development should be gradually carried on step by step, development should start with human development, and ethical development and re-thinking concept should be done prior to the development of technical skill and re-finance. He also has linked the development of community plans and enterprise with the second stage of “new theory” – the practical application of sufficiency economy.

Two of the graduates made their theses on sufficiency economy and the way of Muslims’ life. There is no path of ruin in Muslim’s quarter which is clearly separated from the others in a studied village. In another village where Muslims are minority their way of life gradually has shifted to mainstream economy, especially on economical aspect. The other three graduates made their theses on participatory learning towards sufficiency economy in two highland tribal communities and one lowland Thai community. The conclusions drawn from the studies with the tribal villages is their present way of life is the synergy of the influence of governmental development officers, globalization that has come to the village through better communication and mass media, and their culture. The common conclusion of the three studies is devoted leaders are essential for the leading of positive mental change.

In addition to the formal study program MJU also have organized short training coarse in sufficiency economy and participatory development.

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1972: B.S. with Hons. (Agriculture) major in Soil Science, Kasetsart University
1975: M.S. (Agriculture) major in Soil Science, Kasetsart University
1976-1978: Lecturer, Soil Science, Faculty of Natural Resources, Prince of Songkla University
1978-1981: Researcher, Multiple Cropping Project, Chiang Mai University
1981–present: Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor in Soil Science, Mae Jo University
1988-1995: Started with writing proposal and then working as a researcher and local coordinator in the project on Soil Fertility Conservation for Highland (A joint project between Mae Jo University and Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium)

Research Experiences:
- Utilization of organic wastes materials in crop production.
- Soil conservation and sustainable agriculture for highland.
- Environmental impact assessment of using chlorate as flower inducing agent in longan orchards.
- Optimized irrigation and fertigation for longan orchards with PRD technique.
- Longan production cost reduction with appropriate management of nutrients and other additional materials

Published Papers
Twenty two papers in soil conservation, highland agriculture, using chlorate as flower inducing agent in longan, and optimized irrigation and fertigation for fruit trees.