



Customary tenure in Nan-Pan village, Southern Shan State, Myanmar

Farmers and Land workers Union (FLU)

Background

Four research visits totaling 12 field days were made in 2015: two in June, one in July with MRLG support, and one in October for 5 days. The study was made by Ko Kyaw, Ma Nge Nge and other staff from FLU.

The village of Nan-Pan is a Pa-Oh village which lies at 4,800 feet in the South Hti-Pwar village tract, Pin Laung Township, Taunggyi District, Shan South, 10 miles away from Pin Laung town.

Today, 380 households and 2,000 persons live in the village and total village territory is of 6,500 acres.

Livelihoods, land and natural resources

Each household practices shifting cultivation, on average 1,5 acre per year. The average rotation is of three to four years for rice and pulses. They also produce tea, fruits like mango, oranges, avocado and banana, djenkol beans, ginger and poppy as source of cash income. Non timber forest products like mushrooms, yams, bamboo shoots, orchids and herbs also contribute to their income. Livestock is very limited.

Land use includes shifting cultivation area (5000 acres), permanent farmlands (irrigated paddy terraces 150 ac, upland farms 100 ac for potato, paddy, pulses, 500 acres of tea gardens and fruit tree orchards). Forest lands include community forestry area (583 ac), watershed forest, firewood hedges. There are also religious lands, grazing lands...

lage of Pa-Oh. Yet, selling is rare and only in emergency. There is a customary village fund which is formed through fines and household contributions. It funds social events but it is also used to lend money to needing families against their private land claims that then would be pawned to the village. **The village fund can thus be seen as a protection of village customary land tenure to help vulnerable families.**

Key findings

There is no landlessness in the village and the shifting cultivation land is divided equitably for farming. However, there is the concern that part of their shifting cultivation area has been classified as reserved forests by MOECA. So this land could possibly be granted by government to businesses.

The villagers did not apply for titles during the latest land registration process. The community does not wish for private land registration even on terraces because villagers believe that if someone gets private ownership for a terrace or tea garden, then other people may also ask for it and the whole community may lose all the other lands which are not put under private ownership (i.e. shifting cultivation land). **The villagers wish to keep all the land under communal ownership**, as even owners of private terraces feel their rights are secure within the community and do not need SLRD land titles for this. They would like to have such registration soon, as gold has recently been found nearby and the villagers fear losing their lands unless protected legally.

Customary practices

Upland shifting cultivation plots among the chosen block are distributed internally to each family through local village consensus annually in January, in a meeting attended by the whole village. Permanent farmlands are under permanent claims. Shifting cultivation land cannot be sold as it remains as communal land but may be subject to temporary claims for farming when it forms part of the chosen block. However, irrigated lands and taung-ya lands can be sold internally or to neighbouring vil-

Photo of focus group discussion with elders for mapping



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