

## On-site Education of Practical Languages for Area Studies

### Report in 2008

—Lao, National University of Laos, Laos, Term(11 May 2008 - 29 Sep. 2008)—

Year of Enrollment: 2006

Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies

Shinichi Kawae

#### On My Research Theme

The purpose of my research is to reveal the influence of Para rubber plantations upon the livelihood of local people who have done shifting cultivation in the north of Laos.

In Laos, 80% of the terrain was covered with mountainous areas, and the local people have done traditional shifting cultivation, especially in the north. Each household raised livestock and collected non-timber forest products as well as grew upland rice by shifting cultivation.

Para rubber trees were introduced from China to the north in 1990s because of a great demand for natural rubber in China and its high price. The areas of planting Para rubber trees have expanded particularly after 2002 which is the first year to collect rubber latex.

The well-off are willing to plant Para rubber trees while the poor have difficulty in planting them because it requires a lot of labor input and investment. Although it is supposed that the economic disparity has been expanded, economic research on Para rubber plantations there was not done well because they were planted in 1994 and it takes 7-8 years until rubber latex is collected. Therefore, I do economic research in a village where it has been already collected and reveal the problems.



Rubber tapping



Selling rubber latex in a village

## Language Training

I studied the Lao language at the faculty of letters, National University of Laos. I had a personal lesson for two hours a day, four days a week. A male and female lecturer had the lesson by each day.

There are three textbooks for beginners, intermediates, and advanced learners, and I completed the ones for beginners and intermediates. I learned the Lao letters and each pronunciation by the textbook for beginners for first two weeks. After learning them, I had easy conversation with the lecturer to learn new words and grammar, and I answered questions about the conversation by writing to improve my reading and writing skills.

On the textbook for intermediates, I had more complicated conversation with them to get used to practical conversation.

After completing those two, I learned the basic Lao, but it was not enough to do research for myself. I continued to learn new technical terms and the northern dialect while doing research.



Faculty of Letters, National University of Laos



Lesson with a lecturer