

Food and Agricultural Problems Caused by Urbanization in Thailand:

The Current Food Situation in Bangkok

Admission Year: Heisei 25

Place of fieldwork: Thailand

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Keywords: Thailand, market, food, Thai language, overseas education, report

- Background

At present, urbanization is under way in developing countries where there is an increase in the number of cities and in the size of existing cities. Cities are not only economic centers; they also are centers of commerce and distribution, attracting large populations and requiring many resources. However, most of the resources flow from rural areas, and consumers who live in the city depend on food transported from rural areas. In short, in many developing countries, a significant problem is the securing of food for the city dwellers. It is likely that the urbanization process will continue far into the future. Now is the time to consider and resolve the food and agricultural problem in a framework that includes urban areas.

- Purposes

Thailand, the study site, has been an exporter of agricultural products since the late 19th century. Urbanization has been progressing in various regions in Thailand. The object of this research is to identify food and agricultural problems that are associated with food security for the cities, in particular, Bangkok, and to identify farmers' responses to those problems.

In this study, the primary purpose was to learn the Thai language that would be required for future research in Thailand. The second purpose was to examine the current distribution of agricultural products in Bangkok.

- Results and Achievements of the Fieldwork

First, I took Thai language lessons from September to November 2013. The Thai language is very different from Japanese and I had difficulty learning to speak and understand the language.

Then, I observed the distribution of



Photo 1: Market at Northern Thailand



Photo 2: Stalls of dinner in Bangkok

agricultural products. I observed a standing market, which was a temporary market with simple stalls. Here, many fruits and meats were placed casually for the buyer and sold by the kilogram or by the piece.

In recent years, the number of the large supermarkets has increased in urban areas. In supermarkets, fruits and meats are packaged to maintain freshness. Also, there are corners where organic foods were offered to attract the many buyers, rural as well as urban, who are concerned about food safety. Even in the local market, packaged fruit was sold (see Photo 1).

- Implications for and Directions for Future Research

In this report, I introduce the situation of food distribution in Bangkok. However, Bangkok is very large and the scale of food distribution in Bangkok is beyond the scope and coverage of my research alone.

Through this research experience, I have grasped the general situation of food security in Bangkok and the characteristics of people who live there. Next I will proceed to research the consumption site.

