



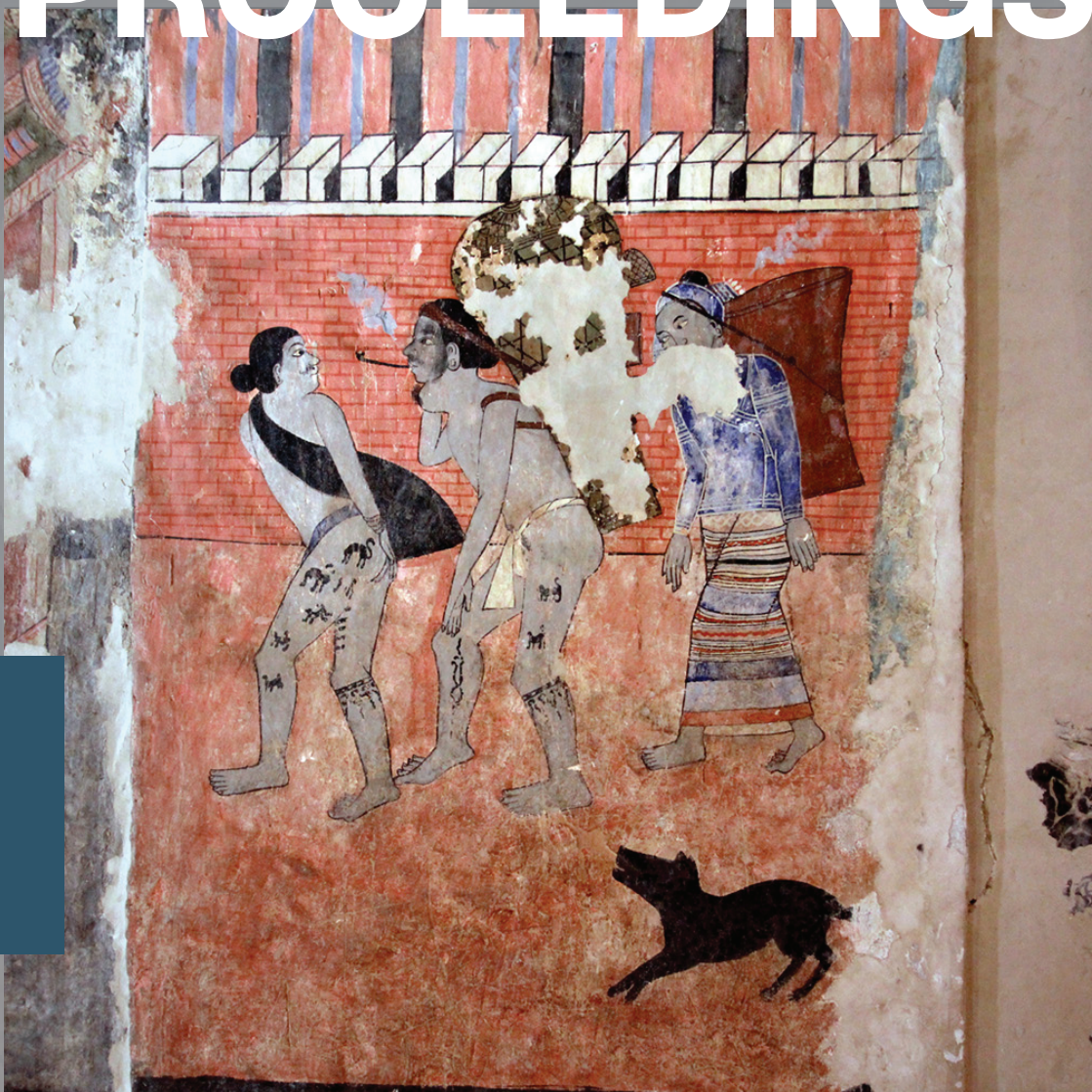
13<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON

# THAI STUDIES

GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT,  
AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES

15-18 JULY 2017 CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

# PROCEEDINGS



## Volume 3: L-P







March 2018

ICTS 13 Conference Secretariat

Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development (RCSD)

Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Email: [icts13.cm@gmail.com](mailto:icts13.cm@gmail.com), [rcsd@cmu.ac.th](mailto:rcsd@cmu.ac.th); Website: <http://www.icts13.chiangmai.cmu.ac.th/>

## VOLUME 3: L-P

### **Volume 3: Table of Contents**

#### **BUDDHISM, HISTORY, LITERATURE AND THE “EPIGRAPHIC HABIT” OF LANNA**

Lagirarde, François .....875

#### **IS TOURISM THE (ONLY) BEST ‘CHOICE’ FOR COMMUNITY REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT?**

Laochockchaikul, Kanjana .....890

#### **TRANSNATIONAL MARRIAGES, THAI MEN AND MASCULINE ANXIETY**

Lapanun, Patcharin .....903

#### **FROM BUREAUCRATIC POLITY TO NEO-PLURALISM AND INSTITUTIONALISM: THE POLITICS OF THAI HIGHER EDUCATION**

Lavankura, Pad.....912

#### **THREE PHASES OF TRANSLATION OF THE CHINESE NOVEL ROMANCE OF THREE KINGDOMS IN THAILAND: A SOCIOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Li, Ping.....928

#### **HOSPITALITY OR INHOSPITALITY?: A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON ONLINE TEXTS OF HOTEL WEBSITES IN THAILAND AND CHINA FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF GENRE ANALYSIS AND CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

Liu, Bo .....939

#### **DISCRETE CONTINUITY IN TRANSNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FLOW AND MODERNIZATION: A CASE STUDY OF THAI DIASPORA IN COPENHAGEN**

Liu, Chang.....958

#### **THE INSCRIPTIONS OF THE LĀN NĀ AND LĀN XĀNG KINGDOMS: DATA FOR A NEW APPROACH TO CROSS-BORDER HISTORY**

Lorrillard, Michel.....970



**BUDDHASENAKA: MOTIFS AND RELATIONSHIP TO LANNA CULTURE**

Luedung, Duanghatai .....982

**IMPROVING COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS TOWARD AEC IN  
CHIANG MAI PROVINCE AND LAMPHUN PROVINCE**

Maneetrakunthong, Archabaramee & Sangkakorn, Korawan .....994

**THAI-JAPAN PPP COOPERATION NEW ERA – DAWEI AND CLUSTER LINKAGE UNDER  
“THAI PLUS ONE”**

Matsushima, Daisuke .....1002

**LOOKING BACK TO A COLONIAL PAST: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN THE  
DISCOURSE OF THAINESS IN THAILAND AND THE DISCOURSE OF  
MULTICULTURALISM IN SINGAPORE**

Metaveevinij, Veluree .....1025

**A REVIEW OF RUSSIAN ACADEMIC LITERATURE ON OVERSEAS CHINESE IN THAILAND  
IN THE 20TH CENTURY**

Moskalev, Petr .....1033

**THE INFLUENCE OF CHINESE CLASSICAL NOVELS ON THAILAND -- A CASE STUDY OF  
THE ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS**

Mou, Lei & Zhou, Hong.....1043

**ALBINO EEL AND VIRTUOUS WIDOW IN LOST CITY – THE VERNACULAR RECORDS OF  
A NATURAL DISASTER IN NORTHERN THAI FOLKLORE**

Nakai, Senjo .....1054

**HOW DID VILLAGERS BECOME PRESERVERS OF THE WORLD HERITAGE? A CASE  
STUDY OF BAN CHIANG ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE**

Nakamura, Marie .....1076

**NATURAL DISASTERS AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN THAILAND: STATUS, RISKS,  
AND TREND**

Nakasu, Tadashi .....1088

**LOCAL HISTORY OF THE *PHANOM RUNG* FESTIVAL: CONTESTED MEANING OF  
SANCTUARY OWNERSHIP**

Narasaj, Benjawan .....1107

**GLOBALIZED WORLD, MODERN *KHRUBA* (VENERABLE MONK) AND THE  
CONSTRUCTION OF NETWORK IN THAI BUDDHIST SOCIETY**

Nasee, Pisith .....1118

**HOW TO MAINTAIN THE PASSION FOR DA'WA MOVEMENT - FROM THE CASE OF PAI  
TOWN**

Nishii, Ryoko .....1144

**THE POETICS OF DESTRUCTIONS: DEMOLITIONS OF ICONIC MODERNIST BUILDINGS  
IN BANGKOK**

Noobanjong, Koompong .....1153

**THE DYNAMICS OF TAI VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE IN NORTHEAST INDIA**

Oranratmanee, Rawiwan & Saicharoent, Chaowalit .....1181

**ACT EAST POLICY, INDIA'S NORTH- EAST AND THAILAND: ISSUES IN ECONOMIC  
INTEGRATION**

Panda, Bhagirathi .....1193

**THE VALUES OF FON PHI CEREMONIES TO SOCIO-CULTURE CHIANG MAI PROVINCE**

Phakdee, Niran.....1204

**STUDY ON ETHNIC SOCIO-CULTURAL IDENTITY PROJECTION THROUGH  
TRADITIONAL TEXTILES AMONG TAIS OF ASSAM, INDIA**

Phukon, Rajashree .....1213

**SOCIAL HEALING FACTORS AND PROCESS THAT LEAD TO RECONCILIATION AND  
FORGIVENESS: THE STUDIES OF THAILAND SOCIO-POLITICAL VIOLENCE CONFLICT  
OVER A DECADE**

Pindavanija, Eakpant; Ouaprachanon, Ratawit & Saisaeng, Bordin .....1222

**STUDY AND DEVELOPMENT OF GRAND SOCIAL PLATFORM: EXPLORING DISCOURSES  
ON NATIONAL REFORM AND 20-YEAR NATIONAL STRATEGY**

Pindavanija, Eakpant; Saisaeng, Bordin & Ouaprachanon, Ratawit .....1240

**NAGA AND THE TAI: GLOBAL INFLUENCES AND LOCAL DYNAMICS IN CULTURAL  
PRODUCTION AND REPRODUCTION IN ARCHITECTURE AND TEXTILES.**

Polakit, Kasama.....1255

**‘LUA’ OR ‘L’VUEA’: THEIR HISTORY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF LANNA HISTORY**

Pongpandecha, Akarin & Krajaejun, Pipad .....1270

**A STUDY OF SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVE FOR LIVING COMMUNITIES**

Poomchalit, Walanrak; Suzuki, Katsuhiko & Suzuki, Arno .....1287

**ARCHITECTURALLY ANALYZING THAI CONCEPT OF ‘HOME’ UNDER MID-19TH  
CENTURY MODERNIZATION BY THE ROYAL REGIME: HYBRIDIZATION AND  
ARCHITECTURE OF NEW ROAD IN BANGKOK**

Prapapyuenyong, Teerapatt.....1305

**DISCOURSE OF TEEN MOM IN THAILAND AND COMPARISON STUDY THROUGH FILMS  
IN TEEN MOM ISSUE**

Prapawong, Suparada .....1323



## Buddhism, History, Literature and the “Epigraphic Habit” of Lanna

Lagiarde, François

École française d’Extrême-Orient  
France

-----

### Abstract

The ongoing publication of the inscriptions of northern Thailand allows a relatively easy access to a considerable amount of information rather well exploited by historians and linguists but still somewhat neglected by the historians of literature and in particular the historians of Buddhist literature.

Although some major texts attributed to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries AD largely dominate ancient literature, almost no manuscript of these distant epochs ever survived. The center of gravity of manuscript culture is in the nineteenth century, while that of inscriptions is rather around the sixteenth. The reading of the inscriptions thus makes it possible to ensure the validity, if not of facts, at least of acts of speech or language from the late pre-modern period and the beginning of the early modern period, closer to the instances and situations that supported or conceived them.

The inscriptions of Lanna evoke both the history of the “books” as objects, the stories they contain or the subjects they deal with. But, first of all, they disclose the epigraphic habit itself as a tool of communication rarely studied for its own sake. This paper will try to highlight the technical aspect of many inscriptions and attempt to find in the stone message what is told or truly “reflected” about its function. This practical side is often concerned with land property and legal management of laborers but finds its ultimate *raison d’être* in a rich sum of Buddhist references and literary practices quoted or mentioned on every inscription.

The reading of Lanna epigraphy goes with the recognition of textual topicality and tradition. It works on a wide system of references that finds its ultimate meaning in the Buddhist faith in its confrontation with the secular power (a final point that will be exposed in the second part of this paper, not published here).

**Keywords:** Thai epigraphy, Lanna Buddhist inscriptions, written communication, Thai literature, Buddhism and history.

*We would have the heart of the matter [epigraphy] if we knew why people wrote things on stone everywhere in Italy and the provinces. We must look not for the occasion chosen, such as a life ended, a vow made, or an honor voted, but at the decision itself to give those facts some marble commemoration.*

Ramsay MacMullen

## 1. Introduction

This decision to turn to “marble” as mentioned above, is the “epigraphic habit” itself, an expression coined by Ramsay MacMullen (here pertaining to the Latin world where facts were “given” stone in order to serve as their reminder). This expression was reused or quoted in other contexts (Greece, India) by different specialists such as Hedrick or Salomon who reflected on this customary practice, questioning the usage first rather than the message first. Epigraphy is indeed a cultural practice that can be understood with different tools, (statistics, mapping, frequency curves about their situation in time and places, etc.) all working indirectly with purely textual or philological considerations. Still epigraphy and other aspects of literature at large can be apprehended inside the epigraphic message itself.

Decision? Every occasion indeed can be told and recorded so why *epigraphy* – erecting stones (melting bronze) – was especially selected to communicate a message that could be *verbatim* transmitted by another lighter (easier or cheaper) medium? Or shall we think that the message on stone was also laid down on another less durable medium and lost sometime in history?

If epigraphy was there to fix or pass precise piece of “external” information could it also inform about itself, about literacy, literature and communication in general? What was its relationship with other “literary habits”? Was epigraphy a very much official and ritual action with an indecisive connection with its counterpart, the “reading habit”? Can we compare some identical or equivalent messages transmitted on different supports? All the specialists mentioned above finally conclude on the epigraphic habit with some sort of wide considerations about history, ideology or psychology: in the context of Lanna can we draw a few lines between power, time and society as well?<sup>1</sup>

Let us try to start answering these questions in the light of the inscriptions of Lanna (mostly *semas* found in monasteries). First of all by reading what the inscriptions have to say about epigraphy. Then we may find what they disclose, more or less directly, about books, works, Buddhist narratives and literature in general in order to legitimize their (pre)scriptions (this question will be discussed in a second part of this paper, not published here).

---

<sup>1</sup> The “rise and fall” of the epigraphic habit is seen as “the sign of some very broad psychological shift” in the Roman people for MacMullen, the Athenian epigraphical habit as a manifestation of state ideology (democracy) for Hedrick, the uniqueness of Aśoka’s time inscriptions because of the “uniqueness” of the ruler for Salomon.

## 2. Situation, Corpus, Definition

**2.1.** Northern Thai epigraphy has natural roots in the epigraphy of Hariphunchai and the epigraphy of Sukhothai. The epigraphic corpus of Hariphunchai consists of a dozen inscriptions in Mon and Pāli (including fragments) apparently all from the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> The most important inscription (LB01 or Wat Don Kaeo) is structured as a model where the general themes of future local epigraphy are to be found.

The epigraphy of Sukhothai, as everybody knows, is particularly rich and abundant and was very much influenced by Khmer epigraphy. One might wonder if the systematic eulogies or panegyrics was a characteristic of the Khmer and if so, what was its indirect influence on the epigraphy of Lanna: indeed a great deal of other elements were directly passed to the stonecutters (lapicides), writers and authors.<sup>3</sup> Despite the Mon influence based on Pāli references, Khmer and Sanskrit linguistic elements were imported directly to Lanna by Sukhothai and remained in the *fak-kham* tradition. The two traditions remained simultaneous for a time.

The “textual awareness” of the Hariphunchai Mon inscriptions is perceptible: either because their refer to books and literature for instance in LB01 (Wat Don Kaeo) “Ayant fait écrire de nombreux tripiṭakas dorés” (Coedès 1925, 190-191, from the Pāli) either because it refers to epigraphy itself, for instance, also in LB01<sup>4</sup>: “(1) Ceci est le récit véridique, inscrit sur pierre, des œuvres (2) faites par ma famille” and “(9) Voici le récit véridique de mes œuvres (Halliday 1930, 90).<sup>5</sup>

The rulers of Hariphunchai knew very well the “epigraphic habit” – or the art of erecting stones – but they did not transmitted the local Mon word for it (*selālekh*) to the new comers, the Thais who always refer to inscriptions as *charik*, *charuek* or *charit* (จารึก, จารึก, จาริต) words of Khmer origin and certainly derived from the K. word *char* (จาร) that appears in Khmer epigraphy as early as the 10<sup>th</sup> century (according to Prof. M. Antelme).<sup>6</sup>

In the frame of Buddhist culture, since inscriptions try to provide, little by little, centuries after centuries, a general public definition of its religious structure, textual awareness and attention for documents can be found with a fair amount of judging and reasoning. It is fairly important but the information provided by the Thai inscriptions is rather scattered and even sketchy. So far it never reached the very precise level of Burmese epigraphy where for instance, complete catalogs were provided by inscriptions: the Pagan inscription dated 1442 AD records a donation to a monastery with a list of almost 300 titles of

---

<sup>2</sup> See Coedès 1925 and Halliday 1930. Either paleographically datable (11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries AD) or actually dated (1213 and 1219 AD for the “Vat Don” inscription [LB01]). M. Buchmann proposed a range: 12th/17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

<sup>3</sup> In this paper I will mention Thai inscriptions prior to 1370 AD that seems directly connected to further developments of Lanna literature and Buddhism. Basically Sukhothai inscriptions of the 13th and 14th century (formerly known as Inscription 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11 etc. and Bang Sanuk Inscription).

<sup>4</sup> Here I follow the Fine Arts Department (also used by Buchmann) province code: BR = Phrae, BY Phayao, JM Chiang Mai, JR Chiang Rai, LB Lamphun, LP Lampang, NN Nan.

<sup>5</sup> 1. *II ° II vo' selālekh cramatt sambhār at 2. dnāt ey ma pa ° [...]* 9. *II ° II vo' selālekh cramatt sambhār ey ma simo' savvādhī siddhi*. An identical formula is used in LB03A01 (Wat Mahawan) and LB06A01 (Wat Ban Luai): *vo' lekh cramatt sambhār* (Halliday 1930, 103). *Cramatt* is a dialectal variety of *cirmat* = testimony, truth, here translated as “a true record” by Halliday (according to Prof. C. Bauer).

<sup>6</sup> But V. Grabowsky points to me that “inscription” is called *silalek* in modern Lao.



texts written in Pāli, Sanskrit and Burmese (Luce 1976, 203-256).<sup>7</sup> The abilities to reflect on literature, on communication strategies and textual heritage remains modest although the oldest Thai inscription (Ramkhamhaeng inscription, AD 1292) is claiming and alluding to “scriptural” foundations. As a matter of fact only a few references are provided by Thai or Mon inscriptions before 1370 AD

**2.2.** In theory “the” corpus should be without limits in kind (considering all material supports) and taken as an open process of constitution since new inscriptions are still being discovered by archaeologists. However, in practice, the published corpus tends to provide limits (and even to transgress them) since many different kind of inscriptions just cannot be put on the same plane. The historical *Prachum Charuek Sayam* (vol.1 and 2) was started in 1924 but was followed by a *Prachum Sila Charuek* up to vol. 7 then by a magnificent 8<sup>th</sup> volume, simply entitled *Prachum Charuek*. Depending on different academic committees and people, corpora are often self-limited to a language, a place, a country or a region, a period.

For instance graffiti and signatures, plates, terra cota, *ostraca*, seals, inscriptions on wood and lacquer are not put on the same level with monumental stone inscriptions or inscriptions on the base of bronze Buddha images. This is understandable for historical reasons, when one needs to display a specific “epigraphic habit” or tradition, but not acceptable in terms of linguistics since the reconstruction of a state of language (indexes, glossaries, grammars) should go through all available documents.

As a matter of fact, existing corpus impose their own definition of epigraphy: considering time or epochs, considering the medium, considering the geography. For instance Marek Buchmann presented a corpus of 173 inscriptions on stone and dated from the origins (1339 AD) to 1616/1617 AD for his *Glossary* and 221 for the *Catalogue* (BR, BY, JM, JR, LB, LP, MS, NN) plus 17 “inscriptions without a Fine Arts Department Registration Number”. His selection was made according to 1) place: a geographical range, northern Thailand; 2) time: a period from 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century (but not for the *Catalogue*; 3) a material support, stone only.

In the *Catalogue* of the 221 registered inscriptions (FAD) by Buchmann 147 inscriptions are dated when 74 are not dated or not dated with certainty although paleographic dating can be fairly proposed for many of them (and this dating is consistent with the following patterns).

14<sup>th</sup> century: 5 stones inscriptions  
15<sup>th</sup> century: 66 stones inscriptions  
16<sup>th</sup> century: 52 stones inscriptions  
17<sup>th</sup> century: 2 stones inscriptions  
18<sup>th</sup> century: 6 stones inscriptions  
19<sup>th</sup> century: 10 stones inscriptions  
20<sup>th</sup> century: 6 stones inscriptions

It is easy to note that Lanna epigraphy was born in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and reached its full “habit” during the

---

<sup>7</sup> It is called *moau-kwan* “Record of Works of the Royal Monastery at Pagan” and mentions the cost of making copies, the name of the copyists and the slaves given to the monastery (idem, 215).

15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. It almost disappeared during the Burmese occupation to humbly be reborn during the new dynasty of the Chao Chet Ton.

**2.3.** The purpose or the epigraphic intentions of the Northern Thai inscriptions are indeed multiple, submitted to the numerous different kind of messages left at two periods of a literate civilization (late premodern and early modern) on many different physical mediums selected for their supposed resistance and durability. In the corpus proposed by Buchmann stone inscriptions, *semas*, were generally public monuments “posted” on or next to other bigger monuments. Their message had to be enduring, public, voluntarily non-confidential.

Griswold and Prasert na Nagara proposed a definition of Sukhothai (Thai?) function of epigraphy: “The main purpose of practically all the Sukhodayan inscriptions, no matter how much additional information they may give, is to commemorate a ceremony which accompanied some specific act, such as the installation of a throne, an oath of friendship between two rulers, the promulgation of a law, the exoneration of a monk who had been falsely accused, the founding or dedication of a monastery or of a cetiya, vihāra or statue, or some other donation to religion.” (introduction to “The Inscription of Vāt Jāñ Lòm (1384 AD)” Epigraphic and Historical studies No.8, in *Epigraphic and Historical studies*, 1992, 221-222).

This rather traditional definition makes an interesting point about the complexity of the epigraphic fact which is 1) writing 2) about a ritual or a ceremony 3) about some “historical” act or fact 4) in order to keep it remembered. The main question should be about what is meant about “commemoration” on the top of all the strong symbolical actions (ceremony and text composition). Is it part of a peculiar reading of the inscriptions?

As we shall see later in this article this first point – “writing” – is not as simple as it appears: the erection of public inscriptions if not a ritual, was at least a process itself well regulated, celebrated or recalled by the inscription. This reflexivity (the inscription speaks of the inscription) is a fundamental and unique aspect that allows us to understand the literacy of the Thai early modern period (Sukhothai and the “Golden Age” of Lanna, 13<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> Centuries) since there is no other literary trace in local languages before the 16th or 17th centuries. AD: the oldest preserved Thai manuscripts were found in the 17th century, even though a few *olas* (in Pāli) of the 15th and 16th centuries have been discovered in Wat Lai Hin (Lampang).

Traditionally, inscriptions have been divided in two categories: relative inscription and independent inscriptions. The epigraphy of Lanna (at least as represented in the available corpus) are relative inscriptions: it means that they are directly connected to an object, usually a monument building or an item, an utensil kept in the monument. These monuments are essentially religious: of course most inscriptions were found in monasteries, either archaeological sites or active places. Often the object of reference has disappeared (or has been ruined) and many inscriptions have been displaced from their original environment. Hence many difficulties in the understanding of their function and in the interpretation of their message.

**2.4.** Writing and reading. Who reads? It is generally assumed that the fact of writing (here engraving in stone or bronze, at great expense, a command carried out by officials) is followed by reading. We may

ask what kind of reading was expected and even if any reading was really ever expected. Who could read these inscriptions when they were written in an alphabet that was not necessarily taught in monastic schools? They were well read by those who had composed them and written on the stone. An author, a secretary, a scribe and all the officials around. After them, who and what?

At this stage it should be very important to distinguish the different kinds of inscriptions, and, in every category, to highlight the language or speech acts, in order to understand better all the possible epigraphic habits. Mostly these inscriptions were designed for future generations, generations of dignitaries who would have full or partial control over land and men. Many inscriptions appear as land deeds or legal acts which organize, more than proper religious activities, the business of maintaining the property. This legal documents (records, certificates, charters) were not meant to be read in general, in an ordinary way, but consulted in case of problem linked to the future evolution of the Thai (high) society. Seen like this, inscriptions are often archives that can be consulted in case of a dispute. Their readership, at the time of their composition, was envisioned as future, collective, undetermined.

But this is not all, apart from the law enunciated by a king and transmitted to its officials, also remains the act of merit performed in full knowledge of the Dhamma and under the law of Karma. And this is generally the second act we can question. The same question again: “who reads” the votive words pronounced by the faithful who wants to become a future Buddha or be reborn in a higher condition? No one. But to write and fix it permanently resembles a ritual action as important as the commemorated good deed.

Last question: who read the narratives contained in the inscriptions, who should have an interest in the quotations and other literary references?

**2.5.** The facts and their “publication.” The (very often a religious rather than a purely political) event (construction of a monastery, of a specific building, gilding of a statue etc.) and the writing of the event are two different things separated in nature and time<sup>8</sup>: that is a reason why some inscriptions bear two different dates or even two different horoscopes like JR02 , LB23 or JR63. The first date would be the date of the event the inscription is talking about. The second date/horoscope mentions the day when the inscription was engraved or erected (not necessarily the day when the royal order was promulgated). In JR02 the date of December 28, 1495 AD commemorates the gilding of the Phra Chao Ton Luang but on the other right part of the same side the date of June 26, 1495 records the installation of the stele. Six months were necessary to compose the text and engraved it on the stone slab. In JR63 two years (from 1497 to 1499) elapsed between the construction of a wat and the promulgation of the *legal* text.

### **3. Inscriptions about the Epigraphic Usage (the Reflexive Aspect)**

**3.1.** *Charik*, *charuek* or *charit* (จารึก, จารึก, จาริต) is part of the epigraphic vocabulary, when inscriptions are mentioning their own existence and refer to themselves. There is a double meaning 1) the stone slab or stele (*stela*) 2) the message or text engraved in the stone. If stone/monumental inscriptions “often” refer to themselves it is not or rarely the case with other types of inscriptions.

---

<sup>8</sup> Or writing about the practical consequences of the event.



The classifiers for *charik*, *charuek* or *charit* can be *hin*, *sema*, *pang*, *phaen*, *lak* (หิน ปาง เสมา แผ่น หลัก). *Charuek* is often qualified with the words *sela/sila* (stone). Sometimes the word *sema* is used by itself as a noun meaning a boundary stone (of the monastery or the ordination hall) and it is difficult to know what is meant, the inscription or the *bai sema* or the *pāda sema* or boundaries of the monastery? JM24A08 [LI pp.92-93] คนโตมากวนแลลวนเสมา ตายลงเบึงจาจุงต้องอเวจี

Hence the question of a special or even “sacred” status?

For instance the Wat Phra Yuen inscription calls itself a *phra sela charik* (in modern Thai พระติลาจารึก, LB 38, I-2) as related or owned by the King Song Saen Na (it is also considered as a Sukhothai inscription). It is a “phra” or became a *phra* when its sister inscriptions never used the word (the Khmer Sukhothai n°4, Wat Pa Ma Muang or the Khmer inscription of the Mango Grove).

The “oldest” inscription (Ramkhamhaeng Inscription or n°1, III-22-24) does not refer to itself but gives a list of 3 other inscriptions calling them simply *charik* (*charuek*). “There is” (มี) one inscription installed (สถาปนา) in the city of Chaliang and two in different caves (Phra Ram and Ratanathan).<sup>9</sup> The very detailed and precise Khmer n°4 (in Pāli) makes a clear distinction between the “sacred stances” (*brah gāthā*, IV-12-15) and the stone on which they are engraved: and so, there is no other occurrence of *phra* associated with *charuek*, therefore LB38 was probably a unique tentative to confer a “sacred” status to the inscriptions.

However the erection of an inscription is seen as an act of merit (*bun*, *punya*) that will be dedicated to the king, in the pure Buddhist local tradition (JM04A09-12, 1497 AD):

หื้อช่างดาบเร็นผู้หนึ่งชื่อชวน้อย นำมาฝังจาริตไว้ เพื่อหื้อเป็นบุญจำเริญแก่พระเป็นเจ้าแผ่นดินแล

See also JM16A05 (1496 AD) when the Mahasami Yanavilasa transfers the merit of establishing Wat Si Bun Rueang to the king:

มหาสามีญาณวิลาสเจ้าตนมีประพญานลาดอาจในปริยัติศาสนาหื้อเอาวัดศรีบุญเรืองนี้  
มาถวายส่วนบุญแก่พระเป็นเจ้า

**3.2.** The Sukhothai inscription n°3, Nakhon Chum, makes also a clear distinction between a message, a statement, or a word (*kham*) and the support itself: it suggests that a single message can be detailed (*phisadan*) and supported in other inscriptions. II-47-48 “This statement (คำ) is rather brief but there is a detailed inscription at Sukhothai” (translation by Griswold and Prasert na Nagara):

คำนี้กล่าวคั่นสเล็กสน้อย แลคำอันพิสดารไซรั กล่าวไว้ในจารึกอันมีในเมืองสุโขทัย

In Sukhothai, the erection of inscriptions is directly under the authority of the king. Inscription 8 or Charuek Khao Sumanakūṭa (approx. dated 1370 like PB38 first royal inscription of Lanna) also tells of the King who made this inscription (Coedès: « Alors il monta rendre hommage à la sainte empreinte du pied que son père avait placée autrefois sur le sommet de cette montagne Sumanakūṭa, puis il grava cette nouvelle inscription » (*Prachum Charuek Siam*, p.129):

<sup>9</sup> Ramkhamhaeng Inscription, III-32-34: “จารึกอันหนึ่ง มีในเมืองชเลียง สถาปนาไว้ด้วยพระศรีรัตนธาตุ จารึกอันหนึ่ง มีในถ้ำชื่อถ้ำพระราม อยู่ฝั่งน้ำสาพาย จารึกอันหนึ่งมีในถ้ำรัตนธาร.” No detail is provided on the reason why we are told about these inscriptions.

จึง จารจารึกอันนี้ ไว้ถึกสด (IV-20-21).

Inscription 45 dated 1392 AD records different oaths of loyalty between high ranking people in Sukhothai as well as imprecations against wrongdoers. The word *charuek* is mentioned twice: the first occurrence (I-33) tells of the « message engraved in this inscription » (สารจารในจารึกนี้) and the second (II-15) « curse the bad people in this inscription on a stela » (สาบานว่าร้ายในเสมาจารึกนี้) or (Griswold and Prasert): “ we pledge in this inscribed stone slab that the wicked...”.

The expression appears verbatim in Inscription 64 also known as Nan 01 « Kham Pu Sabot » (« The inscription Recording the Oath of the Grandfather » studied by Griswold and Prasert na Nagara in EHS 67-107). The same compound *san (sār) charik* can also be found in inscription 106 or Wat Chang Lom inscription.

The inscription dated 1451 AD from Chiang Tung (face B, 1) published by Griswold and P. na Nagara (EHS 19) and Penth (“Chaimontaram AD 1451”) associates the words *san (sāra)* and *tamnan*: ตำนานสารในจาร(ิต) อันนี้ translated by G. and PnN. As “the history summed up in this inscription”.

Clearly the vocabulary of “written communication” is balanced between legal orders and narratives. The Chaimontaram inscription from Chiang Tung explains that the queen was busy decorating the relics casket containing the ashes of the king and other supports. She had paintings of the life of the Buddha made with “words (of explanation inscribed) in sequence [...] there were stone slabs ... [set up] with words relating the stories in detail...” “there were many beautiful stories, all complete” (EHS 19, 84) เราแลวกทำให้คำลำดับ .... มีแผ่นหินสีลา ... ด้วยคำกทำนยายอนัฟิจิตร (face 3, 5-7). She mentions episodes like “the scene when the Lord went to preach the seven Pakaraṇas [here books, expositions] of the Abhidhamma ...” and the author of the inscription<sup>10</sup> tells us that “there were many beautiful stories, all complete.” (idem, 84).

อะพริฐามะสตะปะกรณา (face 3, 16-17) พราหมินิญาหลายพรายงาม (face 3, 20).

Difference between the stone and the text appears clearly in inscription 14 (Wat Khema, dated possibly 1536 AD): I-35-37 “This piece of stone was given by Nāy Bān Biṣṇukarma and Nāy Sāñ, the son of Nāy Debajaya, undertook .... To have it inscribed so that [the record] may last as long as the Buddha’s religion.” Possibly more literally translated as: Nai Sang accepted it to be a durable inscription for the religion of the Buddha. (Cœdès: « Cette pierre-ci a été donnée par Nāy Bān Bisnukarma and Nāy Sāñ, fils de Nāy Deba s’est chargé ... d’en faire une inscription pourqu’elle subsiste dans la religion du Buddha. » (Prachum 1, 167): I-35-37.

หินแผ่นนี้ นายพันพิษณุกรรมให้แล นายสังลูก นายเทพไชยรับ ให้เป็นจารึกไว้ให้มั่นกับศาสนาพระเป็นเจ้า

Obviously stone is seen as the material vector of a message intended to last during the 5000 years of the *sāsanā* and *presence* (in the relics) of the Buddha.

Sometimes inscription tell of the life of the inscription itself like inscription 15 (Wat Phra Sadet dated, for the 4th side, 1525 AD): the inscription was broken and written again at a later date, « as was stated in [this] inscription in the upper part which is [now] broken off, in which the slaves were given

<sup>10</sup> The author is the Mahāthera Khemamaṅgala who speaks at the third person but once uses the first person (เรา) to tell that the king had “faith in my words” (face 2, 21).

unconditionally for the rest of their lives » (Griswold and Prasert, EHS 16 p. 674).

**3.3. “Burying”** (installing, erecting) an inscription. In JM67A09-12 (from Wat Mahawan in Phayao, dated 1489 AD) the queen (Mahādevi/Mahathewi) orders officials to “bury” an inscription set up for the dedication of the monastery she has been sponsoring. The merit will be for her and the King.

เจ้าหมื่นน้อยในมหาเทวีเจ้าจิ่งห้อมมาฝังจารึกไว้ห้อมเจ้าพันหลวงสุวรรณรังการห้อมฝัง  
ห้อมพันหนึ่งสี่สิบพระห้อมกับพันข่ม(จ)อมมาสู่เจ้าหมื่น(อ)อัยฝังบุญทั้งมวลนี้จิ่ง  
จำเริญแก่พระเป็นเจ้าเจ้าแผ่นดิน

Inscription JM16A21 (dated 1491 AD) tells that a senior monk Mahasami Yanavilasa worked on the establishment of a monastery. He transfers the merit to the king who orders Phuak Yana Khamhaeng to erect an inscription:

พวกญาณคำแหงแถมรับอาชญาพระเป็นเจ้าห้อมมาฝังจารึกไว้

The verb *fang* (ฝัง) was used and may have referred to the fact that the lower part of the inscription was put in the ground, or installed enduringly in a base: *fang* should be simply translated with *erect* or *erect permanently* (LB16A20, 1487 AD: ฝังจารึกไว้). The expression ใส่จารึกไว้ (JM09A06) also appeared but is less precise. Permanence is required that is why we find such expressions as: “Any future governor should not remove it from the monastery”. (JM67B10-11)

เจ้าไทยผู้ใด มากินเมิงนี้ อย่าเอาออก แด

The erection of an inscription is witnessed by a group invited or summoned by the king or a high ranking official: “people come to erect a stone inscription in the Banpan monastery following the order of the king; (ten families are given) so do not interfere with the order.” BY89A16-18, 1496 AD:

มาฝังหินจารึก ในวัดบ้านปาน ตามอาชญาพระเป็นเจ้า [...] อย่างลัว อย่าเกล้า ตามอาชญาพระ ที่ไว้

Only once the exact place where the inscription should be left has been mentioned. JR02 (1496 AD) uses the word *charuek* with the horoscope recording the erection of the stone ฝังจารึก (JR02AR02) but on the other side details are provided about the way the inscription should be kept: the queen orders to inscribe and leave the inscription in the “room” (*hong*, ห้อง) of the Great Buddha:

ห้อมต้องจารึกไว้ห้องพระเจ้าตนหลวง

#### 4. Customary Habit and Communication of the Law

**4.1.** One of the most frequent message in the inscriptions is about naming and listing witnesses, officials (something that determines a style, if not a genre), who are supposed to act as guarantors able to enforce the order finally written in the stone.

All of this is very factual and down to earth: in LB26A03 (1500 AD, as published in CLI 6, pp.53-68) the queen orders to “bury” the inscription in Wat Mahapho and to provide seventy-two families from (a place called) Yang.

พระมหาเทวีเจ้าอยู่หัวห้อมฝังจารึกไว้ในวัดมหาโพธิเจ้า(ให้จัด)ชาวญาง๗๒ ครัว (ไว้) กับ (วัดมหาโพธิ ดังนี้).

The main point is indeed about the respect of two properties: land and people (slaves). That is why some many big names – holders of authority – are invited to come and “bury” an inscription. As we have seen above the expression มาฝังจารึกนี้แล is standard and occurs in several inscriptions, like LP12B08 (1496 AD) or BY06A05-06 where the Phra Pen Chao Chao Mueang Chiang Rai (the Governor) summons three officials to come and install the inscription in Wat Nang Muen (หื้อมาฝังจารึกไว้กับวัดนางหมื่น) in order to guarantee independence of the donated persons from other government duties. See also JM024A08 (= JM175) “order to bury the inscription that bears [= mentions the donation of] ten families”:

หื้อมาฝังจารึกไว้คน(สิ)บคร้ว หื้อรักษาพระพุทธรเจ้า

A king can even order (through a Chao Muen) the installation of an inscription and stipulate that his law shall be respected by the generations of kings to come during the Buddhist era. BY38A02-07 (no date, 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century): “Any king should not rule and oppress the group of people mentioned [or assign the people to another duty]”:

พระเป็นเจ้า...หื้อฝังจารึกในวัดด...ง.กลางหื้อ มันต่อเท่าศา(สนา)พระ-----เจ้า๕๐๐ปีเจ้า  
(แ)แผ่นดินผู้ใดอย่าเบียดเบียนเขา(ใช้ส)อยเขาหมื่น

In LB23B01-19 (1489 AD) the erection of an inscription is seen as a reunion of important people and high ranking monks that need to be witnessed two days after an important donation by the queen (two horoscopes are provided, one for the donation and a second one for the erection of the inscription). The queen calls for an assembly to witness the erection and give (written?) permission (อนุญาต)<sup>11</sup> to a *rāja paṇḍita* to accompany other senior monks in establishing the boundary stones of the wat according to what was given by donators. It is not clear if the *paṇḍita* is the “editor” of the message supported by the inscription. In the end the land is divided in two zones คามเขต (two villages under the authority of the wat called ช่วงชุมแก้ว?).

1. อันมา
2. ชุมนุมกันฝังจารึกปางนี้เป็นประธาน
3. ว่ามหาพุกามเจ้าแลมหาสามีสรีสุนันทะ
4. กัลยาณะกับทั้งราชบัณฑิตรู้
5. แล ถัดนั้นพันนาหลังเชียงน้อยก็รู้แสนเขาซอยก็รู้
6. ร้อยนาหลัง ลำหมื่นก็รู้ ลำพันคำคอมก็รู้
7. คนทั้งหลายในเมืงควกนี้รู้ชู้คนแล แล
8. พระมหาพุกามเจ้าตนชื่อมหาญาณมังคลเจ้า
9. อันอยู่ในอารามเชียงเรือกที่เร็นพ่อพระ
10. มหาราชเจ้า ตนชื่อพระศรีธรรมราชนัดดา
11. นั้นขออาชญาแห่งมหาราชเทวีกี่ปลงคดี
12. ลงคำแก่ราชบัณฑิตชื่อญาณวิสาร์ทะ
13. หื้อมากับมหาพุกามเจ้า ก็จึงชุมนุม

<sup>11</sup> ปลงคดีลงคำ = to authorize, to allow

14. ชาวเจ้าสังฆะทั้งหลายเป็นต้นว่ามหาสา
15. มีศรีสุนันทะกัลยาณะ หากผูกพั
16. ทธสีมานี้ไว้ในวัดช่วงชุมแกวนี้
17. แล พัทธสีมาอันนี้เมื่อจักผูกนั้นราชบัณฑิต
18. หากกตหือเป็นคามเขต ๒ อันแล เจ้าภิก
19. ขูทั้งหลายเมื่อหน้าอย่าสงสัยใน..นี้เทอญ

**4.2.** Rules of communication and communication of the rules. As seen above inscriptions do mention who compose texts and who lead *in situ*, in the monastery.

It is well stated in BY39A15 (Phayao, Wat Choi Sae, 1495 AD): three officials receive the words of Mahathewi who lays down an order [*kae na phra pen chao* from the king?] that [the message] should be engraved.

เจ้า X,Y,Z รับเอา คำ พระมหาเทวีเจ้า แล พระมหาเทวีเจ้า ปลงอาชญา แก่ณา พระเป็นเจ้า หือเป็นจาริกไว้<sup>12</sup>

BY39B11-13 tells of “any noble (Chao Khun) who interferes with the people [listed] in this inscription is considered as disrespectful of the order of the King. This inscription was erected on the month of...”

เจ้าขุนผู้ใดก็ดี หากได้ กลัวเกล้า ก็ ดี คนในจาริตนี้ ผู้นั้น เรียกว่าบ่ยำ อาชญาพระเป็นเจ้าแผ่นดินแล จาริต  
นี้ฝังใน เตน + date

The main words here are *yam ājñā* = to respect a decree, a royal command.

As pointed by Hans Penth, King Mangrai (if not his father) used a code of law “a *rājasattha* Yuan version” established in order to rule “without contradicting the dharma” (Penth 2004, 61). In the inscriptions the law text is called อาชญา (*atya* or *atnya*, S. *ājñā*, P. *āṇa*) a royal order written by Kings (and or nobility?) which appears necessary to compose the (pre)text of the inscription.

The orders comes from the highest level and this explain why cursing and imprecations could be made against anybody including important persons *chao thai* (เจ้าไทย).

For instance we read in LB19B10-12 (1502 AD or 1506) or Penth CLI (vol.6 pp. 166-186, Wat Phayā Ruang):

เจ้าไทยผู้ใดบ่ไว้คนในจาริกอันนี้ ตามอาชญาพระเป็นเจ้า ตนเป็น(เค้า)\*แลหากมล้างเส [ = เสีย ]  
หือมันฉิบหายตายตกนรกฯ \* Penth reads “ พระ”.

My translation: “Whoever, among the high ranking people, does not leave the people [slaves or servant] mentioned in this inscription [= takes them away from their duty?] under the order of the King , whoever, among those leaders, breaks or damages [this inscription], will meet with disaster, death and hell.”<sup>13</sup>

In JR03 (1496 AD) we learn that the decree/order of the King has been passed, written on a golden plate

<sup>12</sup> Similarly JM05B03 (1560 AD) names three ladies who have carried the order: ๓ คนนี้นำเอาอาชญามาฝังจาริตไว้

<sup>13</sup> Here I follow more or less the translation given in LI, 2-I p.435 (“if any governor”) or CLI-6, p.173 (“country administrators”).

and assigning families of servants to the Wat Prasat:

พระเป็นเจ้าทั้งสองพระองค์ มีศรัทธา ปลงอาชญา หื้อหลาบคำมาไว้คนสิบครัว.<sup>14</sup>

Same message in BY02A05-06 (1488 AD) where the queen orders officials to bring a golden plate (*tra lap kham*) to the ruler, or the wife of the ruler, of Phayao donating 20 families to the wat and the Buddha image:

หื้อเอาตราหลาบคำมาถึงนางเม็งพญา

Sarassawadee Ongsakul (2005, 118 and 274 in the Thai edition) has provided pictures of a silver plate and seals (called หน้าจัต in Northern Thai) belonging to the reign of queen Wisutthithewi (1567 AD). The royal seals and plate were given to the community around a monastery to exempt them from corvée labor. Apparently every three years a ceremony is still performed to celebrate this royal gift. One may wonder if this celebration is a new tradition or an original one. In this case – a real tradition – we could consider it as an act of public reading (maybe similar to what it was 400 years ago?).

Griswold and Prasert have compared Sukhothai Inscription 45 (dated 1393) and NN01 (or Inscription 64, date lost, same date than 45?) which are the two versions of a pact between Sukhothai and Nan (a rare function in the epigraphy of Lanna). Interestingly the two inscriptions are quite different from each other, a situation that puzzled Griswold & PnN who assumed that “perhaps both inscriptions had ‘annexes’ e.g. in the form of inscribed gold sheets (*suvarṇapaṭra*), which were kept secret. Or perhaps there was one basic pact, followed later on by supplementary pacts...” (EHS, 77). NN01A04 has a tortuous formula to express the commitment in writing: “We who were separated [conjectural translation] are bound together and united in the text of this inscription”:

ยวเกลียวนสนิท อันแตกร้างเข้าในสารจารจารึกนี้

Even if the idea of a new harmony opposed to past disunity is difficult to read, this complicated sentence combines quite clearly three notions: text + engraving + inscription.

Inscriptions may try sometimes to recall older orders (donations of slaves and land) and reconfirm their validity (like LB10 according to Penth, CLI 06, p.115). Indeed, in 1496 AD there is a strong tradition of installing the stone slabs and, possibly, a kind of ritual or ceremony fixed for the event. LB10C16-17 mentions that the order is given to “a high ranking *paṇḍita* to compose and tell with his beautiful voice, to rise and bury the *sema* shaped inscription to stand in accordance with ancient and former [fashion] and to be permanently (standing) in the Prakham monastery: it should last until the end of the five thousands years of the *sāsanā* of the Buddha.”

ให้อุตมบัณฑิตจรจนาพิจิตรวาจาขึ้นจารึกฝังเสมาให้ไว้ตามโบราณมีเมื่อก่อนให้มันในวัดพระคำ  
ต่อเท่าสิ้นศาสนาพระพุทธเจ้าห้าพันปี

Another reading by Penth *et alii.*: ให้อุตมบัณฑิต ริสนาพิจิตรวาจาขึ้นจารึกฝังเสมา  
ให้ไว้ตามโบราณมีเมื่อก่อน ให้มันในวัดพระคำ ต่อเท่าสิ้นศาสนาพระพุทธเจ้า ๕๐๐๐ ปี

<sup>14</sup> หลาบคำ also found in BY02A06 see Buchmann’s *Glossary* 2011, 189. Another name was สุพรรณบัฏ. If the sheet or plate was made of silver it was called หลาบเงิน or หิริญบัฏ.

Maybe here we can try to guess the way an inscription was made: having in hand different documents from the king or the authority in charge, a pandit or a local scholar would establish a full text then tell it to the *lapicide* who will engrave the stone with its cutting tools.

In the same year 1496 AD an inscription from Lampang (LP06A13-17B01-02) explains a donation (in May) and the following installation of an inscription (in June). A Chao Saen, a Chao Muen and other witnesses “got the royal order of the king that they must inscribe and install [the inscription] permanently until the end of the *sāsanā* of the Buddha; anybody who breaks it or takes it away from the Buddha will not have a long life and will go to the four places of suffering (*abāya*)”.

รับอาชญาพระเป็นเจ้าห้อมมาต้องจาริตฝังไว้ต่อเท่าสิ้นศาสนาตราบใดศาสนาพระพุทธรูปเป็นเจ้ายัง  
ผู้ใดหากเอาออก (จาก)พระพุทธรูปเจ้า อย่าห้อมมัน มันยืน อบายทั้งสี่ห้อมเป็นที่ไปแห่งมันผู้เอาออกแด

LB18A15-18 dated 1488 AD brings a very similar message: “the two Chao [named here] who received the ‘word’ of Mahathewi must ‘bury’ this inscription in order to have [preserve] this *ārāma* during the whole five thousand years of the *sāsanā* of the Buddha, the order should be kept, do not remove or destroy [this stone]”:

เจ้าล่ำหมื่นสุวรรณเจ้าหมื่นน้อยคำ..หากรับคำมหาเทวีเจ้าห้อมฝังจาริตอันนี้เพื่อ (จัก) อารามอันนี้  
มันต่อเท่าศาสนาพระเจ้าพัน(ปี) (ตำ)บลอันนี้อาชญามหาเทวีเจ้าห้อมไว้ --- (ตำ)มดอัน อย่าห้อมลิตห้อมล้าง

The series of inscriptions on wood, in the form of *semas*, from the Tham Den Ngua cave (LP42 to LP45) offers a short history of a royal order concerning a group called Khrao (คร่าว the officials who carry taxes in kind from provinces to the royal treasury?). The first order is issued in 1410 or 1470 and stipulates that the district heads must not interfere with the work of the Khraos (no heavy loads in transport). In 1491 a second inscription invalidated an order given by a local public figure who obliged them to supply grass to their horses and elephants and to carry heavy loads. The third inscription (LP44) of 1506 confirms and clarifies the preceding message and indicates that the royal order shall be laid in an inscription and made public (or placed everywhere). In the fourth (LP45) of 1515 the author recalls that the orders given by his grandfather (Sam Fang Kaen), his (great-uncle?) Tilokaraja, by his father and still by the present king (Phaya Kao?) must always be respected and shall be laid in an inscription and publicized in every *mueang*.

LP44A13: เอาใส่จาริตไว้ชูแห่งดีแล

LP45A14-15: จึ่งห้อมต้องเป็นจาริตไว้ในคร่าวชูเมืองฉนั้นแล

## 5. Conclusion

The epigraphic habit of Lanna was a way to communicate on many different topics but, at its peak, it had a lot to do with the donation and management of land (and the people taking care of it), especially in connection with the organization and life of the Buddhist monastery. When epigraphy speaks about epigraphy it is about “burying” a “signal” (“anything that serves to indicate, warn, direct, command, or the like”) in the very land or soil that was provided by the landlord, in theory, the king himself. All the legal transfer of properties was done by documents and the message posted on the *sema* itself was certainly only the top of an iceberg of utilitarian literature. But the contemporary documents that prepared the event and the erection of the inscriptions have all disappeared and we are left with this limited portion of a larger communication process.

The main point was in the management of two systems of law and two *rāja* systems or hierarchies: the *chao pen din* lord of the land, king above the kings, and the *saṅgharāja* master of the community of monks.<sup>15</sup> There and then, two systems had to meet, the Thai *sakdina* and the Buddhist *vinaya*. Transferring the property from the Crown (eventually to a local noble or appointed person) to the Saṅgha was finally feasible by accepting the Buddhist code ruling on the boundaries of the area were the act of the Saṅgha (*saṅghakamma*) would be fully valid.

JM21B07-12 (1491 AD) is a rare example explaining this process. It tells of the king of Chiang Mai (Phaya Yot Chiang Rai) who appointed a Muen Dap Ruean to build a *vihāra* and a *cetya*, to cast five Buddha images, etc. The king ordered that the land for the monastery be donated according to (or using) the Pāli formula provided by the Commentary (*aṭṭhakathā*): *ayaṃ viṣuṃ gāmo hotu*, which means “may this be a place separate [from the rest of the land owned by the king]”. This is a quotation from the commentary of the Vinaya, the *Samantapāsādikā* (Sp V 1052), an expression that became the name of the official recognition of a legitimacy of a monastery (known as the “Royal wisungkhamasima”).<sup>16</sup>

๗. [...] ฐานนี้เจ้าอดีตขณนบวรสิทธิผู้เป็(น)
๘. หมื่นดาบเร็นนั้นขอแห่งพญาเจ้าตนชื่อศรีส-
๙. ทธรรมมังกุมมหาพรหมจักรวัดตราชาธิราชแล-
๑๐. วแล ศรีสทธรรมมังกุมหาบรจักรวัดตรา-
๑๑. ชาธิราชตัดหื้อเป็นคามเขตต่าง โดยคำม-
๑๒. ำในอรรถกถาว่า อยู่ วิสุ ุคามโมโหตุ นี้แล [...]

My translation: [After] the request from his Muen Dap Ruean, the king decided (decreed) that it [the new monastery] should be a separate place from the village using the formula from the Commentary: *ayaṃ viṣuṃ gāmo hotu*.

<sup>15</sup> On the *sakdina* system and the Lanna general economy see Sarassawadee 2005, 90-99.

<sup>16</sup> The Prince Patriarch Vajiraññaṇavarorasa devoted a short chapter to the subject of “Visuṅgāmasīmā” in *The Entrance to the Vinaya* (1983, 42-43). He explained that “A King who is a Buddhist Patron wishing to assist the sangha issues a decree to make the site for a wat (monastery) a visuṅgāmasīmā, according to the royal tradition, also being the royal permission to build a wat.”



To publicize partially an already written act appears as an important function of the inscriptions that is not restricted to a legal content. As a matter of fact inscriptions are largely devoted to quoting and referencing and, in the second part of this paper (to be continued), we will examine how the epigraphy of Lanna is balancing the laborious or arid legal (often religious) context with other types of citations and literary references.

More ideology, more imagination and narratives were indeed needed to legitimize more softly the social organization of the religion.

## References

- Buchmann, M. (2011). *Northern Thai Stone Inscriptions (14<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> Centuries) – Glossary*. Wiesbaden: DMG Harrassowitz.
- Buchmann, M. (2012). *Northern Thai Stone Inscriptions (14<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> Centuries) – Catalogue*. Wiesbaden: DMG Harrassowitz.
- CLI (Penth, H., Panpen Kruathai *et alii*). (1997-2012). *Corpus of Lan Na Inscriptions*. Chiang Mai: SRI, Chiang Mai University, 15 volumes.
- Cœdès, G. (1925). Documents sur l'histoire politique et religieuse du Laos occidental. *BEFEO*, 25, 1-200.
- Griffiths, A., & Lammerts, D.C. (2015). Epigraphy: Southeast Asia. In Silk J., von Hinüber O., & Eltschinger, V., *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, volume I, 988–1009. Leiden: Brill.  
<http://www.brill.com/products/book/brills-encyclopedia-buddhism-volume-one>.
- Griswold, A. (1957). Dated Buddha Images of Northern Siam, *Artibus Asiae. Supplementum*, 16.
- Griswold, A. & Prasert na Nagara. (1992). *Epigraphic and historical studies*. Bangkok: Historical Society.
- Halliday, R. (1930). Les inscriptions môn du Siam. *BEFEO* 30, 6-105.
- Hedrick, C. W. Jr. (1999). Democracy and the Athenian Epigraphical Habit. *Hesperia*, 68.3, 387-439.
- Ishii, Y. *et al.* (1989). *A Glossarial Index of the Sukhothai Inscriptions*. Bangkok: Amarin Publication.
- LI (Prasert na Nagara). (1991 and 2008). *Lanna Inscriptions*. Bangkok: Fine Arts Department, Part 1, 2 volumes, Part 2, 2 volumes.
- Luce, G.H., & Htway Tin. (1976). A 15th Century Inscription and Library at Pagan, Burma. In Wijesekera, O.H. De A. (Ed.), *Malalasekera Commemoration Volume*, Colombo, 203-256.
- MacMullen, R. (1982). The Epigraphic Habit in the Roman Empire. *The American Journal of Philology*, 103 (3), 233-246
- Panciera, S. (2012). What Is an Inscription? Problems of Definition and Identity of an Historical Source. *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 183, 1–10
- Penth, H. (2004). *A Brief History of Lān Nā*, Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.
- Prachum Charuek Sayam Phak 1, 2. (2467). ประชุมจารึกสยาม ภาคที่ ๑,๒ จารึกกรุงสุโขทัย ศาสตราจารย์ ยอช เซเดส์ ชำระแลแปล พิมพ์ทั้งภาษาไทยแลภาษาฝรั่งเศส.
- Prachum Charuek Phak thi 8. (2548). ประชุมจารึก ภาคที่ ๘ จารึกสุโขทัย, กรุงเทพฯ, กรมศิลปากร ๒๕๔๘.
- Sarassawadee, O. (2005). *History of Lan Na*. Translated by Chitraporn Tanratanakul, Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.
- Salomon, R. (2009). Aśoka and the 'Epigraphic Habit' in India. In Patrick Olivelle (Ed.), *Aśoka in History and Historical Memory*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 45-52.
- Vajiraññaavarorasa (Somdet Phra Mahā Samaṇa Chao Krom Phrayā). (1983) (Thai version first published in 1921). *The Entrance to the Vinaya, Vinayamukha*, vol.III. Bangkok: Mahāmakut Rājavidyālaya Press.

## **Is Tourism the (only) Best ‘Choice’ For Community Rehabilitation and Development?**

**Laochockchaikul, Kanjana**  
College of Innovation  
Thammasat University  
Thailand

---

### **Abstract**

Economic conditions, societies, and current changes make many communities in Thailand face changes in occupation and life, especially suburban communities which face loneliness and sluggishness. With this problem, renovation and development of communities ensue. Many communities have changed their image to be the “tourism community”, the result of which is generally perceived as either failure or success.

According to this phenomenon, the author would like to present a story through a case study of Pak Nam Prasae Community, Klaeng District, Rayong Province. The author had an opportunity to conduct a participatory action research with collaboration for the main objectives which are to support knowledge body that leads the community out of loneliness and sluggishness and to create tourism activities. Nowadays, this community has become a popular tourist attraction, which is promoted as part of the national tourism by Tourism Authority of Thailand.

The author would like to present both sides of the development through the tool called “tourism” which was employed by the community as a new approach to maintain, renovate and develop the community. Even though in the initial stage promotion and support from the external network were important, the most important thing is the cost of community in certain aspects that support the community to insist, improve and connect to new networks by itself. On the other hand, the community will have to face with new different issues and challenges, especially in terms of management and share of benefit gained from using the local resources to develop the tourism in the community. According to these two pieces of information, after all, whether “tourism” is the best tool for development is an important issue that the community has to consider.

**Keywords:** Community Development, Tourism Communities, Social Change

### **Introduction: Why Prasae?**

Pak Nam Prasae Community (*meaning of Pak Nam is estuary*) is located on the eastern coast, the southeastern part of Klaeng District, Rayong Province. Because the community is by Prasae River that the estuary connects to the Gulf of Thailand, the area is plenty of natural resources according to the characteristics of river plain and coast plain; moreover, there is the resource of mangrove forest that is

full of aquatic animals and various plants. Many people have settled down in this community since the past. It reflects the lifestyle and occupation of people in Pak Nam Prasae such as farming and fishery. Furthermore, people here earn a living by trading and various types of industry that grows and ceases periodically such as a rice mill or a sawmill.

According to the characteristics of the aforesaid area, in the past Pak Nam Prasae was important as the strategic area of communication; that is to say, it was the major port of Klaeng Town and the center of prosperity as the source of production and the source of agricultural goods and process goods with high quality such as shrimp paste and popular fish sauce.

However, the lifestyle of people in Pak Nam Prasae changed due to the change of communication; because land transportation was more important than water transportation. From the past that it was the center of trade and communication, now it turns into the place that is far from the main route. The community and residences are silent because of being abandoned from the changed lifestyle of earning a living with the value of heading to a big city.

Pak Nam Prasae where is still full of charm from the history that can pass on and tell a story that there is the plentifully and gracefully natural resource including the cultural resource appearing in the characteristics and warm and supportive community lifestyle. According to awareness of its potentiality, under the lead of Intellectual Property Office and Enterprise Incubation of Thammasat University, the activity of integrating development for enhancing lifestyle and life quality of Pak Nam Prasae Community is managed by the group of academics that passes on knowledge. The purpose of this activity is to develop this community. Also, I as one part of this operation must pass on the procedure in working from the beginning step and tell a story of activities after the project finished. Therefore, this article consists of 2 parts: 1) the details of running activities for development of Prasae areas and 2) the story of Prasae areas after finishing the development activities.

#### **When the Last Answer is “Tourism”**

The operation of developing Prasae areas is considered the practical research with participation that is coordination among the academic, the community leader and the community member. The operation starts from holding the community meeting as often as possible in order to survey the community need and listen to the community opinion. The meeting summarizes and reflects what the community is aware of and sees it as important that is the significance of history, the significance of culture and tradition and the significance of ecology and environment. According to these three important points, they lead to the plan of substantially developing Prasae areas in the name “Prasae Model”, with these five points in operation that are the history, culture/tradition, nature/environment, activity/recreation and good society/stable community. The community agrees to plan the goal of developing Prasae areas as “the conservative tourist community”.

#### **My Role with Part of Development and Prasae’s Research**

According to achieving the purpose in operating the community development as the conservative tourist community and considering the main point that the community is aware of, the inevitable key element is researching and collecting the historical knowledge and the society and culture of the community. It is not the only the main factor that leads to other operations, but self-knowledge is also important to make perception and participation with people around because “the self-knowledge” is considered the key

component that makes members of the community aware of the identity and distinction in their own local areas, whether it be the landscape and culture considering the core that supports this development emerged and developed next with stability. It makes me as one part of this operation have the chance to join the research project with the purpose of supporting the activity of integrating development for enhancing lifestyle and life quality of Pak Nam Prasae Community. The operation of managing and collecting the historical knowledge and the society and local culture is conducted to support the community get the benefit from developing the knowledge in other types.

The name of research that I conducted is “The Study of History and Socio-Culture of Pak Nam Prasae Community for Community Development and Ecotourism Project”; therefore, there is the role comparing with the base to the operation and other activities.

My research on the information on the history, society, and culture of the community in Pak Nam Prasae, Klaeng District, Rayong Province, is a qualitative research work that uses the discipline of Participatory Action Research and Community Development. Therefore, I adapt the concept for the archaeological management of community cultural resource (Sāyan Phraichānchit 2004: pp. 209 - 215) to the research methodology. The main point of the concept, the archaeological management of community cultural resource, is the change from the former cultural resource plan that focuses on governmental centralization and executions by governmental officials or juristic persons hired by the government to the management by local community with collaborations from people, academics, community leaders and other local organizations, which need to be fine-tuned with one another for synchronized attitudes and operations. Governmental authorities and academics who used to work independently without any collaboration from local community have to be aware of the potential of the locals, and must change their work scheme from setting the policies and making decisions by themselves in the up-down or vertical manner to the horizontal manner that focuses on the collaborations from the locals who take parts in decision making. Authorities and academics must value the ideas and actual needs of the locals. Academics must change their roles to become academic and technical advisors to disseminate knowledge, experiences, and skills in cultural resource management to the locals. In addition, academics should also build-up the locals’ attitudes and spirits in order to make them treasure the cultural resources in their community and to strengthen the groups that are in-charge of managing cultural resources in a sustainable manner. In other words, academics have to develop themselves and community simultaneously.

In addition, this concept focuses on the participatory principle, practical study, and appreciative building process to make the locals satisfied and impressed with the backgrounds of their community, with the following principles and guidelines:

1. Holistic approach: meaning the study on all the dimensions of a community in the past and at present, and the study on effects that each dimension has on one another;
2. Multicultural approach: the awareness of the unique cultural identity of each community that is the location of the resource, which forces managers to be respectful to the cultural difference;
3. Dynamic approach: the focus on the uncertainty or the changes, which means managers outside the community must realize that society, culture, and everything are ever-changing; thus, plans and techniques for the management must be adjusted to fit the contexts of a place;

4. Participative openness-inquiry: meaning all the people working on cultural resource management must work together in the form of co-learning and collaboration in order to generate the knowledge that is equally beneficial for everyone;
5. Learning by doing: allowing everyone in the community, interested in learning and share work ideas in every step to have opportunities to work together;
6. Common appreciative building: meaning managers, understanding the values and importance of cultural resources, have to set up a learning process that allows all the local people to appreciate the value and importance of the resources in an equal manner, and create a process that allows the locals of the community that with cultural resources to understand, know and have good attitudes towards the resources so that they will love and treasure the resources as the ones owned by all members of the community;
7. Research & development: meaning the research methodology is a research process that incorporates the activities to develop the target community at the same time; and
8. Accompanying/co-existing: meaning the locals must have chances to participate in all the steps and local administrative organizations must receive supports to boost the capacities and knowledge for such resource management.

I have applied the aforementioned principles to the field work and data collection as follows:

1. The focus group and interviews which start from the focus group interviews with groups that exist in the community such as groups of the older person and community leaders in order to attain ideas and suggestions in the overview, which are reviewed, researched and screened before the respondents for the key persons interviews are chosen to provide insights and documents that they have in the unstructured informal interviews that encourage the respondents to reflect 'identities', 'selves' and 'way of life' of Pak Nam Prasae Community that they are aware of and understand; afterwards, the attained information is sorted in accordance with the relevant issues; and
2. The research on relevant documents, which are primary documents from related federal agencies such as the National Archives of Thailand and History Division of Naval Education Department in order to glean knowledge on history from written records, which is not available in the community, to support and create the issues for the discussion and to remind the locals of their memories and check such memories at the same time; in addition, documents available in the community such as commemorate books in funerals, memoranda from the locals or monks who are/were community leaders, invitation letters to ordination and nuptial ceremonies, or photographs of all events in the community.

From the collection of data and stories related to 'Pak Nam Prasae' in terms of history, society, and culture, interesting information on several aspects of cultural resources is discovered. Such information is a greatly valuable capital that need be disseminated in order to facilitate the sustainable local development.

***Pursuance, Research, and Record of Data***

From the created questions for data research, I set out the fundamental questions for the focus group interviews with members of the community in order to have initial understanding such as ‘speaking of Pak Nam Prasae, what do you think about’ or ‘what are the interesting things that you want to talk about’. I have received answers to such questions supported with historical information for the extensive discussion with the locals and receive interesting information that can be sorted into different issues as follows.

*Variety and Importance of the Name ‘Prasae’:* This community is one of the neighborhoods with the most names and spellings. From the available records, it is hypothesized by senior members of Pak Nam Prasae community or Phra Khru (Buddhist Monk) Praphat Wiriyaakun, a former abbot of Takhian Ngam Temple, and Rawi Panyaying that the name ‘Rayong’ is from the word ‘Ra-yong’ in the dialect of Chong (*Chong is the name of ethnic group*) people who used to live in Rayong Province. With this hypothesis, the name ‘Prasae’ is from ‘the word ‘Pri-chae’ or ‘Fri-chae’ which means ‘rice fields and forests’ or ‘cleared forests’. However, in an era, the governmental agency in charge of naming could not find any Thai word equivalent to ‘Prasae’; thus, the name was changed to ‘Krasae’ which has a meaning. Thus, this community attains the name ‘Krasae Estuary Sub-district’ in addition to the former one. Afterward, the words ‘Prasae’ and ‘Krasae’ were added with ‘-r’. Therefore, display signs in this community showing the name of the community in different names which can considerably astonish visitors.

The word ‘Prasae’ is also the name of one of the two major rivers of Rayong, the headstream of which is Chanthaburi Mountain Range, running through waterways and canals (Culture, History, Identities and Wisdom of Rayong 1999: pp. 3 - 4). A piece of historical evidence that clearly indicates date, time and place is the record of the event of the ‘Suppression of Khun Ram Muen Song of Prasae Village’ which is a chapter of the Royal Chronicle, the Version of the Royal Documents, Volume 2 (2005: pp. 153 – 157), which was the time of the ‘riot’. This record describes the event when His Majesty King Taksin and his troops marched to the eastern cities to gather all forces to reclaim the capital of Thailand and suppressed groups of bandits around eastern cities, one of which was the group of Khun Ram Muen Song that had escaped from Rayong City and settled down in Prasae Village.

The aforementioned information reveals that this community has been important in the past. It has been recognized for a certain period of time. Another evidence of the importance of the name ‘Prasae’ is that the name of this river basin is used for naming the ‘Prasae’ Royal ship, HTMS Prasae, that was bought in 1953 in accordance with the trend to name Royal Thai Navy ship by important estuaries name.

*The Way of Life:* The evidence that most clearly describes the settlement of people in Pak Nam Prasae is the Royal Letter of King Rama V when His Majesty went to the eastern coast in the year of monkey or A.D. 1884, Volume 1, which describes the settlement in this community, “...In the morning of Sunday or the 10<sup>th</sup> waxing moon of the third lunar month, the boat was moored at Phasae Estuary which is the place where Pra Klaeng Klaeo Kla is. We moved to a smaller boat towed by a steamboat to go along Phasae River until we saw a village a hundred of households built close to one another. We were told that there are many more houses further but they were too far, so we did not go there (Culture, History, Identities and Wisdom of Rayong 1999: p. 32).” It is apparent that houses at Pak Nam Prasae at that time

were built in lines by the river side and could be seen from the sea afar and there could have been a great number of houses in the area farther from the sea. Most people in Pak Nam Prasae are the Chinese. For a person born in Pak Nam Prasae, his/her forerunners of 2 - 3 former generations might have a Chinese family name. Chinese-Thai people in this community are Teochew people, Hainan people, Hokkien people, Cantonese people and Hakka people. The geographic characteristics and fertility of the maritime resources in this community are factors that cause the locals to do fishery. From the past to present, the locals have had fishery-related occupations and industries such as fishery, sea piers, fishing with nets, fishing with downstream traps, lampshell digging, ice business and manufacture of processed seafood products, as well as boat building and trade which is an important profession of Chinese people. In the past, Pak Nam Prasae was an important port of the east of Thailand. It can be said that Pak Nam Prasae was the port of Klaeng and Rayong because Prasae connects the sea with inland waterways. Ships that carry goods such as the ship of East Asiatic Company, which is a big iron boat that weighed more than 200 tons, and many big passengers boat that ran in the eastern routes in the memories of the elder in Pak Nam Prasae community, have many names such as Sapatai, Nipha, and Phanurangsi. These vessels were big and had draughts; hence, they could not pass sandbar to get to Prasae River. Passengers had to use small boats to get to the big ships from the river and vice versa. With the development, this port city had theaters for several performances such as Djike (a kind of Thai performance), Lamtat (a kind of Thai performance), movies and stage plays, and opium houses, which manifest the prosperity of this community.

The prosperity of trade and commerce in this community attracted another group of Chinese people to settle down in this area during the World War II. These Chinese people had had business bases in Bangkok. They were wealthy and well-educated, so they played important roles in establishing the group of the Chinese community and setting up the systematic education of Chinese language in the community. Constructions that well reflect the prosperity of Chinese groups and fishery groups are joss houses and shrines in a great number around Prasae community, which have been well-managed and regularly used in the annual manner on the important day of each shrine, which reflect the adherence to the traditions that have been conserved from the past to present.

*Important Places of Pak Nam Prasae:* Pak Nam Prasae people have many places that make them proud of their history and prosperity. The first place is Wat Laem Son (Laem Son Temple) or Wat Luang (Luang Temple), the official name of which is Wat Sommutti Thap Thapanaram (Sommutti Thap Thapanaram Temple). The reason why this temple is called Laem Son Temple is that this temple is located in Laem Son area. It was given the official name from King Rama V when His Majesty visited the eastern coast of Thailand and stayed around Laem Son Estuary area, Klaeng City (Sub-district), where there was a pagoda on the beach. Therefore, His Majesty had an idea to build a temple there and donated a plot of land the size of which is 10 rai and 2 ngan (around 16,400 sq.m.) on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1884; and clearly stated the name of the temple in a letter to describe the trip. Another important place is the Shrine of His Royal Highness Kromluang Chumphon Khet Udomsak to enshrine monument of H.R.H. Chumphon Khet Udomsak, a member of the royal family who has been respected as the 'Faher of Royal Thai Navy'. The Shrine of H.R.H. Chumphon at Prasae was built in 1967. After the construction of the shrine was completed, His Majesty King Rama IX was invited to consecrate and place the monument of H.R.H.

Chumphon. After the ceremony, His Majesty the King visited the locals who waited to see the king before His Majesty went back to Bangkok. This event was memorable for all people of Prasae community.

*Important Traditions of Pak Nam Prasae Community:* The way of life of Prasae people is closely related to the river in terms of living and occupations, especially fishery-related ones, which lead to the occurrence of an important tradition that is an identity of Pak Nam Prasae people that reflects the way of life of waterborne people. *Pha Pa Klang Nam* tradition is the ceremony to offer new robes to Buddhist monks on the river, which is a unique Thai tradition that can be seen only at Prasae. The ceremony is held during the day time, and at the same night, people will float flower-shaped floating lanterns on the river. These two ceremonies are held on 15<sup>th</sup> day of the waxing moon of the first lunar month. On that day, Prasae people will not work and gather together to give alms to monks in the morning. Later, they will put robes on sticks of Fad trees (*Lumnitzera racemosa Willd*), which grow in mangrove forests, beautifully decorated. Afterward, monks are invited to take the robes from the sticks in the river. People will also join the ceremony by rolling their boats along with those of the monks. After the ceremony, people will have fun activities such as boat decoration contest, boat songs and beauty contest. Even though the details of the ceremony nowadays are different from those in the past, this ceremony is still an important event for Prasae people.

#### **Process of Data Collection from Stories of People's Lives**

One major problem encountered during the field works, whether the group or individual interviews, is that the ones providing information are community leaders or activity leaders. For most people without any position or social status, even though they have collected many photographs or have had many stories about their community, they dare not express themselves or tell their stories although their mediocre stories or photographs can be greatly valuable and can fulfill the jigsaw of historical overview and stories of the community.

The field works begin with the attendance to the meetings of different groups in Prasae. The group the members of which seem to be interested in the project and provide information that can be used for designing further interviews is the group of the elder, which will hold a meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of each month in order to project the available photographs and discuss on several topics. The objectives of such meetings are to attain more information in addition to the photographs; to check the stories that have been heard; and to inform them of the research activities. In addition, the discussion is also beneficial because it makes respondents trust and become aware of the researcher's sincerity to all the community members. I, the researcher, value the information given by everyone, not just the leaders of the past. This concept enables the researcher to receive additional information and photographs from all members of all groups, which have never been shown to the community before.

Furthermore, the visit to the house of each member of the community and the chance to see the collected photographs enable the researcher to learn about more stories from the conversations, especially with people who are not good at speaking in a public forum or meeting. The attainment of many unexpected photographs gives a complete overview of the community at Prasae Estuary, expands the issues to be studied on, and builds pride and feeling of participation to Prasae people who think that



they are insignificant people by encouraging them to tell their stories.

Afterward, stories are chosen and space for the presentation and exchange is determined in order to build common impression. Data collection in different ways leads to the gathering of historical, societal and cultural information in the predetermined ways until I can get enough information to be classified, and to show the importance and relevance of the area in the past, as mentioned before.

With the expectation to expand knowledge, build awareness and urge pride for the society on the wider scale, I, the researcher has had a meeting to consult the related people in the area, which are Director Anchali Sansuwan and teachers and students of Wat Takhian Ngam Community School, state officials of the education division of the Municipality of Pak Nam Prasae Sub-district, the mayor and members of the council of municipality in order to determine the area and guidelines for the presentation of the gleaned information. From the meeting, the consensus is to use Ban Kao Community that has been planned to be turned into a 'museum' which will be a space to educate visitors with significant stories of Prasae people. This museum will be a hub of knowledge and a spot that both Prasae people and visitors must pay attention to. The museum is planned to be open to the public on the day of Pha Pa Klang Nam tradition in 2014, which is an important ceremony of Prasae people. In addition, Prasae Municipality will hold the ceremony of robe offering on the river and lantern floating festival; and will close the road by Prasae riverside, which is in Ban Kao Community, and turn it to be a walking street.

The selection of information to be presented and the display of photographs and exhibited objects are significant challenges that the researcher has to work on with the related people from the local community in order to enable the museum to respond to the needs of the locals who might have known the information. This museum thus emphasizes on the building-up of awareness and feeling to participate for visitors who want to learn about Prasae area and tourists who drop by and might need less information but want to see the highlights of this area. This museum should also allow visitors to learn and see everything by themselves.

The presentation of information can be in different forms, such as the posters that present brief information on the place and highlighted events, and the display of photographs. The presentation of information must be accurate, systematic and reference. All the used materials must be simple, non-fragile, and interesting for people of all ages. The decoration must use the colors that meet the needs of the locals.

The results from the operation in this step, attained from the observation and conversations with visitors of the museum, show that the owners of the presented information, especially the photographs, are proud and impressed. This leads to expansion of discussion and conversations with other community members with different genders and ages, which can promote the operation and build understanding and positive attitudes of community members and visitors towards other related activities.

#### **When Prasae Starting Activities for Community Development towards Tourist Zone**

The details of the important activity held for developing Prasae areas towards the tourist zone as follow:

##### ***Meeting of Business Operator in Community***

The meeting is considered the important activity that is always held. There will be different purposes in each meeting that starts to make people understand the way of development together. After activities

finish, the meeting is still held as usual both for informing news and advising by experts of those fields in order to track the task and report the achievement to relating persons in each level. The stakeholder in the community as the relating main group is the group of home-stay businessman, the group of tricycle driving servicer and the group of store businessman, especially on Rim Nam Road, Baan Kao Zone. When each meeting is held, it is considered members in the community interested and participate in joining the meeting. Cooperation is considered one part of the important internal fact reflecting the cooperation, relationship of people in the area and strength of community as the power that drives activities more smoothly.

#### ***Operation of Central Area Development for Presentation of Community Story***

This activity is caused by the Prasae's old areas, and it is already planned to change to "the museum house" that means this area can be used to disseminate knowledge with the main purpose of preparing the area for knowledge dissemination by collecting important stories from Prasae people as the center of knowledge and the place where everyone, both Prasae people and visitors, calls on. The purpose of management was to exhibit the tradition, Pha Pa Klang Nam, in 2014 the first time that at that time it was the moment of the important tradition of Prasae people.

Selecting information from research used in the presentation and arranging photos throughout items exhibited in the museum house is the important proposition for me that must learn with relating persons in the area about responding to local people who may already know the information but italicizing awareness, feeling of participating need; visitors who need to know the information of Prasae origin and tourists who just pass by may need less information but need to see colorfulness of this place and it should be the place where visitors can learn or visit themselves.

The poster is used as the presentation media that is the brief information about important places and the presentation of photos derive from many people around. Significantly, the information used to present is correct, can be referred, must be operated with simple and hard-to-be-broken materials, accesses people in every generation and must decorate the place according to the community's need.

According to the outcome of this procedure and the researcher having the additional place to observe and talk to visitors who call on the museum house, it revealed that the information used in the presentation, especially photos, made people proud and impressed. It affected the conversation in the community society that many people with various genders and ages influenced the public relation of activities and made people more understand other activities relating to members of the community and visitors.

Moreover, after activities finish the first time, it made another group of Pak Nam Prasae members interested in giving the information and photos that they have. It reflects the importance of together maintaining and passing on more stories.

Currently, this place turns into the center of a community that exhibits the information and welcomes visitors.

#### ***Creating More Activities in Pha Pa Klang Nam and Walking Street Market***

*Pha Pa Klang Nam* is the tradition that is important to the community the most since the past because it reflects the lifestyle of Pak Nam Prasae people having a good relationship with the canal both in living and earning a living, especially a fisherman. As a result, it brings about the important tradition that is the

identity of Prasae people well reflecting the settler's lifestyle living by the waterway. The tradition, Pha Pa Klang Nam, is considered the only one tradition in Thailand with Pha Pa Klang Nam at noon and Loy Krathong at night because it corresponds to the full-moon day of the 12<sup>th</sup> lunar month. In the past, according to the aforesaid time, Prasae people who went fishing would stop working and joined the tradition since the morning. (see detail of this tradition above)

Even at the present, activities in this tradition will greatly differ from the past because no big activities are held in the past, but the period of Pha Pa Klang Nam is still the most important one of Pak Nam Prasae people as it was. Prasae people who move to live in other places take an opportunity to visit their hometowns whereas Prasae people who live here will take this time to make a sale.

When Prasae is the place where must welcome "outsiders", they are not just local people. Pha Pa Klang Nam in 2-3 years ago, there is a change since starting to develop, especially activities that must present in Pha Pa Klang Nam to interest and make more "selling point".

Notice from activities on the stage and in the period of Pha Pa Klang Nam that formerly when holding it for people in the community, activities would be like the performance that was mainly made by schools and the contest for fun such as the folk song contest, the Noppamas queen contest, and the boat rowing competition. When time flies and the period of Pha Pa Klang Nam turns into the place of inviting tourists to join activities appearing in this tradition. The past's daily ritual is brought up as one part of the performance such as the song of fishermen were singing when they pulling fishnet or playing of Nang Krok Nang Sak that used to be in the community.

As the period of walking street, when holding activities every month, people in many segments are requested to join shown activities so that they will be joyful by the time the walking street is also held.

Apart from the story that is shown in the museum house moving the exhibiting area to the outdoor by Baan Kao Road that the walking street is held. The photos from members are enlarged and exhibited around the space by Baan Kao Road for clearness of exhibition and interesting visitors more.

### ***Improve Walking Street Activity***

The walking street activity is agreed by the community that Prasae people have resources that can be presented to sell dried food or processed food. Also, Prasae people are good at cooking as well as merchandising as usual. In the past, the walking street was held when Prasae had the important festival, which is Pha Pa Klang Nam, held once a year or the walking street would be held on a special occasion like New Year festival.

At the present, Prasae holds the walking street activity every month around Rim Nam Road, Baan Kao Zone. The place allows members in the community throughout merchants to merchandise here for joy. There is the meeting that determines the yearly schedule. The activity will be continuously held on the first Friday, Saturday, and Sunday of every month. This activity is held in the name "Walking Street" and later changed to "Cultural Road" according to the suggestion by the Ministry of Culture that joins as the activity supporter. It makes the current walking street still be the same but in the other name.

### **From Tourism Stimulation to Tourist Town of TAT**

When many segments are much more interested in Prasae areas, both of the state agency and the private institution visit here with different purposes whether they be the recommended food; people make a film of delicious food and great restaurants, the book of tourism and other tourist programs. It is

the story of Prasae that is publicized the most widely. This place is presented to be the tourist attraction in the project name of the town must not be missed of the Tourism Authority of Thailand or TAT greatly influencing on attracting people to visit this place. Notice from the empirical product emerging after that; for example, last year (2016) Prasae turned into the target of many tourists. Notice from the increasing and variously tourist review written by tourists. Notice from the search engine with the word “Prasae”, it will appear so much information about activities as the tourist review.

The support by the international institution helps more public relations through main media. Activities are officially made and supported. It makes activities more support tourism such as the activity of cycling in the name of “slow-life cycling in the town must not be missed”, the contest of impressing photos and postcards of the town must not be missed and all.

Apart from TAT, there are other institutions that promote and support the public relations through activities such as the activity of Thai lifestyle tourism, the activity of deep fashion in the cultural tourist community from the Ministry of Culture, the project of recovering old towns and community zones that the community is supported to improve the townscape and make activities to stimulate the old community zone.

You can see that they endeavor to do this from the first time until now. The silent community now becomes more joyful as expected. It is considered the successful development as planned, but the tourism seems like medicine that cure. When you have it, there is the caution that you do not prepare for or expect to, either.

### **What Follows with “Tourism”**

What happens with Prasae when the community turned from silence with good effects is that members in the community have a job noticed from the increasing quantity of residences called the home stay. Residences are various and standardized. You can feel staying in the community. In the other hand, the cause of rapidly increasing residences is that the factor of readiness of buildings due to the fact that many houses in Prasae are abandoned and are mostly used in the extended family; space there can be easily changed. In another side, it reflects the capability of areas and supporting factors well.

Another activity that members in the community get the benefit from the tourism is to ride a tricycle to convey tourists for money because of the narrow road of the community in Baan Kao Zone of Prasae. The most convenient and proper travel is the tricycle that is modified by attaching the special space to the back of motorbikes. Prasae people normally use this vehicle to convey people and items. When the tourism is held, the tricycle is applied as the vehicle for tourists’ convenience. The tricycling service turns into another activity that Prasae people can earn money from it. At the beginning of promoting the tourism, many tricycles were supported the budget to for decoration as the unique symbol, which is Prasae’s battleship.

When there are changes from activities, the upcoming benefit is differently given to people. In the early time, people were hardly interested in activities but they were more interested in when seeing the clear benefit that they could earn; the success always attracts people.

Some activities that are supported by the state agency and the private institution must be grouped by holders as a representative for calling the support. When tourist activities are successful with good-and-increasing economic results, there is the conflict for the benefits agreement. Finally, the

groups are separated such as the group of residence managers who are in the area of waterfront and are not. The reason that they separate from each one another is that they cannot manage the agreement and work together anymore. The place nearby the main tourist area is around the entrance of Tung Prong Thong that was the space. The area is invested and allocated as the parking lot that is gradually increasing; however, there is the conflict of managing and snatching for the service. It makes the chaotic image of the invitation advertisement for the parking lot service along with other services such as cruising and roaming with a tricycle.

The chaos from the tourism activities seems difficulty inevitable. When Prasae is more well-known, the chaos comes with the better economy. It is considered the good and bad points; they are caused from both of the good cooperation in area development and the misconception of some groups in the community including the equality of getting benefits from development has changed.

### **Finally...Whether Tourism is the Best Answer**

According to the situation of Prasae development that I presented above, I need to see how a place is developed that faced the silence problem from the changed society and economy in the past. It made Prasae find a new way to survive in the changed society and economy. The stimulation and assistance from the educational institute were just the beginning. After that, the community could find the right way to survive. Their endeavors made various activities that were both praised and criticized. However, the continuous development made sleeping Prasae turn into the most interesting place and much more when the responsible institution supported Thailand's tourism, which is the Tourism Authority of Thailand that came to this place and joined the part of public relations with the official campaign. It made Prasae rapidly interested by many people.

Even if today the goal of "tourism" development that used to be the purpose of success and the "stability" that also used to be one part of the purpose seem fading away, the development expects to keep the identity and focuses on environment and maintenance concealed by the mass tourism. So many tourists cause the competition for benefit shares, especially the business relating to tourist activities. Division for keeping the benefit inevitably appears in this small community.

Certainly, the summary of development absolutely has no end nor no instant result. My role as the person studying this place before and still monitoring here as well as being one part of running some community activities cannot answer for Prasae development in the future. The tourism still helps Prasae stable according to the community target from the beginning or becoming a new factor that makes Prasae worse than ever; it cannot be concluded now, but the phenomenon of promoting tourism for communities in Thailand must be questioned and taken care with carefulness that even the policy and activity makes money for Thailand, which is tourism, there are many damages from tourism support with carelessness and consideration in any details.

The story of changing the place from Prasae tourist development will be the example that helps you get through the question whether "tourism" is finally the best tool in development. It is important for the community to consider and review endlessly.

## References

- Culture, History, Identities and Wisdoms of Rayong. (1999). [วัฒนธรรม พัฒนาการทางประวัติศาสตร์ เอกลักษณ์และภูมิปัญญา จังหวัดระยอง. (2542). กรุงเทพมหานคร:คณะกรรมการฝ่ายประมวลเอกสารและจดหมายเหตุ ในคณะกรรมการอำนวยการจัดงานเฉลิมพระเกียรติพระบาทสมเด็จพระเจ้าอยู่หัว]. Bangkok: Fine Art Department.
- Phraichānchit, S. (2004). *Community Archaeology: A New Approach for Cultural Resource and Community Development*. The Journal of Thai Khadi Research Institute. 1(1) (October 2003 - March 2004):pp. 197-259.
- Pra Kru Prapatwiriya. 60th year. (Mimeographed). [พระครูประกาศวิริยคุณ. 5 รอบ. เอกสารอัดสำเนา]
- Ratchaburi, C. (2013). *"Prasae in the Past" in Muang Klang. Rayong: Klaeng Municipal* [เจลิยว ราชบุรี. (2556). "ประเพณีในอดีต". ใน เมืองแกลงของเรา เมื่อเก่าบรรพชนระยอง. ระยอง: เทศบาลเมืองแกลง.]
- Royal Chronicle vol.2. (2005). พระราชพงศาวดาร ฉบับราชหัตถเลขาล่อม 2. (2548). (พิมพ์ครั้งที่ 10). กรุงเทพมหานคร: สำนักวรรณกรรมและประวัติศาสตร์ กรมศิลปากร. Vol.2. Bangkok: Fine Art Department.

## Transnational Marriages, Thai Men and Masculine Anxiety

Lapanun, Patcharin

Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
Center for Research on Plurality the Mekong Region (CERP)  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University  
Thailand

-----

### Abstract

Studies of transnational marriage trend to focus on the women and men engaged in this relationship. Most studies of marriages between Thai women and Western men explore women's motivations, experiences and practices in realizing their desire to initiate and maintain this transnational relationship. The emergent works also examine inspirations, involvements and experiences of men in these marriages. Yet, transnational marriages involve two groups of men –those who are directly involved in these marital relationships and those who are not, but who influence and are affected by such marriages. The latter group of men are related to women under transnational marriage in different ways; some are ex-husbands, others are fathers or sons. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in the northeast region or Isan, this paper focuses on these local men to explore how women's choices for marital relationships outside marrying locally are perceived and reacted to by local men; how these choices have generated masculine anxiety; and whether they have influenced gender relations in Isan communities where these marriages are embedded.

**Keywords:** transnational marriage, masculinity, Thailand, Isan

### Introduction

Transnational marriages and marital intimacies across borders between local women and *farang* men (Western men) are a striking social phenomenon in Thailand, especially in the Northeast region or Isan. Similar trends in transnational relationships were also documented in a number of other Asian countries, including Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, China, Vietnam and the Philippines (Constable 2005; Ishii 2016; Jones & Shen 2008; Lu & Yang 2010; Wang & Chang 2002). This growing phenomenon has received scholarly attention, both from practical concerns and theoretical perspectives. Early inquiries into transnational marriages tended to focus on women and men engaged in this type of relationship. The ethnic, socio-cultural and economic background of both women and men involved in these marriages, as well as patterns and characteristics of such marriages were explored (Jones 2012; Jones & Shen 2008). Studies also focused on motivations and aspirations propelling women (and men) to opt for such unions and how they actualized their desires and negotiated social relations in the sites of origin

and settlement society as well as in the 'contact zones' where their relationships were initiated (Brennan 2004; Cabezas 2009; Lapanun 2012; Maher & Lafferty 2014; Suksomboon 2009; Tosakul 2010; Smutkupt & Kitiarsa 2007; Sununta & Angeles 2013). The insights reveal that these marriages are shaped by local and Western cultures/norms, gender, ethnicity, class, historical and political factors on the one hand, and by 'social locations' of concerned women and men in the global hierarchy on the other (Lapanun 2013). Most of these works concentrate on women and their experiences, while knowledge about men and masculinities in literature on transnational marriage is relatively limited.

Transnational marriages involve two groups of men – those who engage in this marital relationship and those who do not. Recently, there have been a growing number of studies exploring the experiences of men of the former group (Cheng, 2012; Cheng, Yeoh & Zhang 2014; Maher & Lafferty 2014; Thompson, Kitiarsa & Smutkupt 2016) while those of the latter group are under-researched. Consequently, there is a gap in the theoretical claims about masculinities, gendered ideologies and practices as well as the family lives of interethnic couples. Thus, this paper examines perspectives and experiences of local men who are not involved in, but are related to or affected by such marriages. It explores how this type of transnational relationship has generated masculine anxiety, altered masculine ideals, and influenced gender relations in Isan communities where these marriages are embedded.

The notion of masculinity, according to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), is a relational concept of manhood and womanhood which is embedded in specific social environments and which changes over time. These authors state that "[M]asculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and, therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting" (2005: 836). In his review of the anthropology of masculinity, Gutmann (1997) also suggests that the investigations of men and masculinity need to incorporate women's experiences and opinions with respect to men. Applying this notion, this paper draws on two sets of data collected from both men and women in two Isan communities, one in Khon Kaen province and another in Udon Thani. The main data set is composed of the narratives of eight men between the ages of 24 and 63 and six women between the ages of 23 and 57, living in a rural village of Khon Kaen province, called Na Chareon<sup>17</sup>. These men are related to women under transnational marriage or *mia farang*<sup>18</sup> one way or another; some are ex-husbands, others are relatives or neighbors. One man is a retired school teacher. Three women are *mia farang*; one is a village school teacher and the other two are neighbors of *mia farang* living in the village. The interviews were carried out during March 2015-January 2016. The supplementary data set is from extensive research on transnational marriage that I carried out in Na Dokmai, a rural village in Udon Thani province during 2008-2009. This research involves 68 women, 14 local men and 11 *farang* (Western, Caucasian) men who are in relationships with Isan women (Lapanun 2013).

---

<sup>17</sup> The names of villages and all personal names quoted are pseudonyms.

<sup>18</sup> The Thai term *mia farang* literally means a Thai wife of a Western man. *Mia farang* denotes a woman involved in a serious and long-term relationship with a Western partner. There is another Thai term, *phanraya farang*, which also refers to Westerners' wives and denotes a more of a sense of respect as compared to *mia farang*. However, villagers in both Na Chareon and Na Dokmai rarely used the term *phanraya farang*. In this paper, I use *mia farang* following the villagers' usage.



## Transnational Marriage and Local Men's Views

In the Thai context, transnational marriage might simply mean 'a marriage of a Thai woman with a Western man.' However, my fieldwork in Na Chareon and Na Dokmai shows that the way in which people regard such a marriage varies widely depending on their background and relationship with the women who are married to Westerners. Gender is one of the key factors shaping perspectives towards transnational marriage. My earlier work in Na Dokmai (Lapanun 2013) shows that the motivations propelling village women to marry a Western partner are multiple and complex, extending beyond material relations and romantic love. These marriages are often related to women's obligations as a 'dutiful daughter' and a mother, as well as local male images, gender imagination and fantasies about modernity and 'a better life'. The women's parents and relatives share this view. On the other hand, local men often perceive these marriages as a way to improve the economic situation of women and their families. Asking why there are so many *mia farang* in Na Chareon, Som (50)<sup>19</sup>, a former assistant village head explained:

These days the ways of life of people in the village have changed. Everyone rushes to earn money to improve their life.... Money can bring anything: a big house, land, a car and so on. To earn money, villagers have migrated to work in cities and tourist destinations. Many village women headed to Pattaya and Phuket [transnational tourist sites] with the aim of meeting and marrying *farang* [men]. Through marrying *farang*, women can improve material wealth to support their parents and take care of their children [born from a local father].

The view emphasizing economic reasons is predominant and shared by many local people. Big, a man in his late twenties whose wife left him to marry a Japanese man told me that he did not earn much; thus, the amount of money that should be spent often became an issue in his family. Eventually, his wife and daughter left him. The man said: "I feel sorry that I could not earn enough to satisfy her and to support our child... It is good for my daughter to be under her mother's care; she can have a good education and a good life." The conversation conveyed to me that his wife made this decision for the future of her daughter and herself, although she still has affection for her ex-husband. For some men these marriages did not imply that 'by nature' Thai women feel less affection for Thai men than foreign men. A father (32) with two children, who ran an internet shop in Na Dokmai, concurred with this viewpoint. He stated:

If people [either female or male] can live a good life, nobody would want to marry a foreigner. Coming from different cultures and using different languages, it is difficult to develop a deep understanding and passion.... I truly believe that women marry *farang* [men] out of difficulty, not because of love.... Parents and senior kin also encourage their daughters and nieces to marry *farang* [men]. The elderly are less concerned about love than a secure future.

*Mia farang* acknowledged that material aspects of transnational marriage were part of their desires. At the same time, they also recognized other factors motivating them to turn to Western men, among them

---

<sup>19</sup> The figure after person's name indicates his/her age at the time of the interview.

the major factors were the irresponsibility of local men in caring for their family, and female filial obligations. By contrast, local men often talked about transnational marriage in economic terms. This line of reasoning neither recognizes the importance of human emotions nor takes into account the behavior of local men in family relations that drives women to seek transnational marriage.

Some local men are threatened by transnational marriage because it offers the women in their community an alternative to marital relationships beyond what is available locally. Many women, when their relationships with local men did not work out, turned to foreigners with whom they thought they could enjoy a good marriage and a secure future for themselves and their natal families. There are also village men who are less concerned about 'losing women' to *farang* men. These men realized that transnational marriage offers women a marriage alternative but in the end these women would return to local men. This perception draws on the fact that there are women who have been seeing local men while living with their *farang* partner or after their transnational relationship ended. While intimate associations outside of marriage are considered immoral, villagers talked about such relationships as a way for local men to enjoy material support and 'a comfortable life'. Such associations emphasize the image of local men as irresponsible people who did not take the relationship and family's welfare seriously. Interestingly, while many male villagers accepted that the image of 'irresponsible local men' was relevant, they did not consider it a factor that turned women away from local men, making them seek transnational marriage. Rather, these men often claimed that the desire of the women and their parents to obtain wealth were key motivations in seeking transnational marriage. This male perspective emphasizes the issues of breadwinner and marriage possibility.

### **Breadwinner, 'Masculine Culture' and Marriage Possibility**

Focusing on breadwinners, I do not mean to say that transnational (and local) marriages involve material relations alone. Rather, I have argued elsewhere (Lapanun, 2012, 2013) that transnational marriage is a complex social phenomenon that is shaped and reshaped by multiple factors including ethnicity, class, gender, Western/local norms and cultures as well as economic, historical and political dimensions. In this paper I focus on breadwinning as a way to analyze and capture local masculinity in the transnational marriage context.

The cultural ideals of breadwinners/providers are central to the notion of masculinity. Connell states that the "cultural function of masculine identity is to motivate men to work" (1995, 33). This implies that men would be the primary breadwinners. The ability to provide resources for the survival of one's family is the main basis of adult men's standing and reputation. In this sense, breadwinning roles are the most fundamental foundation of masculine identity (Cheng, Yeoh & Zhang 2014; Thai 2006; Fuller 2001). It is this identity that men, in all societies, have negotiated in order to be 'real men.' Cheng, Yeoh & Zhang (2014) found that Singaporean men who have married Vietnamese wives negotiate a stereotype of 'losers' in the marriage market – a source of their masculine unease – by performing the roles of 'providers' and 'supporters' for their own and their wives' natal families. Such roles allow these men to validate their masculine identity. Similarly, Western men resettling with their wives in Isan communities have performed what they saw as hegemonic masculinity so as to position themselves as 'providers and real white men' (Maher & Lafferty, 2014). Elmhirst's (2007) observation in Indonesia shows that

masculinities are often connected to men's participation or nonparticipation in productive work. Successful masculine identities relate closely to success in providing for the family. Across diverse national contexts, the role of a man as breadwinner is a key aspect of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995) that men have articulated and negotiated, and these endeavors are varied and shaped by their contexts. Furthermore, studies also reveal how men sustain and reclaim their masculine identity through performing breadwinning roles. I further elaborate, in this section, how breadwinner masculinity shapes the marriage possibilities of local men in the context of contemporary transnational marriage in Thailand.

Narratives of men in Na Charoen reveal fluid masculinities; the older men are more successful in fulfilling breadwinning roles, although there are younger men who worked hard to earn a living for their family. However, a number of young men in the village have struggled to embrace breadwinner masculinity. Life stories of the men who are in their fifties and sixties reveal that these men engaged in both agriculture and non-agricultural, paid labor to earn an income so as to provide the essential resources for their family. This engagement is important even before getting married as men's secure work signifies their status as potential marriage partners. Sri (63), a man who had 30-years of experience in running an Isan folk song band (*mor lam*) as a source of income to support his family, said that he had worked hard for three years before marriage to prove to his wife and her parents that he was a qualified partner who could take care of the family. Som's story also reveals that he had engaged in diverse kinds of work to support his family. Leaving home to work in Bangkok for almost 10 years after marriage, he could not save any money. After having their second child, Som and his wife returned to the village. Then, he earned a living by selling ice cream in the home village and in villages nearby. The earnings allowed him to open a food stall where his wife sold cooked food, which later evolved into a grocery shop, a business that this family has maintained until now. Both men have managed to embrace breadwinner masculinity and validate their identity as 'good husband and father.'

Dan (29), a younger man from a relatively well-to-do family who ran a game shop with an extended section selling groceries, said that he sold his car and motorbike to invest in this business. His wife planned to open a coffee shop as well. Being concerned about masculine responsibility in taking care of his family, Dan stopped philandering and drinking – activities that he had much enjoyed during his teenage life. "Now I have a different life style than most young men in the village who enjoy going out with friends, drinking and gambling," Dan said. Images of young men in Na Charoen present popular stereotypes of seeking thrills and being financially irresponsible and prone to over indulgence in alcohol. Young village men I spoke with often talked about their experiences of going out, drinking, sexual philandering and gambling which they considered as 'masculine culture' even though they were aware that such behavior would make them unqualified as potential marriage partners. Tom (25), one of the young men getting together in front of Dan's shop, said:

To marry, one has to have to a secure job, but I don't.... I don't earn much, I'm not able to make ends meet. It is difficult to get a job with good pay.... I go out with friends almost every day. We regularly meet here [in front of Dan's shop] in the evening, chatting and drinking. Sometimes we also go to town. It is good to meet and talk to friends who are in the same situation.

Another man joining the conversation reported that he had been seeing a woman who he wants to marry, but the woman's parents did not agree as he did not have a regular job. These young men cited the lack of economic opportunities especially in rural areas as the root of their inability to embrace breadwinner masculinity. At the same time, they also claimed that *farang* men are in a better position in term of their economic status which allows them to fulfill the roles of providers in a transnational marriage family. Interestingly, while the young men associated their limited marriage possibilities to economic means and unsecure jobs that prevent them from embracing breadwinner roles, the parents often talked about the problems of promiscuity, (hard) drinking, and gambling in relation to their criteria for selecting a partner for their daughter, apart from economic considerations. Similar criteria also applied the women themselves. Nang (47), a woman who married to a French husband, said, "I always look for men, either Thai or *farang*, who are not lazy and who take good care of me and are responsible for the family... I cannot accept male womanizing behavior (*jao chu*)."

Sa (37), a woman living with her Danish husband in Na Dokmai, shared a similar view; she put it: "I want a good man who is generous and warm-hearted...who is responsible for his family, accepts and supports my children and cares for my parents as well." These women's and parents' views reflect the view that local men have to negotiate both breadwinner masculinity and 'masculine culture' so as to qualify themselves as desirable partners. In Na Chareon, another condition shaping masculine identity has to do with drugs. The village history reveals that after Thailand's economic crisis in 1997, a number of men (and some women) in the village became involved with drugs. In most cases, such involvement resulted in family problems and eventually in separation as these men could not support their family. This development emphasizes the failure of local men in fulfilling breadwinning roles. Some women who struggled with family crisis as their husbands were involved with drugs sought to marry *farang* men. Currently although drugs are not a problem in Na Charoen, the collective memory about this development has shaped ideas of local masculine identity that village men have to negotiate.

In talking about men's ability to provide resources and care of their family, the older men in the village often mentioned that the ways in which people earn their living have changed. In the times when they were young and started a family of their own, people focused less on cash and were less materialistic than they are these days. Thus, in the current context, young men may face more pressure in terms of working to earn enough economic means to support their family. However, the older men did not appreciate the practices of 'masculine culture' of the younger generations which have become more common in the village scene. Ironically, young men are less apt to accept that their behavior in this regard is a factor contributing to the perception of them as unqualified suitors.

Thus, this study shares with existing works the idea that although the role of breadwinner is central to masculine identity, this role may not be the sole factor influencing marriage possibilities. The practices of 'masculine culture' have shaped and reshaped how men are perceived and whether they are considered to be qualified partners, apart from their role as breadwinner. It is under this context that masculine anxiety comes into view whether or not local men accept it or are aware of it.

### **Masculine Anxiety and Patriarchal Gender Relation**

In Na Dokmai, local men's fears of losing their partners to foreigners are manifested in such expressions

as, "If I dare to argue with my wife, I am afraid that she will leave me to marry a *farang*" and "I do not dare to cough or sneeze. If my wife is disappointed she may leave me to marry a *farang*." Often these utterances were mentioned as a third person's assertion and the expressions were made in a non-serious, joking manner. Drawing on feminist studies in the field of language (Mulkay 1988), the reactions can be read as reflections of local men's insecurity and their realization of the transformations that challenge the patriarchal gender privilege. This interpretation is in line with Weisman (2000) in her analysis of Thai women involved in sexual relationships with American servicemen during the Vietnam War (1965-1975). Weisman argues that women's involvement in the sex trade is indicative of men's failure in controlling female sexuality, as these women took control of their own sexuality without having to submit to mediation by their fathers or older kin men.

In Na Chareon, village men (and women) are aware of the shift in gender power relations regarding marriage. Men are also aware that transnational marriages provide women with the choice of marrying *farang* men, allowing these women to have a 'better' life. Though not all women with *farang* husbands have enjoyed a good marriage and a secure life, the changes and advancement of material consumption and life style these women acquired by virtue of marrying *farang* men are obvious. Such changes have highlighted masculine identity as that of breadwinner and have shaped local men's perspectives of marriage. Two young men, aged 24 and 27, told me that if they will marry, they have to make sure that they are able to take care of their wife and family. One man stated that "women expect their husbands to support them financially. To be a good husband and father, men have to fulfill this expectation." These two men admitted, however, that although this expectation is hard for them and other village men to fulfill, they were aware of the male role as providers. The situation has generated masculine anxiety that many young men in the village have experienced and negotiated.

While local men's awareness of the breadwinner ideal is common, their actions in this regard did not always demonstrate it. Some, like Dan (29), have embraced the breadwinner identity and practice it. Dan believes that being responsible for one's family and maintaining a good relationship are crucial for marriage and family life, and that men play a key part in keeping the family together. Other young men took this ideal less seriously; they did not change their routines of going out, drinking and seeking thrills. These men talked about such activities as ways of coping with profound pressure from limited economic opportunities as well as their anxiety over being seen as unsuitable partners. Dan, as well as other village men, related the ignorance of young men in refusing to embrace breadwinner ideals to their expectation that women marrying *farang* husbands would eventually return to local men. This expectation was shaped by examples of relationships between *mia farang* and local young men in the village.

Such associations are perceived ambiguously. On the one hand they are viewed from an opportunistic perspective; young men can gain material possessions and enjoy a comfortable life while women acquire intimate relationships that fulfill their desires. On the other hand, these relationships are considered immoral and inappropriate in terms of both masculine identity and dignity. This ambiguity is common and it turns up in the narratives of both men and women in Na Chareon. Not surprisingly, it is women who are blamed as 'bad women' for being sexually active, while men are not considered as having 'bad' behavior. Indeed, male involvement in such relationships is said to be 'cool' and 'chill.' Struggling to qualify themselves as suitable marriage partners, young men often talked about marriage to suggest that whether or not they are able to embrace breadwinner ideals, women will eventually return to local men.

In such a context, transnational marriage has reproduced patriarchal privilege to justify local men's inability to carry out the role of breadwinner. Thus, masculine anxiety in this context has less influence on men's actual practices, although these men were aware of the transformations that challenge gender relation regarding marriage and family life.

## Conclusion

As Connell and Messerschmidt suggest, "[M]asculinity is not a fixed entity embedded in the body or personality traits of individuals. Masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and, therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting" (2005: 836). The on-going changes in responses to the current transnational marriages taking place in Na Charoen and Na Dokmai underlie gender dynamism, create anxiety in local men and place them in a vulnerable position – that of being unqualified as marriage partners. While the transformations have brought new challenges to gender relations, they also reinforce 'masculine culture' and patriarchal privilege, allowing local men to justify their incompetence to embrace breadwinner ideals. The fluid masculinities highlight some of gendered responses to current transnational marriage and the ways local men negotiate masculinity in a manner sensitive to the perceptions and lived reality influenced and constrained by social and economic conditions. The narratives and experiences of local men reveal diverse and complex masculinities in relation to transnational marriage where gender, sexuality and family life are put to severe test in the face of local-global articulation.

## References

- Boa, J. (1999). Reconfiguring Cheesiness in Thailand: Articulating Ethnicity along Sex/Gender and Class Lines. In P. Jackson & N. Cook (Eds.), *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Thailand* (pp. 261-274). Bangkok: Silkworm Books.
- Brennan, D. (2004). *What's Love Got to Do with It?: Transnational Desires and Sex Tourism in the Dominican Republic*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Cabezas, A. L. (2009). *Economics of Desire: Sex and Tourism in Cuba and the Dominican Republic*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Connell, R. W., & Masserschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept. *Gender and Society* 19(6), 829-859.
- Constable, N. (Ed.). (2005). *Cross-Border Marriages: Gender and Mobility in Transnational Asia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Cheng, Y. (2012). Transnational Masculinities in Situ: Singaporean Husbands and their International Marriage Experiences. *Area*, 44(1), 76-82.
- Cheng Y., Yeoh, B. S. A., Zhang, J. (2014). Still 'Breadwinners' and 'Providers': Singaporean Husbands, Money and Masculinity in Transnational Marriage. *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, DOI 10.1080/0966369X.2014.917282.
- Elmhirst, R. (2007). Tigers and Gangsters: Masculinities and Feminized Migration in Indonesia. *Population Space and Place* 13(3), 225-
- Fuller, N. (2001). Social Construction of Gender Identity among Peruvian Men. *Men and Masculinities* 3(3), 316-331.
- Gutmann, M. C. (1997). Trafficking in Men: The Anthropology of Masculinity. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26,

- 385-409.
- Ishii, S.K., (Ed.). (2016). *Marriage Migration in Asia, Emerging Minorities at the Frontiers of Nation-State*. Singapore: NUS Press.
- Jones, G. W. (2012). International Marriage in Asia: What Do We Know, and What Do We Need to Know?. ARI Working Paper, series No. 174. Asia Research Institute & J Y Pillay Comparative Asia Research Centre at the Global Asia Institute, National University of Singapore, [www.nus.ari.edu.sg/pub/wps.htm](http://www.nus.ari.edu.sg/pub/wps.htm).
- Jones, G., & Shen, H. (2008). International Marriage in East and Southeast Asia: Trends and Research Emphases. *Citizenship Studies* 12 (1), 9-25.
- Lapanun, P. (2012). It's Not Just About Money: Transnational Marriages of Isan Women. *Journal of Mekong Societies* 8(3), 1–28.
- Lapanun, P. (2013). *Logics of Desire and Transnational Marriage Practices in a Northeastern Thai Village*. Doctoral Dissertation, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.
- Lu, M. C., & Yang, W. (Eds.). (2014). *Asian Cross-border Marriage Migration: Demographic Pattern and Social Issues*. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press.
- Maher, K. H., & Lafferty, M. (2014). White Migrants Masculinities in Thailand and the Paradoxes of Western Privilege. *Social & Cultural Geography* 15(4), 427-448. DOI: 10.1080/14649365.2014.893703.
- Mulkay, M. (1988). *On Humour: Its Nature and Its Place in Modern Society*. Cambridge and New York: Polity Press.
- Suksomboon, P. (2009). *Thai Migrant Women in the Netherlands: Cross-Cultural Marriages and Families*. Doctoral Dissertation, Leiden University.
- Smutkupt, S., & Kitiarsa, P. (2007). The Business of Marrying the Orient and Its Vicissitudes: Farang Husbands and Isan Wives on the Global Cultural Stage. A paper presented in Southeast Asia Center 20th Anniversary Celebration Conference on Religious, Ethnicity and Modernity: Identity and Social Practice in Asia, organized by Southeast Asia Center, University of Washington, Seattle, October 5-6.
- Sunanta, S., & Angeles, L. C. (2013). From Rural Life to Transnational Wife: Agrarian Transition, Gender Mobility, and Intimate Globalization in Transnational Marriages in Northeast Thailand. *Gender, Place and Culture* 20(6), 699–717. DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2012.709827.
- Thompson, E. C., Kitiarsa, P., & Smutkupt, S. (2016). From Sex Tourist to Son-in-Law: Emergent Masculinities and Transient Subjectivities of Farang Men in Thailand. *Current Anthropology* 57(1), 53-71. DOI: 10.1086/684841.
- Tosakul, R. (2010). Cross-Cultural Marriages and Transnational Gender Mobility: Experiences of Village Women from Northeastern Thailand. In M. Lu & W. Yang (Eds.), *Asian Cross-border Marriage Migration: Demographic Patterns and Social Issues*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Wang, H., & Chang, S. (2002). The Commodification of International Marriages: Cross-border marriage Business in Taiwan and Viet Nam. *International Migration* 40 (6), 93-114.

## **From Bureaucratic Polity to Neo-Pluralism and Institutionalism: the Politics of Thai Higher Education**

**Lavankura, Pad**

Faculty of Political Science  
Ramkhamhaeng University, Bangkok  
Thailand

---

### **Abstract**

This article seeks to understand Thai higher education in its political terms. Taking a theoretical approach with academic studies of the Thai political system, Thai higher education can be viewed, from the past to the present, through the lenses of 'bureaucratic polity,' 'neo-pluralism,' and the 'institutionalist' approaches. The linkage between theories of Thai politics and the higher education system can be used as a basis for understanding the overall context of the Thai higher education system. First, this study argues that the 'bureaucratic polity' remains the key to explaining the country's higher education system in the historical period. Despite the efforts of oppositional forces, the historical period saw the imposition of a 'top-down' model, where state authority took complete control of the universities. The study also examines the contemporary period, in which the location of authority shifted as a result of political and socio-economic changes in the country's wider context. This period has witnessed the rising fragmentation of other interest groups outside the bureaucracy. These situations can be best explained through the 'neo-pluralist' and 'institutionalist' approaches. Finally, the study concludes that Thai higher education is an arena of conflicts and consensus for key related forces within the system. In its current condition, there are as yet no signs of long-term beneficial effects to serve wider public interests.

**Keywords:** Bureaucratic Polity, Neo-pluralism, Institutionalism, Higher Education, Thai Politics

### **Introduction**

It is true to say that Thai higher education is a mirror image of the Thai political system. To understand the fundamental problems of Thai higher education, it is vital to relate Thai higher education to the country's political system. Since higher education cannot be viewed as separate from its socio-economic and political environment, this article scrutinizes the Thai higher education sector from the very early to the contemporary periods, by using theoretical approaches in the study of Thai politics. From that perspective, higher education is merely a reflexive study of the Thai political regime as being a place where political actors seek to follow narrow interests.

The 'bureaucratic polity' model has been used to understand Thai higher education's context during its first establishment. When the bureaucratic sector became challenged with the increasingly complex



demands made by various interest groups, from the 1970s onwards, the Thai higher education sector can be best understood through the 'neo-pluralist' and 'institutionalist' approaches. Some might argue that Thai politics is far too complex to be captured with any particular approach. It is always questionable whether particular political events fit with the "bureaucratic polity" model or any of the other approaches that have been suggested. In the same way, the circumstances of Thai higher education have always been very complex throughout its history. However, by using the theoretical approach that Hewison (1997) suggested regarding political change in Thailand, these analytical tools help to understand the complex and changing situation of Thai higher education in different periods.

This article begins by linking Thai higher education with the 'bureaucratic polity' model. This model has been useful for explaining Thai higher education's situation since its first establishment. The following section goes on to discuss Thai higher education in its 'neo-pluralist' and 'institutionalist' approaches, in which one can see various key players at different levels attempting to open channels of influence in an expanded higher education and political arena. The article concludes that the forces of mainly elite interest groups in the higher education sector provide no hope for a better result.

### **Thai Higher Education and its "Bureaucratic Polity" Model**

The 'bureaucratic polity' model has been useful in explaining the Thai higher education system in the early period (Riggs, 1966). From the establishment of Chulalongkorn University, the first full-fledged university in Thailand, in 1917, to the 1970s, it had been nearly 50 years in which the key players who took control of the Thai higher education system had been members of the royal elites and military-civilian bureaucrats. The primary reason that these elites became involved with the system must be understood in the country's socio-economic and political context. Thai higher education was first established under the system of absolute monarchy, during the reign of King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910), followed by that of King Vajiravudh (1919-1925) (Watson, 1991: 561). During that period, the concept of bureaucracy was introduced as a form of rule by government officials (Wyatt, 1969: 379; Smith, 2003: 159). This was a period in which the Thai bureaucracy grew rapidly. Government expenditures climbed at a higher annual rate of nearly 14 per cent in the 1890s, and the staffs of the new ministries increased respectively (Wyatt, 1994: 235).

Consequently, higher education was originally the state's apparatus to serve the rapid development of the country. Its priority was to train members of the royal elites and those involved in royal court circles to become '*kharatchakarn*', a Thai term for those in the service of the king (Wichit, 1974: 74; Wright, 1991; MUA, 1992: 18; Krissanapong, 2002: 3). During that time, bureaucratic values were strongly entrenched in Thai society. The bureaucrats' work was considered the most prestigious, and was reserved for members of the royal family and the elites who had obtained degrees from abroad or from state institutions. Thus, higher education was considered elitist, as a means to enhance the social status of certain individuals based on the patronage system (Wright, 1991: 18).

Due to the absolute power of the state, the first university, Chulalongkorn, was organized as part of the University Department in the Ministry of Education (Wichit, 1974: 74). In the same way as other civil service sectors, especially those of military and police departments, the internal management of Chulalongkorn University was very bureaucratic-centric. The rector, being called "commander in chief",

administered all the internal matters of the university, including the academic, financial, human resources, and infrastructure (Rattana, 2015: 42).

Following the absolute rule of the monarchs, in 1932, the political situation changed. A coup was successfully carried out by influential military-civilians, mainly led by the head of the People's party, Pridi Banomyong, a law graduate from France, in alliance with the army. This coalition of elites framed Thailand's first constitution, which placed the King under the law. One of the important goals of the People's party concerned 'the right of the people to access education' (MUA, 1992: 33). Pridi founded *Thammasat lae Karn Mueng* University (the University of Moral and Political Science) in 1933. This allowed people from all walks of life who had completed secondary school or had gained the equivalent academic qualifications to acquire tertiary education.

The early years of Thammasat's administration saw an attempt by the civilian forces to liberate the university from the state's control. The creation of Thammasat University for the first time established the idea of a university council, made up of senior chair holders (Patom, 1989; Varunee, 1990). The university was free from the state's control, in contrast to Chulalongkorn University, which was part of the Ministry of Education and retained its prestigious value of higher education for the nation's elites (MUA, 1992: 33). However, this liberal style was not particularly sustainable, because Thammasat University, which was the pioneer of this idea, retained its autonomous system only for the 16 years of the 'Pridi era.' He was eventually exiled as a consequence of political conflicts (Akagi, 1977: 42). The civilian forces were replaced by the new Phibun government in 1952, and military and bureaucratic forces took control of the system.

When the new Phibun government came to power, Thammasat University was placed under state control. The word "political" was removed from its name, and so it has remained to this day (Prizzia, 1985: 38). This intervention was an attempt by the government to implement its desire to eliminate all traces of Pridi's influence. Like Chulalongkorn University, Thammasat University was put under the Ministry of Education and considered another route to serve the bureaucracy (Watson, 1991: 562). As a consequence, the potential to develop liberal education and the concept of professional development unrestrained by the bureaucracy was distorted by the military government. The bureaucracy remained embedded inside Thai higher education institutions, and the influence of the state remained dominant.

During the Phibun administration's 'Era of Nation Building', three more universities were established in 1942 and 1943 to accommodate the country's manpower demands in specialized areas. The universities were named Mahidol (University of Medicine), Kasetsart (University of Agriculture), and Silpakorn (University of Fine Arts). This period again saw the continuation of strict state-control of the Thai higher education system, despite an attempt in the early part of the period to liberate the universities (Varunee, 1990: 5; Watson, 1991: 561-2; Neave and Van Vught, 1994: 12). The ruling elite wished to maintain its authority by putting the institutions under strict state control. The first two universities were administered by the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Agriculture respectively, while the last came under the Ministry of Education (Prizzia, 1985: 38). These universities were driven by the original idea of Thai higher education as a training ground for civil servants. Instead of fostering a spirit of critical inquiry, the universities tended to produce specialists in limited fields who served the particular needs of a specific branch of government service (Watson, 1991: 562).

Moreover, in the curricula taught by the universities in that early period, academic freedom was limited.

Although there were a number of foreign teachers from England, France, and the United States, the majority of the teaching staff were Thai. The attitudes and values that were encouraged were largely based on Buddhist Morality, including subservience to elders and acceptance not only of the traditions of the past but of the existing patterns of society (Watson, 1989: 90). The links between universities and specific ministries undermined intellectual development and the independence of the universities. During these periods, Thai higher education maintained a limited relationship with society, since the bureaucracy was the preserve of the elites. The universities were all to be found in Bangkok. This restriction to the capital city reflected the uneven distribution of access to higher education (Watson, 1991).

While discussing the 'bureaucratic polity' model in the Thai higher education system, it is important to emphasize that universities were part of the bureaucracy and those working in public universities were civil servants. The teaching and academic staff had a lifelong tenure as public servants, with associated rights and privileges, such as full medical coverage, housing allowance, and the right to receive royal decorations (Welch, 2011: 91). The idea that universities were part of the bureaucracy certainly shaped the norms of individuals. This led them to prioritize prestige, relative power, and stability, rather than developing an identity as academics.

Moreover, during the first 40 years of the establishment of public universities in Thailand, the full-time university lecturer system was not well-established. All universities applied the part-time lecturer system, which means civil servants from various ministries were employed to teach in universities on the side (Rangsan, 2001: 309-310). The number of part-time lecturers was higher than the number of full-time staff (Varunee, 1990: 259). The use of this part-time lecturer system reflected the priority of the Thai state to stick to the concept of 'training civil servants,' rather than allowing the universities to become institutions that are designed to produce advanced knowledge (Rangsan, 2001: 311). Due to the embedded bureaucracy in Thai universities, the most powerful figure does not need to be the most experienced or qualified professor. Rather, the authority is focused around the high ranking university administrators such as the presidents, and deans. In Thai universities, there are those academics that prefer to hold the administrators' status, because they gain benefits and can make important decisions (Rattana, 2015: 182). This shows how bureaucratic values dominated within the university sphere, thus reducing academic professionalism.

Following the Phibun regime, the dictatorial regime of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat also embraced the state's power over the higher education sector. Following Sarit's national socio-economic development plan, which was largely elite-centered and influenced by the American experts, there was an expansion of universities to other provinces. The focus of this plan was on the distributional impact of growth, regional development, the lessening of rural-urban income differentials, and equal access to job opportunities and social services (World Bank, 1989: xi). Consequently, Chiang Mai, Khon Kaen, and Prince Songkhla Universities were founded in 1960, 1962, and 1965, respectively (Varaporn, 2006: 192). One of the key rationales in creating provincial universities was that the government was aware of the threat of communism in the countryside. The educational expansion to the rural areas was mainly undertaken based on security considerations (Thak, 1979: 234). When the government felt these pressures, it rushed to establish the universities in regional areas without researching the willingness and readiness of the regions. That action led to the problem of 'center-periphery' relationships, in other

words, the new universities suffered from genuine shortcomings. Qualified teachers were not willing to serve in isolated rural areas; there was a lack of library research facilities and equipment and resources; and the number of enrolled students was limited. It took some time, but by the late 1970s these universities had become prestigious in their own right. However, the process of sending staff and managing from the center reflected top-down control, which would hardly meet the rural demands (Watson, 1991: 566; Arai, 1977: 38).

During Sarit's government, Thai universities acted as the followers, rather than as leaders or participants in policy planning. Watson (1991, p. 564) pointed out that it was not until the fourth national social and economic development plan (1977-1981) that university staff actually became involved in the planning process. This reflected not only the role of the followers, but also the limited capacity of academic research to direct the government's policy. While the national economic and social development plans were formulated by Sarit's government as 'part and parcel of the execution of American policy' (Thak, 1979: 255), the plans were regarded by the Thai higher education sector as an imperative blueprint to be followed. It needs to be understood that Thai universities largely depended on the state's direct control in all internal matters such as finance, staffing, and management.

The dictatorial regime of Sarit demonstrated the state's power over the higher education sector in other ways as well. Sarit's government realized that the student movement had been instrumental in the removal of Phibun's regime in 1957. Thus, when he came to power, he suppressed university student activism according to two distinct plans. The first was announced in 1959, when he arranged for every university to be administered by the Office of the National Education Commission (ONEC), which reported directly to the Prime Minister's Office. This made it easier for the government to monitor students (MUA, 1992: 162-163). The establishment of ONEC was a way to centralize higher education's strategizing and planning. It was perceived as an imposing trend that would serve a rigid military dictatorship. At that time, the Prime Minister consolidated absolute power to control universities in terms of planning and internal affairs, focusing on the concepts of standardization, centralization, and the harmonization of nation plans and education objectives (Rattana, 2015: 45-46).

The second mechanism imposed by the government was to install military politicians as presidents of the universities. For example, Field Marshal Thanom became the president of Thammasat University from 1950 to 1953; Field Marshal Prapas became the president of Chulalongkorn University from 1951 to 1959; and Marshal Prasert was appointed president of Chiang Mai University (MUA, 1992: 162-163). These measures secured the authoritarian military government's control over higher education. Moreover, Field Marshal Sarit himself took part in various positions such as the President of the University Council, President of the ONEC, and President of the University Committee (Rattana, 2015: 46). The direct intervention of the military state in the universities made it difficult for academics to protect their intellectual space.

The centralized management of higher education in Thailand must be understood in the broader context of the country's politics and the attempt to govern the universities' activities. The government's strategy to control universities and students was partly embodied in the regulations stipulating the wearing of uniforms by university students, which were drawn up during this period (MUA, 1992: 187-188). Government policies made clear that challenging the dominant power was not to be tolerated. Higher education once more came under state control.

The bureaucratic elites played the most important role from the period of absolute monarchy until that of the authoritarian military regimes. Rival ideas and actions, such as the creation of Thammasat University or the students' movements during 1950s, were suppressed by the military state. Although right-wing repression continued, the contrasting forces of the military state and the student movement continued to exist. As Anderson (1998: 173) suggested the voice of this 'new bourgeois strata gradually emerged and did not disappear', however, they remained of secondary importance.

The priorities of Thai higher education in that early period can be summarized in three main points: 1) the primary objective of the universities was to serve as training grounds for civil servants; 2) the state's control over the universities' affairs was powerful and centralized; and 3) the structure, norms and values inside Thai public universities were bureaucratic. These three main points marked a real beginning of Thai higher education system and remain embedded as core elements in Thai higher education.

### **Higher Education with the Neo-pluralist and Institutional Approaches**

Hewison (1997:6) has suggested that the Thai political system could progress from the idea of 'bureaucratic polity' to a variety of theoretical approaches. He identified two theoretical approaches: the first included the 'neo-pluralist' and 'institutionalist' approaches; and the second was the 'political economy' approach. This section attempts to understand Thai higher education from the 1970s onwards by applying the first theoretical approach, as it best captures the politics of Thai higher education during this contemporary period.

The 'neo-pluralist' approach focuses on a new kind of relationship between business and bureaucracy, in which the first becomes more influential than the latter. Business groups many times are more privileged and have more say than the state. Regarding the 'institutionalist' approach, Hewison (1997:6) has noted that the political system has developed "channels of influence" for a range of interest groups, and that these groups are 'single-issue interest groups lobbying for their own particular benefit.' This approach essentially reduces politics to a 'distributive game' where some interest groups gain support or subsidies at the expense of the majority. A shift towards the 'neo-pluralist' and 'institutionalist' approaches occurred when the political space opened and allowed many interest groups to have channels of influence.

Empirically, it was realized that the political space in Thailand had widened and that the bureaucrats were no longer the only power controlling the policy-making process. The openness towards the market and the widened political space allowed other interest groups to be part of the process (see Anek, 1992: 13-15; Surin and McCargo, 1997: 147; Ockey, 2004). The uprisings of 1973 and 1976 witnessed the apex strength of the student movements in the Thai political system and triggered another turning point in political life (Unger, 1998: 65). Those events were the first time that the universities were able to challenge state authority. The broadening access to university education, which created new social values, encouraged Thai students to actively resist the state's authoritarian rule (Girling, 1981; Wyatt, 1982: 296; Somsakdi, 1987). The students' forces were joined by business forces, members of the middle class, labor unions, civilian politicians, and rural society, and the coalition continued to grow in strength. However, the military and bureaucracy did not disappear; they have remained an important part of the scene (Ockey, 2004; Bidhya, 2013).

In the higher education sector there are at least five key actors mainly representing extra-bureaucratic groups. These are politicians, technocrats, state civilian bureaucrats, academics, and upper and middle class students. Within the open political space, these elite groups are those who seek to gain short-term benefits from the higher education system. This article argues that they are all engaged in a self-interested struggle for resources while the quality of education is under-prioritized. From the 1970s onwards, the situation in Thai higher education reflected the internal dynamics of various demands, the fragmentation of interests, and the bargaining process within the system.

### **Politicians/Technocrats**

The changes in the wider socio-economic and political context of the country allowed politicians and other interest groups to take part in the higher education system, which had once been reserved only for bureaucratic elites. This section discusses the involvement of politicians and technocrats in the higher education system. The year 1988 marked a significant move from the 'bureaucratic' to 'electoral' politics (Anek, 1992: 13-15; Hewison, 1997: 1; Chai-Anan, 2001: 85). The coming of the Anand civilian government in 1991-1992 and once again in 1992 brought an increasing role for 'high-caliber' technocrats whose authority and influence would normally have varied according to the political situation (McCargo, 1998; Bidhya, 2013: 141).

Both politicians' and technocrats' groups came to realize that higher education should be part of social reform projects following the 1997 constitution (Prawes, 2002: 26). Due to the increase in social demand for higher education, advancements in information technology, the globalization movement, and the economic crisis, higher education reform was put forward as one of the country's top agenda items (Sukanya, 2001: 466-468). The process of drafting the education bill took place, led by eminent figures in the field, including those from the economic, social and legal sectors. The National Education Act was promulgated in August 1999, during Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai's second-round government (1997-2001), and was amended in 2002 during Thaksin's government (2001-2006). The amendment of the National Education Act partly reflected the different opinions of the two governments.

Chuan's government gave importance to external conditions imposed by international funding agencies, new trends, the roles of the technocrats, public intellectuals, academics and bureaucratic elites. In contrast, Thaksin attempted to restrict political space by delegitimizing all non-formal politics, diminishing the remaining power of bureaucrats, and undermining the roles of independent bodies and technocrats (Pasuk and Baker, 2004: 229; Bidhya, 2004; McCargo and Ukrist, 2005: 188). The actual implementation of the higher education reform was affected.

Undoubtedly, Thaksin's government was skeptical about the National Education Act that had been initiated by the Democratic government in 1999 (Ratchanee, 2001: 52; Thipsarin, 2014). During his term, Thaksin and his supporters reflected the strong opposition to the issues proposed by the Office of Education Reform established following the 1999 National Education Act. For example, Suvit Khunkitti during his term as Minister of Education declined to obey to the timeframe set by the National Education Act. He also criticized members of the Office of the Education Reform and other scholars who had played important roles in formulating the education reform policy on the grounds that they were the same people who had been very much involved with the country's education failures in the past. He suggested that due to their involvement, they did not have any credibility to propose any ideas or approaches

towards the reform (Thipsarin, 2014).

Concerning the reform, Thipsarin (2014) pointed out that different levels of commitment from the leaderships of governments responsible for policy implementation were one of the obstacles to the reform. From 1999-2009, there were three major groups of elites who assumed power: the first was the Democrat party and its associated scholars; the second was Thaksin Shinawatra and his supporters; and the last group was the elites who assumed power after the 2006 coup, the leader of which was Surayud Chulanont. These three groups came in with different interpretations and levels of commitment towards the reform. The first group focused on rules and regulations, especially commitment to the National Education Act. The second group disagreed with the approach of the first group. They tended to initiate their own ways of dealing with the reform, leading to the amendment of the reforms. They were skeptical towards National Education Act, and their government was reluctant to implement what the Act required. The third group of elites appointed Professor Wichit Srisa-an, former chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Office of Education Reform (Thipsarin, 2014). This appointment indicated that the third group tended to see eye-to-eye with the first group, aiming to remove the second group's power from Thai political arena. These events re-emphasized the struggles for political power within the education sector between the forces of the politicians, technocrats, and bureaucrats on one hand and the Thaksin's government on the other. During that particular time, reform was only rhetorical and did not lead to any significant changes.

### **Bureaucrats**

Although the civilian politicians and technocrats had become influential in the decision-making process and in the country's political regime since the late 1980s, the bureaucrats still held considerable power and authority. They retained the administrative, judicial and coercive arms of the state. It was possible that the civilian bureaucrats could obstruct and delay policies and projects (Ockey, 2004: 147).

When we speak about bureaucrats in the higher education arena, there are two levels of bureaucrats: first, the bureaucrats at the state level; and second, the bureaucrats at the university level. In Thailand, the university lecturers possessed civil servant's status. The bureaucrats at both levels therefore have had close relationships, and they were considered only as bureaucrats of different organizational units. Sometimes, this created a blurred line between their links. The situation was slowly adjusted when the lecturers who entered the state's universities after the 1999 national education act were required to hold a university employee's status. The next section will discuss bureaucrats at the state's level and later at the university's level.

### ***State's level***

At the state level, the Ministry of University Affairs (MUA), currently the Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC), was first established under the PM's Office in 1972, later becoming an independent Ministry in 1977. The MUA was the fruit of a political negotiation between the state and public universities (MUA, 1992: 176). It was added that the MUA's role was not based on state-control but rather based on state-support and coordination (Rattana, 2015: 47). MUA was seen as a unit that would deregulate the universities from the very strict and direct control of the military government. The issue of deregulation by the MUA is, however, debatable. There are differences of opinion as to whether the creation of MUA added further to the control of universities by government (Charas, 1996: 277), or if the

public universities gained the highest freedom that the bureaucratic framework would allow (Varunee, 1990: 228). The MUA seemed to realize since its first founding that the fundamental values of the university are based on academic autonomy and freedom. Therefore, the MUA was designed to be relatively smaller than other Ministries, providing more flexibility towards universities (Rattana, 2015: 47). During the 1970s-1980s, however, Thai public universities still relied on the state's budget and had to conform to the state's national plan (Varunee, 1990: 228; Watson, 1991: 564). During its first establishment, MUA was responsible for the appointment of rectors and deans for each state university, approval of curricula, and the overseeing of general affairs in higher education institutions, as well as responsible for more than 80 per cent of the university's income (Rattana, 2015: 47).

The deregulation role of the MUA had clearly been put into practice during the sixth plan (1987-1991). The reason behind this move was that the Thai government had realized it could not share the burden of mass higher education, especially for the period of 1982-1988, when the government faced the budget deficit (Rangsan, 2001). These deregulations and decentralizations were also done in response to both national and global political pressures for liberalization and reducing size of public sector.

To respond to such demands, the Thai state was forced to adjust and reform the internal administration of public universities and to give more flexibility to private universities. The government had to adjust its position to becoming a 'resources provider', in other words, to guarantee quality by adopting 'state supervision' rather than 'state control.' The university administrations were forced to change from 'bureaucratic' to 'businesslike' management (Neave and Van Vught, 1994, 12; Slaughter et.al, 1997).

During that first period of deregulation, MUA applied a 'laissez-faire' policy, urging public universities to rely on markets, seek outside funding, produce curricula to serve business sectors, generate their own income, and promote the establishment of private universities. Unger (1998: 170) termed 'laissez-faire' in Thai style as 'laissez-faire by accident' or 'Thai-style liberalism', which means that the state allowed the private sector to perform in economic terms while the state provided no credible commitments. This specific explanation encapsulated the situation of Thai higher education when the government started to deregulate the public universities' outside funding by stating that declaration on the budget need not be made to the Ministry of Finance (Rangsan, 2001: 313). The state also delegated decision-making power for course approval and degree granting to the higher educational institution council (Varaporn, 2006: 199; Rattana, 2015: 128). Universities needed to pursue strategies of self-reliance and self-regulation as well as generate income from university products (Pad, 2013: 669). This initiative, reflecting a mismatch between rising demand and limited public financing, allowed greater freedom for universities to open a number of profitable 'special' programs, mainly to generate institutional income (Welch, 2011: 104). These programs were mushrooming in various types that were designed mainly to serve the potential customers. It was mentioned that these types of programs were introduced by Chulalongkorn University about 20 years ago in the form of an executive MBA, soon to be followed by the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), Ramkhamhaeng University (RU), Kasetsart University (KU), Mahidol University and many others (Welch, 2011: 104). The number of courses on offer greatly increased from 235 in 2003 to 3,195 in 2007. These quantities came at the expense of the quality (Welch, 2011: 103).

However, during the time when these courses were on the rise, the MUA did not provide 'credible commitment' towards qualitative results. Indeed, during the period of the 'laissez-faire' policy, the MUA still connected its authority to the 'higher education plans' and the 'MUA's regulations,' reflecting the



bureaucracy's determination to hold on to redundant authority and retain process-control. The 'autonomy' at this period remain awkward, because the MUA still retained its pre-auditing of procedural matters. It was particularly strict with private universities, and it held on to rigid rules and regulations. Even worse, when such rules and regulations were not strongly effective, some of the rules were evaded by the universities without the MUA's knowledge. Such top-down prescriptions cannot guarantee quality. The universities found ways to escape from such rigid rules in order to serve their own interests. The MUA was accustomed to the 'regulative' role rather than the 'supervision' role. These emerging demands were in contrast to the nature of the Thai higher education system, which has long been embedded in the bureaucracy (Varunee, 1990: 251; MUA, 2003: 32-36; Pad, 2005: 81).

Despite its statement in the 1999 National Education Act that the MUA's new role was to move from regulation to supervision, creating autonomous universities (Krissanapong, 2002: 3), the MUA, currently OHEC, still retained its former style of administration. From the promulgation of the National Education Act in 1999 to the present, the top agenda of the MUA has been related to the quality assessment. On this matter, however, OHEC could not guarantee improvements in the universities (Rattana, 2015: 128). The criticisms of OHEC's quality assessment system were considerable, ranging from its bureaucratic process, which featured too many meetings, documents and people, to additional academic work and rigid, inflexible rules (Rattana, 2015: 161).

The quality assessment tools and the supervisory role of the OHEC remain important and large. OHEC has the authority to manage and promote higher education on the basis of academic freedom and excellence, for example, by recommending the establishment, dissolution, amalgamation, upgrading, and elimination of higher education institutions and monitoring, inspecting and evaluating outcomes of higher education management (Varaporn, 2006: 188). However, state's administrators often said that the OHEC had no authority to become involved with the universities' internal matters, since the OHEC had delegated all the works to the university council of each university (*Bangkok Post*, 27 January 2017). Consequently, the OHEC was able to identify many problems in the universities without realizing that OHEC must also take some responsibility for the incompetence of Thai higher education. It was now 18 years of practice since the National Education Act was promulgated in 1999, and the result of the reform seems to be malfunctioning. The performance of the responsible unit at the state's level shows that it has been incapable of practicing the 'state supervision' role in a way that would establish qualitative education.

The underlying problem appeared to be the long-established interests of the Thai bureaucracy. Existing pattern of bureaucratic mindset continue to persist in this government unit. The major constraint in this transitional period is grounded in the bureaucracy's ineffective structure and embedded norms.

### ***University's level***

A common problem has also occurred inside Thai public universities. In the Thai higher education context, the blurred relationship between universities and the market needs to take into account that the universities have not engaged with truly competitive capitalism.

In addition to the controversial situation of public universities wishing to be done with the bureaucratic system, the individual academic bureaucrats were not motivated to accept the status of employees. At the moment, the number of academic staff who hold bureaucratic status has gradually declined by

retirement; those who entered the universities after 1999 national education bill were only given the status of employee's. The current number of about 60 per cent of university lecturers are employed as employees, and the remaining 40 per cent are civil servants (*Bangkok Post*, 20 November 2016). In spite of the fact that the university council charter provides a channel for individual lecturers who have civil servants' status to choose either to retain bureaucratic status or opt for university employee's status, most of them chose to retain the bureaucratic status. In addition, the parallel system of personal management is considered awkward, with two types of personnel working on the same job with different compensations (Krissanapong, 2001: 6). This situation is in accordance with Sakda's (1996: 16) view that, "while there have been complaints about salaries, inadequate financing, and lack of autonomy, so far none of the existing public universities have pushed hard enough to leave the bureaucratic system".

One public university discussed the future of the university under multiple challenges in the Thai higher education system, especially on the issue of declining number of students:

"As long as we are part of the government, we will be alright; I have never seen any government sector being bankrupted. Under certain circumstances, we might earn less, but if we stick with the self-sufficiency philosophy, the university will definitely be able to pass all these challenges". (Conversation, March 15, 2017).

The above discussion encapsulated the conservative mind as well as the wish to retain the status quo, which the university administrator chose to stick with. Most of the academic bureaucrats tend to believe that administering universities in the former pattern and style was better, in this sense, being embedded in bureaucratic norms and values. It would be difficult for universities to bring about fundamental changes. This finding has to be understood by relating back to the historical period, when the benefits that Thai academic bureaucrats gained from the system included prestige, stable tenure, limited oppositional forces and exemption from assessment. These reflected the inabilities of the bureaucrats to see beyond their narrowly defined self-interests (see Chai-Anan, 1989: 337; Wright, 1991; Pasuk, 1999: 9). The deep attachment to their *kharatchakarn* status bore witness to the cultural norms prevalent within Thai public universities.

Paradoxically, however, the concept of 'commercialization' has gradually entered into the Thai university sphere since the period of 1980s. Inside public universities there was a part that runs like a private company. There have been a number of courses for which universities charge full-fee, normally around ten times more than that of regular programs. Most universities rely very much on this 'special' income from these 'special' programs (Welch, 2011: 110). Since the sixth plan, the state allowed universities to generate their own income by offering the profitable 'special' programs. Both public and private universities, to a great extent, had the opportunity to open their own courses to meet market demands and be able to generate their own income. One academic commented on, "the opening of profitable 'special' (commercial) programs and recruiting more students, while facilities and lecturer numbers remain the same. This unavoidably affects the quality of education" (Suluck, 2013). This quotation is true especially if the programs were opened based on commercial rationales, and there was a tendency that the quality of the courses would be undermined (Welch, 2011; Asian Development Bank, 2012).

The income to each university from these extra courses is large. The revenue would normally be shared

within universities, ranging from the program's administrative committee to the individual lecturers and university staff. This means that they received other sources of income apart from their actual monthly salary. For some lecturers, this special money exceeds their salary, and that motivates them to teach extra hours in order to gain the extra pay. Teaching duties can be as much as 16 hours per week. Research suffered under such conditions, as teaching duties overwhelmed the creation of new knowledge (Welch, 2011: 91). These benefits make the quality issues very complicated. Many lecturers enjoyed freedom without responsibilities and accountabilities (Krissanapong, 2002: 6). The self-interest of individuals came before the public interest.

At the moment, Thai university lecturers are affected by the stricter new set of curriculum standards: each individual must be qualified, and continuously produce research and academic works (Varaporn, 2006: 203). Within the liberalization era, it is important that universities and teaching staff need to be self-regulated, as autonomy and accountability are considered two sides of the same coin (Sukanya, 2001: 476). The current situation portrays a struggle of universities and different individuals to survive and find strategies to cope with such high demands. However, it seems that under current conditions the acceptance of market forces is unlikely to lead these universities to agree to fundamental changes in their internal structure and culture.

Regarding the autonomous system, the university council needs to be strengthened, as they represent the government and the public interest (Krissanapong, 2002: 6). Each council consists of around 20-30 members who attend monthly meetings and are chosen by a selection committee. Most of the members are usually outsiders, including the chair of the council. At the moment, there remains a problem of reciprocal interests between the university council and university administrators. It has been claimed that the university council in Thailand is operated on a 'you scratch my back, I scratch yours' basis. Decisions on university matters tend to be based on these personal ties, rather than acting as an accountability unit to check and balance university administration (*Matichon online*, 5 February, 2015; *Bangkok Post*, 20 November 2016). This internal relationship adds further complexities to universities' issues.

Although the process of reform to improve that structure and culture is still under way, the objectives of the early period of reform have not yet been achieved. The OHEC was an ineffective overseer of the quality control process due to its bureaucratic character. Thai public universities are situated between enjoying bureaucratic status and benefiting from the market. On the one hand, university lecturers are attached to the bureaucratic values of prestige and security; on the other hand, they are motivated by purely economic interests. Torn between these incompatible benefits, it is difficult for them to contemplate fundamental change.

### **University Students**

University students had a powerful role during the movements in 1973 and 1976. Their actions represented social demands towards changes. However, students faded away when the military-civilian government took office after the massacre of 1976. A number of activist students escaped to the jungle, joining the communist insurgents. However, as socio-economic development increased, the students' forces became weak (Morell and Chai-Anan, 1981). As time went by, from 1986 onwards, the country was moving towards the rising demand in the industrial and manufacturing sectors. Thai universities

were required to produce competent graduates to work in various sectors such as exports, industry and manufacturing (Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 6), and to produce knowledge-based research (Chai-anan, 1994: 49-50). At that time, higher education was thought of as merely providing advantages in the labor market, and students became interested in business and ceased to adopt a radical role. They no longer understand the underlying problems of society as they had in the 1970s. Higher education is now considered to be a means of gaining better employment and material advancement and to improve social mobility (Sakda, 1996: 15).

Most of students who enter the higher education system come from upper and middle class backgrounds. It has been stated that 90 percent of university students are from upper and middle class families (*Matichon*, 28 January 2003). It is interesting to note that when the constitution required at least a bachelor's degree to contest an election, this measure excluded around 90 per cent of the total population, over 95 per cent in the rural area, and over 99 per cent in the agricultural sector (Pasuk and Baker, 2008: 118). This means that few individuals from the lower social classes could pass the higher education selective entry process needed to enter the universities, nor could they afford such an education. A university education is one of the most important indicators of middle class status (Ockey, 1999; Ockey, 2004: 154; Welch, 2011: 87). This inequality of access to higher education has widened the gap between the rich and the poor and reflecting the exclusive role of higher education in serving particular elites (Surichai, 2002: 7-17; Pad, 2013: 672).

There are different types of students in higher education institutions. On the one hand, there are those who stand up to request greater justice and fuller participation. For example, students in various universities raised concerns about the issue of university privatization. These activist students requested more transparency in the privatization process and asked for greater student participation in university affairs (*Matichon online*, 7 May 2015; *The Isaan record*, 5 September 2015). Throughout the period, there were student activist movements on many political issues. These activities were, however, limited in scope.

On the other hand, there are students who do not have much concern about that particular political topic, as they enter the university only to obtain a degree. In the same way as in the historical period, but in different context, Thai students see the university degree as a ladder to upgrade their social and economic status. Many of them see universities as a place to gain personal networking and connection (Varaporn and et.al., 1996: 63). They do not care much about the quality of teaching and learning provided by the programs. Interviewing Thai students and foreign students on the quality of teaching and education in international programs in Thai universities, there are different responses. While the foreign students care much more about the quality of the teaching and ask the lecturers many questions in class, Thai students tend to be relaxed and prefer those lecturers who give them better grade results (Pad, 2005: 264). It also needs to be understood that these Thai upper and middle class students might have privileges and opportunities to such a great extent that the deeper concern for the quality of their learning can be neglected. Higher education in Thailand involves predominantly upper and middle class students, and those from well-to-do families have more opportunities to rely on cram schools, international schools or programs, and foreign education (ICFE Monitor, 2015). In this sense, the needs of upper and middle class students are currently in a transitional period, and it will take time for them to place greater demands on the higher education sector that could lead to fundamental changes.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Thai higher education was initiated by and for the benefit of bureaucratic elites in the early period. That provided the embedded bureaucratic norms and values which became the strong foundation of Thai higher education system. At the time when market mechanisms had opened the political space to all walks of life and transformed Thailand into a more pluralistic society, the Thai higher education system was forced to adjust itself to allow different key players to participate in the scene. The above description and analysis reflect the internal dynamics of different key actors who came to be involved in the higher education system in both the historical period and from the 1970s onwards. However, the tensions between the countervailing forces represented by politicians, technocrats, students, and bureaucrats in their new roles did not promote effective change. It only prompted these interest groups to follow their own agendas regardless of the rule of law. Thai higher education became an area of conflict and consensus for key related forces. This fragmentation of interest groups created a jigsaw puzzle, which is an apt metaphor for the fundamental problems of Thai higher education. The necessary changes will require a great deal of additional time.

Thai higher education is now in the 18<sup>th</sup> year of its reform process. The actual developments have rarely been recognized. As long as Thai politics fluctuates back and forth from the 'bureaucratic polity' to the 'neo-pluralist' and 'institutionalist' approaches, higher education will follow the same pattern. The situation in Thailand under these theoretical approaches has not reflected a promise to change the fundamental structure of Thai higher education. So far, Thai higher education has only benefited the elite minority and it has provided little impact on wider public interests.

## References

- Akagi, O. (1977). Higher Education in Asia: the historical development of Thammasat University. *Research Bulletin of the National Institute for Education Research* 15, 40-43.
- Anderson, B. (1998). *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World*. London and New York: Verso.
- Anek, L. (1992). *Business Associations and the New Political Economy of Thailand: From Bureaucratic Polity to Liberal Corporatism*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Arai, I. (1977). Higher Education in Asia: the development of higher education in Thailand. *Research Bulletin of the National Institute for Education Research* 15, 35-39.
- Asian Development Bank. (2012). *Counting the Cost: Financing Asian Higher Education for Inclusive Growth*. Philippines: Asian Development Bank.
- Bangkok Post (2016, November 20). Failing the lecturers. *Bangkok Post*, Retrieved from <http://www.bangkokpost.com/print/1139761>.
- Bangkok Post (2017, January 20). Wanted: A Ministry of University Affairs. Higher Education system 'facing a crisis'. *Bangkok Post*, Retrieved from <http://www.bangkokpost.com/learning/advanced/1187936>.
- Bidhya B. (2004). Thaksin's model of government reform: Prime Ministerialisation through "a country is my company" approach, *Asian Journal of Political Science*, 12 (1), 135-153.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2013). Administrative Reform and Regime Shifts: Reflections on the Thai polity, *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Administration*, 35 (2), 137-147.
- Chai-Anan, S. (1989). Thailand: A Stable Semi-Democracy. In: L. Diamond, J. J. Linz, and S. M. Lipset (eds.), *Democracy in Developing Countries*. ASIA. Boulder, Colorado and London: Lynne Rienner and

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

- Adamantine Press. 305-345.
- Chai-Anan, S. (1994). *Changes and Knowledge in Globalisation*. Bangkok: Rong Phim Tawan Ok.
- Chai-Anan, S. (2001). *From Nation-State to State as Market: the concept of state and society in globalisation*. Bangkok: Baan Phra Arthit Publisher.
- Charas, S. (1996). Academic Freedom and University Autonomous in Thailand. *Higher Education Policy* 9 (4), 277-280.
- Girling, J. L.S. (1981). *Thailand: Society and Politics*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Hewison, K. (1997). *Political Change in Thailand: democracy and participation*. London and New York: Routledge.
- ICEF Monitor (2015 January 20). *Political uncertainty in Thailand slows planned education reforms*. ICEF Monitor. Retrieved from <http://monitor.icef.com/2015/01>.
- Krissanapong, K. (2002). *Thai Public University System in Transition: Some issues on Management and Financing*, paper presented at the Thai-UK University Presidents Forum, Bangkok, January, 17, 2002.
- Matichon. (2003, January 28). ONEC Claims Thai Higher Education Failed. Uncover 90% of Students are Rich, Focus on Making Business. *Matichon*.
- Matichon Online. (2015, February 5). Ten problems making Thai higher education regressed. *Matichon Online*.
- Matichon Online. (2015, May 7). Thammasat university students presented a petition with more than 2,000 signatures calling for students' participation in the privatization and the university's affairs – Pornpetch raised Harvard to compare. *Matichon Online*.
- McCargo, D. (1998). Alternative Meanings of Political Reform in Contemporary Thailand. *Journal of Asian Studies*, 13, 5-30.
- . and Ukrist, P. (2005). *The Thaksinization of Thailand*. Copenhagen: NIAS press.
- Ministry of University Affairs. (1992). *Two decades of Ministry of University Affairs*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University.
- . (2003). *Private University Act*. Retrieved from <http://www.mua.go.th>.
- Morell, D., and Chai-Anan, S. (1981). *Political Conflict in Thailand: reform, reaction, revolution*. Cambridge: Oelgeschlager and Gunn & Hain.
- Neave, G. and Van Vught, F. A. (1994). Government and Higher Education in Developing Nations: A Conceptual Framework. In: G. Neave and F. Van Vught (eds.), *Government and Higher Education Relationships across Three Continents: the winds of change*. Oxford: Elsevier Science. 1-21.
- Ockey, J. (2004). State, Bureaucracy and Polity in Modern Thai Politics, *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 34 (2), 143-162.
- Pad, L. (2013). Internationalizing Higher Education in Thailand, *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 17 (5), 663 – 676.
- Pad, N. (2005). *Internationalising Thai higher education: Examining policy implementation* (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis). University of Leeds, United Kingdom.
- Pasuk, P. (1999). *Civilising the State: state, civil society and politics in Thailand*. Amsterdam: Centre for Asian Studies Amsterdam.
- . (2004). *Thaksin: the business of politics in Thailand*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.
- Patom, M. (1989). Evolution and Autonomous System of Higher Education Administration in Thailand. In: National Institute of Development and Administration (NIDA), *Autonomous System of Thai University Administration: past, present and future trends*, Bangkok: NIDA. 19-70.
- Prawase, W. (2002). An Overview of Political Reform. In: D. McCargo (ed.), *Reforming Thai Politics*. Copenhagen: NIAS press. 21-27.
- Prizzia, R. (1985). *Thailand in Transition: the role of oppositional forces*. Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press.
- Rangsan, T. (2001). *Education, Capitalism and Globalization*. Bangkok: kobfai.
- Ratchanee, A. (2001). *Factors accounting for the delay in the implementation of education reform policy under the administration of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra*. Research Paper. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University.
- Rattana, L. (2015). *A Critical Study of Thailand's Higher Education Reforms: The culture of borrowing*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Riggs, F. W. (1966). *Thailand: the modernization of a bureaucratic polity*. Honolulu: East-West Center Press.
- Sakda P. (1996). Higher Education in Thailand: Traditions and Bureaucracy International Higher Education. Retrieved from <https://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ihe/article/viewFile/6216/5452>

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

- Slaughter, S. and L, L.L. (1997). *Academic Capitalism: Politics, Policies and the Entrepreneurial University*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Smith, B.C. (2003). *Understanding Third World Politics: Theories of Political Change and Development* (2nd Edition). Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Somsakdi, X. (1987). *Government and Politics in Thailand*. Singapore: Oxford University Press.
- Sukanya, N. (2001). *Higher Education Reform in Thailand*. Southeast Asian Studies. 38 (4), 461-480.
- Suluck, L. (2013, April 27). University autonomy prompts concern over student fees. *University World News*. (269). Retrieved from <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20130426103554771>
- Surichai, W. (2002). *Chula and Society*. Bangkok, Thailand: Chulalongkorn University Publishing.
- Surin, M. and McCargo, D. (1997). Electoral Politics: Commercialisation and Exclusion. In: K. Hewison (ed.), *Political Change in Thailand: Democracy and Participation*. London: Routledge. pp.132-148.
- Thak, C. (1979). *Thailand: the politics of despotic paternalism*. Bangkok: Thammasat University Printing Press.
- The Isaan record. (2015 September, 5). Khon Kaen University's transition to autonomy leaves uncertain future. *The Isaan record*. Retrieved from <http://isaanrecord.com/home/category/news>.
- Thipsarin, P. (2014). *The Roles of Governments in the Education Reform Policy in Thailand and Their Impacts From 1999-2009*. The International Academic Forum (IAFOR) North American Conference on the Social Sciences Official Conference Proceedings.
- Unger, D. (1998). *Building Social Capital in Thailand: Fibers, Finance, and Infrastructure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Varaporn, B., Pornlerd, U., Gerald, F. (1996). Cultural influence on higher education in Thailand. In K. Kemper and W.G. Tiernay (ed.). *The social role of higher education: Comparative perspectives*. Abingdon: Taylor and Francis. 55-77.
- Varaporn, B. (2006). *Thailand in Higher Education in Southeast Asia*. Bangkok: The UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education. 187-218.
- Varunee, O. (1990). *Analytical Study of the Historical Policy Development of Higher Education in Thailand: its implications for current development and future trends*. Bangkok: Ministry of University Affairs.
- Watson, K. (1989). Looking west and east: Thailand's academic development. In: P.G. Altbach. and Selvaratnam V.(eds.), *From Dependence to Autonomy: The Development of Asian Universities*. London: Kluwer Academics Publishers. 63-96.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1991). Thailand. In: P. G. Altbach. (ed.), *International Higher Education: an Encyclopedia*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, INC. 559-577.
- Welch, A. (2011). *Higher Education in Southeast Asia: Blurring borders, changing balance*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Wichit, S. (1974). Country Report on Higher Education Development in Thailand. In: A. Tapingkae (ed.), *The Growth of Southeast Asian Universities: Expansion Versus Consolidation*. Singapore: Regional Institute of Higher Education and Development, University of Singapore. 72-79.
- World Bank. (1989). *Education Development in Thailand: The role of World Bank lending*. Washington D.C.: World Bank.
- Wright, J. (1991). *The Balancing Act: A history of modern Thailand*. Oakland and California: Pacific Rim Press.
- Wyatt, D. (1969). *The Politics of Reform in Thailand: education in the reign of King Chulalongkorn*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1982). *Thailand: A Short History*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1994). *Studies in Thai History*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.

## Three Phases of Translation of the Chinese Novel Romance of Three Kingdoms in Thailand: A Sociological and Historical Perspective

Li, Ping

Sichuan Provincial Research Institute of Thai Studies  
China

---

### Abstract

In the history of literature translation in Thailand, there are three noteworthy translation phases of the Chinese novel Romance of Three Kingdoms, namely: the first phase before the 20th century; and the second phase in the 20th century, with a boom in 1980s and 1990s; and the third phase in the 21st century, with a steady increase of new translations in the years from 2000 to 2016. The first phase was marked by the birth of Samkok, the first Thai translated version of the Chinese novel; the second phase was known mainly for its fast increasing amount of re-translations; and the third phase was remembered for the creations of more literature genres in translated versions and different focuses in re-translations and translation research products. By using Pierre Bourdieu's Field of Cultural Production theory as an analytical tool, and translated versions, biographies, related research publications and interviews as data, this study will use Andre Lefevre's three manipulating control factors, patronage, ideology, and poetics, as benchmarks in translation of literature works to see how these factors cast influences in a translator's choice in source text and strategies in different historical contexts. The study addressed three questions: for what these translated versions were done? And for whom these translated versions were done? And, what were behind the translated versions? It was found that there existed a close correlation between the translated versions and the society in which they were produced.

**Keywords:** Romance of Three Kingdoms; translation production; field of literature production; politics

### Introduction

Chinese novel *Romance of Three Kingdoms*, one of the four books labeled as "Four Classical Novels" in China, has been widely read not only in China, but also in the world. This novel has been particularly well accepted by readers in Asia, where existed a historically formed Chinese culture circle. Thailand does not belong to the Chinese culture circle in Asia. Its literature, architecture and art are very much influenced by Indian culture, but what is interesting is the fact the novel and its translated versions have been read by quite a large number of readers in Thailand and some have even gained a lasting popularity there. The first translated version of this novel Samkok has been regarded as a national masterpiece of literature in Thailand. Why could such a translated version become so popular among readers in Thailand? Why could such a translated version be regarded as excellent literature heritage in Thai literature? Why later there



are more than 100 translated versions of this novel made? To discovery what are behind this phenomenon, our study will address three questions: for what these translated versions were done? And for whom these translated versions were done? And, what were behind the translated versions?

## I. Literature Review

Both translating and translation production are social. Translating is a social behavior; translation production field can hardly be independent of a social field. Lefevere points out that the effective method of studying translation, in its essence, is from a perspective of social study. The study focus is not the words on the paper, but the society, ideology and poetics behind. "Any translation, as both an enactment and a product, is necessarily embedded within social contexts" (Wolf, 2007:1). Gideon Toury pointed out: "Norms are acquired by the individual during his/her socialization and always imply sanctions—actual or potential, negative as well as positive" (Toury, 2001: 55). In the wake of cultural turn in translation studies, more and more Chinese scholars gradually realized that the research methodology of translation can borrow methodology from sociology field, and Shao Lu (2011: 126-130.) is one of the pioneers, who introduced and interpreted Pierre Bourdieu theory of "field" theory and methodology to Chinese readers.

Bourdieu's field theory has attracted scholars in translation studies field from the perspective of sociology. In previous translation studies, researchers used Bourdieu's theory to study "habitus" of translators and the power of translation. However, focused, in-depth study of the literature translation field study based on a country's social changes is still lacking, with only a few papers published. Lefevere (2010) Gouanvic (1997) used the viewpoint of Bourdieu's theory, investigated the history of the translation of American science fiction in the French field of cultural production in 1950s. Lefevere (1998:41-56) has discussed the retranslation of Aeneid from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century by explaining the circulation of "cultural capital", a crucial concept in Bourdieu's theory. Yang (Yangliu, 2003) analyzed the relationship between cultural capital and the power of discourse over translation in the field of production of translational culture from the theoretical perspective of field of cultural production of Bourdieu. Hanna Sameh wrote this thesis from the perspective of Bourdieu's theory in 2006, with the focus of a translator. "Drawing on Bourdieu's sociology, Hanna argues that re-translators of Shakespeare's tragedies into Arabic in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century made use of various forms of 'distinction' to set their translations apart from earlier ones, claiming for example, that they had better access to the source text, the source culture and the author"(Baker & Saldanha, 2010:236). Wang Hontao (2011:14-16) introduced the construction of social translation; Wang Yuechen (2010:5-13) viewed translation phenomena from a sociological perspective, making deep analysis of the key words in Bourdieu's theory.

Another reason for us to do the research is out of our curiosity that a Thailand-based study of *Romance of Three Kingdoms* literature translation field is still not part of the knowledge of Chinese scholars in the area of study of *Romance of Three Kingdoms*, although this translated versions of this novel in Thailand is huge and lasting. At present, Japan-based study, and South Korea-based study of *Romance of Three Kingdoms*, have already been done and have formed good connectivity with Chinese scholars in this field. Therefore, we hope to find out why in Thailand *Romance of Three Kingdoms* attracts many

translators to do translation and then retranslation? Who are supporting the translators with money, time and power to do all these translation? Who are the target audience of these translations?

In this paper, we are going to make an analysis of translations of the Chinese novel *Romance of Three Kingdoms* in Thailand from both a sociological perspective and historical perspective. First, we would give a description of the three noteworthy phases. Then we are going to make an introduction about the Pierre Bourdieu's Field of Cultural Production theory that will be used as an analytical tool. Lefevere's concepts of patronage, ideology and poetics will also be explained for the purpose of being used as three benchmarks to observe the changes of translated versions of this novel in different fields in the three historical phases. After that, a discussion will be made over the findings and then draw the conclusion.

## II. A Historical Description: Three Phases of Production of Translations

In the history of literature translation in Thailand, there are three noteworthy translation phases of Chinese novel *Romance of Three Kingdoms* namely: the first phase was before the 20th century, with only one but great translation Samkok done by Chaophraya Phrakhleng (Hon) during Rama I of Bangkok Dynasty; and the second phase was in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, making the translated versions grow fast. Among the total, most of them were produced from 1980s to 1990s; and the third phase was in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, more new translated versions have been made and make the total number reaches a new climax in 2016. The first phase was remarkable because the birth of Samkok, the first Thai translated version of the Chinese novel, which has been regarded as the ever made greatest Thai literature treasure by Thai literature critics, researchers, scholars, upper class readers. When asking Dr. Saoasuru Songsukrujiroad from Ubon and Mr. Porntart Pothinam from ASEAN center about Samkok in Thailand, we were informed that reading Hon's version is a great taste among Thai scholars and people in Thailand love this book as their own literature treasure rather than a foreign one. In the second phase, there is a boom of translation in 1980s to 1990s, when there was a fast increasing amount of re-translations; and in the third phase, we could see more varied literature genres and discourses in re-translations and translation research products.

## III. Theory and Major Concepts

**Field.** Bourdieu & Wacquan (Bourdieu & Wacquan, 1992:97), defined that "In analytic terms, a field may be defined as a network, or a configuration of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions as well as by their objective relation to other positions", A field can be either a small-scale restrictive production field (more heteronomous) or a large-scale mass production field (more autonomous). The field provides a possible space for literature production makers to compete by providing motivation, power, possibility and manipulations. Therefore, literature production can be viewed as a reflection of a specific field, embodying the power and manipulations.

**Capital.** Bourdieu believed that "accumulated labor" can present itself in three essential forms: economic, cultural and social capital. Each may function as symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1986:241-243). Symbolic capital refers to social importance and reasons for living; it is social recognition in all manifestation (Bourdieu 2000:241)

**Patronage.** Bourdieu supposes that the production of literature works has a correspondence with patronage occupying different positions in the field. Patronage, translators and consumers form an associated and interdependent network. "The patronage may influence the translator's choice of translation strategies, the formation of the translation style, and may also adjust the translation products directly." (Dong Xiu, 2016:110)

**Ideology.** Lefevere defined that Ideology as the "grill of form, conventions and beliefs, which orders out actions" (1992:16) and it is believed that Ideological constraint plays a very important role in doing translation. Lefevere (1992:7) once wrote: "some rewritings are inspired by ideological motivation, or produced under ideological constraints."

**Poetics.** Poetics is composed of two parts, according to Lefevere (1992:26): "One is the inventory of literary devices, genres, motifs, prototypical characters and situations, and symbols; the other a concept of what the role of literature is, or should be, in the social system as a whole." A dominant poetics usually can influence a lot on the production or reception of a translated literature. In order to make his translation be better accepted by readers in the receiving culture, a translator is likely to conform to the dominant poetics in the related social context.

#### IV. Methodology

This research has adopted a combination of sociological and historical perspective. From the historical perspective, we can see the translation of the Chinese novel *Romance of Three Kingdoms* experienced three phases: the first phase before the 20<sup>th</sup> century; and the second phase in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with a boom in 1980s and 1990s; And the third phase in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with a steady increase of new translations in the years from 2000 to 2016. The first phase was marked by the birth of Samkok, the first Thai translated version of the Chinese novel; the second boom was known mainly for its fast increasing amount of re-translations; and the third boom was remembered for the varied literature forms and focuses in re-translations and translation research products. From the sociological perspective, we applied the Field Theory into the study and use field, patronage, ideology and poetic as benchmarks to detect the translated versions in choice of source text, narrative, language and literature genre. The study used a combination of qualitative methods and quantitative methods. By using Pierre Bourdieu's Field of Cultural Production theory as an analytical tool, and translated versions, biographies, related research publications and interviews as data, this study will use Andre Lefevere's three control factors (patronage, ideology, and poetics manipulating the translation of literature works as benchmarks to see how these factors cast influences in a translator's translation production in different historical contexts. Different versions of translations of the novel are collected, papers written by scholars in the last five years have been read, five scholars from Thailand were interviewed and four Chinese scholars were interviewed face to face or through emails.

#### V. A Sociological Lens: Three Phases of Translation Production of Translations

##### Phase I: Birth of the First Translated Version Samkok in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

The first Thai translated version of the *Romance of Three Kingdoms*, **Samkok (Hon's version)** was finished in this phase. The appointed translator was Chaophraya Phrakhleng, a court official and great

writer during that period. Production of Hon's version is mainly inspired and manipulated mainly by the royal court power. Hon's version got its production supporting power from the royal patronage, king Rama I. "Many scholars in modern Thailand believe that one of the important reasons that Rama I, the first king of Bangkok Dynasty, ordered the translation of *Romance of Three Kingdoms* was out of political purpose. At that time, Bangkok dynasty was just set up, and the court need to consolidate the regime and put down rebellions, and to use military force to defend the border. The story and values in *Romance of Three Kingdoms* satisfied the need of political stability with its description of counsel, strategic, diplomatic ways of doing things and using right persons, *Romance of Three Kingdoms* become a must-read among soldiers and leaders." (Wu Qiong, 2002:97-100). Chaophraya, the translator himself could not read Chinese, so he got help from some Chinese story-teller who helped to translate orally the novel to him from Chinese to Thai. In the process of translation, the translator got help from assistants who were those court scholars. Based on this, he modified the translation in such a way that Thai readers enjoyed reading that writers and translators would prefer to regard Hon's version as a Thai literature works. It was translated in manuscripts and was circulated among the elites at that time, and then gradually spread to more readers. "During that period, the cultural education and the literary creation belonged to the ruling class as a privilege. (Jin Yong. 2010:42) The translation was done to serve the purpose of the country, the expectation of the king to keep a political stability and restart of a new prosperity of Thai literature.

In the late eighteenth century, after many wars in history, the royal court under the reign of Rama I was longing for stability and prosperity, **Hon's version** was completed in 1806; the translation manuscripts were first circulated among readers in court and then spread to the readers in the public. Even today, Hon's translated version is still the most popularly read version of the *Romance of Three Kingdoms*. Hon's version focused on the theme of loyalty to the state, master-servant relationship, friendship and brotherhood. Chaophraya Phrakhleng, the translator, based his translation on Mao Zonggang's version as the source text of the *Romance of Three Kingdoms*. Mao Zonggang was a great history Scholar in China in the Qing Dynasty under the reign of Emperor Kangxi. Mao Zonggang's version showed an ideological value of devotion to the country and to the brotherhood. In **Hon's version** praises went to Guan Yu, Zhu Geliang and Zhang Fei, who are the highlights of those values. The purpose is to publicize the "kingcraft", "benevolence", "loyalty" and "justice" can be detected between the lines. Therefore, we can see **Hon's version** was produced mainly for serving the new ruler for his need of political stability and the need of obedience from the officials and officers. As Chen Yan stated that: "Hon's version cast a big impact in Thailand. King Rama I supported its spread for the reason of his power. The *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* described all kinds of experiences and struggles of between people in the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history, regarding political, military and diplomatic affairs. The stories were told in the way needed by the king. At that time, Bangkok Dynasty was just set up; facing invasions from neighboring Myanmar, the king hoped his generals and ministers are able to learn all kinds of governance strategies from *Romance of Three Kingdoms* to defeat the invading enemy."(Chen Yan, 1996.: 3).

As a great writer in Thai literature, Chaophraya Phrakhleng used his poetic reference in doing the translation through re-writing strategy and creative strategy. It was translated in prose genre, beautiful in the wording, rhythmic to read, and easy for readers to understand. He developed a kind of prose

genre of his own by breaking the restriction of the source text and deleting a large number of Chinese poems and songs in the source text, which he did not think important. By using rewriting and creative translation strategies, he created a concise, smooth, beautiful prose style, which is later called as "Samkok" prose style that made the whole story beautiful in lyrics, vivid in narration and complicated in human relationship. All the rewriting and creative translation made Hon's version become popularly read and lasting. It was a very successful translation in the sense that it led a new literature prosperous era in those years to make up for the terrible damage and loss of the Thai literary classics in the war.

The appearance printing technique accelerated the spread of Hon's version into the market. "After the spread manuscripts of Hon's for more than half a century, Hon's manuscripts got finally printed in 1865, and later repeatedly reprinted. During the reign of Rama V (1868-1910), Hon's version had six editions of printed copies. (Zhao Meiling. 2010: 95). There appeared the new translation version of the *Romance of Three Kingdoms* done by Slapachai Mazarin in 1952; one of the most outstanding interrelated translations of Hon's version of the *Romance of Three Kingdoms* done by Prince Danlong, which gave readers a good interpretation of Hon's version and this version became very popular among readers at that time. "In the year 1927, during the rule of Bangkok Dynasty VII, Prince Delon Rachanupa (1862-1943), a famous writer and literature critic, director of the National Library modified Hon's version which further promoted the spread of Three Kingdoms Stories in Thailand. Prince Delon, helped by other experts who were excellent in English and Chinese, made an in-depth research based on a large number of related materials, wrote History of the Three Kingdoms as a preface for the new version ..." (Sun Guangyong, 1999: 102-103.).

## **Phase II: A Dramatic Increasing of Re-translations and translation for Other Social Functions Appeared in 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

In the 20th century, new market economy and political power balance gave chances to the translators to build up their new economic, cultural and social capital, based on which the symbolic capital can be constructed: The accumulated labor force and capitals generated new and varied forms of translated versions, translators' translating focus and strategies.

In the year 1975, Kukrit Pramoj, Thai politician and scholar, the thirteenth Prime Minister of Thailand, promoted Thailand's establishment of diplomatic ties with China. As a scholar and writer, Kukrit Pramoj was a leading authority on traditional Thai culture and literature. The new diplomatic relationship between Thailand and China gave promotion to the translated production of translated versions and a new retranslation of the *Romance of Three Kingdoms* Thailand boomed from 1980s to 1990s. The translation products in this period were mainly revised versions or retranslated versions of Hon's version, with a few new English versions of *Romance of Three Kingdoms*. Scholars working in governments, institutions and Publishers became the dominate patronage in the translation field. And the translated versions of the novel are now targeting for targeted different groups of readers, such as royal family members, the education sector staff, the business sector employee and the military staff.

Translators in this phase are mainly people who were proficient both in Chinese and Thai. People from other social backgrounds, particularly writers and historians, joined in the translations. During this period, under the leadership of Rama IX of the Bangkok Dynasty, Thailand saw a steady increase of economy. Market economy initially increased the power of public readers. The new translated versions

of the novel were used as must-read books in training programs in enterprises in Thailand. Readers read the translated versions not only as literature books, but also as books for wisdom, communication, philosophy and even for business strategies. There appeared the revised translation version done by Wiwa Phachaneewee and the revised full version finished by Thanathun Leennanon; and translation research products done by Prapin Manomaivibun, whose research product entitled *A Comparative Study of Samkok* was quite still quoted by researchers or learners in studying *Romance of Three Kingdoms*. To meet needs from different readers' groups, translators chose to focus on different aspects of the source texts. Some focused on morals in the story, some were on business strategies, and some were on military strategies. For example, in translating, a translator may focus on just the leading heroes in the source text instead of all the heroes (more than one thousand) in it. Cao Cao, Guan Yu, Zhu Gelang, was mostly translated heroes in the new versions, but translator rewrote the heroes in some ways to meet the function of the translated version.

### **Phase III: Boom of Re-translations in a More Autonomous Literature Translation Field in the 21st Century**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, under the reign of the Rama IX of Bangkok Dynasty, Thailand has experienced a steady development of the economy and becomes a very important Southeast Asian country in connecting Asian community and its neighboring countries. Thailand proposed to transform Thais into "competent human beings in the 21st Century". Connectivity, sustainability, communication with outside world are very much addressed and supported by the government and institutions in different areas.

In this phase, retranslation, the revised translated version and criticism of towards the translated version have become the mainstreams of production. In the literature translation field in Thailand, a large number of retranslations of novel have made the *Romance of Three Kingdoms* again draw attention from readers and researchers. Jin Yong (2017) showed us that from the beginning of the 21st century to 2016, 68 new translated versions based on Samkok were published, making the total 110. New versions are more varied in their functions. Translations and Translations research were more supported by funding provided by literature associations, universities or research institutions both nationally and internationally. The literature translation field is more autonomous. More translators do the translations not for the market, but for his/her own accumulation of symbolic capital to gain or keep the expected social identity and power of discourse in the literature circle. The printed translation products of *Romance of Three Kingdoms* are less powered by the market, but are more manipulated by academic circles. Readers of the translations are more restricted to academics, researchers, and university students. Moreover, internet-technology has created greater connectivity and interaction between patronage, translators, publishers and consumers and the boundary between each sometimes become fuzzier. Readers have more and easier access to read different translation versions, translation evaluation production, and translation researches of *Romance of Three Kingdoms*.

Scholars are the main force in production and dissemination of the *Romance of Three Kingdoms* in this boom. In the field of translation studies, Prapin Manomaiviboon from Chulalongkorn University has drawn attention from readers both in Thailand and in China. Contrasting the linguistic usage, she made her comparative study and evaluation of English version and Hon's version of the *Romance of Three Kingdoms*. Team members are usually the assistants in doing translation and translation evaluation.

Compared with assistants in last two phases, assistants in the third phase are more professional in translation field, more interactive and well organized. Assistants from different academic backgrounds and different cultural backgrounds are more easily gathered and work together because of Internet. In this phase, Prapin Manomaivibool and her team become well known for their contribution to this world. Chulalongkorn University is thus famous for its research about translation of the *Romance of Three Kingdoms*.

In this phase, internet-technology promoted a more diversified form of genres of translation of *Romance of Three Kingdoms*. Computer games, online-games, mobile phones games based on this novel have been translated to meet the needs of young users. However, among all these varied translations, Hon's version is still the best known, most popularly read one. Jing Yong (2017) told us in ICTS13, according to his reception and dissemination research on the translated versions of the novel, so far Hon's version is the best-accepted translated version of the *Romance of Three Kingdoms*. And when interviewing five literature teachers in Chiang Mai University and NIDA, we were told that in their view Hon's version was not regarded as a translated foreign literature, but native literature of Thai, and he pointed out it was written with rhythmic and simple vocabulary and syntax, and when readers read it, they will be touched by the musical and beautiful poetic things in it, therefore this book has been widely read by elites in Thailand. Reading Hon's version became a symbol of well education, marking a kind of social identity.

## VI. Findings

When looking at the literature translation field in the three phases, we can find the literature translation field is more from a more heteronomous one towards a more autonomous one. Sino-Thai relationship cast influence to Chinese literature translation in Thai translation field. Analyzing the three translation phases of *Romance of Three Kingdoms*, we have found a correlation between the translated versions with Social changes in Thailand, particularly with Thailand's politics. The patronages are mainly from the upper class circle in Thailand. In the first phase was from royal courts; in the second phase were mainly from government and publishers; and in the third phase were mainly from publishers, associations and universities. A translator was very much influenced when he could not have a solid social capital, economic capital or culture capital. Only when he had his symbolic capital, his translation could be done in a more independent way. Translation production, including translation strategy, style, choice of language, is very much limited and empowered by its sponsors, assistants and consumers of social network. Restricted by a translation production field, a translator can hardly escape the constraints and power of the sponsors, assistants and consumers in the field. For instance, from the three booms we can see consumers shifted from mainly court readers to more diversified groups of public readers. Some consumers read *Romance of Three Kingdoms* for its wisdom and devotion; some consumers consider it a book full of strategies of fighting; some consumers use it as a guide of human resource development as well as marketing strategies. When translating, a translator should be clear about his/her target consumers and adopt proper strategies.

From the ideological and poetic perspective, it can be detected in the translated versions of the *Romance of Three Kingdoms* the ideology and poetic of the upper class of the society. Take Hon's version as an example, it was a kind of reflection of Lama I's considerations of political stability and classic literature

prosperity. Another thing than can be found in it was a fact that in the early time of Bangkok Dynasty, some Chinese immigrants entered the upper class social circle and brought with them the Chinese classic literature, both the story and the novel narration style, into the Thai court, In the historical development, from Lama I, to Lama V, to Lama IX, we could find that Thai political power led the prosperity and stability of the country by adopting an open policy to the outside world, absorbing the foreign culture.

## V. Discussion

By using Pierre Bourdieu's Field of Cultural Production theory as an analytical tool, and translated versions, biographies', related research publications and interviews as data, we have addressed three questions: for what these translated versions were done? And for whom these translated versions were done? And, what were behind the translated versions?

### For what?

Changes in translation production of the *Romance of Three Kingdoms* can mirror social changes in Thai history. Patronage is a reflection of power in politics and economy. In the three translation phases of the *Romance of Three Kingdoms* in Thailand, we discovered a correspondence between the translation and political need and economic development. In the first phase, translation for political stability and literature renaissance could be found. In the second phase, translation for market practical needs and popular literature could be observed. And, in the third phase, translation for literature and literature reinterpretation became dominant.

### For whom? And why?

A Translators' choice of the source text and translating strategies are manipulated to some degree by Patronage. Literature translation field is not really an independent and autonomous one, although we could see a transition in the literature translation field from a more heteronomous one towards a more autonomous one. Translation production is an integrated part of the changing social contexts, in which the economic capital, cultural capital and social capital of importance. Translators, consciously or unconsciously, were involved in the patronage's ideology and poetic preference. The production of translation should be regarded as a part of the social development. As Rao Kangzi points out:

*"From the historical and cultural backgrounds of the spread of Romance of Three Kingdoms into Thailand and its long lasting influence, the spread of Romance of Three Kingdoms should not be viewed only as a literary phenomenon, but also a cultural phenomenon with deep connotation. Different versions of production of Chinese literature Romance of Three Kingdoms mirrored the non-literature needs of the sponsors and translators in Thailand at different historical periods of Thailand. The translation target itself, the focus, and the strategies can prove the reality that the other major goals are to learn from the Chinese historical novel the military, political, diplomatic strategies and ethics model. It has been a wish and effort to make people get all those wisdoms by accepting them into the heart to make contributions to construct and strengthen Thailand." (Rao Kanzi, 2005: 228)*



### **Then what?**

Just as Xie Weisi wrote in the preface of Moss Roberts version of *Romance of Three Kingdoms*: Three kingdoms still has the vitality, and still affects the Chinese people's way of living attitude and behaviors. Judging from this, I still believe that reading the book is a good way for us foreigners to read and understand China." (Roberts, M. Roberts, 1994: preface) In 2013, in China President Xi Jinping put forward the Belt and Road initiative. China is trying to promote people to people communication and connectivity through retranslation of Chinese classics to the target country. In Thailand, on December 1, 2016, Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn became the new king of the Bangkok dynasty. Thailand 4.0, as a national planning, is being implemented by the new government in Thailand. The Thailand 4.0 advocates integrating Thailand with ASEAN and connecting Thailand to the global community. These social contexts have formed a new production social opportunity to the literature translation circles in both China and Thailand. China Government is now providing more funding to encourage scholars and writers from both sides to communicate, cooperate and interact in doing translation of Chinese classics, for the purpose to let ordinary people in other countries along the Belt and Road route to have a better understanding about Chinese culture gene, culture values, which can help people to interpret modern China and Chinese culture. China discourse power will grow in a way. Moreover, more capitals will be invested into the literature translation world by countries along the Belt and Road route through local China research centers, universities and institutions for knowing better about China and Chinese cultures. Therefore, it can be predicted that other counties outside China, more translated versions will be done as well, using more vivid, easy to understand modern language, rhythmic musical local genres of literature and narration style will possible to be created to meet the habits of reading of local people, which might generate new knowledge of literature in the countries and at the same time enable the "journey" of the Chinese novel to continue and thus make the culture heritage be part of the world heritage and live long.

### **Conclusion**

From a historical perspective, different translated versions of a classic literature works reflect the social contexts in which a translation was done and how much the capital accumulation a translator had. The three translation phases of *Romance of Three Kingdoms* have reflected the changes of power of patronage and changes of ideology, and poetics choices in the history of Thailand. Patronage, ideology, and poetics are more or less manipulated by literature translation field, heteronomous or autonomous. From a sociological perspective, in the literature translation field, a translator is very much manipulated by patronage, and only when his symbolic capital is built up can he really be free from the manipulation. The description of the three phases showed that the manipulation power from outside the literature translation field in Thailand is getting weaker and the literature translation field is experiencing a transition from a more heteronomous field to a more autonomous one. With the shared expectation of Sino-Thai connectivity from both China and Thailand, elites circle in literature translation field in Thailand could be a very important group of people to retranslate and disseminate the translation to the public.

## References

- Baker, M. & Saldanha, G. ( 2010). *Rutledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- Bourdieu, P. & Wacquan, L. J. D. (1992). *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1993). *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Columbia: Columbia University Press. Chaophraya Phrahang (Hon), Samkok, 2001 edition:1 the preface.
- Dong, X. (2016). *Translation Aesthetic Research with the Perspective of Bourdieu Theory: A Case Study of the Translation Version by moss Roberts*. Journal of Tongji University (Social Science edition) , 27 (4) Vol. 27, No. 4: 110
- Gouanvic, J. (1997). *Sociologie de la Traduction: La Science-ficton Americaine dans L'espace Culturel des Annees 1950 [A]*. In Hornby, S.M., Jettmarova, Z. & Kaindl, K. (ed.). *Translation as Intercultural Communication: Selected Papers from the EST Congress Prague 1995*. Amsterdam: John Benjamin Publishing Company.
- Kanzi, R. (2005). *Court Mode in Culture Impact: Romance of Three Kingdoms in Thailand, in Yang Naiqiao ,Wu Xiaoming (2005) Comparative Literature and World Literature. Proceeding for Professor Yue Daiyun' Seventy-five Anniversary "*. Peking: Peking University press, 2005: 228
- Lefevere, A.( 2010). *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. Shanghai: Foreign Language Education Press:7, 16,26.
- Lefevere, A. (1998). *Translation Practice and the Circulation of Cultural Capital: Some Aeneids in English*. In Bassnett, S. & Lefevere, A. (Ed.). *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 41–56.
- Roberts, M. (2011). *Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1994: preface
- Shao, L. (2011) *Translation Sociology: Interpretation of Bourdieu Field Theory*. Journal of Jinan University (PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL SCIENCES EDITION) (3): 126-130.
- Sun, G. (1999). *Three Kingdoms In Thailand*. Journal of the PLA. Foreign Language Institute, (2): 102-103.
- Toury, G. (2001). *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- Wang, H. (2011). *Construction of Social Translation.: Name and Reality*. Chinese Translator's Journal (1): 14-18.
- Wang, Y. ( 2010). *Translation Phenomena from a Sociological Perspective: Key Words in Bourdieu's Sociological Theory*. Chinese Translator's Journal (1): 5-13.
- Wolf, M. (2007). *Introduction: The Emergency of A Sociology of Translation [A]*. In Wolf. M. & Fukari, A. (Ed.). *Constructing A Sociology of Translation [C]*. Amsterdam: John Benjamin, 1-36.
- Wu, Q. (2002). *Romance of Three Kingdoms in Thailand*. Research on Ming and Qing Dynasties. 97-100
- Yang, L. (2003). *Cultural Capital and Power of Discourse in Translation*. Chinese Translator's Journal (3): 8-10.
- Yong, J. (2010). *Three Kingdoms and Thailand literature Revolution*. Journal of Inner Mongolia Normal University: 2010 (3): 42.
- Zhao, M. (2010). *On the Romance of the Three Kingdoms in Thailand*. Film Review, Issue fifth: 95.

## **Hospitality or Inhospitality?: A Comparative Study on Online Texts of Hotel Websites in Thailand and China from the Perspective of Genre Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis**

**Liu, Bo**  
Chengdu University  
China

---

### **Abstract**

This study is designed to study the texts from Hotel websites in Thailand and China from the linguistic perspective, seldom of which could be found in the previous studies; thus, the “Thai experience” of constructing texts on their hotel websites could possibly be a valuable reference for developing hospitality industry and tourism industry in China, especially the language service in this research. In the light of Genre Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis, this study probes into linguistic features of the online texts from websites of hotels in Thailand and China with a qualitative analysis of a small corpus. Its results are likely to be valuable and significant as an effective language strategy for establishing and constructing a standard for language service of the hotel online websites, or more significantly for hospitality industry in China.

**Keywords:** Thailand; Tourism; Hospitality Industry; Online texts; Critical Discourse Analysis; Generic Structure; Discourse of Hospitality; Language Service

### **Introduction**

For years, the national image of Thailand as one of the most popular tourist destinations, with a large number of world-class hotels and resorts, has been firmly hold by many Chinese tourists (Shi, 2013), especially for those young Chinese tourists who prefer to designing their own travel plan through the Internet: simply by surfing the user-friendly hotel websites. However, it could be a totally different story for Thai tourists when they try to make a hotel reservation in China through the Internet, probably due to the poor language service for non-Chinese-speaking tourists. Since many valuable researches on tourism and hospitality industry in Thailand and China have been conducted from different researching areas, such as marketing, tourism management and economy policy (Shi, 2013; Xue & Wu, 2016; Wang & Luo, 2013), this study, however, is designed to study and compare the online texts of hotel websites in Thailand and China from the linguistic perspective, probably seldom of which could be found in the previous studies; therefore, the “Thai experience” of constructing online texts of hotel websites could possibly be a valuable reference for developing hospitality industry and tourism industry in China, in this study especially for their language service on their websites.

In the light of Genre Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis, this study probes into linguistic features of the online texts of hotel websites in Thailand and China with a qualitative analysis of a small corpus, and tries to answer the following questions:

1. What are the unique linguistic features of online texts of luxury hotel websites in Thailand and China respectively, in terms of their generic structure, mix-genres, and lexico-grammatical features?
2. What are the differences? Why?
3. Can “Thai experience” of constructing online texts of hotel websites in Thailand possibly be a standard or a reference to construct a consumer-friendly online texts of hotel websites in order to improve language service for the hospitality industry of China?

According to those research questions, this study conducts an in-depth study from the point of departure from Critical Discourse Analysis and Genre Analysis to investigate social practice, discursive practice and text. At the same time, the special attention would be to the language use, especially the lexico-grammatical features, inspired by Halliday and Hasan (1985), on websites at the text level. The findings of this research could make a contribution further to the field of CDA and GA, and its outcomes should also be valuable and significant as an effective language strategy for establishing and constructing a standard for hospitality industry in China.

## **Literature Review & Theoretical Framework**

### **1. Reviewing the Previous Studies on Discourse of Hotel**

There exist numerous researches which value in studying on the discourse of hotel (Tian, 2013; Zhang & Vasquez, 2014; Cenni & Goethals, 2017). But, to some degree, these previous researches are likely to be summed up by three points: 1) they probably pay more their concentrations on “consumers”, which means the discourse of consumers’ online review has become their top concern when investigating the online discourse of hotel industry; 2) linguistic features or language use of online discourse of hotel industry seems not to be their research priority, since the outcomes of those previous studies put a high value on commercial ends, such as analyzing effects of media on promotion, commercial strategies (Cenni & Goethals, 2017) and improvement of hotel management (Tian, 2013); 3) there are seldom valuable comparative studies, which, in this study, especially refers to hotel industry in Thailand and China, where English is treated as a second language or foreign language, but the language services, especially refers to English service, are total different. The answers to these research gaps are difficult to be found in the existing studies. These three possible research questions listed below reveal the gap that this research tries to fill up:

- (1) Except for Consumers’ online review, this research tries to identify the online discourse of hotel websites as a whole so that its result could be seen as one of contribution to discourse analysis and genre analysis.
- (2) This research is planned to pay more attention on linguistic features, trying to give a detailed description or investigation on the linguistic features as a reference to improve language service for

hospitality industry of China.

- (3) It also applies a comparative study to reveal some social or cultural difference on online discourse of hotel websites between Thailand and China, so that the practitioners of hotel industry in China can initialize the “Thai experience” of language use into the local stance

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The framework of this research procedure is basically determined by the purpose that this study tries to achieve and the gaps to fill-up. Critical Discourse Analysis framework proposed by Fairclough (1993; 2001) has been employed as a workable approach of accomplishing the claims of analyzing nature of social and cultural practice; as a significant contribution to explore discursive practice from historical point of view, including “moment-by-moment” text production and interpretation across diverse genres and discourses (Fairclough, 1993). Moreover, this study is planned to be based with the theoretical perspective of SFL (Halliday, 1994; Hasan, 1989; Martin, 1992; Halliday & Matthysen, 2004), as an analytical tool to investigate lexico-grammatical features of language use in the online texts. The potential advantages of SFL could explain this choice as one of fundamental framework. First, The concept of the “generic structure potential” (GSP) (Hasan, 1989), which is aimed at analyze possible structure of every text in a genre, can be applied to investigate the generic structure of the websites of hotels. In addition, language makes meaning and has three metafunctions (Halliday, 1994; Martin & Rose, 2007): What kinds of meanings are designed to be involved to hotel websites? How the meanings are organized? How meanings are implemented to establish a relationship with potential consumers in a more persuasive way? Importantly, the particular structures of different genres as well as their metafunctions are realized by “lexical-grammatical choice” within the text (Rose & Martin, 2012).

## 3. Data Description and Analysis

The data contains 18 online websites of hotels in Thailand and China (See in *Table 1*), with a large number of online texts. As for those 18 online websites of hotels in Thailand China, the research is designed to select the top three most popular tourist cities in Thailand and China, based on the survey conducted by *Sohu.com*, and for each tourist city, the hotels, this study selects, are also the top three most popular hotels, according to the *agoda.com*.

*Table 1: Hotels in Thailand and China*

China	Thailand
Top three: Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu	Top three: Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket
<i>Han's Royal Garden Boutique Hotel</i> <i>Pangu Hotel</i> <i>Park Hyatt Beijing</i> <i>Shanghai tongmao hotel</i> <i>Les Suite Orient (Shanghai)</i> <i>Shanghai Peace Hotel</i> <i>The Temple House Hotel</i> <i>Diaoyutai Boutique Hotel</i> <i>Old Congde Alley Hotel</i>	<i>Four Seasons of Chiang Mai</i> <i>Layana Resort</i> <i>Dream Hotel Bangkok</i> <i>Arnoma Bangkok</i> <i>The Racha</i> <i>Soneva Kiri</i> <i>Siri Pawa</i> <i>The Davis</i> <i>Siam Hotel</i>

The procedure of data analysis incorporates three steps: for the first step, its attention is paid to the analysis of generic structure and lexico-grammatical features of online discourse of hotels in China and Thailand at the textual level. The second step, which could be the key point for this research, is that this study will interpret differences underlying online discourse of hotel websites between Thailand and China at the discursive level. The third step deals with a discussion on the possibility that online discourse of hotel websites in China incorporates the “Thai experience” at social-cultural level. All these three parts would be in accordance with Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework (1993; 2001), including a text analysis, discursive practice and social-cultural practice (See in *Fig.1*).

According to theories and methodology mentioned above, this study is intended to apply two comparative researches (See in *Fig.2*): first, it includes a comparative studies (*Difference A*): it will focus on comparing the generic structures of the online discourse between luxury hotel websites in Thailand and China respectively ; and the second one (*Difference B*) is planned to analyze and compare language features of online discourse of hotel websites between Thailand and China. Both of two comparative studies will be based on the Hasan’ GSP (1989), Bhatia’s genre theory (Bhatia, 1997) and Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1994; Hasan, 1989), and Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1992; 1993; 2001). The outcomes of this study should be valuable and significant as an effective language strategy for establishing and constructing language service for hospitality industry in China.

*Figure 1: The Process of Analysis based on the Framework of CDA*

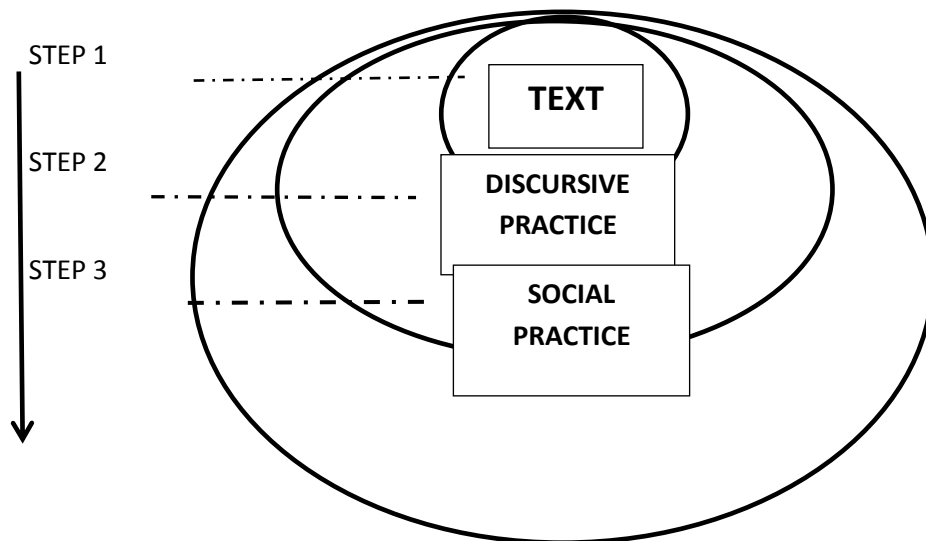
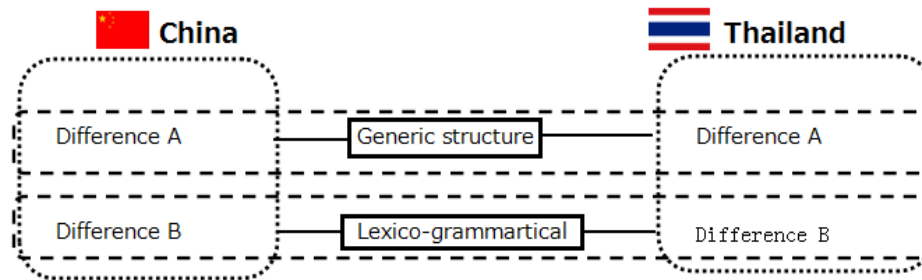


Figure 2: The Comparative Analysis in this Study



## Research

### 1. Analysis of Hotel Websites at Textual Level

The analysis at the textual level is related with generic structure as well as linguistic features in the online texts of Hotel websites.

#### 1.1 Generic Structure of Hotel Websites

Moves and steps are the basic structural units for interpreting text-genre analysis (Forey *et al*, 2010), revealing the form of communicative patterns in a genre (Bhatia, 1993). But, in this study, due to the special designed-layout of website, the moves or steps seem to be hyperlinks or sub-hyperlinks on a website. *Table 2* and *Table 3* outline and summarize the move structure, together with its further step arrangement, of 18 hotel websites in Thailand and China respectively: the hotel websites consist of several basic moves and steps, based on the different hyperlinks or sub-hyperlinks. Hence, there exist two layouts in the generic structure of their websites: the upper layout consists of the Hyperlinks, so they are called Moves; and the lower of Sub-hyperlinks which could be called steps.

Table 2: The Hyperlink and Sub-hyperlink of Hotel Websites in China

Hyper link (Moves)	Sub-Hyper link (Steps)
Home	Introduction & Description
Booking & Reservation System	Prices & Rooms
Rooms	Rooms
Pictures	Photos & Video
Feature & Service	Health Spa & Fitness Center
	Meeting
	Dining & Wedding
Location	Address & Maps
Travel	Travel plan
Review	Comments

*Table 3: The Hyperlink and Sub-hyperlink of Hotel Websites in Thailand*

Hyper Link	Sub-Hyper Link
<b>Welcome</b>	Welcome message
	At a glance
	overview
<b>Home</b>	introduction
<b>Room &amp; Suites</b>	Rooms
	Booking System
<b>Ding</b>	Ding restaurants
	Nightclub
<b>Meeting</b>	Business
	private
<b>Wedding</b>	Wedding
<b>Photos</b>	Photos & Video
	Lifestyle
<b>Offers</b>	Features & services
<b>Local Affairs</b>	Shopping activities
	Local snacks
	Festivals
	weather
<b>Discovery</b>	Camping; Academy; Activities Journey
	Family; Kids; Couple; Honeymoon
<b>Review</b>	Personal Diary
	Comments

As *Tables* summarize all the possible moves and steps from hotel websites of Thailand and China, more attentions can be paid to the interpretation of these Moves and steps.

#### **1.1.1 Obligatory Moves and their Steps**

4 moves which appear in both hotel websites of China and Thailand are obligatory moves. This outstanding characteristic probably indicates the essential function that the websites of the hotels in both nations offer basic information to potential consumer by telling: who they are (**Home**), what they can offer (**Rooms**), what they look like (**Pictures**) and how they are (**Reviews**). These four obligatory moves actually have established fundamental basis of the hotel websites. However, although the hotel websites in both countries share four obligatory moves, they are really different in their language use, which, however, will be fully discussed in the following section. And in this section, two obligatory moves should be analyzed in detail: **Reviews** and **Pictures**.



*Table 4: Moves and Steps in China's and Thailand's Hotel Websites*

<b>Moves and Steps</b>		
<b>Obligatory Moves</b>	<b>Obligatory Steps</b>	<b>Optional Steps</b>
Home	Introduction	-
Rooms	Room & Prices	-
Pictures	Pictures	Lifestyle ( <i>Thailand</i> )
Reviews	Comments	Personal Dairy ( <i>Thailand</i> )

As for the **Reviews**, it is clear to see that in Thailand's hotel websites, there are two further steps with vivid personal diaries from different guests and the concise comments by guests as well. So these websites will provide a genuine or first-hand experience to the potential consumers, especially by selecting a personal dairy, which could be a very wise strategy to persuade potential guests. By contrast, hotel websites of China simply contain a comments service, which, as a matter of fact, provides useless information to the consumers, since there seems to be no valid or valuable comments for potential consumers. When it comes to **Pictures**, there also exist some obvious differences on their websites. First of all, hotel websites of Thailand provide video clips of the hotels in a large number of aspects, such as different types of rooms or suites, restaurants, sports center, *etc.* More importantly, these pictures not only demonstrate indoors but also outdoors, like the scenery of the city, lifestyle of local people and some popular tourist attractions, and this step can easily establish a close relationship with potential guests. But as for hotel websites of China, they only provide indoor pictures of hotels and its number is also very limited.

To sum up, in order to achieve the general purpose of establishing a generic structure of hotel websites, there are four obligatory moves, consisting of the **Home** Move, the **Rooms** Move, the **Pictures** Move and the **Reviews** Move in Tables. But there seems to be a very essential finding to explain the fact that the some hotel websites of China, usually, provide hotel information in English for consumers only within these four obligatory moves, since the communicative purpose of hotel websites in China is simple and directly: *"live or not live in my hotel, that's you question!"*. And the differences between Thailand and China on the **Pictures** and **Reviews** Move are likely to show the different concepts of offering service to potential guests, especially the language service in this study. As for more detailed distinctive features of generic structure on the hotel websites between Thailand and China, more attention is designed to be paid on their optional moves and steps.

### **1.1.2 Optional Moves and their Steps**

There seems to be more interesting features underlying the optional moves, together with their own optional steps. Since the obligatory moves and steps have constructed a fundamental system of a hotel website, it is more valuable to analyze some differences of the optional moves and steps on attaining their own communicative purposes through their websites between Thailand and China.

*Table 5: The Comparison of Moves and Steps in the Hotel Websites between China and Thailand*

China		Thailand	
Optional Moves	Optional Steps	Optional Moves	Optional Steps
Booking & Reservation System		Welcome	Welcome message
Features & Services	Health Spa & Fitness Center		At a glance
	Meeting		Overview
	Dining & Wedding	Dining	Ding restaurants
Location			Nightclub
Travel		Meeting	Business
			Private
		Wedding	
		offers	Features & services
		Local affairs	Shopping activities
			Local snacks
			Festivals
			weather
		Discovery	Camping; Academy; Activities Journey
			Family; Kids; Couple; Honeymoon

As we can see in the *Table 5*, the Optional moves that hotel websites in China constructed includes five moves. Firstly, it is really interesting to find that Book & Reservation System, as a hyper link, became one of main concerns for hotel websites in China, probably for the practical purpose of offering an easy access for guests to have a reservation. Secondly, the optional moves like Location and Travel are designed to inform the potential guests with some basic geographic messages: where the hotel locates and how to get there by public transports, which probably seems to be unimportant for guest, since the public transports or location might not be their top concerns for the target guests of a 5-star or luxury hotels. Third, although the optional move, Features & Services, cannot be found in the hotel websites in Thailand, actually its optional steps, including meeting, wedding, Dining and fitness center, belongs to the optional move, offer, in hotel websites of Thailand, and more significantly, according to the table, on the hotel websites of Thailand, wedding, meeting and Dinning are establish as an independent and individual optional move, instead of step on hotel websites of China, which suggests the fact that hotels in Thailand create a more professional image for the potential guests so that they can provide different services for different demands proposed by customers whatever they want to do in the hotel. For example, guests can have a dinner, or hold a business meeting and wedding.

Compared with only four optional moves on the websites of China, it is clear to see that the hotels in Thailand have designed more optional moves with their optional steps in their websites, which, of course, create a professional image with all-demand service for potential guests. Since some of optional moves on the websites of Thailand have been discussed above, three optional moves, including

welcome, local affairs and Discovery, will be fully studied. For welcome, as it appears in the initial position, it might reveal that certain purposes or functions attempt to be achieved from the beginning: it is vital, since a friendly greeting together with a brief description probably could convey some important message to receivers (potential guests), by establishing a sense of trust immediately. This strategy of creating a friendly and consumer-centered concept cannot be found on the websites of China. When it comes to another optional move, Local Affairs, it also share the function of creating a friendly role or identity among potential guests by providing some useful information or travel tips so that guests can make a great plan for their travel according to the advice provided on the websites. For example, guests may have a great cultural experience during the local festival, which could be a distinctive feature, to some degree a huge progress, compared with useless information on the websites of China. And the last move on the websites of Thailand is called Discovery, which, to some degree, embodies with a consistent concept of consumer-oriented service. For this optional move, it bears a clear objective of providing different service programs for different target guests. Firstly, in its optional step, the programs are divided into Camping, Academy and Journey, especially Academy, which guests can learn some cultural knowledge in the local city with entertainment. For example, guests may learn some biology knowledge on tropical plants or animals in Thailand when visiting Zoo or Botanic Garden. This optional step is likely to be a very wise strategy for attaining at least two ends: meeting its commercial needs and enhancing the publicity of local city among potential guest throughout the world. Another key point which is worthy to be mentioned is the categorization of the hotel services for the target guests according to their unique demands: family with Kids, couple and honeymoon, which means the hotels in Thailand offer a consumer-built service.

So far, although some valuable findings on move structure of hotel website in Thailand and China have been discovered, we still neglect another essential point when attempting to investigate the complete picture of generic structure of hotel websites in this study: the relation and the sequence between these moves and steps, which means what actually looks like within each step in terms of obligatory and optional element as well as their sequence is ignored. For instance, what is the order in which the moves and steps occur? Questions like this still fail to be solved by the analysis in this section.

### ***1.1.3 The Sequence of Moves and Steps***

According to Hasan (1989), in order to understand the Generic Structure Potential, it is necessary to identify five aspects: what elements must occur, what elements can occur, where they must occur, where they can occur and how often can they occur. Once all the possible elements have been identified, it is possible to analyze the GSP of hotel websites in Thailand and China. But, before the analysis of the GSP, it is necessary to mention its contextual configuration, referring to any particular combination of the three variations in register: field, tenor and mode (Hasan, 1989). In order to explain unique features of the GSP on the hotel websites in Thailand and China effectively, in this study, contextual configuration tends to be the profit activity (field) that hotels in Thailand and China (tenor) attempt to persuade potential guests (tenor) through online websites with texts together with some visual images or videos (mode). Since the move structure has been discussed above, this study is designed to conduct an integrated model of the GSP, attempting to look inside each move and step.

#### *1.1.3.1 The GSP of Hotel Websites in China*

According to *Table.6*, there are nine hotels websites of China that have been discussed in this study, and it is clear to observe that there are four obligatory moves since all the nine hotels have adopted these moves and its steps at the same time. Meanwhile, they also follow the same sequence: Home- Rooms - Pictures - Reviews. Therefore, this sequence has established a fundamental structure of constructing the hotel websites of China. As for the optional moves or steps, it is more effective to summarize according to their functions and purposes. Firstly, for booking & Reservation system, it can be categorized into the obligatory move, Rooms, since it shares the similar function of this obligatory move. Secondly, Feature & Service can also include Location and Travel, because these three optional moves with their steps could be categorized as a kind of service the hotel websites offer. So the GSP of hotel websites of China has been established in the *Table 6*, and as you can see, the GSP of hotel websites of China actually contains basic moves and steps on their websites, which bears a clear feature with a strong goal of giving two basic information to the potential guests: general introduction of the hotels and description of room with its prices; thus, the generic structure, or language service, of the hotel websites in China are equipped with a clear function of informing rather than offering or serving, which perhaps create a distance between hotel and guests.

#### *1.1.3.2 The GSP of Hotel Websites in Thailand*

As for the hotel websites in Thailand, it is interesting to note that there are more optional elements, revealing that more information or more services are planned to give to potential guests in order to create a good image as a friend or as a professional travel agent who gives travel tips by adding the optional moves, Welcome, Discovery and Local affair. But in this study, according to the similar functions of these two optional moves together with their optional steps, Discovery and Local affairs are planned to be categorized as one optional move summarized Guest-oriented Service.

Based on all the discussion above, it is reasonable to summarize that the hotel websites in China might be characterized by **Introduction-oriented** type, since most of their attentions or most information on the websites have been on informing basic and descriptive messages like room, service, location and etc. Probably due to the fact that the hotel websites in Thailand attempt to offer a detailed information on their service according to different needs or demands of guests in order to establish the image of profession, the websites in Thailand probably carry more properties of **Target-oriented** Type; therefore, more optional moves and steps are designed on their hotels websites so that the potential guests are more likely to have a better user-experience when surfing on their websites, which suggesting that it would be more effective to influence the choice of potential guests. As we can see, although the communicative goal of websites in Thailand and China might be the same or similar, their communicative modes on their websites shows a distinctive difference.

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

Table 6: The Generic Structure of Hotel Websites in China

Hyper link	Sub-Hyper link	9 Hotels		GSP
Home	Introduction & Description (ID)	9/9	Home	ID →
Booking & Reservation System	Prices & Rooms (PR)	5/9	Room	RO ^ ( + PR) →
Rooms	Rooms (RO)	9/9		
Pictures	Photos & Video (PV)	9/9	Pictures	PI →
Feature & Service	Health Spa & Fitness Center (HF)	6/9	Feature & Service	[ (<+ HF · +ME · + DW · - AM · - TP>) ] →
	Meeting (ME)	7/9		
	Dining & Wedding (DW)	8/9		
Location	Address & Maps (AM)	3/9		
Travel	Travel plan (TP)	2/9		
Review	Comments (CO)	9/9	Reviews	CO →
ID ^ RO ^ ( + BR ) ^ PI ^ [ (<+ HF · +ME · + DW · - AM · - TP>) ] ^ CO →				
< > means equal relation; ( ) means optional; · means sequence can be changed; ^ means followed by; [ ] means appear between. → means direction; + means high frequency; - means low frequency				

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

*Table 7: The Generic Structure of Hotel Websites in Thailand*

Hyper Link	Sub-Hyper Link	9 hotels	Moves	The GSP
<b>Welcome</b>	Welcome message (WE)	4	<b>welcome</b>	$(WE \cdot - GL \cdot - OV)$ $\longrightarrow$
	At a glance (GL)	3		
	Overview (OV)	2		
<b>Home</b>	Introduction (IN)	9	<b>Home</b>	$\xrightarrow{IN}$
<b>Room &amp; Suites</b>	Rooms (RO)	9	<b>Room</b>	$\xrightarrow{RO \wedge BS}$
	Booking System (BS)	9		
<b>Ding</b>	Ding restaurants (DR)	9	<b>Dining</b>	$\xrightarrow{DR \wedge (-NC)}$
	Nightclub (NC)	3		
<b>Meeting</b>	Business (BM)	9	<b>Meeting</b>	$\xrightarrow{BM \wedge (+PM)}$
	Private (PM)	5		
<b>Wedding</b>	Wedding (WE)	9	<b>Wedding</b>	$\xrightarrow{WE}$
<b>Photos</b>	Photos & Video (PV)	9	<b>Photos</b>	$\xrightarrow{PV \wedge (LF)}$
	Lifestyle (LI)	3		
<b>Offers</b>	Features & services (FS)	9	<b>Offers</b>	$\xrightarrow{OF}$
<b>Local Affairs</b>	Shopping activities (SA)	6	<b>Guest-oriented service</b>	
	Local snacks (LA)	5		
	Festivals (FE)	3		

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

	Weather (WE)	3		( < +SP · + LS -- FE · - WE · CAA · + FKCH > )
Discovery	Camping; Academy; Activities Journey (CAA)	4		
	Family; Kids; Couple; Honeymoon (FKCH)	6		
Review	Personal Diary (PD)	6	Reviews	(PD) ^ CM
	Comments (CM)	9		
( WE · - GL · - OV ) ^ IN ^ RO ^ BS ^ DR ^ ( - NC ) ^ BM ^ ( + PM ) ^ WE ^ PV ^ ( LF ) ^ OF ^ [ ( < +SP · + LS -- FE · - WE · CAA · + FKCH > ) ] ^				
(PD) ^ CM				
< > means equal relation; ( ) means optional; · means sequence can be changed; ^ means followed by; [ ] means appear between. —————> means direction; + means high frequency; - means low frequency				

## **1.2 Analysis of Lexico-grammatical Feature of Hotel Websites**

In Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (1985), he mentioned three metafunctions: the experiential meaning, dealing with "what is going on"; interpersonal meaning, "what is relation between participants"; textual meaning, "how to organize message". Since the previous study focuses on the generic structure, which mainly deals with the issue of how the information on the hotel websites organize through the Moves and Steps, the following section is planned to concentrate on analyzing the lexico-grammatical features, underpinned by another two metafunctions: experiential and interpersonal

### **1.2.1 The Analysis of Interpersonal Function**

In the online texts of hotel websites in Thailand and China, there are a large number of first-person and second-person pronouns, such as "you", "we", "our" and "your", which probably could be an effective device to address two participants of this online discourse directly and personally, since a close relationship between hotel and potential guests can easily be established. This application of personal pronoun probably could be a common tool, not only as discourse strategy which Fairclough calls "synthetic personalization" (1989) but a distinctive feature of persuasion in any promotional genres (Bhatia, 2000); therefore, so many evidences of personal pronouns can be found on the hotel websites of both Thailand and China.

Although there is a preference on application of personal pronoun on the websites in both nations, some differences on the application of personal pronouns on the hotel websites between Thailand and China are easily to be found: 1) on the websites of Thailand, the use of second-person pronouns takes up a larger proportion than first-person pronoun, and this should never be an inexplicable phenomenon as the hotels in Thailand tries to construct a humble identity, rather than impersonal image of "informer". The personalization of the hotel as a friend or as a professional travel agent stimulates a personal and equal relationship with guest, or even elevate a higher position of consumers, and this language style or language service could be commonly conceived in the promotional genres, like advertisement, sales letters (Bhatia, 2004). 2) However, on the websites of China, first-person pronoun is equally important to the second-person pronoun. Perhaps, to some degree, more first-person pronouns, such as "we", "our", can be found in the online texts of hotel websites in China than those in Thailand. At the same time, the proportion of second person pronouns on the hotel websites in China presents less than those in Thailand. Therefore, their online texts probably fail to be characterized by the use of personal pronouns effectively so that hotels can talk directly to the readers (potential guests) in order to achieve a personalizing relationship. On the contrary, these online texts serves as an informative role that creates a distant identity with its primary goal of informing or reporting rather than serving, helping and suggesting; thus the language style or language service seems to be unfriendly for users of the websites.

### **1.2.2 Analysis of Experimental Meaning**

According to the theory of metafunction (Halliday, 1985), the Experimental function mainly consists of "Voice" and "Transitivity", and in this study, the analysis will depart from the "Transitivity", which is the grammar of constructing grammar, including at least six processes: material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal and existential. However, since this research deals with the hotel websites in both Thailand and China, whose major goal is to offer outstanding services to guests, the material process and relational process would be the key point to unfold the secrets of the language use on their



websites.

The material processes are those in which something is done: “actor - process – goal” (Halliday, 1985). On the websites of Thailand, the hotels, together with its services, facilities, programs, stuffs, appears as subject, acting as a provider of services in the strong sense of “enabling” (Martin & Rose, 2001); therefore, it is easy to see that the “goal” of the process is often the different kinds of services. As for the relational process, the analysis of “attributive” and “identifying” process in the online texts of Thailand is another interesting feature to be considered. The attribution and identification of the online text mainly describe: where the hotel locates, how beautify the scenery is, how great the service is.

But, there seems to be less difference in the aspects of material process, since, as mentioned above, the subject, as an actor in the process, in the online texts of hotel websites in China refers to hotel (service, rooms, programs). But the distinctive feature lies in the fact that hotel websites in China perhaps adopt more language features with relational process, which strongly reflect the some informative purposes.

## **2. Analysis of Hotel Websites at Discursive level**

The analysis at discursive level includes a series of aspects about how the online texts of hotel websites have been created across different genres and discourses, which, in Fairclough’s words, is called “Interdiscursivity” or “Intertextuality” (1992; 1993; 2001).

The online texts on the hotel websites in Thailand is an interdiscursively complex discourse with a variety of genres and discourse. In this part, the analysis is designed into two aspects: how many genres involved and what’s the function of those genres. As for the category of genre, the online texts of hotel websites in Thailand can be divided into two major genres: personal letter (diary) and reports, according to genre theory generated by Martin and Rose (2012). The online texts from Hyperlink, Welcome, could be served as a personal welcome letter written by the director of hotel, and several travel diaries which give a vivid, first-hand experience from the perspective of tourists. The genre of personal letters, clearly, carries sense of “sharing” (Mattiessen, Teruya & Lam, 2010) that establishes a personal experience by telling, narrating or sharing a story; thus, in this study, online texts of some hotel websites in Thailand aim to apply the features of personal letter in order to equalize the relationship with consumers, perhaps even melting the gap or re-establishing a brand new relation. However, in China’s hotel websites, they apply the genre of reports as a main, even only, strategy to construct their online texts. It should never be a surprise since the hotels in China are designed to provide information of the rooms and services.

As for the function of genre, however, this study will investigate the purpose of genre-production on the hotel websites. For the genre of personal letter on hotel websites of Thailand, especially on the hyperlink, welcome, a conversational genre could be conceived in the text: “we, sincerely, wish you.”, which is absolutely an informal speaking genre in the written genre. Hence, as an efficient device, it can attain the purpose of creating a strong connection and friendly relation with consumers. In addition, the genre of personal letter in the sub-hyperlink, personal diary, as a matter of facts, shares a large number of distinctive features of “narrating” by not only telling a real experience or story of a tourist who lives in this hotel, but also, on purpose, giving some information of hotel from the consumers’ perspective. However, as mentioned above, it is impossible to trace any of these online texts on the hotel websites of China, which seems to fail to establish a friendly image among consumers. Although the hotel websites of both Thailand and China have adopt the

genre of reports, with dominant feature of the descriptive and informative function (Martin & Rose, 2001), there exists an obvious difference, since the online texts of hotel websites in Thailand are designed to accomplish their communicative goal of “sharing” , as a commercial strategy of “branding effects” (Flowerdew, 2004). Moreover, online texts of Thailand’s hotel websites perhaps bear more characteristics of the typical promotional genre, like advertisement. According to the research conducted by Cook (2001), promotional genre, like advertisement, shares some similar discourse strategies, which, interestingly but not surprisingly, could be found out in the online texts of hotel websites in Thailand, because the primary goal of hotel shares the same commercial purpose like other commercial industry, which is to persuade consumers to buy products or to influence consuming behaviors. (Bhatia, 1998). Therefore, the ideology of promotion can, clearly, be mixed and mingled in the online texts of hotel websites in Thailand to produce and construct their online texts in order to realize their goal. But what seems to be very surprising lies in the fact that the although production of hotel websites in China carry most feature of “reporting”, it could be difficult to find out some obvious evidences of discourse strategies of promotional genre, which suggests that the main purpose of online websites in China merely tries to achieve the goal of informing rather than sharing or persuading.

*Table 8: The Comparison of Genre Preference in the Hotel Websites in China and Thailand*

Genre	Thailand	China
Personal letter	√	-
Conversation	√	-
Report	√	√
Narrative	√	-
Promotional	√	-
	<b>Promotional Genre</b>	<b>Public Genre</b>

As it has been discussed above, in the online texts of hotel websites in Thailand, it is clear to find the genre-mixing process or hybrid discourse, which suggest a fact that language service on the hotel websites in Thailand is wiser, smarter by synthesizing different genres or discourse. However, in the online texts of hotel websites in China, the construction or production of their online texts is, simply, the “Report”, according to the genre map generated by Martin and Rose (2005), but “Report” shows a strong sense of informativeness by delivering a fact or statement. It is, therefore, obvious to find that the preference or dominance of “report” in the online text of hotel websites in China performs the feature of public genre or discourse, like news reports, with the goal of informing and reporting, which lack of interaction with its audience, giving an expression of impersonal and distant authority.

### **3. Analysis of Hotel Websites at Social-cultural Practice**

The analysis in this section will be conducted in a much broader social-cultural perspective. Fairclough’s CDA in the perspective of social practice requires the investigation of “context of situation”, “context of institution” and “context of culture”.

In Thailand, probably due to its particular history and geography, tourism has already displayed as an essential approach for seeking financial resources for the development of Thailand (Wang & Luo, 2013). Therefore, the hospitality industry, as a key role of developing tourism, has adapted, consciously or unconsciously, the promotional strategies in attract potential customers by providing

the best service for consumers all over the world, which, of course, includes the language service, probably due to more fierce competition in hotel market in Thailand. Another important concern which cannot be ignored is the practice of hospitality industry in Thailand is international rather than domestic, which means that there are a large number of well-known international hotel enterprises; therefore, objectively speaking, these international hotel enterprises which have established and operated their hotels in Thailand for a long period of time (Xue & Wu, 2016) have promoted the hotel market in Thailand so that the hospitality industry in Thailand has benefited significantly so that the hotel websites of Thailand has a longer history and richer experience of providing a well-designed English version for their target-group than those of China. Websites with English-version itself, actually, is a powerful proof of marketing strategies, probably due to two major reasons: 1) hotels in Thailand perhaps have a long-term experience of providing service for all-over- the- world consumer; 2) hotel industry in Thailand, to large degree, are establish by a large number of joint venture, such as Shangri-la, Hilton group and Four seasons corporation.

On the online website in Thailand, there are a large number of commercial genres, and this ideology of marketization has “power” over two participants (hotels and consumers): for hotel, the current corporate culture of “making money” (Chan & Lo, 2007) will force hotels to adjust their discourse practice; for consumers, they might be entitled with such power to create a consumer-oriented ideology, making consumers “enjoy” high-quality services. Therefore, under the ideology of marketization, the potential consumers are given such “power” so that hotels will be forced by this “power” to provide a large number of services, such as dining, wedding, Spa, tourist experience and so on. But, as a matter of fact, it would be difficult to trace such ideology on the online texts of hotel websites in China.

*Table 9: The Differences in the Social-Cultural Practice in Thailand and China*

	Thailand	China
<b>Cultural-Social Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Marketization; Commercialism</li> <li>*Corporate ;Promotional culture</li> <li>*Consumer-centered idea</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Administrative and Political trend</li> <li>*Bureaucracy</li> <li>*Hotel-centered idea</li> </ul>

However, there are some interesting differences in the analysis of China’ hotel websites. They try to give some facts, data and magnificent history, which probably suggests that the hotels have control, power and authority over consumers, by saying “*you are lucky to choose our hotel*” rather than “*we are happy to have you as our guest*”. The another concern is that the majority of target-group for a hotel in China seems to be Chinese tourists, which is easy to understand that the hotel websites with English version in China provide limited information, instead of all the information on the website to the potential consumers who are non-Chinese speaker. Therefore, except for the detailed description for the room or suites, the hotels find it unnecessary to construct online website with English version to offer more information on other services; thus, objective speaking, it probably lead to the result of poor language service on the hotel websites of China, since nearly no one would care the English version of Hotel websites in China.

## Implications and Conclusion

This study has discussed and analyzed online texts of hotel websites in Thailand and China in terms of three levels: the textual level with their lexico-grammatical choices and the generic structure; the discursive level with the genres or mixed-genre and the social-cultural level. Its results can be applied to answer the first two research questions mentioned above: 1) the result of this study suggests that the hotel websites of Thailand bear the effect of marketization, or commercialization, as a strong social-cultural practice, which has been seep into the online texts of hotel websites in Thailand, creating a strong identity of service-provider, since there are profound evidence on the lexico-grammatical features in the texts and more detailed generic structure. 2) More significantly, there exist some distinctive features in the online texts of hotel websites in China due to the strong ideology of “informer” rather than “service-for-individual”. The possible outcome of the research could be applied to give some valuable implications or instructions for providing language service of hospitality industry in China, to construct a professional English websites with the ideology of marketization, trying to reconstructing the role of the hotel, which probably is a significant trend in the field of hospitality industry in China. This study is based on theories stemming from the works of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1993) and SFL (Halliday, 1985; Halliday, 1994), genre analysis (Bhatia, 1994; Bhatia, 1998; Bhatia, 2004; Martin, 2004).

The results and findings are reliable, though there are still some limitations, in analyzing online texts from a limited number of hotel websites in Thailand and China. But the findings from this study are still significant for giving valuable reference to establish a better language service of hotel websites by learning “Thai experience”:

- (1) The ideology of marketization in the online texts of hotel websites in Thailand which probably could be a model or reference to develop a better and professional online texts according to generic structure, genre selection and lexico-grammatical features;
- (2) Strategies for persuasive or promotional genre like advertisement can be applied into the online texts of hotel websites in China for explicitly or easily achieve their goal of providing a better language service and constructing an international image.

## References

- Bhatia, V. K. (1993). *Analyzing genre: Language use in professional settings*. London: Longman.
- Bhatia, V. K. (1997). Genre-Mixing in Academic Introductions. *English for Specific Purposes*, vol. 16, no. 3: 181-196.
- Bhatia, V. K. (2002). *Applied Genre Analysis: A multiperspective Model*. Iberian, vol. 4: 3-19.
- Bhatia, V. K. (2004). *Worlds of Written Discourse: a Genre-Based View*. London: Continuum.
- Chan, D., & Lo, W. (2007). Running Universities as Enterprises: University Governance Changes in Hong Kong. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, vol. 27, no. 3: 305-322. Doi, 10.1080/02188790701591543.
- Cenni, I., & Goethals, P. (2017). Negative hotel review on TripAdvisor: A cross-linguistic Analysis. *Discourse, Context & Media*, vol. 16: 22-30.
- Cook, G. (2001). *The discourse of advertising*. London: Routledge.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. London: Polity.
- Fairclough, N. (1993). Critical discourse analysis and the marketization of public discourse. *The University. Discourse & Society*, vol. 4, no. 2: 133-168.

- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and Power*. United Kingdom: Longman.
- Flowerdew, J. (2004). The Discursive Construction of a World-Class City. *Discourse & Society*, vol. 15: 579-604.
- Halliday, M. (1985). *An Introduction to functional grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A., & Matthiessen, C.M. (2004). *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Arnold.
- Halliday, M.A., & Hasan, R. (1998). *Language, context, and text: Aspects of Language in a social-semiotic perspective*. Geelong: Deakin University.
- Hasan, R. (1989). The structure of a text. In M. A. K. Halliday., & R. Hasan. (Eds.), *Language, context and text: Aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective (pp. 52-69)*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Indiana Center for Intercultural Communication. (1998). *Written Discourse in Philanthropic fund raising: Issues of language and rhetoric*. Indianapolis, Ind.: Indiana Center for Intercultural Communication, Indiana University Center on Philanthropy.
- Kaur, K., Yunus, N.M., & Arumugam, N. (2013). Beauty product advertisements: A critical discourse analysis. *Asian Social Science*, vol. 9, no. 3: 61-71.
- Martin, J. R. (1992). *English text: system and structure*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Martin, J. R., & Rose, D. (2007). *Working with discourse*. New York: Continuum.
- Martin, J. R., & White, P. R. (2005). *The language of evaluation: Appraisal in English*. London: Palgrave.
- Matthiessen, C. M., Teruya, K., & Lam, M. (2010). *Key terms in system functional Linguistics*. London: Continuum.
- Shi, H. P. (2013). The Study on the tendency of development of Tourism in Thailand. *Tourism Management Research*, vol. 8: 62-63 (石洪斌.(2013). 论泰国旅游发展趋势. *旅游管理研究*, 2013年08期, 62-63.)
- Tian, Y. F. (2013). Engagement in Online hotel Reviews: A comparative study. *Discourse, Context & Media*, vol. 2, no. 4: 184-191.
- Wang, C. & Luo, K. R. (2013). A Research on the Development of Tourism Economy in Thailand from the Perspective of Inclusive Growth. *Southeastern Asia*, vol. 5: 41-46 (王超, 骆克任. (2013). 包容性增长视角下泰国旅游经济发展模式研究. *东南亚纵横*, 5, 41-46.)
- Xunfeng, X., Yan, W., Forey, G., & Lan, L. (2010). Analyzing the Genre Structure of Chinese Call-center Communication. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, vol. 24, no. 4: 445-475.
- Xue, Y. J. & Wu, H. Z. (2016). *Analysis on the Promotion Strategy of Tourism in Thailand: A Case study on Chinese tourists Forum*, vol. 6: 58-60. (薛云健, 吴惠子.(2016). 泰国旅游的营销策略——以赴泰中国游客为例. *论坛 (企业研究-月刊)*, 2016年06期, 58-60.)
- Zhang, Y., & Vasquez, C. (2014). Hotels' responses to the online reviews: Managing Consumer Dissatisfaction. *Discourse, Context & Media*, vol. 6: 54-64.

## **Discrete Continuity in Transnational Religious Flow and Modernization: A Case Study of Thai Diaspora in Copenhagen**

**Liu, Chang**  
University of Copenhagen  
Thailand

---

### **Abstract**

Thousands of Thai have been out flow globally, during which ritual, cultural, lingual identity travel as well. However, Thai diaspora in Europe have been generally taken as a small group of people and the study of Thai is underestimated in European academia. This paper aims to reexamines the role of religious belief and its impact on the global ethnic flow through a case study of Thai diaspora in Copenhagen. In our research, we focus on the ethnographic understanding of the role of Buddhism for Thai diaspora in Copenhagen, and find the transnational flow of belief may form a mechanism of providing various relief for a turbulent life of diaspora via the recreation of homeland. In addition, we observe a discrete continuity in the transnational religious flow, and how Buddhism plays distinct roles in the different Thai diaspora groups' life in Copenhagen.

**Keywords:** Thai, Diaspora, Globalization, Buddhism, Modernity

### **Introduction**

Thai diaspora in Europe have been generally taken as a small group of people and the study of Thai is underestimated in European academia. In fact, however, Thai immigrants are one of the biggest Asian immigration groups in Europe and especially in Scandinavian countries. According to *Statistics Denmark*, by the second quarter of 2017, there are a total of 11,300 Thai immigrants in Denmark, which ranks first among the numbers of immigrants from all the ASEN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries. The huge amount of Thai immigrants also brings the flow of religion from Thailand to Denmark, as around 90-95 percent of whom are Buddhists (Borup, 2008). As described by Kitiarsa (2010), "Buddhism has become a religion which immigrants take along with them to their new homeland."

The majority group of the Thai immigrants in Denmark is middle-aged women. In 2017, the female ratio of Thai immigrants in Denmark is 85.4%, which indicates the main pattern of the Thai immigration in Denmark is the transnational marriage between Thai women and Danish men. However, the cause of the transnational marriage is in debate. Suksomboon (2008) and Jungteerapanich (2014) thought the sustained phenomenon might come from the popularity of Thai tourism in Europe, which makes more European men can travel to Thailand and find their wives from the local tourism and entertainment sectors. But it cannot explain why the female European travelers do not find their husbands in Thailand as well. Meanwhile, many scholars attribute it to the

globalization and market forces, which they think commoditize the marriage and women from developing countries. However, Robinson (2007) criticized it as *"when a marriage is contracted, the man and woman enter into a personal relationship that cannot be reduced to a commodity exchange"*. In contrast, he emphasized the role of aspiration in the "South-North" marriage migration, and described it as *"People moving from poor to rich countries, in search of work and improved economic circumstances."* However, although these Thai wives do get a better material life to some extent as what they expected, many of them get mental sufferings from the problems in their transnational marriage and have difficulties getting used to the new environment.

Meanwhile, the Thai temple seems becomes a place where they can find a relief in their turbulent diaspora life by the recreation of a feeling of their homeland. They come here to meet friends and seek suggestions from monks. For these Thai women, religion is an important part of their diaspora life and they also play as the actors in the transnational religion flow. In contrast, the 1.5 generation immigrants who come to Denmark with their mothers at early teens, show a different interaction with Thai Buddhism. On one hand, they have a critical attitude to religion. On another hand, they still recognize themselves as Buddhists, but in a less religious way. In the context of modernization and globalization, the role of religion in the diaspora life of immigrant, especially for the female immigrants, is paid very little attention from the scholarship. Though the gender issue of migration has been noticed by many scholars (Hannah, 2010; Spanger, 2013; Jongwilaiwan & Thompson 2013), the functions of religion often get easily ignored.

The aim of our research is to get understanding of the role of religion for diaspora by a case study of Thai diaspora in Copenhagen, with a focus of the Thai women. The paper attempt to answer the two research questions: "Can religion function as a mechanism to give a relief to the diaspora's turbulent life?" and "How do Thai diaspora perceive their religion belief in the global mobilization?" The rest of this essay is organized as follows. The next section is the theoretical framework of the research. The third section is the research methodology and data collection. The section 5, 6 and 7 sections will present our research results from our fieldwork and the analysis on the role of religion in the diaspora life, from the respect of Thai monks, Thai wives and 1.5 generation immigrants respectively. The last section is the discussion of our findings in the research.

## Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of our research would be mainly based on the theory of "Second modernity" proposed by Ulrich Beck and the paper "Varieties of second modernity: the cosmopolitan turn in social and political theory and research" by Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande (2010), but also touches upon the theory of the "self-identification" in the context of globalization. In contrast with the classical modernization theory and "First Modernity", Beck and Grande (2010) argued that the social theory-building of Second Modernity must *"go all the way through the 'plurality' of modernization paths, of Western and non-Western experiences and projects, their dependencies, interdependencies and interactions."*, which they called as "methodological cosmopolitanism" (Beck 2006; Beck and Grande 2007). There are three theoretical building blocks of cosmopolitan modernities theory: "Plurality of modernities and their entanglements", "Discontinuous changes within modernity", and "Cosmopolitization" (ibid). Among the three theoretical building blocks, the concept of "Cosmopolitization" and its two dimensions are the pillar of our analytical approach in our empirical research. Beck (2006) described the concept of "Cosmopolitization" as *"We do not live in*

*an age of cosmopolitanism but in an age of cosmopolitization– the ‘global other’ is in our midst.”*, and discussed the two dimensions of cosmopolitization as:

It is characterized, rather, by structural contradictions resulting from two conflicting processes, which create what we call a ‘cosmopolitan dialectic’. On the one hand, there is a centripetal, unifying process, the formation of a ‘world risk society’ (Beck 1999, 2009). At the same time, the Second Modernity is subject to powerful, centrifugal, diversifying processes resulting from the co-existence, and probably even the hegemonic competition between different types and visions of modernity; and from resistances to economic, political and cultural globalization within societies. (Beck and Grande 2010)

While the cosmopolitization is enhanced by the reflexive modernization, the relationship between individualization, secularization and belief is reformed by it at the same time (Mythen, 2010). Both as the actor in the process of reflexive modernization, our case study of migrants and transnational religious groups reveals a global entanglement among secularism, religion and individualization through the study of Thai diaspora in the global city of Copenhagen. It is a good example to show how the two dimensions of cosmopolitization could be accommodated with each other in the modern society. Based on the framework of the cosmopolitan modernities theory, we focus on how a transnational religion plays a variety of roles in the life of immigrants in the context of a global city and explore further about the implications of this social phenomenon.

As a product of the identity space of modernity, “Globalization” is described by Friedman (1995) as *“a flow of meaningful objects and ideas that retain their meaning in their movement.”*. For the 1.5 generation Thai immigrants in our case study, they spent their childhood in a religious society but grew up in the context of globalization and got educated in a society with individualism values. What is the relationship between the religion and the self-identities of the new immigrant generation is another question of concern in our research.

### **Research Methodology and Data Collection**

We primarily use the qualitative methodology of ethnography in the research. The whole fieldwork was conducted in Copenhagen in April 2017. It includes the participant observation of a local Thai temple, *Watpa Copenhagen*, by intensive field visits, and three and in-depth interviews with four Thai informants living in Copenhagen. The interviews are semi-structured with open-ended questions, which mainly focus on the role of religion in the informants’ life and how they change their perceptions of religion with the life change in immigration. In addition to the fieldwork, we also collect the secondary data from relevant statistical institutions and media as a supplement to our analysis.

Considering the impact in Thai immigrant communities and the transportation convenience, the temple *Watpa Copenhagen* was chosen for the interview and participant observation. It is a Thai Temple of Thammayut school built in 1992, very influential among the Thai immigrants group. According to the research of Jørn Borup (2008), *“Many of whom periodically visit the three Thai Buddhist temples: Watpa Copenhagen, Wat Thai Denmark Brahmavihara Buddhist Monastery and Wat Buddha Denmark, from the Thammayut, Mahanikaya and Dhammakaya schools respectively.”* It is fully operated by only five missionary monks in total (sometimes several elder Thai women may come here helping with the administrative work, such as the reception and coordination). It has two



floors and a backyard garden, with an area of 3,105 square meters in total. The first floor includes a reception office, a large dining room, a kitchen and several meeting rooms. The second floor is a main hall for the religion activities, such as praying and important ceremonies, but it also functions as a rest room for monks. We visited it for the first time on a Saturday. Weekend is usually a busy time of the temple. Every weekend the temple provides traditional Thai food during lunch. There were around 30 people there when I arrived. They were most Thai family as middle aged women with their kids, but also a very few of them were the Danish husbands coming here as a company with their Thai wives. The head monk of the temple had an informal talk with us at the first time. After knowing our research interest of Thai Buddhism, he helped us find another young monk, Payo, who can also speak English to be our informant. The informant has been in Copenhagen for almost one year. Before he came to Denmark, he was assigned to Germany staying for a period of five months in total. The other informants are three *1.5 generation* Thai immigrants who came to Denmark with their mothers during their early teens and were all studying in Copenhagen. Kevin, was studying a Bachelor program of Southeast Asian Studies in Copenhagen. The other two informants, Lily and Dam, were a young couple. The boy was studying gastronomy in a vocational school and the girl was taking a language class and some elective courses in a high school. The two interviews of the bachelor student and the monk were conducted in English. The other interview with the young couple together was conducted in English and Thai with the translation assistance of the Thai bachelor student.

To collect more useful data in the fieldwork, we also used some techniques to prepare the interview and select samples during the research process. We began the fieldwork first by interviewing the bachelor student who was studying Southeast Asian Studies. He was very interested in our research and agreed to be interviewed by us. The first technique is the arrangement of an informal meeting with him before the final interview. The informal meeting was proven to be very helpful to our fieldwork in some ways at last. Although the meeting was unrecorded, the valuable information collected in the meeting gave us a general picture of the Thai migrants' lives in Copenhagen, which could make us reflect on the questions designed for the interviews before and improve them based on the information. Besides, he recommended one local Thai temple to us as a field site. The information of the temple provided by him also helped us make better preparations before visiting it. Meanwhile, the "snowball technique" was another technique we used to find other potential informants. In the meeting, we asked him to introduce more Thai friends of him who were willing to be interviewed for our research. Then he helped us find the couple to be our informants successfully. There are also some limitations of our research methods. First, the number of our informants is relatively insufficient to cover all the Thai immigrant groups in Copenhagen, especially for the Thai women who are the first-generation immigrants. Although we try to collect the information about the life experience of Thai women from the interviews of our informants, it is still an indirect impression from the perspectives of "others", no matter from the children of them or the listener of them. Second, the use of "snowball technique" may also cause the representativeness bias. For example, the young couple and the bachelor students had some relatively similar opinions and attitudes on the Buddhism, and shared similar migration experiences. However, this limitation is difficult to deal with because of the sensitiveness of the religion topic. Our informants said it in the interview, "*in Thailand, it is very sensitive to talk about religion*", and "*if someone is very religious, he won't talk a lot about it.*"

### Thai Monks in The Temple: Missionary, Counselor and Diaspora

Kitiarsa (2010) concluded the three entwined forces which mainly drive the transnationalization of Thai Buddhism, as the institutionalized efforts through the sponsorship by the Sangha and the state, the growth of Thai immigrants overseas and the increasing global interest in Buddhism from developed countries arisen by the varieties of cross-border interactions. While, in our research, we find that in the transnational Thai Buddhism in Denmark mainly comes from the first two forces. On one hand, the missionary monks come to overseas for promote the religion in more countries. On the other hand, the increasing amount of Thai immigrants creates a big demand on their mission. In the interviewed with Payo, one of the monks in the temple, he talked about his work as a missionary monk in Denmark as *"for religious work, to spread the religion, to promote, to practice, to be a leader in religion.....I think it's a good place to promote the religion because they have many Thai and many Buddhists here to come this temple"*.

In our research, we find the temple is not only a religious venue for the Buddhists, but also functions as a place providing the guidance to the diaspora about how to get used to the new environment, and a relief to their turbulent life via the recreation a feeling of homeland and listening to their problems. Despite as a small number, the work of missionary monks plays a vital role in the immigrant communities in Denmark. Payo described what they usually teach when a layman come to the temple, *"Teaching about Denmark, to practice, teaching about chanting, how to use it in daily life, how to spend time when you got some problems. To tell the way to do the good things"*. We will talk more about it in the section of "Thai wives in Denmark".

Meanwhile, we should not ignore another important identity of these missionary monks. That is, they are a part of the Thai diaspora as well. Although they are fully respected by the disciples in the temple, when the missionary monks are outside the temple and go to the city, their life experiences could be very different. They were sometimes offended by the European locals like other Thai immigrants, and often got more misunderstandings due to their religious way of dressing. Payo talked about his experience in the city of Copenhagen,

Payo: .....when I come to the city, they don't know about Buddhism, about the monks. But someone who knows who used to go to Thailand, they know. When you say hello, they have something like this (a Buddhist gesture). But someone they don't know, they just look at us like a dressing fantasy (laugh).

- *Because it's a very different way of dressing?*

Payo: Yes, different. But sometimes they just watch from the TV and from the movie. They want to take a photo with (me), sometimes can touch and can stand next to each other.

Although the missionary monks sometimes experience offensiveness and discrimination in their life, Payo shows a very positive attitude on it.

Payo: Actually, in Thailand, Asia, we are friendly. But here maybe personality, but it could be friendly, but sometimes no. Sometimes, the Asian people come here in Europe, someone can look at me down.

- *Really, Asian people?*

Payo: No, European people, look at Asian people.

- *They look down on us?*

Payo: Yeah, sometimes, we can feel, they dislike (us). But not a problem, because we know what we do, we know why we come here. Just don't care. Because, if we know that we did good (well) in everything, so don't (be) afraid of everything.

### Thai Wives: A Relief from The Unchanged Belief

The most notable feature of the Thai immigrants in Denmark is its significant gender difference in the number of male and female of all age groups. While Jungteerapanich (2014) found the Thai communities in Sweden are highly female dominant with a female-male ratio of 78.29% in 2013, the female ratio of Thai immigrants in Denmark is 85.4% in 2017(See Table 1). On another hand, most male Thai immigrants in Denmark are teenagers and young people in twenties, but female Thai immigrants are middle-aged women. As shown in Table 1, among different age groups of Thai immigrants in Denmark, the age group with most male immigrants is 20-29 years old, while most female immigrants are from 40 to 49 years old. In contrast, the number of female Thai immigrants from age group 0-9 years old is even less than the same age group of male immigrants. The transnational marriage between Thai women and European men is widely regarded as the main reason for this immigration pattern. According to *Statistics Denmark*, from 1999 to 2016, there were 4590 Thai immigrant women married to Danish men in total, which accounts for 42.28% of all the transnational marriage between Danish men and Asian immigrant women.

*Table 1: The number and female ratio of Thai immigrants in Denmark by age groups (2017)*

Age (years old)	Male	Female	Female Ratio
<b>Total</b>	<b>1647</b>	<b>9653</b>	<b>85.42%</b>
0-9	88	52	37.14%
10-19	374	506	57.50%
20-29	482	757	61.10%
30-39	357	2321	86.67%
40-49	200	3110	93.96%
50-59	75	2128	96.60%
>=60	71	779	91.65%

Source: *Statistics Denmark* (<http://www.dst.dk>)

The data above indicates that the transnational marriage has been the main source of the Thai immigrants in Denmark since the middle and late 20<sup>th</sup> century. When Payo was asked about if most people come to the temple are women, he confirmed it and said *"Because if you come to Denmark, it's the only way to marry the people here. So, most are women come."* Many Thai women come to Denmark through the "marriage migration", with an aspiration for a better life. This is manifested in all our interviews. Lily described the migration of her mother as *"She came here because of the money. Then she does not need to go back, to lose the money again"*. While Kevin talked about the reason for his mother came to Denmark as *"for a better life, a better living"*

No matter in which way, religion plays an important role in the diaspora life of Thai women in Denmark. Most Thai immigrant women in Denmark are still relative religious of Buddhism and their immigration experiences seem to hardly make any changes on their religion belief. When Kevin described about his mother, he said, *"my mum is very religious and she practices a lot"*, and *"She goes to the temple regularly"*. Besides, when we asked them if their mothers changed their attitude to Buddhism after moving to Denmark, all of them did not think so. Dam said that his mother *"still*

*goes to the temple, still donates, still prays in the temple and at home*, as what she did before in Thailand. In the visit of Watpa Copenhagen, we found most people coming to the temple were also middle-aged Thai women. On one hand, as religious Buddhists, they come to temples for the ritual activities. On the other hand, as immigrants, they come to temples for a relief to their diaspora life by talking to the monks and meeting friends.

Many Thai women come to temples talking to monks about the problems in their diaspora life. As new wives coming to Denmark in their middle age, they are often faced with difficulties integrating into the new society in many aspects, such as the different social norms, cultural difference and family relations. Many Thai women struggle with their relationship with their husbands because of their different way of thinking, while the language problems often worsen it. When Payo was asked about what topic do the people coming here usually talk with him, he said:

People come to, have a problem to talk with me is family.....Sometimes, thinking different between wife and husband.....Maybe someone meet their husband who is drinking alcohol, lazy, or try to use the girl working outside to get money..... they meet each other in Thailand, but when they come here, different thinking, can't spend time together, the husband blames her about work, about maybe language. Language is important, but if you cannot speak, I mean, Danish or English, they will get some problems.....the husband just take her from Thailand. But she got a language problem. She does not know how to talk about with her husband. She talked to me, you can tell my husband, suggestions about doing anything here.....you got some problems because not understand each other.

Besides, the different social norms and culture difference bring a lot of sufferings to these Thai women when they just move here. Payo talked about the cases that some women feel hurt and confused because of the value difference between the Danish society and Thai Society:

In the Thai social (norms).....everyone almost in Thailand, we are friendly, but come here is more personal, so sometimes, you live in a flat with each other but don't know each other. They don't care about this. But in Thailand not like this.....For me, if live in my room next to each other I don't know before, sometimes I have to talk, to give food, to try to invite, to get the food. But here no, so the people from Thailand come here, they don't know about the style of people here. Sometimes (they) just think that they are hurt. Just confused about this.

These barriers have become the challenges preventing these Thai women to be integrated in the mainstream society. When we asked Lily if her mother feel integrated to the society, she also talked about the complaint of her mother to the system of Danish society, *"In Thailand, we can do anything we want just if we have the money. But here, it doesn't matter if you have the money, you just cannot do. That is what she does not like. And the hospital also, when she is sick, she needs to wait for a long time. She does not understand."*

Meanwhile, the temples can not only provide guidance and support to their turbulent life, but also function as a venue to meet people. With an isolation of the mainstream society due to the culture and language difference, their social life usually shows an evident Thai identity. Dam talked about the social circle of his mother as having *"more Thai friends"*. Although the mother of Lily is a kind of *"social people and she likes to talk to new people"*, most of her mother's friends are from Thailand. For them, the temples become an important part of their social network in their diaspora life, and a

place for a sense of belonging. When we talked about the purpose of people who go to the temple, he said:

I think, yes, according to my mum, she said that a lot of people who go to the temple, they go there to meet each other, to talk about all the stuff, about life, work, whatever, just normal conversation.....I think people go there no necessarily just because of the religion but also to be a part of something, like a community, to exchange friendship and information, definitely.

In this context, going to the temples, becomes an ideal way for them to meet the social community needs in a foreign society to some extent, such as communication and building social connections. When we asked Payo if they feel better after coming to the temple to talk about this. He said,

Yes, it could be more relaxing. Sometimes, when you got some suffering, you need someone to talk to explain about yourself to others. When you finish from telling other ones or get some suggestions from other people, maybe you will get better. Because, human is like a social animal, you can't live alone. So, Sometimes, at least you have to meet someone, to talk someone.....if they live alone, we just think about life, parents, my own, But the thinking could be dangerous, because sometimes, we think about friends, but.....friends are not the way we think. So if you got some problems when you feel alone, maybe it's better to talk with others, to get some suggestions from other people.

### **The “1.5 Generation Immigrants”: Less Religious Buddhists in A Secular Society**

Though the Thai women who married to Danish husbands are a majority group of Thai immigrants, we should not ignore another important immigrant group: the children of these Thai mothers. Many of them are “1.5 generation” immigrants, who left Thailand to Denmark with their mothers during their early teens. As a new generation growing up in the western societies, they have a different attitude to religion from their Thai parents. In the interviews with three young Thai people, all of them showed a critical attitude about Buddhism. They did not see Buddhism as a serious religion belief, but more like one of their obligations for the sake of their religious parents. Dam described his experience as a monk when he was twenty years old as *“It's like a tradition, repay for your parents. It's like fulfill a duty.”* Lily said,

I don't think religion is important for me.....We need to polite to the Buddha but I don't know why. I just do for my family, they happy. They said, go to the temple, pray for Buddha and the good thing will come to you. But I don't see. It's just like we do what they say. But for me, it's just not important.

Compare to Lily, Dam seemed like having a “softer” attitude, he liked the history of Buddhism, but he did not think he was very religious as his parents.

- *What's your feeling to religion??*

Dam: I like my religion.

- *You like?*

Dam: Yes. I collect the religious “goods”. Because I think (there are) many histories about it,

for a long long time. But I don't have a strong belief of Buddhism.

Lily has had this attitude for a long time, *"I have the question all my life, Why I need to go the temple? Give some food to Buddha? But what Buddha give us? And why we need to wake up 5 o'clock in the morning, do everything for Buddha and Buddha, they cannot talk."* While, some of them changed their attitude and become less religious after moving to Denmark.

- *Did you feel your self-identity as a Thai change during these years?*

Kevin: Yes. Definitely.

- *Like what kind of change?*

Kevin: Because I live in Denmark. I become more western.

- *Can you give me some example? Like in which way you feel you are more western now?*

Kevin: Food (laugh). Or maybe also if you can say that, less religious would be a western thing, although it's not actually in these days, a lot of people are still religious. But maybe Danish people are not so religious and less superstitious. I become much much less superstitious. And the way I think, because maybe in Thailand or in Asia generally, they don't teach you to think critically. So that changed me a lot. And it also maybe leads to some other changes in my identity I think.

All of them felt they were well integrated to the Danish society and content about their life in Denmark in a "western" way. Lily said, *"five years now, I feel Europe is my home"* and *"I miss my stories because I grew up in Thailand.....But I don't have the feeling like I want to go back and live in Thailand."* Compare to their life in Thailand, they felt they have more freedom in their family. While in the Thai society, the traditional family structure is relative hierarchical and most of their mothers keep their Thai traditional values in their religion and social life, they have an interesting change in their relationship with their mothers. Dam said, *"The life is freer. I have more open conversations with my mother. We are more open to each other's opinion"*. Kevin also felt the change of his mother, he described it as *"She accepts more, we are more equal now..... She can now say sorry.....She is more self-critical as well."* Lily compared her life in Thailand and Europe as:

When I lived in Thailand, every child in Thailand need to listen to parents. Every parent decides and say and you must follow. When I come to live in Europe, my mum, she still says, like comment, but I don't need to follow everything. I can have myself, I can think what I want to do and do what I want.....I feel it's good in Europe. Because (in Thailand) parents (and children) are so close, sometimes I need my space also. But when I lived in Thailand, I lived close to my dad, I love him, I understand everything he told me, but sometimes I feel it's too much. I feel like I cannot breathe.....

On another hand, influenced by their childhood experience and their origin family, many of the 1.5 generation immigrants still see themselves as a Buddhist, but in a less religious way. They still go to the temple sometimes. After I knew their critical attitude to the Buddhism, when asked if they think they are an atheist or do not have the belief, all of them denied. Kevin said, *"I still believe in Buddhism but not in every part of Buddhism"*. Dam also thought, *"No, it's not like that I don't have the belief, I'm just not very religious."* Dam still went to the temple regularly. He said, *"Every month I went there to give the food to the monks, but I didn't pray or anything..."* While Lily went to the

temple in every Thai new year.

- *Did you still go to the temple here?*

Lily: Yes, I don't know why, but I do it every time in the new year. In the new year, they have party maybe I just feel bored.....I just like want to have some prays for I can see and think after in this year, maybe it's not important to be in the temple, but I feel when I was in the temple, it's just my feeling, I feel like, yeah, everything is gone, and be better. But I don't know why I do that. I do that for five years now.

Meanwhile, they also keep their Thai identity in their social life to some extent and sometimes cannot fully enjoyed their diaspora life in Denmark. Different from a typical western way as hanging out with friends outside, Lily described her social life as *"We usually eat at home because it saves money.....What we can do in Denmark, if we do not eat, if we do not drink?"* When we asked Dam if he felt well integrated to the Danish society he said, *"Maybe not fully integrated in that sense. I do not understand everything but I feel like that's enough."*

In contrast with our informants, some Thai young immigrants are still as religious as the old generation. When asked about if they have any religious friend in Copenhagen. Lily said she has one religious friend and described her as *"She goes to the temple every week. She stays at the temple for one night every week. And she prays for ..... I don't know for what. She will dress up and wear everything white. She does talk about....."*

## Discussion

As Mythen (2010) said, *"Instead of simply waning, religion is manifesting itself in complex forms and being more snugly aligned with self-identities."* In our research, we argue that in the context of modernization, there is a discrete continuity of self-identities and perceptions in the transnational religious flow. With regarding to the role of religion in the diaspora life, the first-generation Thai immigrants and their children in Denmark show an obvious distinction.

For the Thai women who come to Denmark by marriage migration, religion plays an important role in their diaspora life in two main aspects. On one hand, they go to the Thai temple for counseling about the problems they faced in their life. They talk to with the monks about their sufferings and seek for guidance and suggestions in a practical or religious way. As the first-generation immigrants in the middle age, compare to their young children, they have more difficulties in getting used to a new environment. Besides, they are often on a weak side of the power-relations in their new marriage because of the gender and language problem. However, compared to the investor immigrants or international students, the government pays very little attention to these Thai women immigrants and few services are targeted for improving their situation. As what Rattana Jongwilaiwan & Eric C. Thompson (2013) argued, *"the international system of territorially defined nation-states with varied regimes of citizenship is central to producing transnational patriarchy; in comparison"*. Due to the inabilities of English and Danish language, it is hard for these Thai women to find any support from the social welfare agencies or the other government institutions. Therefore, the temple becomes an ideal place for them to seek guidance, help and relief in their turbulent diaspora life. On another hand, the temple also function as a social place for them to get a sense of belongings. It can also meet their social needs such as communication and building social connections. Different to the western value of individualism, Thai traditional culture values the collectivism. With a relative

isolation to the mainstream society, these Thai women immigrants come to the temple for a feeling as being a part of a community.

In contrast, the 1.5 generation immigrants, who are the children of these Thai women show a very different way of interaction with religion from their mother. Their attitudes to the religion are usually critical but their feelings about Buddhism are complex, and sometimes ambiguous. We can see a decline of the influence from religion on them. Meanwhile, they still recognize themselves as Buddhists and have religion belief. We argue that there are three main reasons for this. First, with the widespread of the internet and media, globalization diffuses the western values in more areas. In this context, the new generation usually have more recognition of western values than their parents. At the same time, the western society and education make them develop a more critical way of thinking, which enables them to make more reflections on the religion. Second, most of them grew up in Thailand and were influenced by the religious environment for many years. They see their religious experience as an important part of their life "stories. Buddhism becomes a part of their ethnic identity or a cultural mark of their origin country. Third, although they live in the western society, not like the local young people, they usually have a relative close relationship with their parents. While many ritual activities in Buddhism are regarded as doing good for parents and family, they often do it for the sake of their mother. They see it as a kind of obligation and duty for them as a child.

In conclusion, "*The social dispersal of individualization can thus be seen as impacting on faith choices in an idiosyncratic way*" (Mythen, 2010). Although the modernization is secularizing the world, especially in the western society, the religion still play an import role in the life of the vulnerable immigrant group. With the absence of support and help from the local government, some religious venues function as a replacement of the absent social welfare agencies, which supposed to have provided the service and support to these legal immigrants. They seem to be co-existed with the mainstream society geographically, but in fact live in two different worlds. When I talked to my Danish classmates about my fieldwork in a Thai temple, they were all very surprised to hear the existence of it in Copenhagen.

## References

- Beck, U. (1999) World Risk Society, Cambridge, UK /Malden, MA: Polity Press.  
Beck, U. (2009) World at Risk, Cambridge, UK /Malden, MA: Polity Press.  
Beck, U., & Grande, E. (2007). Cosmopolitan Europe, Cambridge, UK/Malden, MA: Polity Press.  
Beck, U., & Grande, E. (2010). Varieties of second modernity: the cosmopolitan turn in social and political theory and research. *The British journal of sociology*, 61(3), 409-443.  
Borup, J. (2008). Buddhism in Denmark. *Journal of Global Buddhism*, 9, 27.  
Friedman, J. (1995). Global system, globalization and the parameters of modernity. *Global modernities*, 69-90.  
Hannah, M. (2010). Transmigratory Buddhism and travelling feminisms: globalization and cross-cultural difference1. *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 21(3), 332-349.  
Jongwilaiwan, R., & Thompson, E. C. (2013). Thai wives in Singapore and transnational patriarchy. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 20(3), 363-381.  
Jungteerapanich, K. (2014). Discrimination and Social Exclusion in Sweden in the Age of Globalization. *The Case Study of Thai Migrants*.  
Kitiarsa, P. (2010). Missionary intent and monastic networks: Thai Buddhism as a transnational religion.



13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

- Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia, 25(1), 109-132.
- Robinson, K. (2007). Marriage migration, gender transformations, and family values in the 'global ecumene'.  
Gender, Place & Culture, 14(4), 483-497.
- Spanger, M. (2013). Gender performances as spatial acts:(fe) male Thai migrant sex workers in Denmark.  
Gender, Place & Culture, 20(1), 37-52.
- Suksomboon, P. (2008). Remittances and 'Social Remittances' Their Impact on Livelihoods of Thai Women in the Netherlands and Non-migrants in Thailand. Gender, Technology and Development, 12(3), 461-482.

## **The Inscriptions of the Lān Nā and Lān Xāng Kingdoms: Data for a New Approach to Cross-Border History**

**Lorrillard, Michel**  
École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO)  
Chiang Mai Centre  
Thailand  
-----

### **Abstract**

The history of the Lān Xāng Kingdom was closely linked to that of the Lān Nā Kingdom, especially between the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the Buddhist civilization of the northern Thai people reached its apogee. The epigraphic corpora largely testify to the relations between the two politico-cultural areas: they show, in their form and in their content, obvious and numerous borrowings – mostly towards regions downstream of the Mekong. But the analysis of these two corpus also reveals important differences which prevent confusion, even when the geographical origin of the inscriptions, be it on steles or on other objects such as Buddha images, was not memorized. Within the present-day Lao territory, it is even possible to identify the area where Lān Nā culture has long been dominant. A comprehensive approach to the epigraphic sources of Northern Thailand and Laos thus brings precious data to the knowledge of the regional history of the T'ai-Lao people.

**Keywords:** Epigraphy, Inscriptions, Lān Nā (Lanna), Lān Xāng (Lān Chāng), Buddhism, History

### **Introduction**

Among the principal written sources that enable us to address the ancient past of the T'ai-Lao kingdoms of Lān Nā and Lān Xāng are hundreds of stele inscriptions that provide a quantity of first-hand information. Historians, however, have not yet made effective use of these documents, perhaps because they have had difficulty in grasping them in both their globalism and diversity. The lapidary inscriptions of Lān Nā and Lān Xāng arise from, in effect, a wide and physically heterogeneous space that includes the entire north and northeast of Thailand, all of Laos and some territories in Burma. The geographical dispersion of these sources, the lack of published documentation and even the fact that they may still fall outside the scope of inventory programs, have severely limited their inclusion in historical research pertaining to the septentrional T'ai *muang*. For their value to be plainly seen, it is, in fact, necessary to study them in series, work that up to the present has been difficult to accomplish on a large scale.

## I. The Search of the Sources

Epigraphic studies in the northern T'ai regions have nevertheless undergone singular progress during the last twenty years. A decisive step was taken, beginning in 1997, with the publication by Hans Penth, Phanphen Khruathai and Silao Ketphrom of the *Corpus of Lan Na Inscriptions*. Fifteen volumes have been produced to date, the last one in 2013. This collection, the continuation of which has become uncertain since the demise of Hans Penth, evidently does not cover the totality of epigraphic sources of Lān Nā, but, it does regroup most inscriptions on steles from the golden age of the kingdom, others having been edited through a less extensive critical process in various publications. The first systematic research on inscriptions of the ancient T'ai-Lao kingdom of Lān Xāng dates from 1977, with a thesis by Pierre-Marie Gagneux on epigraphic sources conserved in the city of Vientiane. A dozen years later, Dhawaj Poonotoke widely extended the geographical framework of this study by publishing the Lao inscriptions of northeast Thailand, in a most exhaustive manner. More recently, starting in 2003, investigations in all provinces of Laos by the Vientiane center of the École française d'Extrême-Orient have made it possible to form a relatively accurate idea of the epigraphic heritage conserved in the entire country, particularly with respect to its spatial distribution and chronological order.

### 1. General Problems

However, if one sets aside the statistical tables published by Hans Penth, a catalogue and glossary by Marek Buchman, as well as epigraphic data in some stimulating works by Volker Grabowsky, there still does not exist, to this day, a single synthetic study on the stone inscriptions of Lān Nā and Lān Xāng. Certain basic questions have yet to be asked regarding, notably, modalities contributing to the formation and development of the two corpora.

The institutionalized practice of engraving texts upon stone is, indeed, not self-evident – and is not common to all civilizations. Its apparition was spontaneous only in the most ancient of historical periods. Later, it was transmitted through a mimesis effect, by borrowing from neighboring or preceding cultures. This important process must be studied, particularly concerning the kingdoms of Sukhothai and Lān Nā because their allogeneic culture, constituted at the beginning by elements properly T'ai originating in southern China, was developed in the north of Thailand through contact with local substrata as well as strong influences from the east, south and west.

The transmission of epigraphic practice from one culture to another necessarily brings about modifications. The terrain into which it is transplanted must, above all, be favorable to its development. When the practice of engraving texts becomes institutionalized as a tool of civil authority, it responds to precise needs and objectives. If the necessary conditions for its diffusion are not brought together, it will quickly appear artificial and its disappearance will be inevitable. The study of epigraphic sources is thus inseparable from the context in which they are produced. Inscriptions participate in the functioning of a society. They provide real and conjunctural data that sole reliance upon chronicles does not permit to perceive, and that the historian cannot ignore.

In the case of Lān Nā and Lān Xāng, the separate study of the epigraphic corpus already furnishes a large amount of data that illuminates structural aspects of the history of the two kingdoms, notably upon economic and social questions. The comparative analysis of the two corpora, bringing to the fore elements that are shared as well as those by which they are distinguished, allows the perception

of certain phenomenon by situating them in a more complete system of references.

Data that gives itself to comparison within the framework of the study of the lapidary corpus of Lān Nā and Lān Xāng may be classified within two large categories: that which relates to the material nature of the inscriptions and that relating to the textual aspect. The material aspect is relative to the stele inscription itself, that is to say, the dating of the preparation and engraving of the stone, the geographical origin of the document and its physical appearance.

## 2. Time and Space

To identify the date of a stele inscription is, before all, to date its text. In certain cases, the date of this text could possibly be significantly later than when the support was prepared for the first time. In the current state of knowledge, it is not possible to reconstruct with certainty the steps of the process that led to the apparition and diffusion of writing in Lān Nā. The situation is clearer in the case of Lān Xāng, since the systems of notation were manifestly borrowed from Lān Nā. This is certain for the *tham* religious script, derived from Mon writing in western regions and not from the banks of the Mekong. This is even more probable in the case of Lao civil writing which has long carried the mark of *fak-kham* script used in the northern t'ai *muang*.

From a chronological perspective, it seems clear that, on the basis of remains found, the first inscriptions of Lān Xāng show a delay of almost a century after those of Lān Nā were drafted in *fak-kham* script. If one puts aside certain inscription fragments that are undated, and also the famous inscription of Wat Phra Yeun in Lamphun that relates more to the epigraphic corpus of Sukhothai, the oldest t'ai inscriptions found in the north of Thailand manifestly date from 1411 and are linked to an important personage governing in Phayao. It is to be noted that one must wait another fifty years to observe a real development in the production of steles. In the case of Lān Xāng – if one also puts aside two short cave inscriptions at Luang Prabang for which the graphics seem to testify to contact with Sukhothai in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century – the dated inscription that we may consider the oldest is on a small stele at Muang Sanakham, between Luang Prabang and Vientiane, on the bank of the Mekong. It indicates the year 1510 and makes reference to King Sumphu who reigned a few years earlier.

The use of *tham* script in Lān Nā is most likely later than that of *fak kham* – the first example is dated 1465 and found upon the pedestal of a Buddha image – but it also evidenced upon an engraved gold plaque found in Sukhothai that indicates the year 1376. On steles written in T'ai language, the use of *tham* appeared much later to definitively replace *fak kham* script. On occasion, it was used specifically to transcribe a short formula in Pali placed as an introduction, as on a Chiang Saen stele inscribed in 1488. In Laos, the most ancient example of *tham* script dates from 1527; however, it presents an exceptional particularity when compared to ancient Lān Nā inscriptions, being it was used to write an entire text in the T'ai language. This particularity is reproduced several times in the stone inscriptions of Lān Xāng in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The important lag in the chronological agenda between inscriptions originating in the two different kingdoms is not surprising: the engraving of stone is only one of multiple practices, bringing development, borrowed from the *muang* of northern Thailand and diffused along the length of the Mekong. It is certain that they accompanied the expansion of a renewed form of Buddhism, as well as the royal ideology with which it was associated.

Examination of the evidence reveals that the practice of engraving inscriptions on steles in Lān Nā attained an exceptional level during the consecutive reigns of three sovereigns, Tilokarat

(1442-1487), Yot Chiang Rai (1487-1495) and Phra Muang Kaeo (1495-1526), a period of eighty years corresponding to the “Golden Age” of the kingdom. Interestingly, it is at the end of the reign of Phra Muang Kaeo that begins in Lān Xāng with the inauguration of the reign of Phothisarāt a period of almost one hundred years that accounts for the production of practically all the steles inscribed in the kingdom. Since this period is undeniably marked by profound transformations – it is probable, in particular, that the arrival as of 1558 of refugees from Lān Nā strongly stimulated new kinds of activities – one still hesitates to qualify it as a “golden age”. That term would apply more appropriately to the calmer period of the Suriya Vongsa government. There is, however, a paradox: this reign, which occupied a good portion of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and ended with the disintegration of the kingdom into three rival regions, left little epigraphic evidence – and none mention, even by implication, the sovereign.

In numerical terms, one counts in Lān Nā for the period that extends between the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century to 1639 (one must wait another century to have additional evidence) a few more than 120 inscriptions on steles with confirmed dates, plus another fifty some-odd that do not exhibit chronological indications, but bear characteristics indicating an ancient origin. For this same period, knowing that the first confirmed evidence is dated 1510, one counts in Lān Xāng around 80 stele inscriptions, roughly half the production of the other kingdom. Important as this figure still is, it does not suffice to reflect the extent of the differences between the epigraphic sources of the two kingdoms because it masks the qualitative aspect, which is substantially inferior in the case of Lān Xāng. It is useful to take into account the fact that many Lao inscriptions – at least half of the corpus – are characterized by the brevity of their content (having texts rarely consisting of more than a dozen lines) and, therefore, the poverty of information delivered.

In terms of distribution, the Lao inscriptions, when compared with those of northern Thailand, present a more striking contrast because, while the latter are distributed relatively equally over a vast territory, the former are concentrated for the most part (approximately 85%) in the Laotian province of Vientiane and the Thai provinces of Nong Khai and Udon Thani, that is to say in the immediate proximity of the Lao capital. This limited extension of the area where inscriptions were found would appear to be a constant, because the oldest examples, which pre-date the choice of Vientiane as a royal city, are practically all situated in areas close to Luang Prabang, the first capital of Lān Xāng. The differences, in this regard, that exist between this kingdom and that of Lān Nā is without doubt one of the most illuminating regarding perception of the limits reached in each space by effective royal authority.

### **3. Accidents of History**

It is useful, at this stage, to ask oneself how the corpus delivered to us are truly representative of a situation in the past. Accidents of history are numerous: does not our vision risk being affected by the disappearance of a certain number of sources, or more simply by the fact that an important number have not yet been discovered? It is certain that our documentation includes important gaps. It is not less certain that essential historical evidence has disappeared irrevocably. One observes anyway, based upon comparisons made between different local corpora, but also upon other types of sources such as archaeological remains and chronicles, that the “balance” of epigraphic sources at our disposition today is marked by disequilibrium and illogic and that these are without doubt the consequence of serious disturbances.

The capitals of the two kingdoms seem to be deeply concerned in this matter. It is curious to note

how few T'ai inscriptions have been found in Chiang Mai, in comparison with the number discovered for example in Phayao, even though the city accounted for a very large number of monuments and temples, among them the most prestigious. What happened, among other examples, to the great inscriptions that certainly commemorated the foundings and donations mentioned in an important religious chronicle dating from the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the *Jinakālamāli*? It is not in effect logical that steles were discovered in small temples in the marginal territories and that almost none would exist in the large city temples proven important by chronicles and archaeological remains. We know otherwise that the production of inscriptions dropped suddenly in Lān Nā, beginning in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and that this fact is certainly related to the long installation at Chiang Mai of a local power controlled by the Burmese. It would be logical to assume that they substituted their authority for that of the legitimate sovereign by profoundly modifying and weakening the ancient civil and religious networks through which decrees were transmitted in the kingdom – the steles representing reliable records by virtue of the durability and fixity of their support. If the alteration of the administrative apparatus, from the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, brought about the disappearance of the practice of engraving in stone ordinances fixing local relations within civil and religious affairs, previous acts, on the other hand, physically remained in most of the territory, where they were no longer of any use. In Chiang Mai, it was in any case not difficult to cause the disappearance of documents that could constitute a hindrance for the new power – because they maintained in a way the memory of a legitimate ancient authority and presented for this reason a danger, justifying privileges that no longer had reason to exist.

It is clear that at Vientiane many stele inscriptions also disappeared, even though the conditions leading to this were very different. Setting aside three inscriptions linked to That Luang, a monument already located on the margins of the city, not one event commemorating foundations and donations relative to the large temples in the capital previous to the 19<sup>th</sup> century has been conserved in stone. Acts related to less important temples have been found, but outside the historical center of Vientiane. It is known that the Siamese troops, after taking the city for the second time, in 1828, totally destroyed it, with the purpose to ensure the definitive disappearance of its power. It is probable that a number of inscriptions suffered at this time the same fate as other signs of Lao power, including the chronicles produced in the capital: they were consigned to destruction. We know at least one example of a large inscribed stele transported by the victorious troops to the right bank, that of Vat Ho Phra Kaeo (although most likely recent and probably of Siamese inspiration), as it was done with the inhabitants and a good number of manuscripts.

The more or less brutal modification of the historical context is sometimes perceptible only in the “gaps” that the sudden absence of certain types of sources causes in existing documentation. It is by the existence of small peripheral inscriptions that the absence of large inscriptions cries out. In the same way, it is because we possess numerous and widely distributed inscriptions for the reigns of Setthathirat in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, then for Hno Muang at the end of the same century, that we may better perceive the difficulties or differing characters of intermediary or later reigns, like that of Suriya Vongsa in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

## II. The Object

One should not forget in the external critique of Lān Nā and Lān Xāng stele inscriptions, questions relative to their support. These offer knowledge permitting a more accurate approach to the context

in which these writings were set. A visit to museums where Lān Nā inscriptions are conserved, located in Chiang Saen, Phayao or Lamphun, suffices to discern the quality embodied in the execution of these royal documents.

It would be certainly profitable to proceed with a detailed and exhaustive comparative analysis of the forms of all steles found to the present date. This would permit, in particular, identification of the production sites – and by this to recover provenance of documents that have often been displaced – but also to study phenomenon of influence between different workshops, as well as the network of transmission of certain techniques. This research, ideally, would take into consideration aspects of physical geography and identify the regions where the stele material was extracted. Mineralogical analysis of Cambodian inscriptions already demonstrates the interest of this type of investigation. One would perhaps discover as in this last, that the stones used by the T'ai for engraving, were works of real specialists, and much travelled before an inscription was drafted.

The stele itself was certainly a highly valued manufactured product. It would not be surprising, in this respect, that the region of Phayao might have occupied a particular place in the production of stone objects. It is in this province that the greatest number of steles has been found. They are distinguished generally by their size, variety of form and quality. It appears also that it was there that most of the oldest examples of T'ai inscriptions were produced. Finally, one finds there a specific type of production, that of Buddha images in stone, which can be shown to be concurrent in this important *muang* with Buddha images in bronze.

In Phayao, like in Phrae and Nan where very old epigraphic remains were also found, it is probable that influence from Sukhothai was decisive. A certain correspondence is noted between important four-sided steles found in this kingdom and several examples recovered in Phayao. However, it must be remembered that the ancient Mon city of Haripunchai also presented models of engraved steles, the massive nature of some undoubtedly exercised a great impression upon the T'ai artisans, at the very least those in the region of Chiang Mai. It should be kept in mind, however, that the production of these Mon inscriptions seems to have been limited to a short period at the turn of the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and that the practice could have been interrupted during almost two centuries.

Proceeding to the study of lapidary documents in Lān Xāng, one is forced to accept that the methods of production appear to have been quite different. The majority of inscribed steles in the Lao kingdom exhibit an execution significantly inferior to that of steles of the northern T'ai kingdom. They differ by size, the regularity of form, but also in the imperfect preparation of the stone, rendering the final stage of engraving much more difficult. In the final account, whether support or the inscription, the result often appeared less polished. There are however twenty some-odd examples where the work of sculpting stone was done in an attempt to create a beautiful object, but a number of indicators show that local craftsmen did not produce these items. Several cases exist where we are certain that Lān Xāng engravers indeed reused pre-existing supports, sculpted several centuries before by artisans of a different culture. Among these supports one may cite in particular the *sema* of the Mon, a characteristic object which spread during the second half of the first millennium though most of the middle valley of the Mekong. This type of ritual marker, often ornamented by a stylized image of a *stupa*, has been found in great number upon the Vientiane plain and the area upon the opposite bank of the river. Lao lapidaries reusing them needed only to fully or partially slice off the Mon bas-reliefs in order to engrave a text upon the liberated surface. A certain number of inscribed steles in Lān Xāng were rapidly produced in this way, without effective technical preparation of the stone, the mastery of which seemed to have escaped the Lao sculptors (who had

proven, on the other hand, their skill in working bronze).

It is highly probable, moreover, that the production of inscriptions in Lān Xāng during the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century benefited from the arrival in the kingdom of stone sculptors and engravers escaping from Lān Nā. It is significant to state that the most beautiful realization of steles is concentrated during the reigns of Setthathirat and his immediate successors and that northern influence may be found in the rhetorical as well as in written styles. These specialists of stone engraving were perhaps the "*phan nangseu*", references to which occur frequently in Lān Nā inscriptions. Another characteristic that proves the exceptional influence of Lān Nā traditions upon those of Lān Xāng is the use of a very rich calendric system, where textual data are mixed with graphic data (employing a horoscopic disk), all based upon complex calculations requiring consultation with specialists. These Lao calendric data appear to be specific because, given the more limited geographic distribution of the inscriptions, they offer reference to but a single system of monthly calculations instead of the three systems in use at the time in Lān Nā. This unique system, identical to that of Sukhothai, informs us of the ancient influence of this kingdom.

### III. The Text

The comparison of the Lān Xāng and Lān Nā epigraphic corpora through the prism of internal critique, that is to say analysis of texts, is that which obviously reveals the greatest number of results. Research on these corpora still being in the initial stage, one must be content, for the present moment, to expose a few general observations.

Generally, the principal purpose of the large majority of Lān Nā and Lān Xāng stele inscriptions seems identical: to register (more than to commemorate) the donation for a newly created or ancient sanctuary, of property, human resources and products of work. The religious community receives thus, irrevocably, the rights held in principle by the sovereign. Rhetoric used in stele inscriptions refers almost always to a religious act of faith – a motivation also found in other types of inscriptions, notably those inscribed upon Buddha images. However, in this last case the donor formulates aspirations with fervor and sincerity – anticipating great recompense in exchange for the meritorious value of the offering – whereas in the first case the discourse conforms to a rigid and conventional model where individual intention is to a great extent masked by collective action. The primary motivation for making an offering to a sanctuary is thus neither eschatological nor personal. It appears to respond more to civil rather than religious preoccupations. The lay character of the formulation is primary, other than in a few exceptional situations, and the content of the inscription seems marked above all by material considerations. The use of *fak-kham* script might suffice to prove that the objectives go beyond the strictly religious world and are expressed first in order of secular practice, linked to the functioning of society. The act, which is registered and preserved by the inscription, brings to the religious community guaranteed methods of subsistence, even more, a level of sufficiently important resources for rapid expansion of influence. From this, royal power assures its authority in distant lands. More than through its representatives, who belong to a fragile apparatus vulnerable to events, the presence of the sovereign finds itself concretely inscribed upon the territory through the implantation of a powerful network of monasteries, which in its own way plays the role of relaying and transmitting central policy.

Stone inscriptions can thus be assimilated into actual administrative acts. This function has been clearly signified by the term "*ājñā*" (power, by extension decree), associated with the royal person,



which often appears upon the steles of Lān Nā (one also finds the use of “*rājā ongkān*”) and which is later used in a quasi-systematic manner in the most highly regarded Lān Xāng inscriptions, where it serves to indicate, from the first lines, superior and inviolable order. In a certain way, one might also say that the Lao steles, given the stereotypical character that their formulation quickly acquired, seem less ambiguous than the T'ai steles of the north, where the reference to royal authority is not expressed with as much weight. One might mull over the reality that these differences in rhetoric truly reveal. If the Lān Nā inscriptions give the impression that royal intervention was sometimes far away, would they have had a lesser impact than in Lān Xāng where the rigidly conventional formulation of the inscriptions tends to present it as omnipresent and all-powerful? This touches upon only one aspect of the problem because the stylistic distinctions between northern t'ai inscriptions and those of the Lao are, in truth, much more important. The former – favoring narrative style and freedom of expression that lead at times to difficulties in interpretation – furnish during more than one hundred and fifty years a mass of contextualized information that often exceeds the local level: an impression of life and movement emerges, endowing each text with a character absolutely unique. The Lao inscriptions, which at the beginning followed this tendency with a few examples dating from the reigns of Phothisarāt and Setthathirāt, conformed quickly to a fixed model in which their particular information became limited to measures, values and names of individuals. It may be legitimately asked whether this uniformity and simplification in the discourse did not correspond in fact to a sclerosis in the practice, as though it never truly acclimatized to Lān Xāng. Royal charters engraved in stone intended for sanctuaries disappeared, nevertheless, in the Lao context in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and no external upheaval can explain this phenomenon unlike in Lān Nā.

The equilibrium proven by the spatial distribution of the Lān Nā stele inscriptions is confirmed by that which characterizes their content; a similar quality of discourse is observable almost everywhere, proving by this fact a homogeneity of cultural practice and social models over a vast territory. The inscriptions of Lān Xāng do not allow one to draw the same conclusions since they are limited to a small part of the territory and show differences in the quality of the content, which suggests significant differences in written practice, social structure and local representation of power.

The narrative and descriptive styles used in the Lān Nā inscriptions permits a vibrant approach to the context in which these documents were produced. The number of references made not only to various personages but also to differing positions and titles show – more than in the chronicles – a particularly developed social organization. The indexation effected by Hans Penth and his team furnished highly enriched material for research, because upon the basis of 270 inscriptions (comprising other supports beside steles and going beyond the chronological confines of the golden age of Lān Nā) some 5,260 references to names and position were registered. If analysis of this enormous quantity of references remains to be done, it is nevertheless certain that most refer to individuals who found their place in a hierarchical and highly organized system and that each relayed according to their competency and talent policy from a centralized authority. The Lao inscriptions of the 16<sup>th</sup> century offer only a pale reflection of this system, the foundation of which was, indeed, inherent to the T'ai mode of organization. They make reference to a few important lords, as do the chronicles, but they never present the existence of both a veritable corps of agents acting upon royal authority and intermediaries appointed to effect implementation, as it is the case in the epigraphic corpus of Lān Nā. It appears that Lān Xāng never knew the rich and complex institutional apparatus

evidently developed by its powerful neighbor, perhaps because the conditions necessary to its existence were never brought together.

It would be interesting to be able to evaluate the true role played by donations and the granting of privileges through royal prerogative, as well as their economic consequences. While it is highly unlikely that the sovereign's estate would have suffered from the abandonment of land, it may not have been the same with regard to seigniorial benefits, given the insistence with which the inscriptions attempt to prevent all misappropriation of royal donations to the profit of local powers.

The data furnished within the context of donations made to sanctuaries imply a great deal regarding the different aspects of the economic situation in the two kingdoms, notably on production capacity, type of crops, their value, the workforce, etc. The comparison of the corpus of Lān Nā with that of Lān Xāng offers precious elements with which to distinguish the two kingdoms on the important question of their subsistence and, in particular, the role occupied by riziculture. It appears certain that Lān Xāng never attained upon the banks of the Mekong levels of production comparable to those that geographic advantages and human organization made possible in the great plains that surrounded, for example, Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai. Questions relative to manufacturing and commerce cannot be answered with as great a degree of precision. However, the inscriptions show that a monetary economy existed in Lān Nā as well as Lān Xāng, at least in a rudimentary form. The real numerical signification of given figures indicated by the scribes, in particular those reaching several thousand units, should, however, be approached with caution.

The most evident theme exposed by the epigraphic corpus of Lān Nā and Lān Xāng concerns, of course, the situation occupied by religious communities in T'ai local societies as well as the way in which their subsistence and position were guaranteed. Placing aside the smaller size of the monastic grid in the Lao milieu, it seems that there were not flagrant differences concerning material questions in the temples of Lān Nā and Lān Xāng, even if the latter seem to have been conceived according to a less complex format. The inscriptions of the northern T'ai kingdom do, however, evoke a certain number of questions relative to ritual practice that are absent from the inscriptions along the Mekong. The Lao kingdom undoubtedly received echoes of divergences that led the Sangha of Lān Nā to separate into distinct *nikāya*, but not one source is available that shows a similar situation in Lān Xāng. In general, it seems that the Lao religious community was late in receiving, in an incomplete process, the scholastic traditions that gave northern T'ai Buddhism its great reputation. On this subject, Lān Nā inscriptions surely offer information that allows us to re-contextualize a general situation, thus counter-balancing the religious chronicles of Lān Nā that have, until the present, caused bias in the perception of the history of different Buddhist communities. It is not confirmed that the more reformist movements had the impact on the entire kingdom that certain texts suggest. Generally, the inscriptions show a homogeneity in practice except perhaps during the short period at the turn of the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, moreover it is not sure that the controversies that must have agitated the clergy long subsisted.

## Conclusion

The epigraphic corpora of Lān Nā and Lān Xāng represent for historical knowledge of these kingdoms exceptional documentary potential, the analysis of which is now possible and necessary. From the perspective of factual history, which has largely prevailed until today, they present the extraordinary interest of confirming in a general manner chronology exposed by local historiographical traditions,

in particular those of Chiang Mai, Luang Prabang and Vientiane. They also complete the chronicles by offering precise data, which, by their number and both their geographic and chronological apportionment, allows an approach to the economic and social past of these kingdoms. If all the periods may not be treated in the same way, it is still possible for certain eras, such as the forty years covering the reigns of Phra Yot Chiang Rai and Phra Muang Keo, at the turn of the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, to bring together sufficient information to present a macroscopic approach and propose a living image of the society in certain of its aspects. There is, in any case, an interest in studying the two corpora in the mirror of each other: the similarities and the differences they place in evidence will contribute to an important refinement of our vision of the political, economic and cultural balance characterizing the different phases in the regional history of the T'ai-Lao peoples.

## References

### 1. In Thai Language

- เกรียงศักดิ์ ชัยคุรุณ [Chaidarun, Kriangsak], จารึกที่ค้นพบใหม่ ในเมืองพะเยา [Newly discovered inscriptions in Phayao], พะเยา, วัดศรีโคมคำ, ๒๕๕๒ [Phayao, Wat Sri Khom Kham, 2009].
- จารึกในประเทศไทย เล่ม ๕ อักษรขอม อักษรธรรม และอักษรไทย พุทธศตวรรษที่ ๑๙-๒๔ [Inscriptions of Thailand, vol. 5, Khmer, Tham and Thai Scripts, Buddhist Era 19th-21th], หอสมุดแห่งชาติ กรมศิลปากร, กรุงเทพฯ, ๒๕๒๙ [National Library, Krom Silapakorn, Bangkok, 1986].
- จารึกล้านนา ภาค ๑ เล่ม ๑ จารึกจังหวัดเชียงราย น่าน พะเยา แพร่ [Lanna Inscriptions, part I, vol. I, Inscriptions from Chiang Rai, Nan, Phayao and Phrae - Texts], ประเสริฐ ณ นคร [และคณะ]: บรรณาธิการ, มูลนิธิเจมส์ เอช ดับเบิลยู ทอมป์สัน, กรุงเทพฯ, ๒๕๓๔ [Prasert Na Nakhon & al. eds, James H.W. Thompson Foundation, Bangkok, 1991].
- จารึกล้านนา ภาค ๑ เล่ม ๒ ภาพจารึกจังหวัดเชียงราย น่าน พะเยา แพร่ [Lanna Inscriptions, part I, vol. II, Inscriptions from Chiang Rai, Nan, Phayao and Phrae - Plates], ประเสริฐ ณ นคร [และคณะ]: บรรณาธิการ, มูลนิธิเจมส์ เอช ดับเบิลยู ทอมป์สัน, กรุงเทพฯ, ๒๕๓๔ [Prasert Na Nakhon & al. eds, James H.W. Thompson Foundation, Bangkok, 1991].
- จารึกล้านนา ภาค ๒ เล่ม ๑ จารึกจังหวัดเชียงใหม่ ลำปาง ลำพูน และแม่ฮ่องสอน [Lanna Inscriptions, part II, vol. I, Inscriptions from Chiang Mai, Lampang, Lamphun and Mae Hong Son - Texts], ประเสริฐ ณ นคร [และคณะ]: คณะทำงาน, กรมศิลปากร, กรุงเทพฯ, ๒๕๕๑ [Prasert Na Nakhon & al. eds, Krom Silpakorn, Bangkok, 2008].
- จารึกล้านนา ภาค ๒ เล่ม ๒ จารึกจังหวัดเชียงใหม่ ลำปาง ลำพูน และแม่ฮ่องสอน [Lanna Inscriptions, part II, vol. II, Inscriptions from Chiang Mai, Lampang, Lamphun and Mae Hong Son - Plates], ประเสริฐ ณ นคร [และคณะ]: คณะทำงาน, กรมศิลปากร, กรุงเทพฯ, ๒๕๕๑ [Prasert Na Nakhon & al. eds, Krom Silpakorn, Bangkok, 2008].
- จารึกสมัยสุโขทัย [Inscriptions from the Sukhothai Period], กรมศิลปากร, กรุงเทพฯ, ๒๕๒๓ [Krom Silapakorn, Bangkok, 1984].
- ครุฑนิจารึกล้านนา ภาค ๑: ชื่อและตำแหน่งบุคคล [Index to Lān Nā Inscriptions, part I, Persons and titles], อันส์ เพนซ์ ; ศรีเลา เกษพรหม; อภิรติ์ เตชะศิริวรรณ — คลังข้อมูลจารึกล้านนา สถาบันวิจัยสังคม มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่, ๒๕๔๙ [PENTH, Hans, KETPHROM Silao ; TECHASIRIWAN, Apiradee — Archives of Lān Nā Inscriptions, Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University, Forth edition, 2006].
- ธวัช ปุณโณทก [Poonothoke, Dhawaj], ศิลปจารึกอีสานสมัยไทย-ลาว: ศึกษาทางด้านอักษรวิทยาและประวัติศาสตร์อีสาน [The « issanes » inscriptions from the Thai-Lao Period: Epigraphic and Historical Studies], Bangkok, Ramkhamhaeng University, 1987.
- ประชุมจารึก ภาคที่ ๘, จารึกสุโขทัย [Corpus of Inscriptions, part 8, Inscriptions of Sukhothai], กรมศิลปากร, กรุงเทพฯ, ๒๕๔๘, [Krom Silapakorn, Bangkok, 2005].
- ประชุมจารึกเมืองพะเยา [Inscriptional History of Phayao], สุจิตต์ วงษ์เทศ: บรรณาธิการ, พิเศษ เจียจันทร์พงษ์: ชำระและอธิบาย, กรุงเทพฯ, สำนักพิมพ์มติชน, ๒๕๓๘ [Wongthet, Suchit ed, Bangkok, 1995].
- ประชุมจารึกล้านนา [Corpus of Lān Nā Inscriptions], อันส์ เพนซ์ ; พรรณเพ็ญ เครือไทย ; ศรีเลา เกษพรหม ; ชัยชนะ ปิ่นเงิน ; สราวุธ ศรีธา ; อภิรติ์ เตชะศิริวรรณ — คลังข้อมูลจารึกล้านนา สถาบันวิจัยสังคม มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่, [Penth, Hans ; Khrüathai, Phanphen ; Ketphrom, Silao ; Pin'ngoen, Chapana ; Sitha, Sarawut ; Techasiriwan, Apiradee eds., Archives of Lān Nā Inscriptions, Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University]:
- เล่ม ๑: จารึกในพิพิธภัณฑฯ เชียงแสน (๒๕๔๐), [vol. 1: Inscriptions in the Chiang Sān Museum, 1997].
- เล่ม ๒: จารึกพระเจ้ากาวิละ พ.ศ. ๒๓๓๔-๒๓๕๓ (๒๕๔๑) [vol. 2: King Kāwila Inscriptions, 1998].
- เล่ม ๓: จารึกในพิพิธภัณฑฯ ลำพูน (๒๕๔๒) [vol. 3: Inscriptions in the Lamphun Museum, 1999].

- เล่ม ๔: จารึกในพิพิธภัณฑสถาน เชียงใหม่ (๒๕๔๓) [vol. 4: Inscriptions in the Chiang Mai Museum, 2000].
  - เล่ม ๕: จารึกในพิพิธภัณฑสถาน น่าน และจารึกเมืองน่านที่น่าสนใจ (๒๕๔๔) [vol. 5: Inscriptions in the Nān Museum and other Nān Inscriptions, 2001].
  - เล่ม ๖: จารึกในพิพิธภัณฑสถาน เชียงแสน ภาคที่ ๒ (๒๕๔๖) [vol. 6: Inscriptions in the Chiang Sān Museum, part II, 2003].
  - เล่ม ๗: จารึกในจังหวัดลำปาง (๒๕๔๗) [vol. 7: Inscriptions in the Lampāng Province, 2004].
  - เล่ม ๘: จารึกในจังหวัดเชียงใหม่ (๒๕๔๗) [vol. 8: Inscriptions in the Chiang Mai Province, 2004].
  - เล่ม ๙: จารึกในจังหวัดแพร่ (๒๕๔๘) [vol. 9: Inscriptions in the Phrae Province, 2005].
  - เล่ม ๑๐: จารึกในจังหวัดเชียงใหม่ ภาค ๒ (๒๕๔๘) [vol. 10: Inscriptions in the Chiang Mai Province, part II, 2005].
  - เล่ม ๑๑: จารึกในจังหวัดเชียงใหม่ ภาค ๓ (๒๕๔๙) [vol. 11: Inscriptions in the Chiang Mai Province, part III, 2006].
  - เล่ม ๑๒: จารึกในจังหวัดเชียงใหม่ ภาค ๔ (๒๕๕๐) [vol. 12: Inscriptions in the Chiang Mai Province, part IV, 2007].
  - เล่ม ๑๓: จารึกในจังหวัดเชียงราย (๒๕๕๑) [vol. 13: Inscriptions in the Chiang Rai Province, 2008].
  - เล่ม ๑๔: ศิลาจารึกในสมัยพระเจ้าติโลกราช (๒๕๕๒) [vol. 14: Stone Inscriptions in the reign of King Tilōkarāja, 2009].
  - เล่ม ๑๕: จารึกเมืองเชียงตุง ภาคที่ ๑ (๒๕๕๖) [vol. 15: Inscriptions of Chiang Tung, part I, 2010].
- ประชุมศิลาจารึก ภาคที่ ๗: ประมวลจารึกที่พบในประเทศไทยและต่างประเทศ [Corpus of Inscriptions, part 7, A Compilation of Inscriptions found in Thailand and Neighbouring Countries], วินัย พงศ์ศรีเพียร: บรรณาธิการ, คณะกรรมการชำระประวัติศาสตร์ไทยฯ สำนักเลขาธิการนายกรัฐมนตรี, กรุงเทพฯ, ๒๕๓๔, [Phongsiphian, Winai ed, Bangkok, 1991].
- ฮันส์ เพนซ์ [PENTH, Hans], คำจารึกที่ฐานพระพุทธรูปในนครเชียงใหม่ [Inscriptions on Buddha Figures from Chiang Mai], คณะกรรมการจัดพิมพ์เอกสารทางประวัติศาสตร์ สำนักนายกรัฐมนตรี, กรุงเทพฯ, ๒๕๑๕ [Bangkok, 1976].

## 2. In Western Languages

- Cœdes, G. (1925). Documents sur l'histoire politique et religieuse du Laos occidental , *BEFEO* XXV-1, pp. 1-201.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1924). *Recueil des inscriptions du Siam – Première partie: inscriptions de Sukhodaya*, *Bibliothèque Nationale Vajirāñña*. Bangkok: Bangkok Time Press, 175 p.
- Buchmann, M. (2011). *Northern Thai Stone Inscriptions (14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Centuries) - Glossary*, *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, Band 73.1. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 307 p.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2012). *Northern Thai Stone Inscriptions (14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Centuries) - Catalogue*, *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, Band 73.2. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 168 p.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2015). *Northern Thai Stone Inscriptions (14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Centuries) - Grammar*, *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, Band 73.3. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 68 p.
- Eade, J.C. (1996). *The Thai Historical Record – A Computer Analysis*. Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 265 p.
- Gagneux, P.M. (1975). *Contribution à la connaissance de la civilisation laotienne d'après l'épigraphie du royaume de Vientiane (XV<sup>e</sup>-XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles)*. Paris: thèse de doctorat EPHE, 521 p.
- Grabowsky, V. (2004). *Bevölkerung und Staat in Lan Na – Ein Beitrag zur Bevölkerungsgeschichte Südostasiens*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 609 p.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1957). "Population and state in Lan Na prior to the mid-sixteenth century". *JSS* 93, pp. 1-68.
- Griswold, A.B. (1957). *Dated Buddha images of northern Siam*. Ascona: Artibus Asiae, 97 p., 57 pl.
- Griswold, A.B. & Nagara, N.P. (1992). *Epigraphic and Historical Studies*. Bangkok: The Historical Society, 821 p.
- Jayawickrama, N.A. (1978). *The Sheaf of Garlands of the Epochs of the Conqueror*. London: Pali Text Society, 235 p.
- Lagiarde, F. (2013). "Narratives as Ritual Histories: The Case of the Northern-Thai Buddhist Chronicles". In Skilling, P. & Justin, M. D. (Ed.). *Buddhist Narratives in Asia and Beyond*. Bangkok: Institute of Thai Studies, Chulalongkorn University, vol. one, pp. 83-94.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2015). "Thailand Historiography". In Silk, J.A. (Eds.). *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism*. tome 1, Leiden, pp. 792-799.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2017). "Facts and Figures about the Buddhist Historiography of Lanna, its Material Culture and its Production". In Skilling, P. & McDaniel, J. (Eds.). *Imagination and Narrative: Lexical and Cultural Translation in Buddhist Asia*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, pp. 265-286.
- Lorrillard, M. (1999). 'Notes sur l'historiographie lao'. *BEFEO* 86, pp. 219-232.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2003). *Les inscriptions du That Luang de Vientiane: données nouvelles sur l'histoire d'un stūpa lao*. *BEFEO* 90-91, pp. 289-348.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2008). "Insights on the Diffusion of Lao Buddhism », [in] Lagiarde, F. & Koanathakool, P.C., eds., *Buddhist Legacies in Mainland Southeast Asia*". *Études thématiques*, n°19, pp. 139-148.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2008). *Écritures et histoire: le cas du Laos*. *Aséanie* 22, pp. 63-84.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2008). *Pour une géographie historique du bouddhisme au Laos*. In Goudineau, Y. & Lorrillard, M. (Ed.).

- Recherches nouvelles sur le Laos*. Vientiane: Études thématiques n°18, EFEO, pp. 113-181.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2010). *Vientiane et le Mékong: situation de la ville dans l'espace régional et la longue durée*. In Charpentier, C. S. (Eds.). *Vientiane, architectures d'une capitale – Traces formes, structures, projets*. Paris: Les cahiers de l'Iprauss, Recherches, pp. 33-50.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2016). *La plaine de Vientiane au tournant du second millénaire: données nouvelles sur l'expansion des espaces khmer et môn anciens au Laos (II)*. Paris: EFEO, pp. 38-107.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2017). *Early Buddhism in Laos: Insights from Archaeology*. In Skilling, P. & McDaniel, J. (Eds.). *Imagination and Narrative: Lexical and Cultural Translation in Buddhist Asia*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, pp. 231-264.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (n.d.). *Research on the Inscriptions in Laos: Current Situation and Perspectives*. In Perret, D. (Ed.). *A Panorama of Epigraphy in Southeast Asia*. EFEO (soon to be published).
- Lorrillard, M., Kionoanchanh, K. & Sirivongsa, K. (-----). *Recueil des inscriptions sur stèle du royaume lao du Lān Xāng*. (soon to be published).
- Ongsakul, S. (2005). *History of Lan Na*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 342 p.
- Penth, H. (1986). *On the History of Thai Scripts*. Bangkok: Siam Society.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1993). *Bulletin of the Archives of Lan Na Inscriptions*. Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai University, vol.5.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1996). *The Date of the Bang Sanuk Inscription*. JSS 84-2, pp. 5-16.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2003). *On Rice and Rice Fields in Old Lān Nā – Texts, Translations, Interpretations*. JSS 91, pp. 90-188.
- Wyatt, D. K. (1976). *Chronicle Traditions in Thai Historiography*. In Cowan, C.D & Wolters, O.W. (Eds.). *Southeast Asian History and Historiography, Essays Presented to D.G.E. Ithaca*: Cornell University Press, pp. 107-122. — republished in Wyatt, David K. Chiang Mai: *Studies in Thai History*, Silkworm Books, 1994, pp. 1-21.

## **Buddhasenaka: Motifs and Relationship to Lanna Culture**

**Luedung, Duanghatai**

Faculty of Liberal Arts

Maejo University

Thailand

---

### **Abstract**

This research aims to study motifs of Lanna literature named Buddhasenaka in which its literature plot is similar to Rotthasena Jakata in the Pannasa Jataka known as Nang Sip Song (the twelve sisters) or Phra Rot Meri. According to the most reliable Buddhasenaka, the constitution text transliterated by Musikanukhroa, Wiboonwan was used in this study. The study implies that there are three motifs playing an important role. Protagonist, Antagonist and helper are the first known motif called character. Object is appeared as the second motif in the protagonist's journey and adventure, while the last one is related to event. Action of characters and events emphasize on karma cycle and gratefulness. Furthermore, it also reveals social values and notions of Lanna culture.

**Keywords:** Motif, Twelve sisters, Lanna literature, Lanna culture

### **Introduction**

Buddhasenaka is Lanna literature. Some parts of story are similar to Rotthasena Jakata, generally known as Nang Sip Song (the twelve sisters) or Phra Rot Meri. The folklores like the twelve sisters, or Phra Rot Meri, do not only appear in Lanna literature but they are written in other regions, too. In the central and the southern part of Thailand, it is called Phra Rot Meri while in northern and northeastern part, they call Buddhasena, Buddhasenaka and Nang Sip Song. In Cambodia, they call Rithisena-Nang Kangrai whereas in Tai Yai, Shan State, it is called Nang Sip Song Meung Nai. But in Tai Lue and Dai Kun, it is Candasobha. The plot in each local is similar to Rotthasena Jakata in Pannasa Jakata. However, language, writing style, motifs and other details are rewritten when they were told in outside Lanna. In this work, the motifs in Buddhasenaka have been studied by comparing them to international motifs from Motif-Index of Folk Literature by Stith Thompson, as well as, analyzing social values and notions of Lanna culture. It clearly shows that once a story is told in different regions, it is partly rewritten while retaining its identities as the context is adopt.

### **Buddhasenaka in General**

Musikanukroa (1992: 19) explains that Buddhasenaka is probably written based on various sources such as Indian folklores, Buddhism, poet's thoughts, local folklores, Lanna social events and geographical condition, Pannasa Jakata or even based on Shan State's writing style because of its good diplomatic relationship for long period of time. Her research explanation is similar to what

Poungkaew (1984: 319) says comparing 12 sections of international folklores of which the plots are related to Nang Sip Song (the twelve sisters), or Phra Rot Meri. She found that Tai Yai's folklores are the most similar to Phra Rot Meri especially Nang Sip Song Meung Nai which is similar to Buddhasenaka Khao. Khao is a kind of poetry locally composed in northern part of Thailand.

Buddhasenaka could probably be verbally told in northern part as mentioned in Lampang province's manuscript index (researched in 1980-1981). According to the research on manuscripts in northern part by Lanna Group, Social Institute, Chiang Mai University, Buddhasenaka is mentioned in 99 sets of manuscripts, written in Khao Tham (Jakata's poem composing style). But the name is different such as Buddhasen, Buddhasenaka, Buddhasenaka Kumar or Nang Sip Song. Still, it was found in 1-4 section, Amphoe Meung, Chiang Mai province's manuscripts (researched in 1974-1975). Then, it was publicized by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University. Moreover, Buddhasenaka is written in Khao Sor (local composing style in northern part of Thailand) and it is a verbal story. Even now, local people there do not forget the story and main plot (Poungkaew, 1984: 7-8).

Buddhasenaka used in this research is a prose, all written in Lanna language mixed with Pali. In the first part of each section, Pali vocabularies are explained. The stories are quite long, consisting of various motifs, written based on Nang Sip Song and Buddhasenaka's plot. Each motif describes characters' adventure and supernatural phenomenon such as the existence of immortals, magical animal and objects. The story starts when a rich man has no children so he solemnly prays to sacred gods. As expected, he has twelve sisters. However, raising all is impossible so he abandons them in the woods. Unluckily, they are in Suntra, the ogress' custody. Once they know the truth about her, they escape from her and meet an envoy. They marry to Phraya Parutthasena. Having known that twelve sisters escape, Suntra transforms herself into so beautiful lady that she becomes Phraya Parutthasena's wife. One day, she secretly plans to expel twelve sisters and takes their eyes out of socket. The twelve sisters live in a cave. When, the youngest child's son, Buddhasenaka, is matured enough to go outside, he meets many people and goes through a risky journey. One day, he unexpectedly meets Phraya Parutthasena, who is his father. Buddhasenaka is promoted a regent, later. Suntra, the ogress is informed about him so she pretends to be sick and asks him to get her some medicine at Ogress City. In the letter, she tells Nang Kang Ka Ri, her daughter, to eat Buddhasenaka. But a hermit kindly rewrites a letter on time. When Buddhasenaka arrives in Ogress City, he marries to Nang Kang Ka Ri, indirectly asking for about magical objects, eye sockets of twelve sisters and the bow of Suntra. After that, he escapes from Ogress City. Nang Kang Ka Ri follows him, asking him to return but he refuses so Nang Kang Ka Ri is full of grief to death whereas Buddhasenaka bravely meets Suntra and kill her. When Buddhasenaka becomes the governor, his mother and aunts moves to live with him. They become Phraya Pharutasena's wives, then. He goes back to see Nang Kang Ka Ri but he is so full of grief to death once knowing that she is dead.

Buddhasenaka does not only give pleasure to readers but it shares religious teachings, which is useful for the monks' sermon to local people. In terms of writing style, Buddhasenaka is not categorized as Tipitaka. It is general Jakata. The reasons why Buddha told the story, where he told and to whom he told are mentioned in the first part. Next, it comes to the ancient story depicting Buddhasenaka's story which is Buddha's previous life himself. Each character's details are in the last part, describing what they are born to be during their lifetime. Buddhasenaka is edited conforming to Jakata's plot in order to prove that it is Buddha's story from his own verbal expression.

Interestingly, Buddhasenaka is written by deeply describing current time, where each character

exists and how they behave in their previous life. Then, it describes how each character turns to be in the last part. This writing style is different from other Jakata folklore such as Rotthasena Jakata where there is neither description on both current time (Poungkaew, 1984: 35-36) nor each character's karma cycle in their previous life like Buddhasenaka.

### **Buddhasenaka , the Constitution Text Transliterated by Musikanukhroa, Wiboonwan**

The researcher studies "the constitution text transliterated Version of Buddhasenaka", the most reliable Buddhasenaka or the most similar to original version. This transliterated version is analyzed by Musikanukhroa. It is originated from 5 sets of original ones.

1. Buddhasenaka, Chiang Man Temple, Amphoe Meung, Chiang Mai version.
2. Buddhasenaka, Sai Moon Mueng Temple, Amphoe Meung, Chiang Mai version.
3. Buddhasenaka, Ban Mo Temple, Amphoe Meung, Chiang Mai version.
4. Buddhasenaka, Sun Rim Ping Temple, Amphoe Meung, Lampoon version.
5. Buddhasenaka, Saen Fang Temple, Amphoe Meung, Chiang Mai version.

Musikanukhroa compares and analyzes Buddha stories from other versions in order to create the new topic. Having transliterated all stories here, Musikanukhroa rewrites the complete version of Buddhasenaka, the most similarly to original version. Her transliteration from Lanna to standardized Thai language is especially useful and great interest for readers, which has also drawn attention to this study.

### **The Analysis of Motifs in Buddhasenaka**

Motif, in terms of folklore studies, is defined as the smallest elements in a story which are predominant characteristic and continuously told from generations to generations. Here, motifs are categorized into three groups: character with supernatural ability (human, immortals, animal, and plant), magical objects and supernatural phenomenon (Nimmanahaeminda, 2002: 38). Motif attracts both teller and listener due to its remarkable characteristic and easy to remember and relay. That is the reason why they should be publicized. Some are international motifs mentioned in international folklores such as the main character who is the youngest or human-animal intermarriage, whereas some motifs are specifically mentioned in only one folklore. After analyzing motifs in Buddhasenaka, the researcher categorizes them into three groups: character, object and event then compares them with international motifs in Motif-Index of Folk Literature by Stith Thomson.



## Character Motifs

Motifs in Buddhaseṇaka	Motifs in Motif-Index of Folk Literature
<b>Protagonists</b>	
1. The twelve sisters	P251.6.7. <i>Twelve brothers.</i>
2. Buddhaseṇaka	T581.2. <i>Child born of woman abandoned in pit.</i> Z215. <i>Hero son of seven mothers.</i>
<b>Antagonist</b>	
Suntra the ogress	G11.6. <i>Man-eating woman</i> D11.1. <i>Transformation: ogress to man.</i>
<b>Helpers</b>	
1. Cow	B411. <i>Helpful cow.</i>
2. Chicken	R243. <i>Fugitives aided by helpful animal.</i> B469.5.1. <i>Helpful chicken.</i> B443.3. <i>Helpful elephant.</i> B184.1. <i>Magic horse</i> B181.3. <i>Magic tiger.</i>
3. Bird	B450. <i>Helpful birds.</i>
4. Hermit	N843. <i>Hermit as helper.</i>
5. Gods	N817.0.1. <i>God as helper.</i>
6. Guarding Horse	B133.1. <i>Horse warns hero of danger</i>

Table 1: Characters Motifs in Buddhaseṇaka

Characters motifs in Buddhaseṇaka consist of protagonists, antagonist and helpers. They are similar to international motifs from Motif-Index of Folk Literature by Stith Thompson. The protagonists consist of twelve sisters and Buddhaseṇaka, the son of the youngest girl imprisoned in a cave. She does not eat her own son to relieve from hunger like her sisters do. When Buddhaseṇaka grows up, he takes care of his mother and aunts. The antagonist here is a man-eating ogress called Suntra, she can transform herself into beautiful lady that she becomes human wife. In the story, there are several helpers of twelve sisters and Buddhaseṇaka. For example, the cow keeps twelve sisters in the mouth to save her from Suntra. The chicken collects some unhusked rice for the youngest Chantha Pathuma to feed her sisters. After a group of chicken eats a magical mango, they turn into flying horse, flying tiger and flying elephant helping Buddhaseṇaka during his journey. The hermit rewrites the letter Suntra the ogress writes to Nang Kang Ka Ri, and the bird bites the horse collar. To conform Chantha Pathuma's solemn wish, the god guards Buddhaseṇaka when he enters the Ogress City. The guarding horse gives Buddhaseṇaka some signals during his escape from the Ogress City. These characters rescue Buddhaseṇaka during his journey.

## Magical Object Motifs

Motifs in Buddhasenaka	Motifs in Motif-Index of Folk Literature
1. Three species of magical mango	D950. Magic tree. D551.1. <i>Transformation by eating fruit.</i> D659.2. <i>Transformation to animals to fight.</i> D659.4.3. <i>Transformation to eagle to carry hero to safety.</i>
2. Magical plants	D960. Magic gardens and plants. D921.1. <i>Lake (pond) produced by magic</i> D941.1. <i>Forest produced by magic</i> D915. <i>Magic river.</i> D1271. <i>Magic fire</i>
3. Twelve sisters' eye medicine	D1241. <i>Magic medicine</i>
4. Magic Bow	D1091. <i>Magic bow.</i>

Table 2: Magical object Motifs in Buddhasenaka

Magical objects in the story are provided during Buddhasenaka's journey. First, when a group of chicken eats three species of mangoes, they transform themselves into flying horse if eating *Thida mango*, into flying tiger if eating *Kasor mango*, into flying elephant if eating *Sawai Karn mango*. Buddhasenaka makes use of these three mangoes during his journey.

There are magical plants in Suntra's garden:

*Achaniya Soap Pod* can magically create anything. Other magical plants are as follows.

*Nose-Lengthening Flower (Kiang Pra Chuk Neu flower)*: when someone smells it, their nose is longer like the elephant's.

*Nose-Shortening flower (Kam Pong Neu Hod flower)*: someone whose nose is lengthened by *Kiang Pra Chuk Neu flower* can smell *Kam Pong Neu Hod flower* to shorten their nose.

*Hair-raising Deu Batel (Mak Deu Khon Tang)*: when someone applies its resin on their skin, the animal touching them gets stuck there.

*Reviving Temeric (Kamin Pluke Chit)*: just apply it on the bone to revive those who dies prematurely.

*Magical Bamboo (Mai ruak Chu Kan)*: top wood pointed at anything for death, but another end pointed at anything to revive.

*Anti-aging Betel (Mak Poom Peng)*: someone who eats it stays young. Even if they are 100,000 years old, they still look like 15 years old.

*Progeria Betel (Mak Kok)*: someone who eats it gets old suddenly. Even though they are newborn babies, they look like 100 years old.

*Prosperous Wood (Mai Saang)*: if poor people weave it together, they become rich.

*Four Ponds*: the first pond is lethal, the second pond is able to revive. Another pond enhances the beautification, and the last pond lengthens the lifespan.

*Yawning Betel (Mak Wo Roo Hao)*: if someone touches or picks it up, the tree will yawn.

*Whining Betel (Mak Now Roo Ho)*: if someone touches or picks it up, the tree will whine.

*Death-Knocking Tress (Mai Nguan Satt Tai Yuen)*: someone dies once eating it.

*Reviving Wood (Mai Mangkala Pok Look)*: it can be made into a drum. If someone beats it, the dead person revives.

*Shooting Wood (Mai Wisakan)*: it can be made into a gun shooting animals accurately.

*Sticky Herb (Waan Pang Din)*: just apply it on the tip of a gun to shoot the enemy. The gun sticks on them.

*Extracting Herb (Waan Maha Salad)*: if someone is cut by a sword, stick, thorn or shot by a gun, apply this herb on skin to take it out.

*Romance Herb (Waan Rak)*: someone who keeps this herb will take good care of their loved ones.

*Hatred Herb (Waan Kipasake)*: someone who keeps this herb will be hated suddenly.

*Meat-Hunting Herb (Waan Sattasaat)*: it is used to hunt animals for food.

*Mind-Reading Herb (Waan Tiyanasote)*: when someone applies it on the eyes, they know what others think.

*Telehearing Herb (Waan Chakayasik)*: when someone applies it on the ear, they can hear both loud noise and soft sound within any other ranges.

*Televising Herb (Waan Ka srai)*: when someone puts it in the eye, they know where the enemy goes.

*Strict-Grasping Herb (Waan Pantha Nikai)*: It can be made into rope used to arrest ten or even hundred thousand enemies.

*Bamboo Herb (Waan Pai)*: when someone spreads it, the land turns into bamboo woods.

*Pond Herb (Waan Nong)*: when someone spreads it, the land turns into a pond.

*Fire Herb (Waan Fai)*: when someone spreads it, the land is on fire.

*Water Herb (Waan Naam)*: when someone spreads it, the land turns into a long river.

While Buddhasenaka lives in the Ogress City, Nang Kang Ka Ri invites him to the garden, teaches him the good benefits of each plant. He indirectly asks her about twelve sisters' eye socket and medicine. Nang Kang Ka Ri suggests him to grind some yawning and whining betel, and put it in water together with eye sockets. Then, the eye sockets can be recovered and functions perfectly. She also tells him that if Suntra's bow is cut, she suddenly dies.

Thanks to magical objects, Buddhasenaka performs his missions without failure. Here we can prove that the teller is imaginative enough to give pleasure to listeners and readers. Magical object motifs are similar to those mentioned in Motif-Index of Folk Literature, but they are modified suitably to Lanna society. For instance, according to Stith Thompson, the magical trees in Motif-Index of Folk Literature such as apple, cherry, pear, peach are locally western plants. But magical trees in Buddhasenaka are mango, Soap Pod, bamboo and other herbs easily found in Lanna.

## Event Motifs

The researcher mainly studies the event and Character's Behavior motifs of twelve sisters and Buddhasenaka shown in table 3 and table 4.

### The Twelve Sisters' Timeline

Motifs in Buddhasenaka	Motifs in Motif-Index of Folk Literature
1. A rich man wants to have a kid so he prays to sacred god. He finally has twelve daughters.	T513. <i>Conception from wish.</i>
2. The rich man has a financial problem so he abandons them in the woods near the Ogress City. They go fishing when they know of their abandonment. Eleven daughters stab fish's eyes but the youngest stabs only one.	S321. <i>Destitute parents abandon children.</i> S301. <i>Children abandoned (exposed).</i> Q438. <i>Punishment: abandonment in forest.</i> H151.9.1. <i>Abandoned child recognized in game</i>
3. The twelve sisters meet Suntra the ogress. She asks them to live with her and take care of her daughter.	G414. <i>Ogress invites boys to live in her house</i>
4. Once the youngest knows that they all live in the Ogress City, they escape Suntra. Suntra looks for them.	G250. <i>Recognition of witches.</i> G401. <i>Children wander into ogre's house</i>
5. The cow keeps all twelve sisters in its mouth. It wishes them to be Nang Thao Phraya. The twelve sisters thank it by feeding some grass and water then circumambulate for three rounds.	B529.1. <i>Animals (sow, bitch, mare) hide boy in their belly to protect him.</i> K515. <i>Escape by hiding.</i>
6. The twelve daughters marry to Phraya Parutthasena. They live together for seven years but have no child so they strictly believe in Buddhist teachings and solemnly pray for a child.	N711.1. <i>King (prince) finds maiden in woods (tree) and marries her</i> T513. <i>Conception from wish.</i>
7. Suntra is informed about the twelve sisters, so she transforms herself into so beautiful lady that she becomes Phaya Parutthasena's wife.	D11.1. <i>Transformation: ogress to man.</i>
8. Suntra secretly sets a plan to expel twelve sisters out of town and take their eye sockets out. They live in a cave and eat their own kids to relieve their hunger.	K961.2.2. <i>Ogress wife demands eyes of six wives of raja or she will die</i> G72.2. <i>Starving woman abandoned in cave eats newborn child.</i>
9. In final, the youngest girl's son rescues them and gets eye sockets back. All go back and become Phraya Parutthasena's wife.	E781. <i>Eyes successfully replaced.</i> F952. <i>Blindness miraculously cured.</i>

Table 3: The Twelve Sisters' Timeline Motifs

Having analyzed timeline motifs and compared them with motifs in Motif-Index of Folklore Literature, the researcher found that most of twelve sister's timelines are mentioned in Motif-Index. Some are similar while some are slightly different. This indicates that some motifs assumed to appear only in Thai folklore are mentioned in other regions as well, such as in Indian folklore.

- G414. *Ogress invites boys to live in her house.* India: Thompson-Balys.  
H151.9.1. *Abandoned child recognized in game.* India: Thompson-Balys.  
K961.2.2. *Ogress wife demands eyes of six wives of raja or she will die.* India:  
Q438. *Punishment: abandonment in forest.* (Cf. S143.) India:

#### Buddhasenaka's Timeline

Motifs in Buddhasenaka	Motifs in Motif-Index of Folk Literature
1. When Buddhasenaka turns twelve, he goes out for his journey, rescuing many people in danger.	Z251. <i>Boy hero.</i> Q438. <i>Punishment: abandonment in forest.</i>
2. When Buddhasenaka turns sixteen, he performs his mission again. There he meets many people with whom he plays gamble in order to feed his mother and aunts.	N1.1. <i>Hero makes fortune through gambling</i>
3. Buddhasenaka defeats Phraya Parutthasena the chess game. After talking for a while, they finally know that they are father and son. The son is named Buddhasenaka, promoted to be a regent.	N731.3. <i>Father unexpectedly meets abandoned son and reinstates him</i>
4. When Suntra is informed about Buddhasenaka, she pretends to be sick and asks him to get her some medicine at the Ogress City.	H1212. <i>Quest assigned because of feigned illness</i>
5. In the letter, Suntra tells Nang Kang Ka Ri to eat Buddhasenaka but fortunately, the hermit rewrites the letter on time.	K978. <i>Uriah letter</i> K511. <i>Uriah letter changed</i>
6. When Buddhasenaka is in the Ogress City, he marries Nang Kang Ka Ri.	T115. <i>Man marries ogress's daughter.</i>
7. Buddhasenaka indirectly asks about magical things, about twelve sisters' eye sockets and about Suntra's magic bow.	K1165. <i>Secret learned by intoxicating dupe</i> D838.2. <i>Magic object taken from ogre's house.</i>
8. Buddhasenaka meets Suntra and cuts her bow to death.	G512.5. <i>Ogre killed by burning external soul.</i>
9. Buddhasenaka goes back to see Nang Kang Ka Ri, but she is dead so he is full of grief to death like his wife is.	F1041.1.1. <i>Death from broken heart</i>

Table 4: Buddhasenaka's Timeline Motifs

Buddhasenaka's timeline is full of his journey. But in the first part, he rescues many people in danger at his twelve years of age. He rescues an old man from a tiger's attack, helps local people trapped in the cave by taking a big rock out of the exit, sends Wai, the rich lady, safely return home in Amphapani city, rescues Phraya Thamma Saja arrested and abandoned at river bank by townspeople then helps him return to Sitthisoma Nakorn safely, helps Kachopalakama people get the elephant back to aristocrat in Takangra city, settles the dispute between Phraya Utthama and Phraya Nintakuttha and rescues Nang Nanthasanki from suicidal drowning. Because of his kind helps and magical things, they believe that he is God Indra.

Moreover, he defeats local people by gambling. He does Saba seeds tossing with cow farmers, plays

chess with them by betting his life. When he wins, he feeds his mother and aunts. Besides, he often plays Ska chess. One day Phraya Parutthasena is informed of him. He has an envoy ask Buddhasenaka play chess with him in the town. After some talks, it is naturally revealed that they are father and son.

Buddhasenaka's timeline motifs are written in details, focusing on supernatural phenomena. Some motifs are the same, or quite similar to Motif-Index of Folk Literature especially Indian folklore. The stories could probably be partly imitated. Some motifs are different in details due to additional motif descriptions, and they are partly modified from some other tales as founded in the Story of Vessantara in which some motifs appear in the time when local people expel Phraya Thamma Saja because he gives the elephants to others. Here, the poet may put something more based on his imagination or depict Lanna social events and geographical condition. This is related to Musikanukhrao's explanation about Buddhasenaka.

After analyzing motifs in Buddhasenaka, the researcher concludes that the motifs are categorized into three groups: characters' motifs (protagonist, antagonist and helpers), magical objects motifs during the protagonist's journey, and event motifs. There are some similarities and differences, which are probably international notion or they may be referred to each other. But some details are different because of the difference in social values and local cultures.

### **The Relations between Motifs in Buddhasenaka and Lanna culture**

As mentioned above, Buddhasenaka is not mentioned in Tipitaka. It is Jakata. Current time, previous life and how each character turns to be are described chronologically. Buddhasenaka is a story on journey, supernatural phenomena, Bodhisattva and religious teachings. So it can be both fairy tale and religious tale.

The motifs in the story, social values, religious teachings on karma cycle and gratefulness are indirectly mentioned. All are useful for teaching local people. It mainly focuses on karma cycle in Buddhism. Each scene is related to what each character does in their previous and current life.

The twelve sisters' timeline is related to karma cycle as follows.

*The twelve sisters are abandoned in the woods by their rich father:* in previous life, they abandon a puppy in the woods. In the current life, the puppy is a rich man raising twelve daughters.

*The cow rescues twelve sisters from Suntra's attack :* in previous life, they put a fish suffering from too shallow water in a mouth then return it into water. In the current life, the fish is a cow keeping them in the mouth to save from danger.

*They are taken eye sockets:* in the current life, they catch fish in a pond. Eleven of them string some fish in a thread by drilling its two eyes. Then, their eye sockets are taken. But the youngest girl strings them from only one eye to the mouth. That is why she is taken only one eye socket.

*The eleven sisters eat their own children:* in the previous life, they give a miscarriage medicine to Nang Chantha Pathuma, a pregnant lady.

Buddhasenaka's timeline motifs are related to karma cycle as follows:

*He returns to Amphapani city with twelve daughters whose mother is named Wai, the rich lady. Suddenly, during the trip, a shipwreck occurs until their properties are drowned and lost:* In the previous life, they throw a kid's banana out of the ship. The kid cries sadly but they laugh at him.

*He helps Phraya Thamma Saja return to the city after he is arrested and abandoned at river bank by townspeople:* in previous life, Phraya Thamma Saja is a farmer while Buddhasenaka is a dwarf who is

a war victim. The farmer rescues the dwarf. Then, when the town is recovered, he returns the dwarf to his family.

*He cuts Suntra's bow:* in the previous life, she is a wife of one male. She kills a boy by cutting his umbilical cord. This boy is Buddhasenaka in current life.

*His wife is Nang Kang Ka Ri the ogress:* Buddhasenaka is obsessed with her so much that he is full of grief to death. In the previous life, Buddhasenaka is a merchant. He gives his own wife who is Phee Phong (a kind of local ghost in a form of human. During her hunting time, she transforms herself. There is some shining bright light in her nose holes.) to the other merchant, deceiving him that she is a good girl. When Buddhasenaka returns to see Nang Kang Ka Ri. Feeling shock of her death, he put her bones in his arms and holds his breath until death. This is related to what Buddha teaches us the bad side of female obsession.

Apart from the protagonist's timeline, timeline of other characters are mentioned too, for example, Suntra and Nang Kang Ka Ri are the ogress because in previous life, they are mother and daughter. They hunt some crickets in temple for food.

*Nang Tewi from Wanasantha city:* there are seven kinds of crystal flowing out of her mouth because in previous life, she supports Buddha image casting. She prays that jewelry to flow out of her mouth whenever she speaks in whatever life she is born.

*Phraya Thamma Saja from Sitthisoma Nakorn:* he gives an elephant to Thukkata but the townspeople exile him because in previous life, Phraya Thamma Saja is little baby boy breastfed by his mother. One day, a monk hurts his eye, he asks for some milk from his mother to cure it but the boy is angry about this so he expels her from home.

*Nang Atcharachat:* she is one-hundred and one years old but she looks fifteen because in previous life, she supports Buddha image casted from crystal then she prays that in her next life, she stay young no matter how long the time passes.

It can be clearly seen that all motifs and character's behaviors in Buddhasenaka are related to their previous and current lives. Therefore, it is obviously seen that the characters are controlled by karma cycle. Normally in Lanna literature, the interrelation between each event and karma cycle is described. In terms of the focus on karma cycle in Thai folklore, Attagara (1976: 128-129) explains that it might be the same as Atthakatha Jakata storytelling because it initially designs folklore story telling methods based on current and previous life, then finishing with its conclusion. Therefore, listeners simultaneously analyze what happens with them now by tracing back their previous life and search for its logicity within.

Not only karma cycle, the tale Buddhasenaka explains the gratefulness to parents or other supporters, which is a social value in Lanna, namely Buddhasenaka helps other people during his journey, and received something in return such as food, clothes or magical mangoes from Amphapani city. He always gives those to bet for twelve sets of food to feed his mother and aunts. Although he marries to Nang Kang Ka Ri and happily lives with her in the Ogress City, he never forgets to take care of his mother and aunts. He pretends to ask Nang Kang Ka Ri how to put the eye sockets back. Besides, he rescues Nang Nanthasanki from suicidal drowning and tells her to think of parents, not to commit suicide for escaping as he says, "*Listen to me first. You should remind of parent's grace, take care of them, and observe the precepts. Do not put yourself in risk.*" (Musikanukhuoa, 1992: 331)

The teachings on gratefulness are also mentioned in other sections, for example, when a cow keeps twelve sisters in the mouth, it wishes them to be Nang Thao Phraya. They do not forget what it

sincerely wishes for them. They feed it some grass and water, circumambulate for three rounds. As for Nang Chantha Pathuma, she rescues a chick from snake's attack. The chicken thanks her by giving her some unhusked rice.

Each motif reflects Lanna social value like beliefs in god-goddess such as the time when Buddhasenaka rescues townspeople trapped in a cave by taking the big rock out of exit, and when he collects some mangoes with Wai, the rich lady's girl, or even when he helps return the elephant back to Sithisoma Nakorn so that Phraya Thamma Saja can be a governor again. Thanks to his incredible ability, Buddhasenaka is thought to be God Indra who manages to help people during their hard time. God Indra is one of the main gods in fairy tales, acting as human's rescuer.

In addition, the belief in Buddhist making merit is mentioned as described in the previous life of Nang Tewi from Wanasantha city and Nang Atcharachart. In the previous life, Nang Tewi from Wanasantha wishes for valuable jewelry flowing from her mouth whenever she utters a word. Then, she supports Buddha image casting and puts her valuable belongings inside before praying for what she wishes. In the current life, seven kinds of crystal then flow from her mouth whenever she speaks. As for Nang Atcharachart, she wishes to be elegant like Buddha. In previous life, she casts the Buddha image from crystal and wishes that she can stay younger as long as the time passes. In current life, she then looks like fifteen years old even though she is one-hundred and one.

Vessantara Jakata, a well-known story in Lanna, is also mentioned in Buddhasenaka. For example, when Buddhasenaka and his eight assistants help Kashopala people returning the elephant to aristocrat in Takangra city, Eight is also the number of elephants King Kalingarat requests to Phra Vessantara. The scenario when Buddhasenaka helps Phraya Thamma Saja returning back to Sithisoma Nakorn after the expulsion by townspeople because he gives elephants to the poor is quite similar to the second section (Himapan section) in Vessantara Jakata when the townspeople expel the king out of town because he give elephant to others. Once the townspeople ask him to be a governor again, some magical phenomena happen such as thunder, lightning strike, heavy rain or even happy trumpeting sound of elephants. The poet probably adds some local details in the story, even though some scenarios in Buddhasenaka are illogical. It seems that there is an appearance of the interpolation of Vessantara Jakata into the tale, for example, it does not clearly mention why townspeople are angry with the king's decision to give the elephant. However, in the last part, it mentions that Phraya Thamma Saja is expelled out of town because, in previous life, he expels his mother from the house. This reflects the belief in Karma cycle.

It can be seen that characters' behavior and most scenarios are related to Lanna social value like karma cycle, and gratefulness which is the important instruction for Lanna society. Still, they reflect Lanna religious beliefs such as beliefs in gods, Buddhism merit making and in Vessantara Jakata story so that all beliefs are supposed to be an instruction for Buddhists.

## Conclusion

"Buddhasenaka", partly similar to Rotthasena Jakata, is generally known as Nang Sip Song or Phra Rot Meri. Its motifs can be divided into three groups: characters (protagonist, antagonist and helpers), magical objects during Buddhasenaka's journey, and events (the twelve sisters' timeline and Buddhasenaka's journey). Some motifs can be found in Indian folklores, but there are some differences in details influenced by Lanna social value, beliefs, cultures and local tradition. Thus, once a story is told in different regions, the main plot is the same but only some parts are modified or



added suitably for local culture, belief, value and tradition.

Obviously, events and character's behavior indirectly teach Buddhism karma cycle as seen in the last parts where the characters' details both in previous and current life are mentioned in order to make a logical story. Social values and notions of Lanna culture such as gratefulness, beliefs in gods, Buddhism merit making, Vessantara Jataka are also mentioned in the story. Undoubtedly, Motifs in Buddhasenaka gives pleasure to readers along with some religious instruction.

## References

- Attagara, K. (1976). *Folklore*. Bangkok: Department of Teacher Education. pp. 128-129.
- Musikanukhroa, W. (1992). *Buddhasenaka: A Textcritical Analysis and A Study of the Characters' Action*. Master's thesis. Chiang Mai University. pp. 19, 71, 331.
- Nimmanahaeminda, P. (2002). *Folktales*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University. pp.38.
- Poungkaew, N. (1984). *A Comparative Study of Various Versions of Phra Rot-Meri*. Master's thesis. Chulalongkorn University. pp. 7-8, 35-36, 319.
- Thompson, S. (1955-1958). *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*. Revised and enlarged. edition. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Available from: <http://www.ruthenia.ru/folklore/Thompson/>.

## **Improving Community Based Tourism Competitiveness toward AEC in Chiang Mai Province and Lamphun Province**

**Maneetrakunthong, Archabaramee**  
**Sangkakorn, Korawan**  
Social Research Institute  
Chiang Mai University  
Thailand

---

### **Abstract**

The objectives of research project *“Improving Community Based Tourism Competitiveness toward AEC in Chiang Mai province and Lamphun province”* were to study the current situation of community based tourism in Chiang Mai province and Lamphun province. The research also attempted to analyze competitiveness of entrepreneurs in community based tourism toward AEC and presented the guidelines for improving community based tourism competitiveness in Chiang Mai province and Lamphun province .

This research tended to understand competitiveness of community base tourism in Chiang Mai province and Lamphun province by collecting data through questionnaire survey with 150 entrepreneurs in community based tourism, conducting the in-depth interview with 40 stakeholders including studying a secondary data and applying non-participant observation to provide deep understanding.

The result has been found that the entrepreneurs are highly competitive in terms of harmonic blend of local wisdom and products and services, sincerity, customer reuse or revisit .On the other hand, there are inferior competitiveness of international public relations and lack of regulatory knowledge in English communication skills.

**Keywords:** Community Based Tourism, Competitiveness, AEC , Chiang Mai and Lamphun

### **1. Introduction**

Nowadays ASEAN region is a high competitive community which expands its growth continuously. The member countries of this region attempt to coordinate their promoting policy of economic integration in order to make ASEAN has more security and also look for alliances outside the region in order to strengthen the bargaining power of ASEAN at world stage. It can be seen that ASEAN aims to create ASEAN Economic Community in 2016 which has purpose for promoting a single market and production base and free flow of goods, services, investments, skilled labors and capital in the region. However, the free flow of economic in ASEAN may affect to Thailand inevitably. For instance, the unrestricted economic of ASEAN will help Thailand to expand trade frontier and investment to the region, in contrast, foreign trade and investment can also expand in Thailand. As we know that the multinational corporations have prepared budget, technology, full service and specific expertise, these factors will have an impact on Thai SMEs. It means that when there are beneficiaries, there are disadvantages. (Supasorn, 2010)

Tourism business is a driven economy of Thailand because the tourism industry is a high-growth industry and also plays a major role in economic system and society, especially in the local tourism which base in the community. Local tourism is an important service business that makes income to the community, develops economy and society, and causes employment in Thailand. In 2015, Thailand got income from tourism 2.23 trillion baht. The growth rate increased 20.44 percent (Thansetthakij, 2016). But at the same time, the situation of tourism market has an intense competition, it makes tourism entrepreneurs have to improve their business management and adjust their ways to promote tourism to be more exotic, challenge and attractive for tourists, for example by using Thai identities that related to cultural preservation and tradition to be the selling point for cultural tourism or by focusing on the beauty of nature for ecotourism.

The upper northern region of Thailand is an important region on tourism inferior to Bangkok, especially in local tourism. There are many tourist attractions which are well-known at world class in Chiang Mai province and Lamphun province such as Mae Kampong Village in Mae On district, Chiang Mai Province or cultural tourism at Wat Phra That Hariphunchai in Lamphun Province etc. Therefore, the development of community based tourism competitiveness for sustainability and increasing the number of target tourists continuously provide a higher income to the communities in Chiang Mai province and Lamphun province. This important strategy cannot be neglect because the entire encouragement of potential management in sustainable tourism enhances tourism and also combines the knowledge and the creating of local wisdom together. Moreover, the competitiveness development of entrepreneurs in community based tourism and related sectors in both government and private sectors will lead to the cooperation in the context of natural resource and environment preservation and cultural way of the community, making people understand the tourism development path in the same direction, developing the quality service of tourism in long – term, and also promoting competitive advantage in compared with neighboring countries in this region. These affects to the economic expansion by attracting more tourists who have quality in spending on tourism and also conform to national policies and strategies in economic development by adding value in knowledge and local wisdom for community based tourism development under the borderless competitive current of ASEAN community.

## **2. Objectives**

1. To study the current situation of community based tourism in Chiang Mai province and Lamphun province toward AEC.
2. To analyze competitiveness of entrepreneurs in community based tourism in Chiang Mai province and Lamphun province toward AEC.

## **3. Literature Review**

**3.1 Tourism Management** (Jarumanee,1993) said that tourism administration and management mean a targeted action according to principle, theory and proper perspective which regard to reality including any restrictions of society and environment. To determine the direction, measure and good action plan, we have to consider the designated idea; otherwise, the tourism management will be devoid of direction and be failure.

**3.2 Community Base Tourism** is an idea of tourism management by a community that is brought to be an important tool for sustainable preservation, development and management resources in the community. This tourism aims to create collaborative learning between a local community and visitors in terms of existed resources preservation in the community which is a result of the participation of all sectors in the community for their advantage. Tourism administration and management consist of 4 elements as follows 1) Natural resources and culture 2) Community organization 3) Management which is rules and regulations for environmental management, culture and tourism 4) Learning. (Suansri, et al., 2012)

### **3.3 Principles of Community Based Tourism**

In the context of community based tourism administration which needs community participation and make them get advantages from tourism including attention of society, culture and economic development should have common principles as follows

1. Community based tourism has to be occurred from real demand of the community. The community will consider and analyze the problems and the impacts from tourism in all aspects and then conclude to proceed appropriate solutions.
2. The members of community have to participate in tourism management such as planning, activities, learning, evaluation and receiving mutual advantage.
3. Community has to gather in group, club, and organization or originated organization in order to drive management linking to policy direction which jointly establishes by the members of the community.
4. Content form; community based tourism activities must consider for equality, fairness and affect to environment, economy, politic, society and culture creatively and also consider the participation of stakeholders in tourism activities not only public sector but also local people in the community. (Nonsiri, 2011)
5. Rules and regulations are made from an agreement of community's members and motivate them to respect and follow the rules. Moreover, giving a chance to the members make their decisions to solve problems.
6. Community members, local people and tourists should have learning process together continuously and generate the process of appropriate tourism development by the community.
7. Community based tourism must have common standards in the community such as cleanness and security standards. They should consider their potentiality for support tourism and equitable income distribution to the stakeholders.
8. Tourism income is taking part in supporting community development and environmental conservation.
9. Community based tourism is the alternative source of income of the community, not the main income.
10. Community's organizations have to deal strongly on the impacts of tourism and be ready to put a *stop* to irresponsible *tourism* as quick as it can.

Community based tourism management needs to maintain traditional life of the community by not letting the tourism adversely affects the local lifestyle and also help them have more sources of income for the locals. Community based tourism is an idea that local people are the owner of

resources and stakeholders from the tourism.

### **3.4 Competitiveness of Community Based Tourism Management**

Competitiveness is a competitive advantage which makes organizations or entrepreneurs are different and outstanding more than competitors. The competitors cannot imitate or take a long time adaptation in order to achieve the competitive advantage that organizations have. This research will study the marketing competitiveness for using in planning vision, mission and a decisive long-term goal which will base on the ability to create competitiveness for the future and changes. In addition, this aims to survey the competitive potential of community based tourism entrepreneurs if their competitiveness has been ready toward AEC.

## **4. Related Research**

Chitkesorn (2012) studied the sufficiency economy village management format for tourist attraction in Baan Rai Pa Kha, Tha Tum sub-district, Pasang district, Lamphun province by using specific sample. The samples of this research were the village chief of Baan Rai Pa Kha, the village seniors, the village members and community development office of Pasang District, Tha Tum sub-district administrative organization in total 16 persons. This research collected data by using documentary research, in-depth interview, potential evaluation of tourist attractions, participant and non-participant observation and arrangement the conference and public stage for sharing opinions within the community. The tourist attraction evaluation result revealed that Baan Rai Pa Kha has unique, folk wisdom and worthy for learning. It is highly possible to be a tourist attraction. The factors that make tourism management of Baan Rai Pa Kha to be succeeded were because the community leader created Khao Lamphun Cattle preservation and developed it to be tourist village for learning which has a knowledge-based visiting. Tourism development proceeded in the form of tourism committees who come from community member voting. They allocated compensations for community members who participate in fair tourism management. There are public relations by using many sources such as website, brochure and knowledge documents about Khao Lamphun Cattle for tourists.

Sangkakorn (2012) studied tourism development in upper northern of Thailand based on slow tourism for senior s by evaluating the potential of tourist attractions with slow tourism in upper northern region where are suitable for seniors. This research proceeded for surveying and evaluating the potential of tourist attractions for seniors and also ranking them. Moreover, this research evaluated the potential tourism marketing based on slow tourism for seniors in upper northern region. The study found that there were up to 139 tourist attractions which meet the potential to be slow tourism in upper northern region and they are very attractive to both Thai and foreign seniors. However, most of tourist attractions were lack of development and improvement in service system and appropriate accessibility. The tourism entrepreneurs were lack of information in order to access tourism market for seniors and marketing development guidelines by focusing on tourism readiness for being seniors' destination.

## **5. Research Methodology**

### **5.1 Population and Sample**

The research was conducted in community based tourist attractions in Chiang Mai province and Lamphun province with two groups.

**Group 1:** Selecting community based tourism in Chiang Mai province and Lamphun province by purposive sampling and circulating 150 questionnaire survey for entrepreneurs in those community with convenient sampling such as accommodation business, food and beverage business and transportation business etc.

**Group 2:** Conducting the in-depth interview with 40 stakeholders from private and public sectors such as Tourism Authority of Thailand (Chiang Mai office), Provincial Office of Tourism and Sports including local governments, the Association of Tourism, Chamber of Commerce and academics etc.

## 5.2 Data Collection

This study of community based tourism competitiveness toward AEC is using both qualitative research and quantitative research and applying triangulation approach.

- **Document, Information and Survey Fieldwork Study:** such as contexts, way of living and knowledge including community based tourism resources.
- **In-depth Interview:** Conducting the in-depth interview with entrepreneurs community based tourism and representatives of government or private officers by asking key topic and relevant information
- **Non - Participant Observation:** collecting information from expressions, personalities, lifestyle, community way of life, dressing or residence of the informants in order to analyze with other research tools.
- **Questionnaire Distribution:** Survey by questionnaire used for entrepreneurs in community based tourism in Chiang Mai province and Lamphun province for analyzing demographic characteristics data, degree of competitiveness and also problems and suggestions in tourism operating toward AEC. The researcher was developed the questionnaire and established face validity by consulting a number of specialists (judges) within relevant area about whether the questionnaire obtained the content and measure of the concept that is the focus of attention. After receiving their suggestions, there were some items which had discrepancies. Those problems once found were revised and *pretest* it with 30 samples before actually distributing to 150 entrepreneurs in Chiang Mai province and Lamphun province.

## 5.3 Data Analysis

This research performed data analysis by computer statistics software for social research to analyze descriptive statistics such as frequency ratio, percentage ratio and means of community based tourism competitiveness for toward AEC. For qualitative data, the researcher team collected data by in-depth interview then analyzed and interpreted data by content analysis. After that, they integrated information obtaining from interviewing villagers and related public organization and private sector's representatives in order to support research result from quantitative data.

## 6. Results

This study revealed that the marketing competitiveness of community-based tourism in Chiang Mai province and Lamphun province are as follow; entrepreneurs have superior to competitors at high level in distinction in usage local wisdom and traditional living integrated in products and service (4.21), attractiveness to old customers for another service (4.28). However, the competitiveness of entrepreneurs is inferior to competitors in advertising methods in abroad (3.03) and English usage

for communication (3.34).

*Table 1: Competitiveness and Marketing Factors*

Factors	Degree of Competitiveness				Means	S.D.	Meaning
	Superior to competitors	Equal to competitors	Inferior to competitors /unable to compete	Not sure			
	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage			
Marketing Factors							
1.Distinction in usage local wisdom and traditional living integrated in products and service	44.0	42.7	9.3	4.0	4.21	0.945	Superior to competitors
2.Continuous newly design products and service	34.7	46.0	14.6	4.7	4.05	0.979	Equal to competitors
3.Attractiveness to old customers for another service	45.3	44.0	2.8	2.7	4.28	0.860	Superior to competitors
4.Continuous seeking new customer markets	14.7	37.3	42.0	6.0	3.50	1.008	Equal to competitors
5.Advertising methods in domestic	7.3	47.3	39.4	6.0	3.41	0.964	Equal to competitors
6.Advertising methods in abroad	7.3	24.7	60.7	7.3	3.03	1.029	Inferior to competitors
7.English usage for communication	10.7	35.3	52.0	2.0	3.34	0.968	Inferior to competitors

## 7. Discussion

Fieldwork of this research including document review and related research found that community based tourism in Chiang Mai province and Lamphun province all operate by considering 4 elements of community based tourism operation which are 1) Natural and cultural resources, the natural resources in Chiang Mai province and Lamphun community are very prosperous. There is an attempt to spend natural resources permanently. Also, the community has an attempt to inherit cultures and

traditions within community. 2) Community organization in the community which manage tourism, there should be local philosophers or specialists in local wisdom, local skills in various way. The community members should participate in developing processes within community. 3) Community management, this data collect together create rules and regulations in environment management. Cultural conservation and touristic administration from rules and regulations creation to circulate benefit fairly and direct the advantages to develop economy and social community. 4) Learning on community based tourism characteristic and community based tourism forms emphasize on learning and exchanging experiences understanding in way of living and different cultures. There contributes the learning process between villagers and tourists (visitors). There pushes to bring about conscious in Natural resources and cultural conservation both in villagers and visitors. Moreover, each community based tourism in Chiang Mai province and Lamphun province takes an advantage in strengthen process of community based tourism from various supportive factors in related departments both in government or private. But the Research's data collect found that, in Lamphun province, which is smaller than Chiang Mai, the social form is still simple and peaceful semi-rural. Therefore, community based tourism and related institutes in Lamphun province are closed-up, familiar and coordinate regularly rather than in Chiang Mai province. However, although community based tourism in Chiang Mai province and Lamphun province aim to operate by 4 elements of community based tourism as above. But from the survey and in depth interview, revealed that the heart of community based tourism permanence in long-term is the clarity of fair benefit circulation and the income from tourism should help community's social and economic development by villagers' participation and benefit circulation acknowledgement.

### **Marketing Competitiveness**

Marketing factors that decrease ability in competitiveness of community based tourism entrepreneurs in Chiang Mai province and Lamphun province are 60.7 percent of entrepreneurs mentioned that competitive ability is inferior than competitors/not competitive in advertising in media ,prints abroad and 42 percent of entrepreneurs specified that competitive ability is inferior / not competitive in seeking new markets respectively. In order that it is the data not only for related sectors but also any entrepreneurs that have to develop and adopt advertising styles for community based tourism market development in Chiang Mai province and Lamphun province besides severe cooperation in tourism market and claim that community based entrepreneurs that are related to original lifestyle are elders or old people aged over 50 years old that grew up in the previous era of Thai society and not familiar to technology usage or information system. While communication way of new marketing emphasizes on public relations via modernized information technology, English usage and more potential access related to Nathomthong (2015) offered that to be successful in publishing public relations must start from the beginning of decision before tourists' upon arrival. So community based tourism in Chiang Mai province and Lamphun province must find the way to develop public relations abroad and expanding market to new customers continuously. Another consideration in potential development for entrepreneurs is market development between existing customer relations and new customer relations making due to in-depth interview reviewed that community based tourism entrepreneurs could keep existing customers base but entrepreneurs could not develop new customer market as well. So it may result from entrepreneurs did not use proper promotion for their products.



### Research Conclusion

Chiang Mai province and Lamphun province have got their cultural strength that could adapt to major tourism market for Thailand but development entrepreneurs to promptly service and take market share needs to work on together with all sectors to let the direction of market expanding at the same way and doing potential marketing to access targeted tourists that have high buying potential. Actually important marketing principles are communication for building perception on target market abroad, products, goods or service of business. As seeing, competitive ability in community based tourism marketing in Chiang Mai province and Lamphun province reveals that limitations in self-development for responding modernized marketing (English usage and public relations in abroad markets), the related causes may due to Community Based Tourism entrepreneurs still lack of new skills to adapt in community based tourism marketing.

### References

- Chitkesorn, A. (2012). Format of Tourism Management in Sufficiency Economy Village: Baanraipaca, Thatum Sub-district Pasang District, Lamphun Province. *Area Based Development Research Journal*, 5(1), 23-36
- Jarumanee, N. (1992). *Tourists and Tourist Management* Industry. Bangkok: OS Printing House.
- Natomtong, P. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.tatreviewmagazine.com/mobile/index.php/menu-read-tat/menu-2015/menu-12015/218-12015-thai-stream>.
- Nonsiri, P. (2011). *Community Based Tourism in the Lower Northern Part of Thailand*. Phitsanulok: Faculty of Management and Information Science: Naresuan University.
- Sangakorn, K. (2008). *Application of sufficiency economy concept for sustainable community-based tourism*. Chiang Mai: Social Research Institute.
- Suansri, P., Songpronwanich, S., Tidichamrernporn, T. & Mingmetaporn, K. (2012). *The Development of Community Based Tourism Standard in ASEAN Region towards International Credibility*. Bangkok: The Thailand Research Fund.
- Supasorn, Y. (2010). Retrieved from <http://www.sme.go.th/Lists/EditorInput/DispF.aspx?List=15dca7fb-bf2e-464e-97e5-440321040570&ID=1761>.
- Thairath. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.thairath.co.th/content/556171>.
- Thansettakij. (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.thansettakij.com/2016/01/08/25115>.

## Thai-Japan PPP Cooperation New Era – Dawei and Cluster Linkage under “Thai plus One”

Matsushima, Daisuke  
Nagasaki University  
Japan

---

### Abstract

This paper reveals the circumstance around “middle income trap” in Thailand through pointing out some particular features of the transformation of Thai industrial structure.

Referring to some previous literatures about the concept of “middle income trap,” Thai economy should escape from the dependency on the labor intensive industry to more innovation-driven industry.

This paper also examines Thai industrial policy of avoiding “middle income trap” which consists of two parts: relocation of labor-incentive industry; introduction of innovation-driven industry, in accordance with the transformation of Japanese foreign direct investment (FDI), in actual historical events and on-going projects such as Dawei Comprehensive Development and Otagai Project. In this research, it is more emphasized on the procedure and the gap between ideal plan and reality: what kind of reformations could be done and another one not be done.

While not only from Thai Governmental viewpoint, but also from Japanese FDI viewpoint is discussed, this paper provides some issues whether actual situation of Thailand as transit stage of development, can overcome their “middle income trap” or not and how is the most effective measures for avoiding this trap.

**Keywords:** Thai plus One, middle income trap, Dawei Development, cross-border value-chain, Industrial Missing Link (IML), industrial connectivity

### 1. “Middle Income trap” Overcome by “Thai plus One”

What is “Thai plus One” - It is recently observed that the phenomena of “Thai plus One” is being spread in this region in line with Thai’s overcoming “middle income trap”<sup>20</sup>. But how is the transit mechanism form “middle income trap” to “Thai plus One.” “Thai plus One” seems to come from reaction against “middle income trap” in Thai’s changing industrial structure.

The term of “middle income trap” is defined as a country facing to lose their advantage of cheap labor force without any seed of innovation which can accelerate their new economic grow path near future, when these countries enters into the gross national income per capita range around 1,000 to

---

<sup>20</sup> The term of “middle income trap” seems to be defined in these paper below:  
Gill, I. and Kharas, H. (2007), pp.17 and Suehiro, A. (2009), pp.23-24

13,000 USD defined by World Bank in 2017<sup>21</sup> (See the table 1).

Table 1

Reference: This sheet was based on World Bank Database in “World Bank Country and Lending Groups<sup>22</sup>”

(see Annex)

Thailand has already entered into the upper middle income countries in 2010<sup>23</sup> when the phenomena of “Thai plus One” is approaching into the center issue in the industrial structure transformation in the former half of 2000s. “Thai plus One” means existing companies, especially Japanese companies in Thailand start to allocate their business resources and shift some labor intensive functions of manufacturing from Thailand to neighboring countries such as Myanmar, Cambodia, Lao PDR even in Vietnam in the former half of 2010s when legal minimum wage was decided to be lifted.

This statutory minimum wage policy became a trigger to encourage “Thai plus One” for seeking cheaper labors in the Thai neighboring countries. Therefore this phenomena essentially has happened only in the labor-intensive sectors and typical examples are found in these Japanese companies below:

Table 2: Cases of “Thai plus One”

Reference: Author made it through these website below<sup>24</sup>:

[http://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXNASDD170BC\\_X11C12A2TJ1000/](http://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXNASDD170BC_X11C12A2TJ1000/)

<http://www.e-logit.com/loginews/2012:052808.php>

<http://www.toyota-boshoku.com/common/jp/pdf/140519.pdf>

[http://www.nikon.co.jp/news/2013/0321\\_01.htm](http://www.nikon.co.jp/news/2013/0321_01.htm)

(see Annex)

After taking a glance of Figure 2, even though Auto parts, “Sheet Cover” belongs to the labor-intensive procedure. These companies require cheaper labor force and increasing the number of workers in the border area of the neighbor countries. They just pass over the border and then to set up their satellite factories and start up transportation between the center factory in Thailand and their own satellite factories. That feature is easy to be understood when comparing “China plus One” phenomena (see Figure 3).

“Thai plus One” companies are usually moving looks like “inchworm<sup>25</sup>” behavior rather than “butterfly” behavior, which just only pass the border, not directly to the capital of each country, such as Phnom Penh and Vientiane. This strategy can enjoy these better transportation infrastructure in

---

<sup>21</sup> These data comes from <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519>

<sup>22</sup> These data comes from <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519>

<sup>23</sup> Suehiro, A. (2014), pp.128

<sup>24</sup> “Thai plus One” behaviors of each company can be shown in these websites:

[http://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXNASDD170BC\\_X11C12A2TJ1000/](http://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXNASDD170BC_X11C12A2TJ1000/)

<http://www.e-logit.com/loginews/2012:052808.php>

<http://www.toyota-boshoku.com/common/jp/pdf/140519.pdf>

[http://www.nikon.co.jp/news/2013/0321\\_01.htm](http://www.nikon.co.jp/news/2013/0321_01.htm)

<sup>25</sup> Mr. Munenori Yamada, who was in charge of overseas business in Yazaki, regarded these companies behavior as “Inchworm” in the interview with him in August 2013.

Thailand from the location of the edge border, at the same time, it can also take benefits from cheap labor force from another side of passing the border. “Thai plus One” is rather artificial and is promoted by the Government of Thailand in order to avoid “middle income trap.” Therefore “Thai plus One” seems different from “China plus One” phenomena in 2000s and we can find some evidences for such official cooperation for “Thai plus One” promotion from the government.

This Thai policy can imply a couple of things below: This phenomena is the same situation of “Maquiladora” special economic zone in Mexico in which the U.S. companies passed over the border with Mexico and then to set up the labor-intensive factories there. And it is very controversial in the U.S. political arena just after the new administration of the President Donald Trump.

In this way, this movement of industries may well conflict with conventional business community with political agenda but a case in Thailand relatively be made in success. Also this type of “X plus One” can be observed in any countries when the country take a step up in their economic development. Even in Japan, Japanese foreign direct investments expanded since 1985 when Plaza Accord was activated with Sudden Yen appreciation, in line with such a rule of “X plus One.”

Table 3: “Thai plus One” vs. “China plus One”

Reference: Author

(see Annex)

It sounds very odd enough but Board of Investment (hereinafter is referred as BOI) of Thailand launched their own overseas offices in these neighboring countries in order to promote Thai investment into these countries, although the mission of BOI mainly promote investment into Thailand. This trend of outbound investment support seems quite unique and new activities in accordance with “Thai plus One” strategy<sup>26</sup>.

*“We are encouraging Thai industrial firms to invest abroad, as it is a challenge for them [especially SMEs] to expand into new markets”*

Hirunya Suchinai, Secretary General of Board of Investment of Thailand, at BOI Seminar “Opportunity Thailand on February 25, 2016<sup>27</sup>

In this way, “Thai plus One” phenomena can be created not only by business itself but also the support from the government of Thailand. But a couple of inquires happen from this trend; why the government of Thailand had to enhance the statutory minimum wage at that timing when mega flood hit Thailand and some Japanese existing FDI companies psychologically hesitated to stay in Thailand to escape to another country in ASEAN; how is the mechanism for overcoming “middle income trap” through “Thai plus One?”

One of the reasons why higher wage policy should be chosen is to allocate labor forces and another business resources from low wage sectors as well as some industrial sectors which cannot survive in

---

<sup>26</sup> Secretary General of BOI mentioned to launch branch of BOI in the neighboring countries comes from <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/business/EconomyAndTourism/30280092>

I also found a typical episode behind this that even just after the mega flood in Thailand and Japanese governmental officers strongly persuaded to do so, the Thai Government administration at that time refused to postpone their increasing statutory minimum wage in the end of 2011 and in the early half of 2012.

<sup>27</sup> This address is cited from

<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/business/EconomyAndTourism/30280092>

the condition of wage in Thailand. Dr. Dani Rodrik (Rodrik 1993) already mentioned that both of the labor-intensive industry and the high-valued industry is inclined to be mixed each other only in the country and this mixture becomes a serious obstacle against the transformation of industrial structure in this country<sup>28</sup>. Therefore high-wage policy is the best practice to bring the break though in order to overcome “the middle income trap” in the end.

However even in the best practice of high-wage policy, it is also necessary to introduce some high technology or knowledge for next generation of the industrial structure in the transition period of industrial structure, in place of commodity based economy. This question – where it should be introduced and which industrial segments is willing to be required into the middle income country like Thailand. The answers to both questions are found in the cluster concept and concept of “the Industrial Missing Link.”

While considering these varieties of solution above, win-win mechanism between Thailand and Japan which has a potential to avoid “middle income trap” is shown in the chart of Figure 4. This seems like a tree climbing monkey: without release their one hand of a lower branch of tree, they cannot go up without grabbing another higher branch of tree.

Figure 1: Mechanism for Overcoming “middle income trap” in Thailand  
Reference: Author

Figure 2: Metaphor of Tree Climbing Monkey  
Reference: Author  
(see Annex)

## 2. The Significance of Dawei Development

It is time to move to the next question: how to identify where the segment to be targeted for avoiding “the middle income trap.” A variety of tools for this issue were invented in National Economic and Social Development Board (Hereinafter is referred as “NESDB”) of Thailand and JICA (Hereinafter is referred as “JICA”) cooperation. One of these policy measures was the concept of “Industrial Missing Link.”

JICA supervised by NESDB of Thailand conducted a research of “Industrial Missing Link” in 2012 to 2013. “Industrial Missing Link” is defined as the void of segment in each production value chain in Thailand.

Through the conducting interview survey as well as statistics analysis of each industrial sectors: Automobile, Hard Disc Drive or HDD, and white electric appliances. This study was successfully to demonstrate the “Industrial Missing Link” which reveals some potential investment destination in Thailand. This can be synchronized Thai cluster policy recently<sup>29</sup>.

Figure 3: Concept of “Industrial Missing Link”  
Reference: JICA-Deloitte Research (2013)  
(see Annex)

---

<sup>28</sup> Rodrick, D. (1993)

<sup>29</sup> Thailand 4.0 is mentioned in a variety of official releases from the Government of Thailand such as [http://thailand.prd.go.th/mobile\\_detail.php?cid=1&nid=3785](http://thailand.prd.go.th/mobile_detail.php?cid=1&nid=3785)

The concept of “Industrial Missing Link” can also contribute to understanding how to avoid “middle income trap” through identifying which intermediate parts should be produced in Thailand. This hypothesis can demonstrate that some intermediate parts are regarded as one of the serious factors for the robust economic growth and they should be domestically manufactured in order to avoid “middle income trap.”

As for Thailand as an enter stage country for “middle income trap,” they can easily to understand its own situation and learn where they should concentrate on the field of industry. On the contrary, they can release some specific fields of segments which are more related to labor intensive procedure. This “Select and Concentration” strategy of each middle income trap country may well be effective to escape from this serious challenge.

This research revealed some significant features of Thai industrial structure, especially from automobile industry. There were two types of auto component and a material identified as missing link: one was electrification part and the other was the integrated steel mill segment and the metal fabrication in the upstream of steel industry.

In terms of electrification auto parts, the trend of auto manufacturing was at that time transforming from more physical conventional power control to electric power control like from drive belt pump to electric water pump, and from hydraulic power to electric power steering.

Through this transition of car industry, history of Thailand can help Thailand itself. Behind this changing of architecture of auto manufacturing, the previous conventional components factories hit by mega flood with serious damage. It was necessary to replace from conventional to new technologies. Therefore this changing trend coincidentally seemed good fortune for Thai auto industry as a whole for catching up new innovation stage if they fill up this “Industrial Missing Link” at that moment<sup>30</sup>.

The other significant “Industrial Missing Link” laid in the process of metal fabrication as well as a steel integrated mill in the top of upstream industry. This looked like quite serious “Industrial Missing Link” because it brought around additional cost to auto industrial due to import of the high grade qualified steel from Japan whose logistic cost added around 15 % rather than production in Japan.

Due to more energy conservation requirement, the tendency of the lighter, the better of steel for automobile body became the main stream to demand more metal fabrication procedure as well as such high grade qualified steel. You can find these “Industrial Missing Links” in the figure 7 and 8 below:

Figure 4: Results of “Industrial Missing Link” Survey  
Reference: JICA-Deloitte Research (2013)

Figure 5: Import value of steel  
Reference: JICA-Deloitte Research (2013)

Figure 6: Indochina Steel Supply  
Reference: JICA-Deloitte Research (2013)  
(see Annex)

---

<sup>30</sup> For instance, Honda Auto moved to Prachinburi and Cannon also shifted to Korat for new production lines after Thai mega flood in 2011.

Without understanding the trend of intermediate goods and its missing links, Thailand cannot overcome their “middle income trap” and therefore the government of Thailand might well reach to provide new policy package, so-called “Thailand 4.0” with “Industrial Cluster”

This approach can be also applied to the new policy package such as “Thailand 4.0” which is seeking the potential cluster development in Thailand. It is argued to find the vital of Dawei development from this discussion. But why? – How is the sequence of Dawei development as a solution against “middle income trap?”

### **Dawei Comprehensive Development**

Dawei Comprehensive Development Project, launched in the western edge of Southern Economic Corridor (Hereinafter is referred as “SEC”), was regarded as one of the most prior options for overcoming “middle income trap” because Dawei can fill up one of serious “industrial missing links” both in Thailand and also in ASEAN. Dawei, or Tavoy, old name of this city, was registered as the 1st national special economic zone (Hereinafter “SEZ”) out of three SEZs by the Government of Myanmar. Dawei, Thilawa near the Yangon City and Kyaukpadaung in the Eastern part of Myanmar were registered by Government of Myanmar. Dawei became the top runner since 2008 when Italian-Thai Development Public Company Limited committed to Dawei development. This location may well be regarded as a geopolitical and geo-economical strategic significance because it takes only 300 km from Bangkok, mega consumption hub in ASEAN, as well as 350 km from Industrial Hub in Eastern Seaboard in the coastal line of the Bay of Thailand.

It is also observed that if Dawei is completed, the passage to India, another emerging economy, will be easier to connect in Chennai which located in the Southern part of India. Chennai is the hub for automobile industry, so-called “Indian Detroit.” Eastern Seaboard is also called as “Asian Detroit.” Therefore if Dawei would be developed, Dawei can bridge both “Detroit” passing over the Bay of Bengal.

However the Dawei development project to start up since November 2013 when the Government of Thailand, Myanmar and Japan agreed to set up new steering function and three governments are now executing it step by step to prepare for the development under this tripartite function.

Figure 7: Map for Dawei  
Reference: JICA-Deloitte Research (2013)  
(see Annex)

In terms of the aspect of “Industrial Missing Link,” Dawei had a variety of solutions against “Industrial Missing Link” not only inside Thailand but also ASEAN as a whole. An integrated steel mill would be one of the most suitable candidates located in Dawei from the viewpoint of ASEAN and Thailand, because of the bottleneck of industrial value chain in ASEAN. As for Thai automobile industry, if Thailand could get any steel mill production hub in ASEAN especially in the neighboring countries, this would give more competitiveness to Thailand.

This development can also probably create a number of job opportunities in Myanmar which can receive the shifting labor force from Thailand as migrants to Dawei. This estimation in Figure 10 was conducted in NESDB referring to the empirical case in Thailand, Eastern Seaboard Development, to discuss more details of the impact of Dawei development in September 2013. This estimation shows that Dawei development could also provide tremendous benefit not only for Thailand which is able

to fill up their “Industrial Missing Link” but also Myanmar which really need job creation for the minority tribes such as Karen tribe alongside the border as for an inclusive development<sup>31</sup>. This job creation seemed to be a serious implication for “Thai-plus-One” because this can provide a tremendous job opportunity in Dawei for one of the candidates of “Thai-plus-One.”

However it was the serious problem that nobody understood the significance of Dawei as a context of industrial development rather than infrastructure development. It proved how serious some of the Japanese companies to set up the integrated steel mill in this site. In fact, Myanmar delegation already visited Kashima Industrial Zone for one typical existing model of development in Japan in October 2014.

Table 3: Job Creation Estimation in Dawei development<sup>32</sup>  
Reference: National Economic and Social Development Board  
(see Annex)

Unfortunately the way of development supported by public sectors was also different from the previous pattern of development. In 1980s when Thai Government tried to develop Eastern Seaboard, the administration led by Prime Minister General Prem Tinsulanonda decided to take an initiative for development of Eastern Seaboard as a national project. Therefore they borrowed money from Japan as ODA (Overseas Development Aid) in order to arrange a financial structure. When you read the Figure 11, we can easily understand that it was required the public support when it comes to such a mega national project. In a case of Eastern Seaboard, more than 60% of the entire development was covered by public money only from ODA.

As a result of the Eastern Seaboard, Regional GDP which comes from three provinces; Rayong Province, Chonburi Province and Chachoengsao Province covers about 16 % of the entire GDP of Thailand and if you look at the industrial output only, this figure out of this region can cover 1/4 of the whole of Thailand in 2009. ODA is a loan not a grant. So they have to payback but how to earn some money in the nation? Generally speaking, a national project is not an individual project which has to be estimated but the project require the actual fruits from the macroeconomic growth.

Table 4: Portion of Japanese ODA in the case of Eastern Sea board in Thailand  
Reference: Dawei Development PPP Committee  
(see Annex)

However, the stuck of political gestures against Dawei development might prove a sign of the decline about previous Japanese FDI proactive movement as well as National project promotion by the Japanese Government with ODA. In the end, a process of integrated steel mill missed this opportunity. Therefore the delay of Dawei development seems to issue a “death certification of Japanization” which will be visualized later, even though the Government of Japan keeps going for supporting the ASEAN connectivity with physical infrastructure development. “Industrial Missing

---

<sup>31</sup> Of course environmental problem is another serious issue behind the development. Japanese government introduced a model of eco-friendly city, Kitakyushu in front of Myanmar governmental delegation.

<sup>32</sup> Dr. Hiroyuki Taguchi, Japanese governmental officer from Prime Minister Office of Japan, led this estimation as JICA expert in Thailand



linkage” is much more important<sup>33</sup>.

After the funeral of the previous relation between Thailand and Japan, can we find any future cooperation for connectivity inside and outside Thailand? – An answer is in the cluster linkage or local to local network which is now waking up.

### 3. Industrial Cluster Linkage

Industrial cluster linkage between Thailand and Japan is going to be one of the new trends of connectivity based upon the two countries cooperation. This is in line with “Thailand 4.0” policy which goes to “innovation driven economy.”

In other word, the third approach for solving “middle income trap” from innovation which comes from “New Combination” between local wisdom of Thailand and high technology or only-one-technologies from Japanese each cluster and Small and Medium Enterprise (Hereinafter is referred as “SME”)s belonging to clusters. It means to provide a catalyst for cross-border innovation in Thailand or we can say “innovation in Thailand collaborated with Japan.”

#### From JAPANIZATION to De-JAPANIZATION

Before the argument of this topic, it is necessary to reveal the background behind these cluster linkage. It must also review the past and current trend of FDI in Thailand. This was drastically changed during the former half of 2010s, from 2010 to 2015, when the discussion of “the middle income trap” in Thailand is being raised. This new trend in this paper should be called as “de-Japanization” in comparison with the previous “Japanization” or production network model based upon the spread of Japanese supply-chain network under the Japanese multi-national companies, especially from auto mobile industry’s vertical maker-subcontractor relationship or so-called “KEIRETSU” system<sup>34</sup>. In this paper, “KEIRETSU” system is defined as this vertical strong fixed maker-subcontractor relationship, even though this term can be found as different meanings in a variety of prior literatures.

In other words, in the heyday of Japanese giant makers spreading their own production network in the emerging Asia which is regarded as “fragmentation and agglomeration”, this fragmented production network of these companies ironically helped to develop each cluster development with cluster linkages in the transformation from inter-organizational connection toward intra-organizational linkage within the emerging Asia. This will become one of the serious threat to these giant companies in accordance with the emerging cluster which can graduate from “KEIRETSU” and independent from the power of mega companies’ control. It is also kept in mind that this fragmentation and agglomeration urge to enhance the significance of SMEs rather than mega companies in the end. In this way, a new procurements networking is gradually emerging in this region (See Figure 8).

Figure 8: Fragmentation towards Cluster linkage

Reference: Author, (see Annex)

---

<sup>33</sup> Even though Dawei was registered as the 1st Special Economic Zone, Thilawa was already developed with cooperation with Japanese government.

<sup>34</sup> We can find a variety of literatures for Japanese Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) production network and how it is expanding and its background based upon geo-economics such as Fukunari Kimura (Kimura, F. (2006) and (2007)).

Japanese SMEs investments, to be honest, is increasing in Thailand recently. For instance, the number of Japanese SMEs which has already invested into Thailand during 2010 to 2014 was increasing. Comparing the previous generation during 1995 to 1999, when more than half of the entire companies belonged to big company category, but the figure of SMEs companies during 2010 to 2014 was 362 companies rather than 276 companies belonging to the big company<sup>35</sup>.

"March 11," or mega earthquake and tremendous tsunami in Japan, and mega flood in Thailand which occurred in the same year, 2011, could also come up with the new landscape of Thailand-Japan industrial relationship. Both severe natural disasters cut down the supply chain or "KEIRETSU" production network between Thailand and Japan at that time and these disasters made private companies awake more business continuity plan or contingency strategy for this supply chain. It means that Japanese companies tried to build up the backup system for production, on the one hand, and then to hesitate to rely only on the relationship of "KEIRETSU" system. More evidently, the redundancy of production backup brought more costly plan, on the one hand, and multi-national companies, on the other hand, could not maintain the previous strong tie with Japanese sub-contractors under the system of KEIRETSU or designated factories registration<sup>36</sup>.

They were slightly changing their mind to let their sub-contractors be more freely from these multinational makers. For example, POSCO, Korean steel company, was suddenly invited to KYOHOKAI, auto part sub-contractors' association under Toyota since April 2012 which is interpreted that TOYOTA got free hands for their procurement from not only Japanese steel makers but also from multiple options of the non-Japanese sub-contractors for steel as upstream of auto manufacturing<sup>37</sup>.

Figure 9: Changing the Trend of Industrial Structure in Thailand

Reference: Author

(see Annex)

In this way, we can find the tendency of transformation from KEIRETSU to Cluster around 2010. However, the term of "Cluster" seems a bit ambiguous definition. In this paper, "Cluster" will be defined as each local industrial accumulation which refers to Japanese Cluster and Thailand 4.0.

Table 5: Comparison of Cluster Policy

Reference: Author

(see Annex)

Thailand 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, and 4.0 were already described in the address of Thai Prime Minister in the Board of Investment Seminar On February 2017<sup>38</sup>. Although each version of Thailand does not reflect the actual historical sequence in Figure 14 above, it is helpful to understand the specific feature of

<sup>35</sup> Japan External Trade Organization (2015), pp.6

<sup>36</sup> "Designated factory" is one of the measures under the "KEIRETSU" system in which a maker procure their parts or materials only from the designated factories due to maintaining quality, delivering time and cost reduction.

<sup>37</sup> This evidence comes from

<http://www.kyohokai.gr.jp/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/e58d94e8b18ae4bc9ae382bfe382a4e383a0e38388e38394e38383e382afe382b9efbc88posco-japanefbc891.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha addressed in BOI seminar "Opportunity Thailand" on 15 February, 2017 to explain the classification of each Thailand 2.0, Thailand 3.0 and Thailand 4.0.

each cluster.

### **Industrial Linkage**

This cluster linkage is based on the private business relationship. In reality, previous linkage between Thailand and Japan were found in the vertical relationship, “KEIRETSU” system. Even doing in the arena of cross-border business, this was still inside the relationship of supply-chain of each multi-national company. It is time to start to melt down the “KEIRETSU” or “de-Japanization” in the end.

You can clearly understand to overestimate infrastructure development rather than industrial linkage and to ignore its cluster linkage. Although discussion of connectivity usually focuses on the infrastructure or physical connection, however, from the viewpoint of avoiding “middle income trap,” “industrial linkage” is much more prior rather than “infrastructure linkage.” In other word, infrastructure connectivity seems like a “servant” and industrial connectivity must be a “host” or “Emperor” both of the regional economy as well as of the economic integration of ASEAN.

### **Otagai Project by Otagai Forum Association**

Even if it is understandable for the significance of industrial linkage between Thailand and Japan, the implementation body was required. Otagai Project operated by Otagai Forum Association<sup>39</sup> which is Thai public organization under Ministry of Industry of Thailand, has been taken a main figure for their operating the whole picture of a bridge between Thailand and Japan. But this is not only connection but also this is a sort of driving innovation from this region. Innovation is one of the most vital medicine for Thailand as “middle income trap” country and it can be brought through the new platform located in-between cross-border.

Under the Otagai project, more than 50 projects going on and 16 local governments join this project. Since 2011, 15 international conferences as Otagai Forum (former “Otagai Conclave<sup>40</sup>”) have been taken place in order to ignite the transnational innovation between Thailand and Japan. As for these strong expectation to this project from Thai Government, Minister of Industry. Ms. Atchaka Sibunruang already delivered inaugural speech in the opening ceremony on the 13th Otagai Forum in Fukui and Minister of Science and Technology, Dr. Pichet Durongkaveroj also participated in the 14th Otagai Forum in Tokyo.

Figure 10: Otagai Project Map and its transnational innovation

Reference: Author

Table 6: Chronology of Otagai Forum Event

Reference: Author

Table 7: Pattern of Innovation under the Otagai Project

Reference: Author

(see Annex)

It must be moving toward the concept of “cross-border innovation.” It is coincidentally an epoch when Otagai Project as the new platform for transnational innovation during Thai governmental

---

<sup>39</sup> It can be bound the Otagai Forum Association in <https://otagai.asia/>

<sup>40</sup> Previous activities can be found in <http://kenplatz.nikkeibp.co.jp/otagaien/>

dealing with mega flood in 2011. Of course “de-Japanization” and “middle income trap” were also starting at that moment.

Otagai Project was came up with in the mid terms of mega flood in October, 2011. At that time, one of the most serious challenges came from the difficulty how to keep each industrial supply-chain. Serious natural disaster like Thai mega flood, makes their value chain cut down due to their physical damages such as road disconnection and stuck of port operation.

These damages stayed not in local, but the influence happened over the globe from the beginning of mega flood. On the one hand, Honda Auto. faced very serious damage in their own factory in Ayutthaya, on the other hand, Tokyota did not get any damage directly from mega flood however, some sub-contractors hit by mega flood and then Toyota also faced challenges in their production at that time. In the same sense, Japanese business people could not eat any Yakitori, or Japanese version satay, in the Yakitori bar after business hour in the end of 2011, because the Thai production base of Yakitori was destroyed by mega flood. Japan was one of the top prior export destinations for Yakitori from Thailand, therefore if even in the trouble happened only in Thailand, the whole value chain was stuck in the end.

“Otagai sama” in Japanese, literally means “helping each other” especially in case of emergency<sup>41</sup>. From the beginning, Otagai Project focused upon such business continuity plan (Hereinafter is referred as “BCP”). Big companies can more easily set up dual system for backup production. However how about SMEs? One of ideas was to coordinate BCP sister clusters between Thailand and Japan. There were some best practices in Japan at that time. For instance, after Chuetsu Earthquake occurred in Niigata in 2006, Tsubame Sanjyo city which is famous for their a cluster of tableware as well as plating and Yokohama, another cluster for plating, agreed with the BCP sister cluster linkage contract which carry the BCP plan relied on the concept of helping each other<sup>42</sup>.

Some people may well wonder such a beautiful story seems only in a book but this was a real story, even in the rival companies. In mega flood situation in Thailand, we could find some typical examples for the potential cross border cooperation at that time. For example, ROAM, a semiconductor company, hit by serious flood in Ayutthaya at that time. They could not to continue to supply to makers. At that time, they asked RENESAS Electronics, one of the serious competitors of ROAM to replace their supply to makers<sup>43</sup>.

Therefore the Otagai Project reported to the Thai cabinet to implement it in November 2011 just after the Thai delegation to discuss the flood problem, with Japanese government came back from Tokyo. This project endorsed by Secretary General of NESDB in Thai Government, Mr. Arkhom Termpittayapaisith in February 2012 and Director-General of Industrial Promotion Bureau, Ministry of Industry of Thailand, Dr. Pasu Loharjin agreed to hand it on in Ministry of Industry in March 2012. However this was only the back-up system for supply-chain. We have to wait for one more story behind this backup. After starting the system of this Otagai project networking, the clue of evoking innovation was found. For example, a case of two plating clusters as sister cluster both in Tsubame Sanjyo in Niigata and Yokohama got new complementally cooperation. In plating procedure,

---

<sup>41</sup> More precisely speaking, “Masaka no tokiha Otagai Sama.” means helping each other in case of emergency in Japanese old saying.

<sup>42</sup> These activities are referred in these articles:

[http://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXNASFK2600G\\_W1A420C1000000/](http://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXNASFK2600G_W1A420C1000000/)

[http://www.pref.shizuoka.jp/sangyou/sa-510/bcp/modelplan/documents/3rd\\_21\\_jirei.pdf](http://www.pref.shizuoka.jp/sangyou/sa-510/bcp/modelplan/documents/3rd_21_jirei.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> Hosotsubo, S. (2012), pp.12

normally speaking, companies pour any part just into the plating bath. However Tsubame Sanjyo cluster provides a service after pouring them into the plating bath, they also conduct a deburring procedure because of their strengthening, scrubbing technology or “MIGAKI” and its know-how.

In this situation, if some customers want to get perfect surface of the product, they should order to Tsubame Sanjyo cluster. Otherwise some customers is willing to reduce their cost in the plating process, then they should ask it to Yokohama cluster. Such a “division of labor” can contribute toward fitting to each special need in diversity of customers’ preference. This also made us aware of the distinction or even “creating” distinction of each cluster’s feature or strengthen even from the same segment of production.

Through the discovery of collaboration patterns of cluster to cluster, Mr. Passakorn Chairat, director of Japan Desk, Ministry of Industry of Thailand, at that time, agreed that the Otagai Project should go beyond BCP function and then to start such a complement combination between Thai and Japanese clusters<sup>44</sup> in 2013. It was time to start these cross-border innovation caused by the cluster to cluster linkage between Thailand and Japan.

As it has been already argued it, one of the most serious factors against “middle income trap” is to evoke spontaneous innovation from this middle income country, Thailand. Therefore if Thailand finds out a way of new innovation, they will be able to avoid “middle income trap” and then to catch up their original path of economic growth.

Innovation was defined as “new combination” by Joseph A. Schumpeter in the book “Theorie der wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung<sup>45</sup>” in the early decades of the previous century. In this definition, innovation was relatively broader concept including some new collaborations of existing technologies or know-how and new ways of utilization or sales method<sup>46</sup>. Therefore this can fit to the cross-border or transnational innovation because these existing technologies or know-how have been already applied and utilized in the developed countries and if these solutions will be introduced into the emerging countries such as Thailand, it can be also contributive toward new development in the emerging countries.

Otagai Project has been focusing this new combination through the special methodology of “catalyst of transnational innovation” between Thailand and Japan. From the viewpoint of the advanced countries like Japan, Japan itself also has faced challenging stagnation for creating innovation now. One of the reasons why Japan is being in stuck of economy so far is difficulty of finding room for innovation arena.

Actually Japan itself has completed Japanese system or “Japanization” in Japan. It consists of two strong frameworks: “strict regulation like a rock wall” (GANBAN KISEI) and Strong tie alongside “KEIRETSU” relationship system (KANBAN KEIRETSU) supported by the strong “dominant logic<sup>47</sup>” and “vested interest” in Japanese establishment.

If Japanese SMEs want to create new innovation, one idea is that they would like to escape Japanese system to fly to Thailand as new frontier for innovation. That is the reason why 16 local governments

---

<sup>44</sup> After collection of study of the possibility about the cluster linkages between Thailand and Japan, he proposed to change the definition of the word “Otagai BC” from “Otagai business continuity” toward “Otagai Business Community” and then to declare the new concept of Otagai project in 2013.

<sup>45</sup> Schumpeter, J.A. (1926)

<sup>46</sup> Apple Company’s i phone and i phad is typical example of innovation in comparison with “iPS Cell” discovered by Dr. Yamanaka, Nobel Prize winner.

<sup>47</sup> Govindarajan, V. and Trimble, C. (2012)

jumped in this project and so many Japanese SMEs are willing to participate in the Otagai Project. After encountering Otagai Project with the “Industrial Missing Link” in Thailand which is one of the strong tool which can indicate the lack of industrial segments easily rather than previous conventional approach for “Business Matching” between Thailand and Japan.

Therefore Otagai or “helping each other” does not mean just a political protocol or gesture but an actual and serious necessary alliance between Thailand and Japan. This is the complementary innovation between them: local wisdom in Thailand and advanced technology and know-how from Japan.

The concept and system of “Otagai” has already been disseminated toward ASEAN countries since ASEAN-Japan Economic Ministers Meeting in Naypyidaw in August, 2014. After the meeting, the 15th Meeting of Otagai Forum was held in Mandalay in February 2017. Apart from that, a variety of workshops of Otagai were taken place in Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam.

### **Toward the Southern Economic Corridor**

While the Otagai concept disseminating all over the Mekong sub-region, the cluster linkage is now expanding alongside the SEC. It is again mentioned that Dawei is now trying to build up a fishery cluster which focus on mackerel fish to be some food processing. Dawei fishery association is now planning to export mackerel fish from Dawei to Thailand. One of Japanese food-processing clusters has already expressed some interest to transfer their special cold chain technology to Dawei. If it is collaborated between Myanmar, Thailand and Japan as local to local cluster, Dawei, Thailand and Japanese local cluster for fishery and food-processing, it is great opportunity for enjoying the innovation-driven output based on this cluster linkage.

It is also vice versa, Kanchanaburi in Thailand has a potential banana cluster would like to cooperation with Dawei to import banana from Dawei in order to response to the increasing demand of banana in Thai market. This kind of cluster linkage as industrial connectivity is also now being established in addition to Japan and Thailand or Japan and ASEAN cluster linkage as an actual industrial connectivity for economic integration in ASEAN.

### **19 Clusters Development Project Conducted by Mekong Institute<sup>48</sup>**

It is time to combine between Otagai Forum and 19 clusters in SEC for the new era of industrial connectivity between Thailand, Japan and the other ASEAN countries. This cross border value chain will lead more accurate economic integration near future beyond 2015 or ASEAN economic community (hereinafter it referred as “AEC”) or economic integration for innovation-driven economy of Thailand or “Thailand 4.0.”

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is uncovered the fact in Figure 12 that transnational innovation as an ideal solution against “middle income trap” and, in reality, Thai government tried to take a specific policy in this context.

Thailand, as always, seems to be able to become “a godsend, a windfall” from ASEAN economic

---

<sup>48</sup> Actual Running Survey in the “Value chain Bottleneck in the Southern economic corridor,” which go by car from Dawei via Kanchanaburi, Sa Keao, Trat and Cambodia to Ho Chi Ming in Vietnam was conducted by Mekong Institute during March 11 to 30, 2017.

integration or AEC which starts since the end of 2015. That is very opportunity for Thai's initiating new game in ASEAN for rebuilding industrial network in accordance with AEC. AEC can build up a cross-border platform for the movement of avoiding "middle income trap"<sup>49</sup> in the whole region. As we have already known it, "Thai plus One" is one of these typical responses to "middle income trap" in the end.

If they utilize some benefit from Dawei development and Otagai Forum network, Thailand will take a great initiative onto ASEAN regional framework; the global presence of regional economic power and; the open innovation platform for advanced countries like Japan. In that day, how much magnitude from the networking type of cooperation between Thailand and Japan, say, Otagai project, is one candidate for sitting on the main sheet for ASEAN economic integration as a catalyst of "Thainnovation."

Figure 11: Scheme of the discussion  
Reference: Author

Figure 12: Actual Running Survey in the Southern Economic Corridor  
Reference: Mekong Institute Research

Table 8: Lead Time from A city to B city in the Survey  
Reference: Author

Table 9: 19 Clusters development under Southern Economic Corridor  
Reference: Author  
(see Annex)

## References

- Gill, I. and Kharas, H. (2007). *An East Asian Renaissance: Ideas for Economic Growth*, Washington D.C.: The World Bank
- Govindarajan, V. and Trimble, C. (2012). *Reverse Innovation*, MA: Harvard Business Review Press
- Hosotsubo, S. (2012). *BC on the spirits of Otagai Sama*, Global Management December 2012: Japan Overseas Enterprise Association
- Japan External Trade Organization (2015). *The Survey for Japanese Companies entering into Thailand 2014*, Bangkok: Japan External Trade Organization
- Japan International Cooperation Agency & Deloitte, (2013). *Study on Economic Impact through Southern Economic Corridor Development for Enhancing Competitiveness in Thailand*, JICA-Deloitte Final Report, Bangkok: Japan International Cooperation Agency
- Kimura, F. (2006). International Production and Distribution Networks in East Asia: Eighteen Facts, Mechanics, and Policy Implications, *Asian Economic Policy Review: Japan Center for Economic Research*
- Kimura, F. (2007). The mechanics of production networks in Southeast Asia: the fragmentation theory approach, *Hitotsubashi University Repository CEI Working Paper Series, No. 2007-8*: Institute of Economic Research
- Rodrick, D. (1993). DO LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES HAVE A HIGH-WAGE OPTION?, *NBER Working Papers Series, Working Paper No. 4451*, Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research,

---

<sup>49</sup> If you look at Integrated Germany, we can understand the effect of the integration between East and West Germany can enjoy both of cheap labor resources from the East and more knowledge and capital intensive facility from the West.

Schumpeter, J.A. (1926). *Theorie der wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung* 2nd edition, translated by Shionoya, Y. and Nakayama, I. and Tobata, S., (1977), Tokyo: Iwanami Publisher  
Suehiro, A. (2014). *Studies on Emerging Asian Economies: Beyond the Catch-up Industrialization*, Tokyo, Iwanami Publisher (in Japanese)

## Annex

*Table 1: Criteria for Income Wise*

	Bottom (From)	Top (To)
Lower middle –income economies	\$1,026	\$4,035
Upper middle – income economies	\$4,036	\$12,475
Higher-income economies	\$12,476	more

*Reference: This sheet was based on World Bank Database in “World Bank Country and Lending Groups”<sup>50</sup>*

*Table 2: Cases of “Thai plus One”*

Company Name	Location	Production	The Number of Employee
YAZAKI	Koh Kong, Cambodia	Wire Harness Auto Parts	600 from the beginning
Nidec Corporation	Poipet, Cambodia	HDD Parts	5000 in the phase III
TOYOTA BOSHOKU	Savannakhet, Lao PDR	Sheet Cover Auto Parts	180 from the beginning
NIKON	Savannakhet, Lao PDR	Entry model Lense	800

*Reference: Author made it through these websites<sup>51</sup>*

<sup>50</sup> <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519>

<sup>51</sup> [http://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXNASDD170BC\\_X11C12A2TJ1000/](http://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXNASDD170BC_X11C12A2TJ1000/)  
<http://www.e-logit.com/loginews/2012:052808.php>  
<http://www.toyota-boshoku.com/common/jp/pdf/140519.pdf>  
[http://www.nikon.co.jp/news/2013/0321\\_01.htm](http://www.nikon.co.jp/news/2013/0321_01.htm)

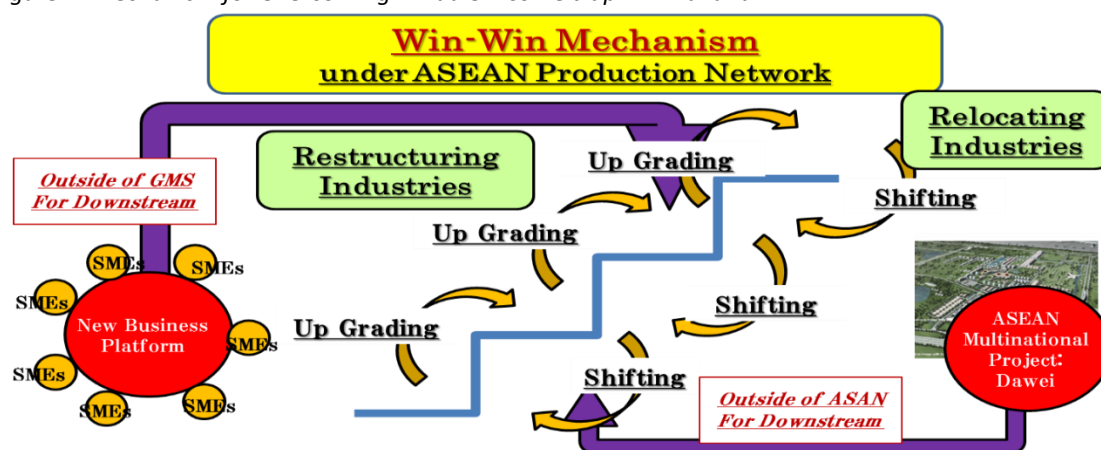


Figure 3: “Thai plus One” vs. “China plus One”

	Thai plus One	China plus One
Term	Since 2008, Lehman Crisis, it started and East Japan Mega Earthquake and Mega Flood in Thailand in 2011 promoted this phenomena and then the new policy of Thai Government ordered to increase the statutory minimum wage in 2012 to 2013.	Since the early era of 2000s * Mr. Shu Watanabe, CEO & President of JETRO at that time, was regarded as a Godfather of this phenomena as “China Plus One.”
Destination for “plus One”	Relatively low wage countries (Neighbor countries such as Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam)	ASEAN (Thailand as one of the candidates) and India
Features of new Factories	Satellite Factory	Replacement of Main Factory
Tendency	Active	Passive
Purpose	Optimization of each product process wise	Risk management (Distribution of risk
Benefit	Low wage labor force & Privilege such ask special custom duty	Avoidance of political risk

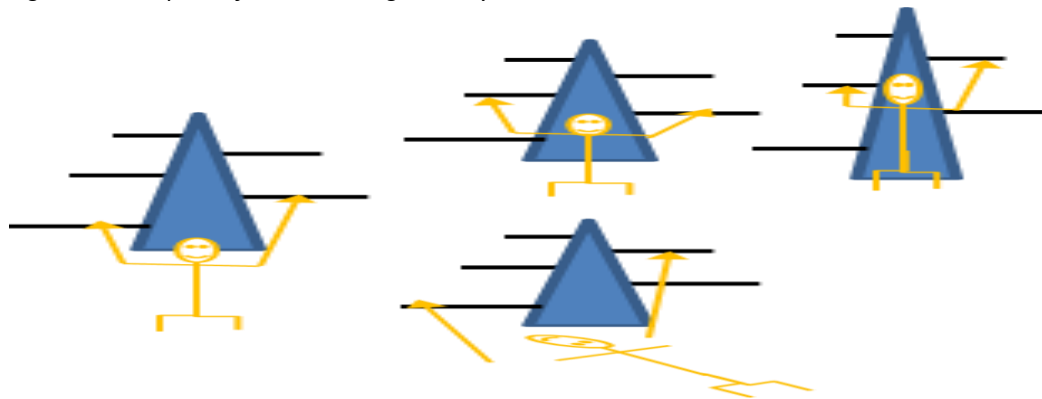
Reference: Author

Figure 4: Mechanism for Overcoming “middle income trap” in Thailand



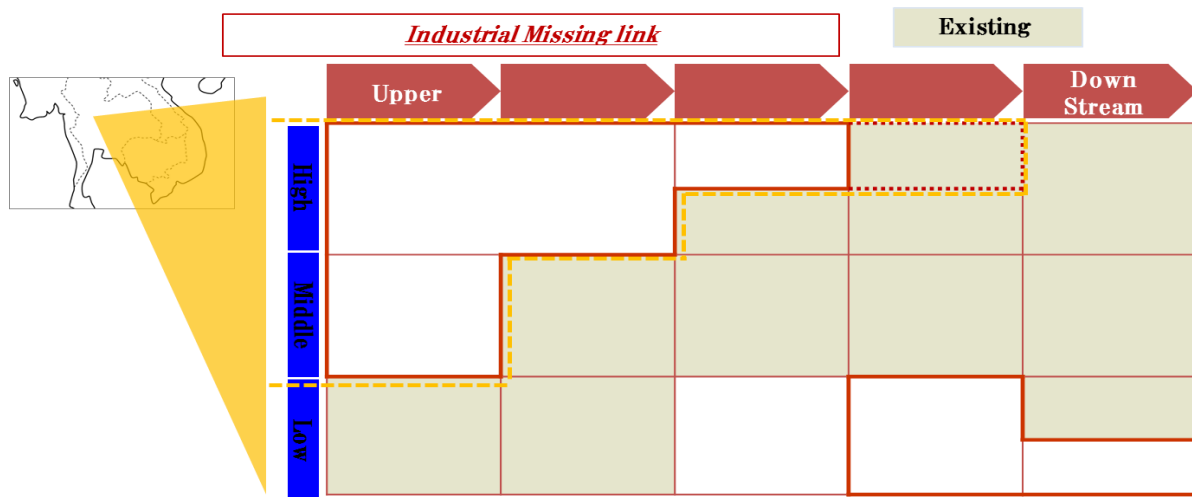
Reference: Author

Figure 5: Metaphor of Tree Climbing Monkey



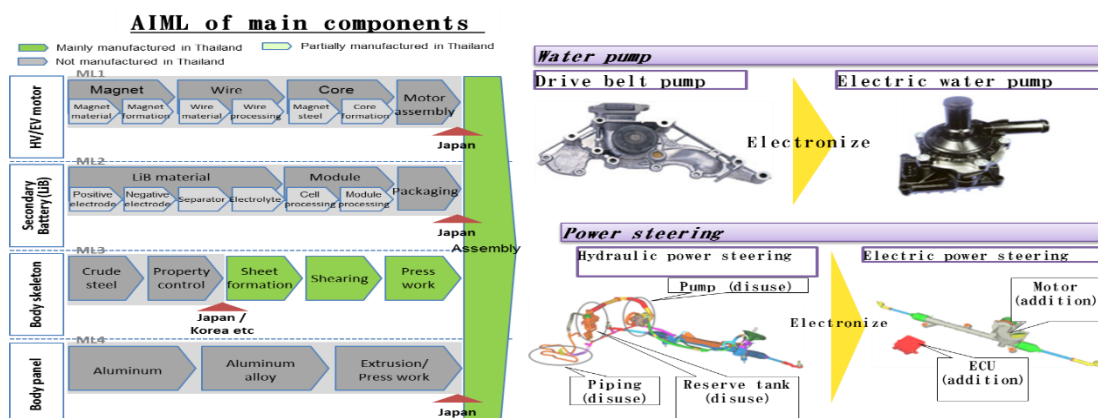
Reference: Author

Figure 6: Concept of “Industrial Missing Link”



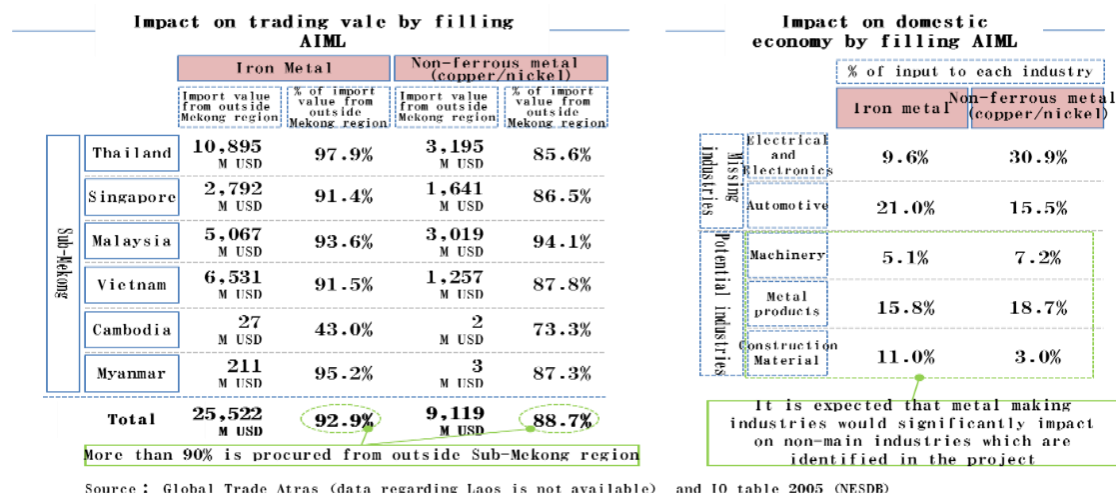
Reference: Author

Figure 7: Results of “Industrial Missing Link” Survey



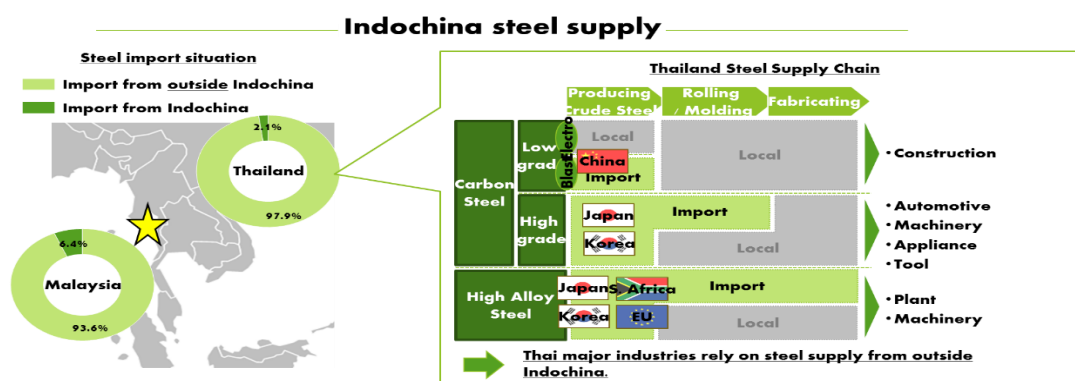
Reference: JICA-Deloitte Research (2013)

Figure 8-1: Import value of steel



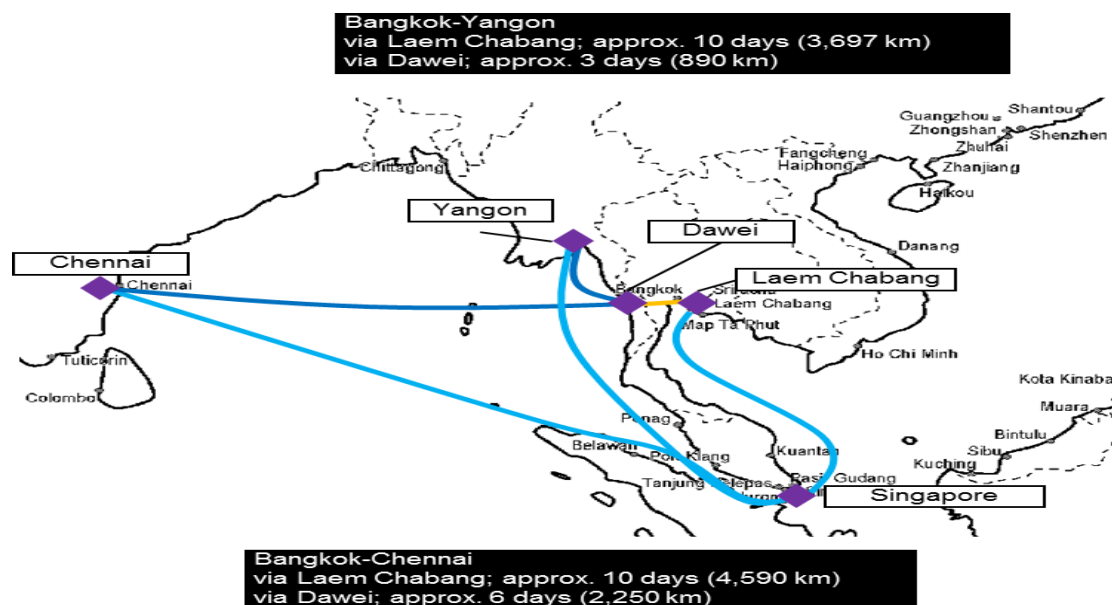
Reference: JICA-Deloitte Research (2013)

Figure 8-2: Indochina Steel Supply



Reference: JICA-Deloitte Research (2013)

Figure 9: Map for Dawei



Reference: Dawei PPP Committee (2013)

Figure 10: Job Creation Estimation in Dawei development<sup>52</sup>

Industries	Area (ha)	Estimation projected by Thai industrial estates	Reference from Thai Case
Steel	2,200	300,000 workers	Rayong 10 Workers / ha 13,000ha
Petrochemical	2,877		
Oil & Natural Gas	1,453		
Shipbuilding	62		
Fertilizer	469		
Middle Industries	6,218		
Light Industries	3,475		Chonburi 50 Workers / ha 3,500ha

\* Industry includes manufacturing, mining, construction, electric, gas and water.

\* The assumption of GDP-industrial structure in 2020 is that Myanmar will reach Thailand in 1990.

It is because Myanmar's investment ratio to GDP will reach 40% in 2020 (25% in 2010), which was in 1990 in Thailand (See MCDV).

\* It took 15 years in Thailand for the share of "Industry" to increase from 26% (1975) to 37% (1990).

Reference: National Economic and Social Development Board / Dawei PPP Committee

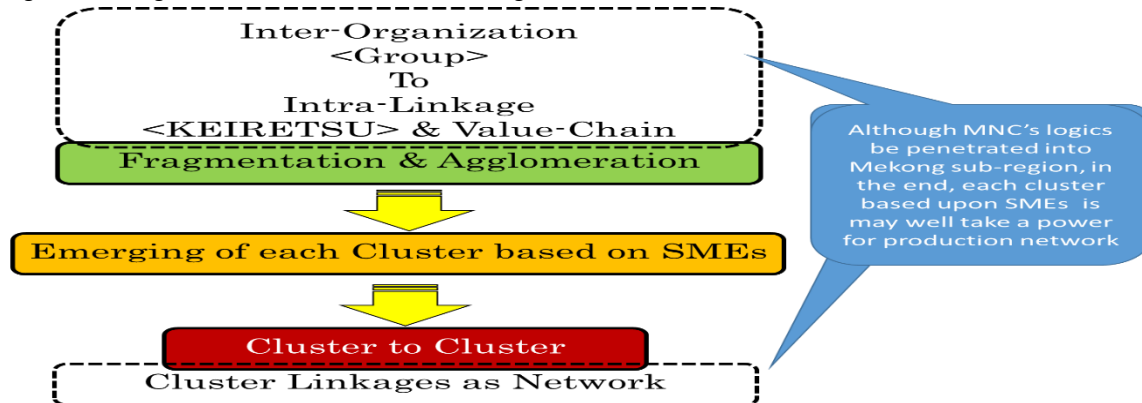
Figure 11: Portion of Japanese ODA in the case of Eastern Sea board in Thailand

Project		Japanese ODA Loan Share (%)
Map Ta Phut area	Port Project	67.5%
	Industrial Estate Project	48%
Laem Chabang	Port Project	68.8%
	Industrial Estate Project	60.7%
Water Resource Development / Water Pipeline Project	Nong Pla Lai Project	34.9%
	Map Ta Phut Pipeline Project	72.6%
	Nong Pla Lai Pipeline Project	53.8%
Railway Project	Sattahip – Map Ta Phut Railway Project	40.6%
	Klong Sip Kao – Kaeng Khoi Railway Project	49.1%
Road Project	Chonburi – Pattaya New Highway Construction Project	88.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>62.0%</b>

Reference: Author made it based on the materials from Dawei Development PPP Committee

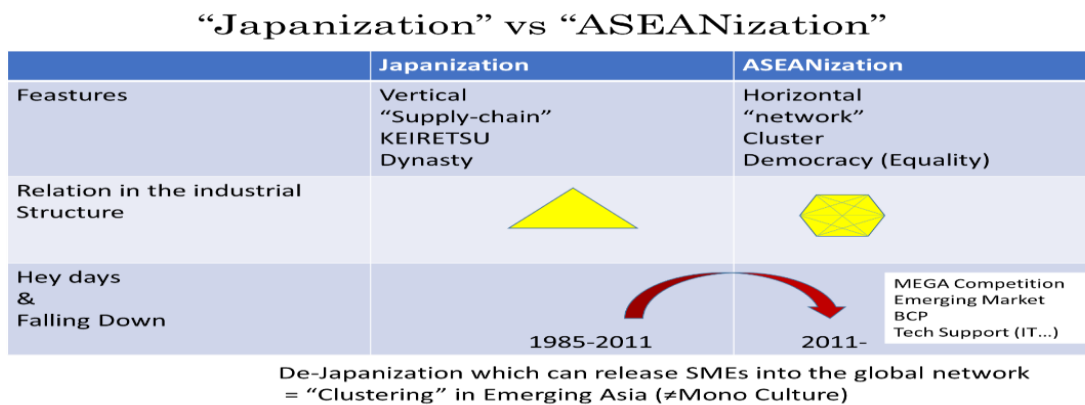
<sup>52</sup> Dr. Hiroyuki Taguchi, Japanese governmental officer from Prime Minister Office of Japan, led this estimation as JICA expert in Thailand

Figure 12: Fragmentation towards Cluster linkage



Reference: Author

Figure 13: Changing the Trend of Industrial Structure in Thailand



Reference: Author

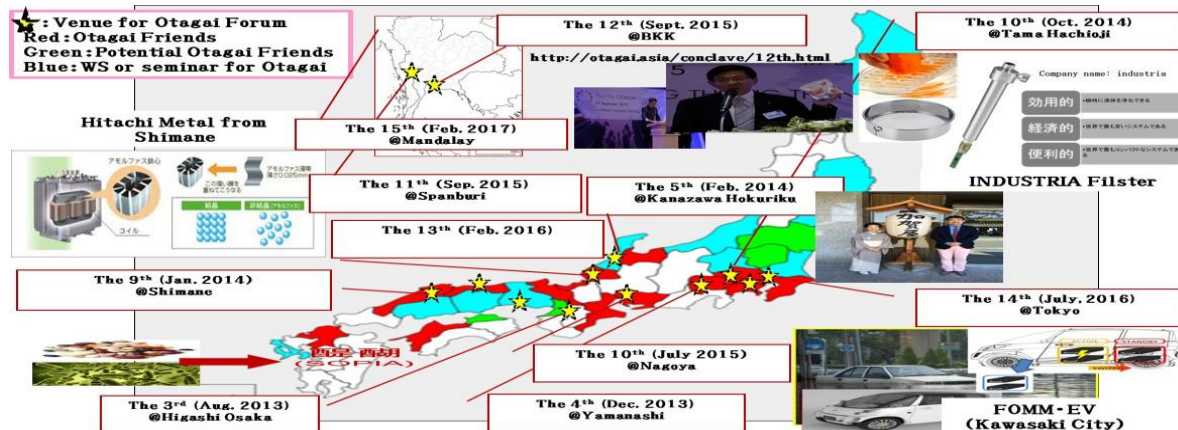
Figure 14: Comparison of Cluster Policy

	Feature	Nationwide or Regional	Agenda
Japan Cluster Policy	Sub-contractor to Tech SMEs, but just almost all is distribution policy	Regional	Regional Development
Thailand 1.0 & 2.0 Version	OTOP inspired by Japanese OVOP: Political legacy	Regional (Local)	Narrowing gap between urban & rural
Thailand 3.0 Version	Value Chain by Michel Potter	Nationwide	Preparation of post FDI driven economy
Thailand 4.0 Version	Thailand 4.0	Regional	Middle Income Trap

Reference: Author

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

Figure 15: Otagai Project Map and its transnational innovation



Reference: Author

Figure 16: Chronology of Otagai Forum Event

	Timing	Venue	Purpose	Outcome
1 <sup>st</sup>	Apr.2013	Tokyo	Supporting for JP SMEs activities & Missing Links	Recognize SMEs Investment to ASEAN as cluster wise and agree the significance of Otagai Project
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Jun.2013	Tottori	Introduction of Technology Census	Invent "Technology Census for Technological Missing Link" and cooperate Thai SME "Shindan"
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Aug.2013	Osaka	Extension from Thailand	Expand Otagai Project toward Thai Plus One countries such as Vietnam and Lao PDR
4 <sup>th</sup>	Dec.2013	Yamanashi	Alliance with Industrial Association	Introduce FA system in order to overcome "Middle Income Trap" in Thailand
5 <sup>th</sup>	Feb.2014	Hokuriku Kanazawa	Sustainable Tourism	Start "Sustainable Tourism Industry" as industrial policy
6 <sup>th</sup>	May.2014	Ibaragi	Regional Linkages in Emerging Asia	Encourage Tourism Industrial Alliance in Japan for Emerging Asia
7 <sup>th</sup>	Jul.2014	Himeji	Industrial development by Tourism	Mutual Cooperation between Japan and ASEAN for developing value-chain
8 <sup>th</sup>	Oct.2014	TAMA Hachioji	Issues Solution Business Matching	Create the method of "Reverse Innovation Matching"
9 <sup>th</sup>	Jan.2015	Shimane Okuizumo Aichi	New Supporting Mechanism Supply Chain Finance	Apply JCM and BCP policy to Local Revitalization Policy in Japan with Emerging Asia
10 <sup>th</sup>	Jul.2015	Aichi		
11 <sup>th</sup>	Sep.2015	Spanburi	SEC Development	Picking up local companies in Spanburi
12 <sup>th</sup>	Sep.2015	Bangkok	SAMURAI Presentation	Enhancing Transnational Innovation
13 <sup>th</sup>	Feb.2016	Fukui	SAMURAI Presentation	Enhancing Transnational Innovation
14 <sup>th</sup>	Jul.2016	Tokyo	SAMURAI Presentation	Agromovation, Aquanovation, Supplinovation
15 <sup>th</sup>	Feb.2017	Mandalay Myanmar	SAMURAI Presentation	Enhancing Transnational Innovation via Big Data Finding solution business in Agriculture & Food Processing

Reference: Author

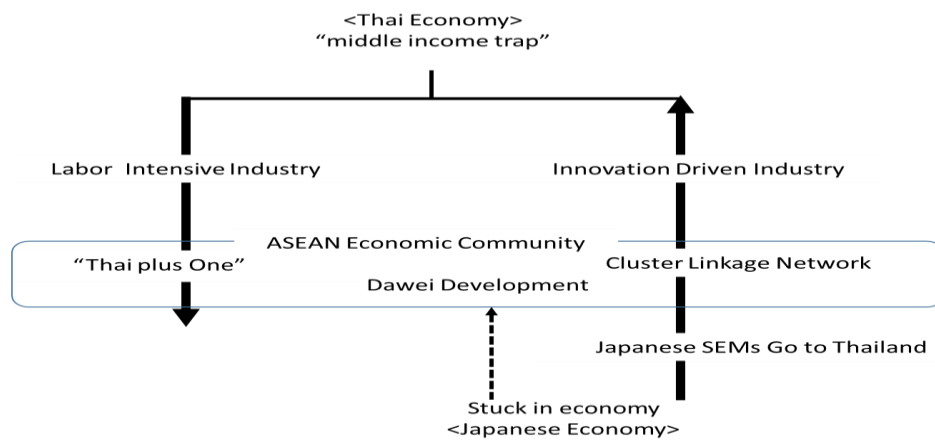
Figure 17: Pattern of Innovation under the Otagai Project

Pattern of Innovation	Case from Otagai project
New Production / Service	Swimming EV
New Way of Production	Sericulture 2.0 Silk Worm Factory Internet of Things (IoT) Agriculture
New Market Channel	7 Star Bus into Mekong Land Tour
New Supply Sources of Materials & Parts	Low Protein Rice into Indica Rice
New Organization	Law Firm Network

Reference: Author



Figure 18: Scheme of the discussion



Reference: Author

Figure 19-1: Actual Running Survey in the Southern Economic Corridor



Reference: Mekong Institute Research

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

Figure 19-2: Lead Time from A city to B city in the Survey

City (FROM)	City (TO)	Lead Time
BKK	Phu Nam Ron ①	2H30M
Phu Nam Ron ①	Myitta ①	2H30M to 3H
Myitta ①	Dawei ①	1H to 1H30M
Kanchanaburi ①	Sa-Kaeo ②	6H to 6H30M
Sa-kaeo ②	Banteay ② Meanchey	2H
Banteay ② Meanchey	Phnom Penh ④	6H
Phnom Penh ④	Say Rieng ⑤	2H30M to 3H
Phnom Penh ④	Kampot ⑥	3H to 3H30M
Kampot ⑥	Koh Kong ③	3H30M
Koh Kong ③	Trat ③	2H
Ho Chi Ming	Tay Ninh ⑦	2H30M to 3H
Ho Chi Ming	Can Tho ⑧	3H30M to 4H

Reference: Author

Figure 20: 19 Clusters development under Southern Economic Corridor

Country	Province	Proposed Product Chains	Otagai Cluster Location
<b>Cambodia</b>	Banteay Meanchey	Silk Production	Sericulture 2.0 Kyoto
	Svay Rieng	Rice	Rice Valley Niigata
	Koh Kong	Sea Water Fish Sauce	Industrial Saitama / TAMA Cluster
	Kampot	Natural Salt	Salt Cluster Hokuriku
<b>Myanmar</b>	Tanintharyi (Dawei)	Mackerel (Pla Tuu)	Fisherman Cluster Nagasaki
<b>Thailand</b>	Kanchanaburi	Banana processing	Fruit Cluster Yamanashi
	Sakeao	Aromatic Herb	Sophia TAMA Cluster
	Trat	Community-based Tourism	SHINKI Himeji
<b>Vietnam</b>	Kien Giang	White (leg) shrimp	Fisherman Cluster Nagasaki
	Tay Ninh	Custard Apple	Horica Niigata

Reference: Author



## **Looking Back to a Colonial Past: a Comparative Study between the Discourse of Thainess in Thailand and the Discourse of Multiculturalism in Singapore**

**Metaveevinij, Veluree**  
College of Innovation, Thammasat University  
Thailand

-----

### **Abstract**

This paper compares the ways in which Thailand and Singapore control their citizens through state discourse. Unlike Singapore, Thailand or Siam was never formally colonized, but the country was nonetheless modernized by the encounter with a colonial power by Siamese elites. One of colonial legacies is a discourse of Thainess. Siamese elites constructed Thainess to homogenize a diversity of cultures and races and unify the Siam boundary, unlike the British empire, which ruled colonial Singapore by dividing spaces and power according to the subjects' race. This practice conceived a concept of multiculturalism that signifies and celebrates differences of race, religion, and culture in Singapore. This paper unfolds the discourses of Thainess and multiculturalism from the colonial to postcolonial era. On the surface these two discourses seem totally different, but I argue that both are similarly used by the states as an instrument of governmentality. A notion of racial homogeneity and heterogeneity has constantly been articulated in citizenship and nation-making in Thailand and Singapore. Policy documents and government campaigns are examined to show how these discourses have continuously circulated in both countries.

**Keywords:** Thainess, multiculturalism, discourse

### **Introduction**

Singapore is commonly known as a country which accepts and promotes ideologies of multiculturalism. Thailand, on the contrary, is recognized as a country which assimilates different cultures to the dominant culture. Thongchai Winichakul (1994) examined the history of Thainification and the construction of Thainess through a process of map-making in his acclaimed work *Siam mapped*. The study reveals that Thainess has been constructed by elites to establish cultural hegemony that supports power structure in Thailand. *Siam mapped* paves the way for many other studies to examine the ideologies of Thainess in cultural sphere.

While it is widely accepted that ideologies of Thainess are closely related to political powers, it is mistaken understood that ideologies of multiculturalism are free from political powers. In fact, both ideologies were initiated during the colonial era and both were used as a way to control citizens. While Thainess seems to suppress marginalized cultures and multiculturalism seems to liberate

cultural diversity, none of these ideologies ever exists without political powers.

This paper, therefore, unfolds the discourses of Thainess and multiculturalism from the colonial to postcolonial era. On the surface, these two discourses seem totally different. I, however, argue that both of them are similarly used by the states as an instrument of governmentality. A notion of racial homogeneity and heterogeneity has constantly been articulated in citizenship and nation-making in Thailand and Singapore. Policy documents and government campaigns are examined to show how these discourses have continuously circulated in both countries.

## Thainess

The construction of Thainess was a site of studies of many scholars such as Thongchai Winichakul (1994, 2000), Saichon Sattayanurak (2005, 2016) and Tamara Loos (2006). The establishment of Thainess could be traced back to the reign of King Rama V when the king centralized power to encounter with the colonization forces. 'Thainess', then, was defined by the royal rituals that were placed to make the king a center of the state, while all races were subjects under the king's absolute power (Saichon, 2016: 320). Once Siamese monarch reformed the state to centralize their power, ethnic minorities were suppressed to strengthen hierarchical social structure. The threat of colonization was deployed to justify new territorial boundaries (Loos, 2006).

The abovementioned arguments are similar to what Thongchai Winichakul (2000) proposes that, in the late nineteen and early twentieth century, Siamese elites had created the 'Other Within' to confirmed their superiority. There are two kind of the Others, which Thongchai called 'the Wild Others' and 'the Docile Others'.

The Wild Others include *Chao pa*, which was described as native people who still lived in the jungles and mountains. These forest peoples became objects of Siamese elites' gaze. They represented 'strangeness' (*pleak pralat*) and their existence was in contrast with civilization that Siamese elites desire for. On the other hand, the Docile Others or *Chao Bannok* is ordinary villagers who had lived peacefully under the rule of Siam.

Thongchai (2000: 55) argues that the different narratives between *Chao pa* and *Chao Bannok* have created space and the temporality of civilization. The different level of civilization between Siamese elites and the Others within Siamese boundary makes Siamese rulers feel superior to marginalized others.

Siam elites, then, considered the West as a site of power. Colonialism was exercised by the Bangkok elites that considered themselves as a supra-ethnic ruling caste and acted as if colonial masters who governed all races within Siam boundary (Kasian, 2001).

Thainess has changed from time to time. Nonetheless, the way of constructing Thainess still relied on creating self/others simultaneously. In the reign of King Rama VI, the king had shaped the meaning of Thainess by making 'Thai nation' (*chat*), 'Buddhism' (*satsana*), and 'the monarch' (*phra mahakrasat*) as three pillars of Thainess. Like the previous regime, the king constructed 'Others', especially Chinese immigrants who had high economic power at that time. The Chinese immigrants were defamed by the king for 'not becoming Thai' (Saichon, 2016: 321-322).

After the 1932 revolution, the political leaders modified the meaning of Thainess to suit with the new political system. Luang Wichitwathakan was an intellectual that had a significant role to construct Thainess during this period. He played his role by being a director of the Fine Arts Department and promoting 'Thainess' through Thai arts and cultures (Saichon, 2016: 330). When facing the cold war

and communist threat, Thai ruling class, including Luang Wichitwathakan, used 'Thainess' to be at center stage of anti-communist movement. The government, consequently, emphasized on the idea that if Thailand became communist, three pillars of Thainess, 'Thai nation, Buddhism, and the monarch', would be destroyed. Hence, those Thais who loved their nation and admired Thainess should fight against communism (Saichon, 2016: 330).

Although Thainess had continuously changed, the construction of Thainess always supported hierarchical social structure. Saichon (2005, 2016), therefore, argues that 'Thainess' is too narrow to respond to rapid changes in Thailand's social and cultural structures. Saichon also addresses the problem of Thainess regarding to racial diversity as follows:

"Thainess" is also too narrow to address the problem of racial origins. Although the concept is not fixed on early principle of racial origins, it does not accept racial diversity. In contrast, "Thainess" pressures other races to "become" Thai...Many races who did not or could not truly "become Thai" did not receive certain rights from the state, did not find convenience in their contact with the bureaucrats, and even oppressed in various ways, ranging from taunts to extortion and use of force." (Saichon, 2005: 32)

Thailand is usually recognized as a country of cultural homogeneity. According to the 1990 Housing and Population Census, 95 percent of the populace were Buddhist Thais and 4 percent were Muslim (Pinkaw Laungaramsri, 2003). Nonetheless, Pinkaw (2003) argues that Thailand does not have cultural homogeneity as it seems. Although majority of the people speak Tai language family, there are a wide variety of dialects they speak. However, every ethnic groups, including Isan people of the North east, hill tribes of the North, and Muslim of the South, have been assimilated to the central Thais by the project of Thaification, which used central Thai language as an official language and imposed the use of central Thai language as a medium of instruction at schools.

While 'Thainess' is constructed as a dominant culture, 'non-Thainess' is identified as being problematic and threat to national security. All the non-dominant groups are mentioned in the state discourse as ethnic minority or *chon klum noi*. They are classified into five groups, including the Chinese (*chao chin*), the hill tribe peoples (*chao khao*), the Vietnamese immigrants (*chao yuan opphayop*), the Thai Muslims (*chao Thai muslim*) and others. However, in this state discourse, various ethnic minorities are absent. Lao of the North east and *Khon Muang* of the North are recognized as ethno-regional groups rather than ethnic minorities (Pinkaw, 2003: 161-162).

Among ethnic minorities in Thailand, the hill tribe peoples and the Thai Muslims are presented by the state as the most problematic ones. Throughout history, the hill tribes in Thailand have been labeled as migratory insurgent, opium producer and forest destroyer. Likewise, the Thai Muslims are portrayed in relation to the terrorist movement (Pinkaw, 2003).

## Multiculturalism

A colonial history of Singapore is, of course, different from Siam/Thailand. According to historical evidences, *Temasek*, an early name of Singapore, was a prosperous regional port since the fourteenth century. The name *Temasek* was replaced by the name *Singapura* at the end of

fourteenth century. However, a history of modern Singapore truly began when Temenggong<sup>53</sup> of the Johor signed a treaty with Sir Stamford Raffles, an agent of the East India Company, permitting the British to set up a trading port on 30 January 1819 (Turnbull, 2009: 19-22). The East India Company merged Singapore with Penang and Melaka to form the presidency of the Straits Settlements in 1829 (ibid.: 53).

After being a trading port, Singapore became immigrant communities. Though Malays were indigenous people, Chinese became the largest community, which constituted 65 percent of population in 1865. Most of Chinese immigrants came from south eastern China and consisted of four dialect groups: Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese and Hakka. Malays, therefore, lost their position of predominance. Indians and European were minorities, which consisted of less than 10 percent of Singapore population during the late 1800s (Turnbull, 2009: 55-56).

The prosperous period of a trading port ended in 1941 when the second World War began. Japan army invaded Singapore. And, finally, in 1942, Singapore was occupied by Japan, which renamed it *Syonan*. The Japan occupation was like a nightmare for many people in Singapore. This nightmare ended when Japan army surrendered in 1945 and the Commonwealth troops returned to Singapore and Singapore were under British military administration. However, Singapore had notably changed after the war and it was more difficult for the British to rule (Turnbull, 2009: 221).

The war also weakened colonial authority. In 1946, the British government reluctantly decided to dissolve the Straits Settlements. Self-government of People's Action Party (PAP) attained Lee Kuan Yew as a prime minister in 1963. And, finally, in 1971, the last British military forces were withdrawn from Singapore.

Meanwhile, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) was established in Kuala Lumpur in March 1946. PAP decided to bring Singapore to join the Federation of Malaya, Sabah, and Sarawak in 1963. However, because of unreconciled different ideologies between PAP and UMNO, Singapore finally separated from the Federation and declared its own independence in 1965. Before the separation, conflicts between ethnic groups in Singapore was intensified until there was the racial riots in 1964, which caused deaths and injuries.

After 1965 independence, the leaders of Singapore constructed the national identity based on geopolitical situation. Considering to its geographical location, Singapore is the Chinese-dominated country, which is surrounded by Malay-Muslim countries. Singapore, therefore, adopt a concept of multiculturalism as the national identity in order to avoid the political conflicts within and outside country. Chua (2003), therefore, asserts that the government in Singapore has used multiculturalism discourse as a social control.

Applying the concept of multiculturalism to the practice of citizenship, the Singaporean government has generally assumed that the races and the cultures of the Singaporean are correlated and fixed; for example:

'The state thus insists that everyone be a hyphenated citizen. Each hyphenated Singaporean is supposedly embedded in his/her race-culture. For example, if one is Chinese, one is supposed to be Confucianist; never mind if that few, if any, Singaporean-born Chinese under 35 and younger have ever read a Confucian text, and that their

---

<sup>53</sup> Temenggong is an old Malay title of nobleman who is usually the chief of public security.

knowledge of Confucianism is almost non-existent. Correspondingly, all Malays are supposed to be steeped in Islamic knowledge and cultural practices and every Indian in his/her religious, linguistic and regional cultural traditions (Chua, 2003: 60).'

It can be said that although the government has promoted the concept of multiculturalism, Singaporean citizens do not have absolute freedom to choose their practices of cultures. Their cultures are assigned by their races. The race-culture identification has widely operated in the government policies such as the bilingual policy.

### **Bilingual Policy**

After independence from Malaysia, People's Action Party (PAP) had built Singapore national identity on the principle of 'Meritocracy', a system in which progress is based on ability and talent rather than race and class privilege. Modern Singapore, therefore, was the state in which culture was based on function and efficiency to support the industrial society. Students in Singapore must learn English which was perceived as an ethnic neutral language for development. At the same time, they must learn 'mother tongues' in schools to re-create local identities and values (Wee, 2007).

According to the early bilingual policy, 'mother tongues' were defined by one's father's ethnicity. Mandarin is mother tongues of students whose father is Chinese. If your father is Indian, your mother tongue is then Tamil. If Malay, then Bahasa Malay (Bokhorst-Heng, 1999: 170). Noticeably, mother tongues are not necessary the same with the languages spoken in families. According to 1957 census, only 0.1 percent of the Chinese community spoke Mandarin. But Mandarin was prescribed as mother tongues for all Chinese-Singaporeans (ibid.).

This bilingual policy is based on assumption that the "a race = a language = a culture" (Bokhorst-Heng, 1999: 175). Also, the bilingual policy arguably supports 'the functional polarization' of language (Pendley, 1999 cited in Bokhorst-Heng, 1999: 171). English was perceived as a tool of modern development, which is neutral and culture-less, while three mother tongues were attached to moral values and traditions.

'The best of the East and of the West must be blended to advantage in the Singaporean. Confucianist ethic, Malay traditions, and the Hindu ethos must be combined with skeptical Western methods in the search for truth. We have to discard obscurantist and superstitious beliefs and practices of the East, as we have to reject the passing fads of the West.'

(Lee Kuan Yew, 1978 cited in Wee 2007: 113)

### **The Others within Singapore**

Eurasians are descendant of Europeans and Asians. In 1990, there are approximately 13,000 Eurasians in Singapore, which is less than 1% of Singapore population. According to Pereira (1997: 9), the status of Eurasians depends on the perception of the dominant group. During the early period of British colonization, Eurasians identified themselves as Europeans because they were English-speaking Christian. Therefore, they were able to gain employment opportunities in the British civil service. Although the European colonizers prevented Eurasians from getting high ranking

positions in the civil services, the Eurasians were treated by the Europeans better than other colonized Asians (ibid.: 10).

However, after Singapore's independence in 1965, the status of Eurasians ethnicity in Singapore declined. The People's Action Party (PAP) limited the racial diversity in Singapore to four main racial groups, including Chinese, Malay, Indian and Others (CMIO). Because of their small population, the Eurasians were included in the 'Others' group and their identities were not promoted by the government as same as Chinese, Malay, and Indian groups.

The policy of multiculturalism of the People's Action Party (PAP) asserted the concept of ethnic equality. Consequently, Eurasians received no special treatment and had to compete with all other races. Besides, some government policies marginalized the Eurasian ethnicity groups. For example, the bilingual policy enforced Singaporean students to study English and a mother tongue language as mandatory subjects in schools. While the government identified Mandarin, Bahasa Malay, and Tamil as mother tongues for Chinese, Malay, and Indian respectively. English, which is used to communicate in Eurasian families, were not accepted as one of mother tongues. Therefore, the Eurasian students had to choose other languages from Mandarin, Bahasa Malay, and Tamil. Consequently, their language proficiency was lower comparing to other racial groups.

Most of Eurasians attempted to adjust themselves under a new model of Singaporean citizenship. Nonetheless, many Eurasians felt unfit to live in Singapore and migrated to Australia and the United Kingdom (Pereira, 1997: 10-11). The Eurasian identity continuously faded away. Until 1990s, there were attempts to revitalize the Eurasian Association (EA).

The Eurasian Association was established since 1919 to promote advancement of all Eurasian-British subjects. In 1980s, the Singaporean government promoted 'Asian value' to prevent the Western liberalism and individualism (Brown, 1994: 92-93). Consequently, the government established ethnic self-help groups, which included Chinese Development Association Council (CDAC) and Singapore Indian Development Agency (SINDA). The Eurasian Association leaders raised awareness of social and economic benefits that other racial groups gained from supporting the government policy. They, finally, revitalized the Eurasian identity to show the government that they were a distinctive group rather than unidentified 'Others' racial group (Pereira, 1997: 13).

## **Comparative Views: Politics of Races and Languages in two countries**

### **Colonizer and Colonized**

Siam/Thailand and Singapore are two Southeast Asian countries, which colonization forces helped them construct their national identities. In the Thailand's case, the monarch modernized the country to encounter the colonization forces. Power was centralized, while the king was made to be a center of the state. Thainess was, then, attached to the royal rituals and constructed to maintain hierarchical social structure among different classes and races.

On the contrary, multiculturalism is built on ethnic equity and the principle of meritocracy. Singapore used multiculturalism as social control to prevent political conflicts within and outside country.

### **Self/Other and East/West**

Siamese elites constructed their identities in comparison with the 'Others'. The West Others was placed as a site of power. Meanwhile, the Wild Others and the Docile Others were placed to confirm superiority of Bangkok Elites. In conclusion, Self/Other have been both created by the comparison

between East and West.

Singapore similarly created national identities through languages. Within the bilingual policy, English or the language of the West is perceived as the languages of development, which is neutral and cultural-less. On the other hand, Mandarin, Bahasa Malay, and Tamil represent mother languages that sustain culture and local identities. This language polarization is not different from the Orientalist discourse, which presents the East as irrational, exotic, and uncivilized ones and portrays the West as developed, rational, and superior ones.

### **Marginalized Others**

In Thailand, ethnic groups that could not become Thai would be marginalized and perceived as the Others. In Singapore, though it seems that multiculturalism discourse opens an opportunity for diversity of races and cultures, the government still homogenize races and cultures to the limit that is in state's control. For example, the Singapore government allowed only three 'mother tongues', including Mandarin, Malay, and Tamil to sustain local identities. Other dialects spoken in Chinese families, such as Hokkien, Teochew, and Cantonese, had not been officially accepted. Likewise, English spoken in Eurasian families had not been recognized as one of mother tongues.

Unlike the Others of Thainess, the 'Others' of multicultural Singapore are ethnic groups whose races and cultures could not be authentic such as the Eurasians. Consequently, in order to survive in multicultural Singapore, the Eurasians need to demonstrate how they are a distinctive group rather than unidentified racial groups. On the contrary, in Thailand, the Others need to conform to Thainess by demonstrating how 'Thai' they are rather than how distinctive they are.

### **Conclusion**

This paper compares the ways that Thailand and Singapore control their citizens through the state discourses, Thainess and multiculturalism. On the surface, these two discourses seem totally different. I, however, argue that both of them are similarly used by the states as an instrument of governmentality. Both Thainess and multiculturalism are also the colonial legacies in which the colonized Singapore and semi-colonized Siam/Thailand constructed their national identities in relation to the West. Siamese elites constructed Thainess to homogenize a diversity of cultures and races and unify the Siam boundary. On the contrary, the colonial Singapore divided spaces and power according to the subjects' races. This practice finally has been developed to a concept of multiculturalism that signifies and celebrates differences of races, religions, and cultures in Singapore.

A notion of racial homogeneity and heterogeneity has constantly been articulated in citizenship and nation-making in Thailand and Singapore. These discourses have continuously circulated in policy documents and government campaigns in both countries. And, finally, both the discourses of Thainess and multiculturalism have created 'the Others' who do not fit in with the standardized national identities and citizenships.

## References

- Bokhorst-Heng, W. (1999). Singapore's Speaking Mandarin Campaign: language ideological debates and the imagining of the nation. In Harris, R. & Rampton, B. (Ed.). *The Language, Ethnicity and Race Reader*. London: Routledge, pp.
- Chua, B. H. (2004). Multiculturalism in Singapore: an instrument of social control. *Race & Class*. 44(3): 58-77.
- Laungaramsri, P. (2003). Ethnicity and the politics of ethnic classification in Thailand. In MacKerras, C. (Ed.). *Ethnicity in Asia*. London: Routledge Curzon, pp. 157-173.
- Loos, T. (2006). *Subject Siam: Family, law, and colonial modernity in Thailand*. London: Cornell University Press.
- Pereira, A. (1997). The revitalization of Eurasian identity in Singapore. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*. 25(2): 7-24.
- Sattayanurak, S. (2005). *The Construction of Mainstream Thought on 'Thainess' and the 'Truth' constructed by 'Thainess'*, translated by Sarinee Achavanuntakul, available from <http://www.fringier.org/wp-content/writings/thainess-eng.pdf>.
- Sattayanurak, S. (2016). *The Construction of Mainstream Thought on 'Thainess' and the 'Truth' constructed by 'Thainess'* (การสร้าง "ความเป็นไทย" กระแสหลักและ "ความจริง" ที่ "ความเป็นไทย" สร้าง). In Sata-anand, S. & Chotiudompan, S. (Ed.). *The Anniversary of Thai Humanities Conference: Wenta Arom Sangkom Kwamjing* (หนึ่งทศวรรษเวทีวิจัยมนุษยศาสตร์ไทย: แวนดา อารมณ์ สังคม ความจริง). Bangkok: Phappim, pp. 315-355.
- Tejapira, K. (2001). *Commodifying Marxism: the formation of modern Thai radical culture, 1927-1958*. Kyoto: Kyoto University Press.
- Turnbull, C.M. (2009). *A History of Modern Singapore 1819-2005*. Singapore: NUS Press.
- Wee, C.J.W. (2007). *The Asian Modern; Culture, Capitalist Development*, Singapore. Singapore: NUS Press.
- Winichakul, T. (1994). *Siam Mapped: history of geo-body of a nation*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Winichakul, T. (2000). The Others Within: Travel and Ethno-Spatial Differentiation of Siamese Subjects 1885-1990. In Turton, A. (Ed.). *Civility and Savagery: Social Identity in Tai States*. London: Curzon Press, pp.38-62.



## **A Review of Russian Academic Literature on Overseas Chinese in Thailand in the 20th Century**

**Moskalev, Petr**

St. Petersburg State University  
Russia

---

### **Abstract**

Overseas Chinese make up a considerable ethnic minority in the Kingdom of Thailand. People of Chinese descent have been coming to Thailand to settle for centuries and contacts between the Chinese and the Thai have been long and fruitful. A few representatives of the Overseas Chinese community in Thailand have become successful entrepreneurs during the 20th century and have contributed to the economic growth of the country. Some of them have also become prominent figures in Thailand's national political life, as well as in international relations within the region of Southeast Asia. Equally important is the role of the Overseas Chinese community in the development of bilateral relations between China and Thailand.

Several prominent scholars in Thailand, China, the United States and in some other countries have previously focused their attention on various issues concerning the Overseas Chinese community in Thailand. Unfortunately, works of scholars, who have written about these issues in the Russian language, still largely remain unknown to the international society of scholars focusing on Thai Studies. Majority of such works have never been translated into any foreign language and have never been published outside of Russia.

This paper is aimed at providing a general overview of some of the most prominent Russian language academic works about the Overseas Chinese community in Thailand during the 20th century. There have been several scholars who have written in Russian about Overseas Chinese in the Thai society, and whose findings and ideas in this field could be of interest to the international academic community. The works reviewed in the paper are writing by such Russian-speaking authors as E.O. Berzin, N.A. Simoniya, G. I. Levinson, A. G. Larin and other scholars.

**Keywords:** Overseas Chinese, Thai Chinese, Chinese in Thai History, Thai Studies in Russia, Overseas Chinese Studies in Russia

### **Introduction**

There have been several scholars, who have written in Russian about Overseas Chinese in the Thai society, whose findings in this field and ideas might be of interest to the international academic community. Among the works reviewed in this paper are academic writings by such acclaimed authors as N.V. Rebrikova (born 1920), E.O. Berzin (1931 – 1997), N.A. Simoniya (born 1932), B.N. Mel'nichenko (born 1935), A.A. Bokshchanin (1935 – 2014) and others. The paper also covers some

works, written in contemporary Russia since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, including several most recent ones. Among such modern Russian academic works on the subject of Overseas Chinese in Thailand several articles written by A. G. Larin (born 1932) are probably the most well-known in Russia.

Overseas Chinese make up a considerable ethnic minority in the Kingdom of Thailand, around 10 to 12% of the whole population of the country. People of Chinese descent have been coming to Thailand to settle for centuries and contacts between the Chinese and the Thai have been long and fruitful. A few representatives of the Overseas Chinese community in Thailand have become successful entrepreneurs during the 20th century and have contributed to the economic development and growth of the country. Some of them have also managed to become prominent figures in Thailand's political life, as well as in international relations within the region of Southeast Asia and globally. Equally important is the role of the Overseas Chinese community of Thailand in the development of bilateral relations between the People's Republic of China and the Kingdom of Thailand since early 1950s.

Several prominent scholars in Thailand, in China and in other countries around the world have previously focused their attention on various issues concerning the Overseas Chinese community in Thailand. Perhaps, some of the most well-known academic publications in this field have been written by Victor Purcell (1896 – 1965), G.W. Skinner (1925 - 2008), Wang Gungwu (born 1930) and many others. Unfortunately, works of scholars, who have written about Overseas Chinese in Thailand in Russian language, still largely remain unknown to the international community of scholars focusing on Thai Studies, and on the studies of Overseas Chinese. Majority of these works have never been translated into any other language and have never been published outside of Russia, which makes it rather difficult for non-Russian-speaking scholars to get acquainted with them. In fact, this difficulty is somewhat reciprocal, because, many academic works on Overseas Chinese in Thailand, which have been written in Chinese, Thai and English have never been translated into Russian and still largely remain unavailable to borrow in libraries in Russia.

Russian-speaking scholars have written several works on the issues of Chinese emigration, the establishment of Overseas Chinese communities in various regions of the World, including Southeast Asia. At the same time, no monographs have ever been published in Russian, which would have been dedicated to the studies as is the Overseas Chinese community of Thailand. In this respect, all examples of academic literature, which are reviewed in this paper, are not books specifically dedicated to the role of Overseas Chinese in the history of Thailand in the 20th century, instead they either focus on the Thai history in itself and partly discuss the role of Overseas Chinese in it, or they focus on the Overseas Chinese in general and by doing so also contribute to the discourse on the Overseas Chinese community in Thailand.

### **The Development of Thai Studies and of Overseas Chinese Studies in Russia**

In order to comprehend the background of work made by Russian-speaking scholars on the subject of Overseas Chinese in Thailand, a few things should be said about the development of Thai Studies and Overseas Chinese studies in Russia. Both of these fields of studies fit within a larger field of Asian Studies, which in its turn began to develop in Russia quite early. Russia's geographic position in Eurasia, predetermined the early emergence of Asian studies in general in this country. The emergence of Asian studies in Russia was closely related to the establishment of first official

inter-state contacts between the representatives of Asian nations and the Russian. It is not surprising, since hardly any serious studies could have been made possible without first obtaining enough factual information to fuel them.

In 1549 the so-called 'Ambassadorial Prikaz' was first established in Russia, which served as ministry of foreign affairs for the country until it was replaced by the 'Collegium of Foreign Affairs' in 1720. Among the many functions of this 'Ambassadorial Prikaz' were the duties to train professional interpreters and translators for the state's needs, first young men were enrolled to study foreign languages then, so the year 1549 can be considered a starting point for the development of Asian studies in Russia. Since the latter half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century the main sources of information about the Asian countries were diplomatic reports made by various envoys and stories told by traders and pilgrims, who used to travel to foreign lands. Russian envoys at those times visited the Ottoman empire and Iran, later envoys from several Central Asian countries began to come to Moscow.

First official contacts between representatives of Russia and representatives of China date back to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. In 1608 Russian Tsar Vasili IV (reigned between 1606 – 1610) made an order to send an embassy to China, the embassy however failed to reach the Chinese empire at that time. The first Russian embassy to actually reach the Chinese capital was sent in 1618, it was headed by a Cossack named Ivan Petlin. The embassy spent four days in Beijing – the then capital of the Ming empire, but was not received by the emperor. Nevertheless, Ivan Petlin is known as the first Russian-speaking person to make a detailed first-hand report about his visit to China. He also drew up an approximate map of the Chinese Empire. Even though Petlin's embassy failed to establish official diplomatic relations with China, it most definitely contributed to the introduction of more or less accurate information about that country and its people to the Russian society.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century Russian explorers began to actively discover and reclaim the lands of Siberia and the Far East, eventually they moved to the immediate proximity of the Chinese northern border. By the late 17<sup>th</sup> century the borders between the Tsardom of Russia and the Chinese Qing Empire (established in 1644) turned out to be very close to each other. During the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Russian embassies arrived to the Chinese capital one closely after the other, but none of them were able to establish official diplomatic relations with China, which was largely due to the lack of knowledge of traditional Chinese customs and diplomatic ceremonies. In August 1689 finally the first official treaty in the history of Russian - Chinese relations was signed. By that time several written descriptions of Asian countries made by European authors, such as Giovanni Botero, Marcin Bielski and Gerardus Mercator were already translated into Russian and contributed to the amount of knowledge of the Russian people about lands and people of Asia. However, until the 18<sup>th</sup> century the field of Asian studies in Russia had still been in a state of formation, the Russian only started to accumulate information regarding some of the countries, which laid to the east and to the south of them. The bulk of Asian countries still remained virtually unknown in Russia, including Thailand.

The period of large-scale reforms initiated by the Russian Emperor Peter the Great (reigned 1682 – 1725) which resulted in modernization of many spheres of social life in the country also brought about a new chapter in the development of Asian studies. The reign of Peter the Great is sometimes referred to as the 'emergence of Asian studies as a scholarly field' in Russia. The Emperor sent embassies to Turkey, Iran, China, Dzungaria, Bukhara and the Mughal Empire. In 1700 he signed the order for the Russian to study Asian languages. In 1705 the first school for the study of Japanese language was opened in the capital of the Russian Empire. In 1724 the orders to establish the Russian

Academy of Science and the University in St. Petersburg were signed. Before that, in 1715 Peter the Great sent the first ever 'Russian Ecclesiastical Mission' to Beijing, since that time it served as a *de-facto* Russian embassy in the Chinese Empire. In 1727 a new Russian – Chinese treaty, which was signed at Kyakhta marked the establishment of the official diplomatic and trade relations between the two countries.

During the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century first Chinese embassies also began to come to Russia, while 'Russian Ecclesiastical Missions' continued to carry out their functions in China. Many Russians, who came to China with these missions eventually studied the Chinese language and are often considered to be the first Russian-speaking scholars in the field of Chinese studies. They translated many Chinese documents into Russian and even created first Chinese – Russian dictionaries. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century almost all Asian languages, which were in use in the countries of Asia that shared borders with Russia, such as: Chinese, Japanese, Turkish, Farsi, Arabic, Manchu, Mongolian, Tatar and so on, were being taught within the Russian Empire. However, many Asian countries, cultures and languages were still only vaguely known in Russia, among them were Southeast Asian countries.

Beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Russia saw the emergence of Asian studies as an academic field, several departments dedicated to the studies of Asian languages, histories and cultures were established in Universities around the Russian Empire. In 1876 St. Petersburg hosted the third International Congress of Scholars in Asian Studies.

Official contacts between Russia and Thailand, largely due to the geographical distance separating them from each other, have not been established until the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. First Russian – Thai contacts were made in February 1863, when two Russian ships arrived at the estuary of the Chao Phraya river. The commanding officers of the ships were granted with an audience by King Rama IV (reigned 1851 – 1868) in Bangkok. The King noted that he would like to establish friendly diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Thailand and the Russian Empire. The lieutenant commander of one of the ships later reported to the Russian Ministry of Navy, that: 'The Siamese are hardworking and strong people of very good nature'. So, this first official meeting between representatives of the two nations laid a foundation for the future development of not only state-to-state relations later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but also stimulated the scholarly interest among some Russians, who were already involved in research in the field of Asian studies.

In 1874 another Russian ship arrived in Bangkok. One year after, in 1875 a well-known Russian explorer and intellectual Nicholas Miklouho-Maclay (1846 – 1888) twice travelled through the territory of Thailand. In 1882 two more Russian ships visited Bangkok, and in 1891 a Russian frigate called 'Memory of Azov' was also welcomed at the port of the Thai capital. In 1892 in the course of almost five months a Russian nobleman Konstantin Aleksandrovich Viazemsky (1853 – 1909) - an avid traveler journeyed across Thailand from its eastern borders to Burma. Resulting from these contacts between the Russians and the Thais in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which were getting more and more frequent by the beginning of the 1890s, first detailed descriptions of Thailand, its capital and architecture, its culture and its exotic nature were published in Russian language.

Between April 19<sup>th</sup> and April 25<sup>th</sup> of the year 1891 a visit of the then crown prince of the Russian Empire – Nikolay Aleksandrovich Romanov (1868 – 1918) to Thailand became a major milestone in the history of Russian – Thai relations. The Russian prince was welcomed in Bangkok by King Rama V (reigned 1868 – 1910) with great hospitality, attention and friendliness. Prince Nikolay later greatly praised the achievements of the Thai monarchy in the process of modernization of the country. King Chulalongkorn also paid a visit to the Russian Empire in July 1897 and was greeted and welcomed

with respect by Nikolay, who was already the Emperor (reigned 1894 – 1917). The leaders of two nations agreed to establish diplomatic relations. An official treaty was signed in 1899.

Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century many young Thais of noble descent came to Russia to study. One of the sons of King Rama V himself – Prince Chakrabongse Bhuvanath (1883 – 1920) came to St. Petersburg to study in a military academy and even ended up marrying a local girl. Another son of the King - Prince Vajiravudh (1880 – 1925), who would later become a King Rama VI (reign 1910 – 1925) came to the Russian capital four times for short visits during the time that he studied in England. In October 1900 the Thai Royal Ballet performed in St. Petersburg in front of the Russian audience.

After the Revolution of 1917 in Russia the established traditions of Asian studies in the country were subject to numerous reforms in the spirit of new political and ideological shifts. During the 1920s-1930s no diplomatic or any official relations were maintained between the Soviet Union and Thailand. Diplomatic relations were reestablished only on March 12, 1941, but soon were ceased again because of the World War II.

The official relations between the Soviet Union and the Kingdom of Thailand began to improve only during the late 1970s, but, the academic research on various aspects of Thai history, language and culture began before that – in the 1950s. By the early 1960s first groups of Russian students, interested in studying Thai language, history and culture began to form, initially at Moscow State University, Moscow State Institute of International Relations and St. Petersburg State University. That time can be considered the beginning of Thai Studies, as an academic field in the Soviet Union.

As Russian scholar Levinson noted in the seminal Russian-language work on Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asian countries titled *'Chinese Ethnic Groups in the Countries of Southeast Asia'* (Kim G.F. Levinson G.I. Chufrin G.I. (Eds.). 1986, pp. 4-5), the Overseas Chinese communities in the countries of Southeast Asia first began to attract attention of Russian and foreign scholars relatively late - after the end of World War II. He also acknowledged, that the first steps in the research of various issues, concerning Overseas Chinese had been made primarily by academics from China, the United States and Western European countries. A little later after that these issues also began to be examined by scholars from Australia, Japan and Southeast Asian countries. In the Soviet Union research regarding Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia have not really began until the 1950s.

This means that although Asian studies in general have been developing in Russia for centuries, Thai studies and Overseas Chinese studies can, however, be viewed as relatively young fields of scholarly research. At the same time, an interesting fact is that both these fields of Asian studies began to develop in Russia around the same time – in the 1950s, meaning that the presence of a large Chinese community in Thailand has been acknowledged by the Russian scholars of Thailand practically since the very beginning of the development of this field. So, it is possible to say that Thai studies and Overseas Chinese studies in Russia have been growing side by side, which resulted in a bulk of Russian-language academic literature on Thailand containing extensive information and numerous facts regarding its Overseas Chinese community.

### **Russian Academic Literature on Overseas Chinese in Thailand in the 20th Century**

The first academic publication on the subject was issued in 1959, authored by a then young scholar based in Moscow – Nodari Aleksandrovich Simoniya. The title of the publication translated from Russian would be *'People of Chinese Nationality in the Countries of Southeast Asia'*. The book

contained 173 pages and was divided into three chapters, with each chapter in its turn subdivided into sections. Interestingly, the author decided not to structure the book by dedicating chapters to individual countries in Southeast Asia and examining the status of the Overseas Chinese communities in each of them. Instead, Simoniya took a different approach, the first chapter was dedicated to the 'historical roots of the Chinese migration' to Southeast Asia as a region, the second chapter focused on the 'role of Chinese bourgeoisie in the economic development of the Southeast Asian countries' in general, and the last chapter explained 'the role of the Chinese working class in the economic life of Southeast Asian countries'. It can be seen just by looking at the structure of Simoniya's book, that his primary interest was to study the economy-related aspects of Chinese migration to Southeast Asian countries, his approach was, naturally, very much in line with the existing Marxist ideology, which was dominating the social science in the Soviet Union at the time of publication. His main conclusions were that people of Chinese descent have formed by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the majority of the working class, as well as the merchant class in practically all Southeast Asian countries, including Thailand, while the majority of indigenous people in these countries mostly remained occupied in the agricultural sector of economy. Simoniya used many foreign language sources to write his book, including books on the Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia written by Chinese and Western authors in the late 1950s, for example, works of Purcell (1948, 1950, 1951, 1955, 1956) Skinner (1957, 1957a), Zhu Zhihe (1957) and He Xiangning (1958, 1958a). It should also be noted, that in 1961 Simoniya's book was translated into English by the U.S. Joint Publications Research Service and published at Cornell University under the title '*Overseas Chinese on Southeast Asia, A Russian Study*'. It is probably one of the few rare examples of Russian-language works that have actually been translated.

Nine years after the publication of Simoniya's book, in 1968 another major Russian-language academic monograph was published. The title was '*China and the Countries of the Southern Seas in 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries*' and its author was one of the most prominent Soviet sinologists - Aleksey Anatol'yevich Bokshchanin. The book contained 211 pages and was written largely based on the late medieval Chinese historiographic sources, such as the History of the Ming dynasty. Bokshchanin scrupulously analyzed the history of official and unofficial relations of the Chinese people with the people of Southeast Asian countries, which took place several centuries before the beginning of the large scale immigration of Chinese to Southeast Asia, thus he explained the historical background of this process. Bokshchanin's book argued that Chinese migrants, travelers, traders and diplomats, who came to Siam during the 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries mostly regarded their visits to this country very highly, he came to this conclusion by analyzing authentic Chinese written sources.

Soviet scholars have continued to research various aspects of the presence of Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asian countries further in the 1970s. In 1973 a book titled '*Overseas Chinese Bourgeoisie: A Peking Toll in Southeast Asia*' by Mikhail Andreevich Andreev was published. It was yet another profound research based on the economic analysis of the role of people of Chinese descent in Southeast Asia in general. This book had a very criticizing approach towards the depiction of the role of the Chinese government in the process of Overseas Chinese remittance to the Chinese economy. This approach reflected the divide between the Soviet and the Chinese governments that took place by the early 1970s, so the author openly blamed China for trying to use the economic potential of the numerous Overseas Chinese population in Southeast Asia for its own benefits.

Also during the 1970s about two dozen academic articles in Russian were published, most of them were dedicated to some specific problems and issues regarding Overseas Chinese in individual

Southeast Asian countries. Most notable of such were articles by Pavel Mikhailovich Movchanyuk (1937 – 1993) (1972, 1974, 1974a, 1975, 1976, 1977), who represented St. Petersburg school of Asian Studies and focused mostly on Indonesia-related research. Articles, written by Svetlana Romanovna Lainger (1930 – 1990) - a sinologist from Moscow on the issues of Overseas Chinese secret societies in Southeast Asian countries (1980) and on the problems of social mobility among the members of Overseas Chinese communities in these countries contributed considerably to this field of research as well.

During the 1980s several conferences dedicated to the studies of Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia were held in Moscow, some of them were organized by the Institute of Asian & African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. As a result of discussions among Soviet scholars specializing in Overseas Chinese studies and Southeast Asian studies a book titled '*Chinese Ethnic Groups in the Countries of Southeast Asia*' was published in 1986, edited by three prominent and influential academics - Georgiy Fedorovich Kim (1924 – 1989), Georgiy Il'ich Levinson (1918 – 1988) and Gennadiy Illarionovich Chufrin (born 1935). This book was a major breakthrough in the studies of Overseas Chinese in the Soviet Union, as it was a comprehensive interdisciplinary study by a group of Russian-speaking historians, economists, social and political scientists. It explained how the process of migration of the Chinese people to each Southeast Asian country happened historically, analyzed the differences between how the Overseas Chinese communities were established in each country. The second half of the book mostly focused on the status of the Overseas Chinese people in Southeast Asian countries throughout the first 80 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

A major contribution to the above mentioned book, which focused on the Overseas Chinese communities in all Southeast Asian countries, was made by Nina Vasil'yevna Rebrikova (born 1920) – a specialist in Thai studies based in Moscow. Apart from participating in this collective work, she also did a lot of her own research, which resulted in the publication of several books dedicated specifically to explaining certain aspects of the history of Thailand, including the important role that the Overseas Chinese community played in it. These books were: '*Essays on the Contemporary History of Thailand (1918 – 1959)*' (1960), '*Essays on the Modern History of Thailand (1767 – 1917)*' (1966) and '*Thailand. Socio-Economic History (13<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century)*' (1977). All of them were first academic publications in Russian, dedicated specifically to Thailand and its history. She wrote them mainly on the basis of Chinese-language sources, as well as on the accounts of some western eye-witnesses of certain historical events in the Thai Kingdom. She was the first Russian scholar to translate such sources into Russian and to analyze them.

Another notable Russian scholar, who dedicated most of his academic career to the studies of Thai and Southeast Asian history was Eduard Oskarovich Berzin (1931 – 1997). He wrote three books on the history of Southeast Asian countries: '*Southeast Asia in the 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries*' (1982), '*Southeast Asia and the Expansion of the West in 17<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries*' (1987), '*Southeast Asia from the Ancient Times to the 13<sup>th</sup> Century*' (1995). These books are held in high acclaim within the Russian academic society, as they still remain primary sources of knowledge about the history of Southeast Asian countries from pre-historic times to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, written in Russian. All of them feature extensive material about Overseas Chinese in these countries. Another important work by Berzin is '*History of Thailand (A Short Essay)*' (1973), the book is 314 pages long and covers the whole Thai history from the Stone Age to the early 1970s. Berzin created the one and only Russian-language academic publication, which covers the whole history of Thailand, he has made a very significant contribution to the development of Thai Studies in Russia. Berzin introduced

a lot of information, previously unpublished in Russian, regarding the role of Overseas Chinese in contemporary Thai history.

One more pioneer of Thai Studies in Russia, and the person who first began to teach Thai language and history at the Department of Asian & African Studies of St. Petersburg State University is Boris Nikolaevich Mel'nichenko (born 1935). He graduated from the Department of History of Peking University on China in 1958 and then from St. Petersburg State University in 1962. In 1969 he defended a PhD thesis on the *'Reforms in Thailand (Siam) in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century'*, in which he also acknowledged the important role of the Overseas Chinese community of Thailand in the process of country's rapid modernization. In 1995 B.N. Melnichenko's book was published on the history of Thailand under the title *'Buddhism and Monarchy'*. It was mostly dedicated to explaining the important role that religion and monarchy both have played in the development of Thai state, but some parts of the book also mention that in Thailand Overseas Chinese were for the most part of history welcomed and accepted by the local population and by the authorities, while majority of people of Chinese descent also found it relatively easy to feel at home in Thailand because of the similarity of cultures and mentality of the Chinese and of the Thai people. This idea is similar to the views expressed by G.W. Skinner in his works on the assimilation of Overseas Chinese in Thailand, but Mel'nichenko, unlike Skinner avoided to conclude that the majority of Overseas Chinese in Thailand have become assimilated in Thai society by the fourth generation.

During the 1990s Russian science in general was coming through a comparatively uneasy stage, very few academic works were published, including in the fields of Thai Studies and Overseas Chinese Studies. The situation began to improve a little for Russian scholars after the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The first decade of the new century actually saw the emergence of the Overseas Chinese studies as an individual sub-field within the much larger field of Asian Studies. One of the most prominent scholars in Russian Overseas Chinese studies since that time has been Aleksandr Georgievich Larin (born 1932), who is currently a leading researcher working at the Institute of Far Eastern Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow. The first publication by Larin concerning the problems of Overseas Chinese was issued in 2008 under the title *'China and the Overseas Chinese'*. It was a rather brief introduction to the problem, but it laid out a solid foundation for all future research to be done in this field by Russian scholars. Larin elaborated on the usage of terminology for the research regarding Overseas Chinese, he also presented new approximated statistical data on the number of Overseas Chinese around the World by drawing up a table to show 20 countries with the largest number of residing Overseas Chinese. In 2009 Larin's book *'Chinese Migrants in Russia. History and Modernity'* was published, it was the first comprehensive research on the subject of Overseas Chinese in Russia in the historical perspective. The author not only provided extensive information about the specifics and dynamics of Chinese migration to Russia throughout the centuries, but also focused his attention on the contemporary issues, which have risen in connection to Chinese immigration to Russia by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A.G. Larin also wrote several articles in Russian academic journals and magazines about Overseas Chinese in various regions of the World (2014).

After 2010 more and more scholarly articles are being published in Russian on the subject of Overseas Chinese, Chinese migration and its effects and prospects. One of the researches in this field worth mentioning is Alina Vladislavovna Afonas'yeva (born 1985), who works at the Institute of Far Eastern Studies in Moscow. In 2011 she defended a PhD thesis titled *'Economic activities of the*



*Overseas Chinese and Remigrants in the People's Republic of China During the Reforms of 1979 – 2010'*, in 2013 her book under the same title was published.

## Conclusions

In conclusion to this brief overview of major academic literature, written in Russian language, which touch upon the subject of Overseas Chinese in the history of Thailand in the 20<sup>th</sup> century several ideas should be expressed. Firstly, the studies of Overseas Chinese among Russian-speaking scholars almost always tended to be interdisciplinary. Meaning that this field of studies has been mostly covered by Russian-speaking authors as a part of some larger fields, such as Chinese Studies in general or studies on the history of specific countries. In this respect, if we talk about studies of Overseas Chinese in Thailand, such studies would always be in between the Thai Studies in the broad sense and the Chinese Studies as well.

Chinese Studies in Russia, as has been shown in the paper, first began in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century and have been developing for a much longer time than Thai Studies, which only started to form in Russia around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, after the establishment of diplomatic relations between Thailand and Russia in 1897, but did not have a chance to truly develop until the 1950s. Russian scholars by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century knew much less about the situation in Thailand, than about the situation in China, this resulted in the fact that majority of Russian academic works on Thailand in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were written by scholars, who initially were trained in Chinese Studies, many of whom knew Chinese and based their research on the Chinese sources.

Of course, since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the situation in Russian Asian Studies is much more balanced, nowadays several Universities in Russia provide study programs in the field of Thai Studies. However, Thai Studies in Russia are still in the phase of development and many aspects of Thai history, culture, language still have not been properly researched by Russian scholars. The problem of the Overseas Chinese community in the history of Thailand is one of such problems that definitely still needs to be researched further. Majority of Russian academic literature, that mention this problem do so only without getting into a details, there have not been any Russian-language books dedicated specifically to the subject of Overseas Chinese in Thailand. Obviously, there is also a need for translation and wider distribution of works of foreign authors about Overseas Chinese in Thailand among the Russian academic community.

## References

- Afonas'yeva, A. V. (2013). *Economic activities of the Overseas Chinese and Re-emigrants in the People's Republic of China During the Reforms of 1979 – 2010*. Moscow: IDV RAN.
- Andreev, M. A. (1975). *Overseas Chinese Bourgeoisie: A Peking Toll in Southeast Asia*. Moscow: Progress.
- Berzin, E. O. (1973). *History of Thailand (A Short Essay)*. Moscow: Nauka.
- Berzin, E. O. (1982). *Southeast Asia in the 13th – 16th Centuries*. Moscow: Nauka.
- Berzin, E. O. (1987). *Southeast Asia and the Expansion of the West in 17th – beginning of the 19th centuries*. Moscow: Nauka.
- Bokshchanin, A.A. (1968). *China and the Countries of the Southern Seas in 14th – 16th Centuries*. Moscow: Nauka.
- He, X. (1958). Qiaojuan Members And Guiqiao Equally Strive to Stimulate and Achieve High Production With Enthusiasm. *Chinese Affairs Journal*, (2).
- Kim, G. F., Levinson, G. I., Chufrin, G. I. (Eds.). (1986). *Chinese Ethnic Groups in the Countries of Southeast Asia*. Moscow: Nauka.
- Lainger, S. R. (1980). Huaqiao Secret Societies (Middle of the 19th Century – Beginning of the 20th Century): Some Aspects of Functioning and Evolution. *11th Scholarly Conference 'Society and State in China'*. Moscow.
- Larin, A. G. (2008). *China and the Overseas Chinese*. Moscow: IDV RAN.
- Larin, A. G. (2009). *Chinese Migrants in Russia. History and Modernity*. Moscow: Vostoch'naya Kniga.
- Larin, A. G. (2014). *Chinese Diaspora as A Source of Profit and Hardships*. Moscow: RSMD.
- Mel'nichenko, B. N. (n.d.). *Buddhism and Monarchy*. Leningrad: LGU.
- Movchanyuk, P. M. (1972). A Campaign for the Assimilation of the Chinese Population of Indonesia and the Creation of an Organization to Form National Unity - Philology and History of Asian & African Countries. Leningrad.
- Movchanyuk, P. M. (1974). Contemporary American Bourgeois Historiography on the Chinese in Indonesia - Philology and History of Asian & African Countries. Leningrad.
- Movchanyuk, P. M. (1974a). The Union of the Indonesian Chinese (1946 – 1953). *11th Scholarly Conference on the History, Language and Culture of Southeast Asian Countries*. Leningrad.
- Movchanyuk, P. M. (1975). Contemporary Indonesia Authors on the Chinese Ethnic Minority in Indonesia. *Historiography and Source Studies of the History of Asian and African Countries*, 4. Leningrad.
- Movchanyuk, P. M. (1977). The Problem of Chinese Ethnic Minority in the View of the Contemporary Western Bourgeois Historiography - Foreign Historiography of the Problems of Class Conflict and International Relations. Leningrad.
- Purcell, V. (1948). *The Chinese in Malaya*. London & New York: Toronto.
- Purcell, V. (1950). *The Position of the Chinese in Southeast Asia*. New York.
- Purcell, V. (1951). *The Chinese in Southeast Asia*. London & New York: Toronto.
- Purcell, V. (1955). *The Dual Nationality of the Chinese in Southeast Asia*. *Indian Quarterly*, 11(2).
- Purcell, V. (1956). *The Chinese in Modern Malaya*. Singapore.
- Rebrikova, N. V. (1960). *Essays on the Modern History of Thailand (1767 – 1917)*. Moscow: IVL.
- Rebrikova, N. V. (1966). *Essays on the Modern History of Thailand (1767 – 1917)*. Moscow: Nauka.
- Rebrikova, N. V. (1977). *Thailand: Socio-Economic History (13th – 18th century)*. Moscow: Nauka.
- Simoniya, N. A. (1959). *People of Chinese Nationality in the Countries of Southeast Asia*. Moscow: IMO Publishing.
- Simoniya, N. A. (1961). *Overseas Chinese on Southeast Asia, A Russian Study*. NY: Southeast Asia Program, Dept. of Far Eastern Studies: Cornell University.
- Skinner, G. W. (1957). *Chinese society in Thailand: An Analytical History*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Skinner, G. W. (1957a). Chinese Assimilation and Thai Politics. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 16(2).
- Zhu, Zhihe. (1957). *Myanmar*. Beijing

## **The Influence of Chinese Classical Novels on Thailand -- a Case Study of the Romance of the Three Kingdoms**

**Mou, Lei**

Sichuan Provincial Research Institute of Thai Studies  
China

**Zhou, Hong**

College of Foreign Languages and Cultures  
Chengdu University  
China

-----

### **Abstract**

"The Romance of the Three Kingdoms" (Thailand called Samkok) is the most widely spread of Chinese classical novels in the overseas. The first version of "Samkok" was translated by the famous Thai poet Chaophraya Phrakhleng and his team, more than 200 years ago. Since then, various versions of the "Romance of the Three Kingdoms" translation and rewriting of the story in Thailand have sprung up to meet the readers' different needs. In China, "Three Kingdoms" is considered a teach worthy novel which teach people to be loyal, but because of the massive war strategy description, the wisdom of war described in "the Romance of the Three Kingdoms" are also descendants respected, even extended to the business, politics and daily life.

Since the widely spread of "the Romance of the Three Kingdoms" in Thailand, it has reached different people and different fields in Thailand just like China, to study the influence of the communication of "the Romance of the Three Kingdoms" is very important. Through this article, the author introduced the influences in Thai society brought by the novel and its related stories, and analyzed the contemporary state of the influence of Samkok in Thailand through questionnaires.

**Keywords:** Chinese classical novel, The Romance of the Three Kingdoms, Samkok, Thailand, influence

### **I. Introduction**

"The Romance of the Three Kingdoms" is one of the four most famous Chinese classical novels, it is the first long historical novel with chapters in ancient China. The author is the famous novelist named Luo Guanzhong, at the end of Yuan and early Ming Dynasty. "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms" mainly describes the war between the warlords of the Eastern Han Dynasty, as well as the political and military struggle between the three kingdoms: Wei, Shu and Wu. At the end of the novel, Sima Yan unified three countries, created the Jin Dynasty.

As a bright star in the history of Chinese classical literature, the culture of the Three Kingdoms not only affected the land of China. With the history of many Chinese immigrants, the Three Kingdoms culture is accompanied by these Chinese, went to the rest of the world.

As a Chinese writer said, besides Chinese themselves, on the familiarity of "the Romance of the Three

Kingdoms", There is no doubt that Thai people should be ranked at the top of the whole world. Dr. Wu Qiong (Thai using Chinese name), the former director of the department of Chinese Language, school of humanity, Kasetsart University, Thailand, once introduced the influence of culture of "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms" in Thailand, said that the novel "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms" has been spread to Thailand for more than 200 years. Actually, as a verbal story, "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms" was introduced into Thailand by a large number of Chinese who moved to Siam (the ancient name of Thailand) in the mid-18th century during the Ayutthaya dynasty. As early as King Rama I (1782 to 1809 reign), the king commissioned the great poet and trade minister Chaophraya Phrakhlung, presided over the translation of "Romance of the Three Kingdoms". This version of "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms" applied free translation more than literal translation, a lot of details have been changed in line with the Thai people's habit on appreciation, the translated novel, following the pronunciation of the Chinese immigrants, was named "Samkok". This version gets to be very popular in Thailand just after the publication in 1802, and it formed a new prose in the history of Thai literature - "Samnuan Samkok" format. The wonderful stories such as "To Borrow Arrows with Thatched Boats" in the novel were selected to be used in the junior high school textbook in Thailand, lots of murals about "Samkok" are also found in Thai temples. In the past two hundred years, the culture of "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms" and the Thai culture blend with each other and have had a significant impact on the development of Thai literature and the cultural exchanges between China and Thailand.

## II. Literature Review

"The Romance of the Three Kingdoms" is the first Chinese novel introduced by Thailand, it was originally in the form of verbal story and manuscript, after translation, "Samkok" started to spread in written form in Thailand, in the period of King Rama I (born in 1737 AD, died in 1809 AD, the reign of AD 1782 - 1809), In 1782, after the establishment of the Chakri dynasty, the domestic situation became stable, the central government is gradually consolidated. King Rama I began to focus on the restoration of culture and education, in addition to value the domestic classical literature, many Chinese classical literature by the royal family attached great importance, which prompted the Chinese literature to spread widely in Thailand. The King Rama I particularly appreciated on the "Romance of the Three Kingdoms", since the war strategy and political strategy described in the book are conducive to the development of the wisdom of the people, he ordered the translation of the "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms" (Dilokwanich, 1985).

According to (PD Nivat & HH Prince, 1955), in his early days of governance, King Rama I requested the translation of some Chinese novels including "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms", in the form of the Royal order. It was both the demand for literary revival, in fact, at the same time to provide spiritual support to consolidate the regime. The establishment of the Chakri dynasty originated from the coup of King Rama I in the Thonburi dynasty, and King Rama I relied on the coup to destroy the last monarch of the Thonburi and successfully landed the throne and established the Chakri dynasty. In the beginning of the establishment of the Chakri dynasty, the domestic situation is still in turmoil with a variety of disputes and conflicts, as the king, Rama I, on the one hand have the responsibility to rescue and restore the majority of literary heritage burned in the war in the later period of the Ayutthaya dynasty, on the other hand he also need to consolidate his dominance, and thus better start the country's revival with good public opinion and mental preparation.

In this context, King Rama I ordered the translation of Chinese novels, including the "Romance of the Three Kingdoms", "the Western Han Dynasty Romance" and the historical story of the Mon People from Myanmar, the "great king", describing the experience of a horse man eventually become the king through struggle. With the widely spreading of such kinds of literary works, the King makes people believe in the establishment of the Chakri Dynasty, and united the people for the reconstruction of the Chakri Dynasty.

In 1802, under the requirement of King Rama I, led by the talented Thai poet and trade minister, Chaophraya Phrakhlung, "SamKok" translation work began, part of the story spread to the folk in Thai, and once swept the country. The translation of "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms" was completed in 1806, the Thai version called "Samkok" is then released. "Samkok" was firstly spread as manuscripts in the Thai court, later on, the manuscripts are passed into the folk, set off in Thailand, the "Samkok" wave. Until 1865, before the advent of Thai printing press, the manuscript of "Samkok" was handed over for nearly 50 years. In 1865, the printed version of the "Samkok" came up, showing a situation in short supply. After reprinted printing, it was largely circulated in the territory of Thailand. At that time, people in Thailand are mad about the translated version "Samkok", printing Chinese novel becomes an important source of the printing business. As the translation speed can not meet the needs of publishing, once some Thai people even wrote the fake "Samkok" for printing. To summarize the spread of the earliest version - "Samkok" (Xiaorui Pei., 2014), it is a classic translation literature that is coveted by the high level of translation quality (translator's identity) and the translation goal (localization goal) determined by the political needs and audience needs at that time.

With the longer spreading time, the culture of "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms", because of its own great charm, resulting in a very good communication effect. At the end of 2015, OCLC (Online Computer Library Center) database search results showed that so far in the world library circulation, there are the translation of "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms" in 15 languages, up to 243 versions. Ranked by language, Korean has the most versions - 69, Thai was ranked the fourth with 31 version. Among those 31 versions, Thai people never see "Samkok" just a general literary work, but pay more attention to the strategies in the novel. This brings the special versions of "Samkok" in Thai for businessman, for capitalists, for medical doctors, or even for the storytellers.

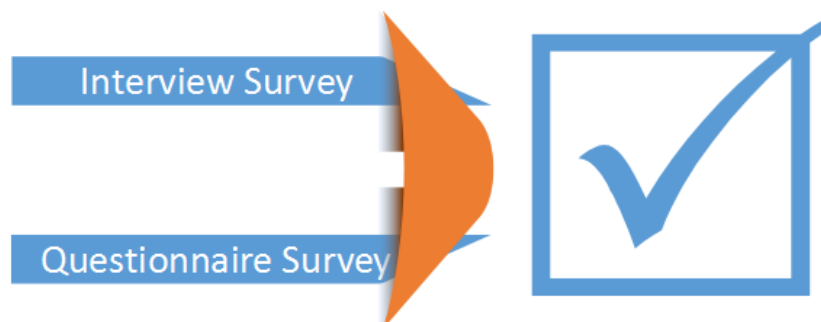
Instead of books, with the development of media technology, more different media began to spread "Samkok" culture to Thailand.

According to incomplete statistics, a total of at least two TV series, three films related to "Samkok" were introduced and played by Thailand, loved by the audience.

Through the summary of the above research literature and data, the author found a large number of historical records regarding how the novel spread to Thailand, but few researchers engaged in the research and investigation of the current status of the impact of "Samkok" culture in Thailand.

### **III. Research Design and Methodology**

In order to make up for the problems found in the above literature, the research design was work out as follow:



*Figure 1: Framework of Methodology*

#### (1) Interview Survey

Structured Interview was conducted in China and Thailand, respondents are mainly Thai people whose work were partially done in China, or Thai people who were interested in Chinese culture. This research method was selected because primary data could be obtained, since few literature could be found. It is very easy, convenient and feasible to guide in-depth conversations to obtain reliable and effective information. By group interviews, participants are relaxed, and mutual inspiration is conducive to promoting the problem in depth.

#### (2) Questionnaire Survey

An online questionnaire survey was designed and published in 2015, in order to address Thai people's understanding and awareness of the "Samkok" culture.

The questionnaire includes 21 questions, which covered demographic information and the understanding and awareness of the "Samkok" culture, it could be found at the following address: <https://www.wenjuan.com/s/bM7bMr/>.

During August of 2015 and October of 2015, this questionnaire was distributed online, mainly through the connections of the authors in Thai universities, finally 181 valid responses are collected. According the data of the year 2015 from the website named "Trading Economics ", with the following URL: <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/thailand/population>, Thailand had a population of 65.73 million, more than 95% of them are educated. With the 181 valid responses, and 95% as the confidence, the confidence interval is calculated to be 7.28.

### **IV. Data Analyze**

#### (1) Interview Survey

Through random interviews with Thai people, it was found that almost all respondents claimed themselves reading enthusiasts, and in these reading enthusiasts, nearly 90% has touched the Thai version "Samkok" in different ways.

Almost all of the respondents who have touched "Samkok" have learned stories related to "Samkok" in their school education, and have watched "Samkok" related TV series or films, about 70% of them touched animation or games related to "Samkok", and over 50% have read the novel "Samkok". Among the respondents who have read the novel, nearly 70% of them considered the characters in the novel to be fascinating.

Most of the respondents agreed that to understand “Samkok” is meaningful, the main points of view include:

- A. It can help them understand Chinese history, society and culture, learn something valuable from the understanding.
- B. Fragments of Chinese history are added into the primary and secondary schools textbooks in Thailand, not only contributed to the spread of Chinese culture in Thailand, but also to a certain extent, affected people's thinking, improved their moral cultivation;
- C. "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms" is a true sense of the historical novel, is also a true war novel, it describes a lot of war stories, with a grand idea, writing techniques are also varied diversity, enough to learn.
- D. The thinking and principles inside the novel can be learned to manage talents. According to statistics, there are 1191 characters in this novel, including 436 generals, 451 civil servants, 128 royal members and eunuchs and the other 176 people. The intricate relationship is as complex as the interpersonal relationship of today's society. Learn to understand the Romance of the Three Kingdoms can improve the ability to communicate and learn from the way people do things.

## (2) Questionnaire Survey

The questionnaire was designed with 21 questions including open questions. The first 5 are demographic questions describing the status of the respondents.

### A. Demographic description:

Among the 181 respondents, 59.67% are male, while 40.33% are female. Most of the respondents aged between 18-44, shown as following figure. From the perspective of age distribution, all the respondents should have the ability to think and judge independently.

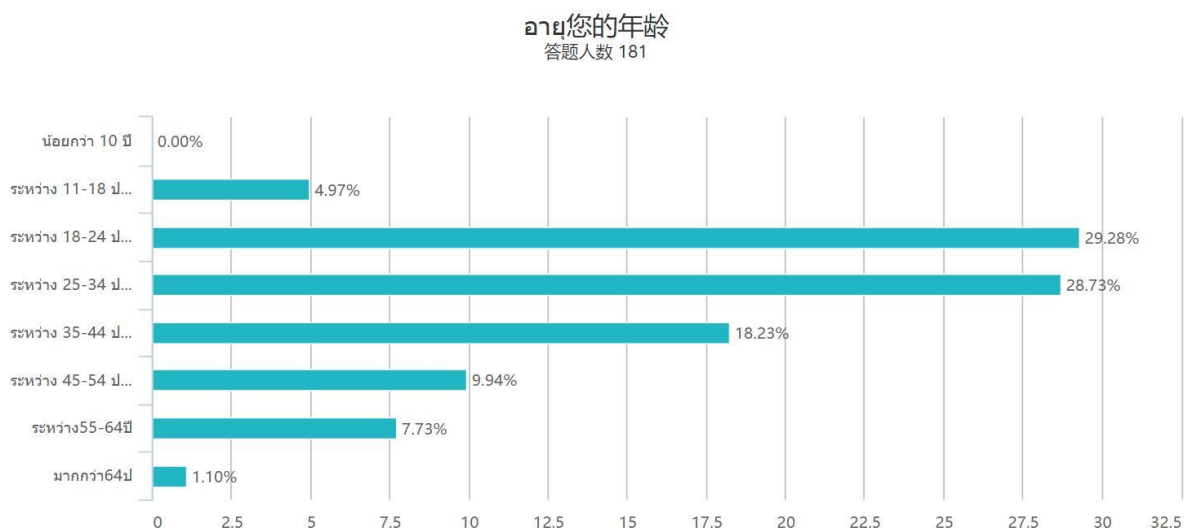


Figure 2: Age distribution of respondents

Over 98% of the respondents have finished at least high school, indicates that these respondents are well-educated and are possibly have learned at least stories of “Samkok” from school textbook.

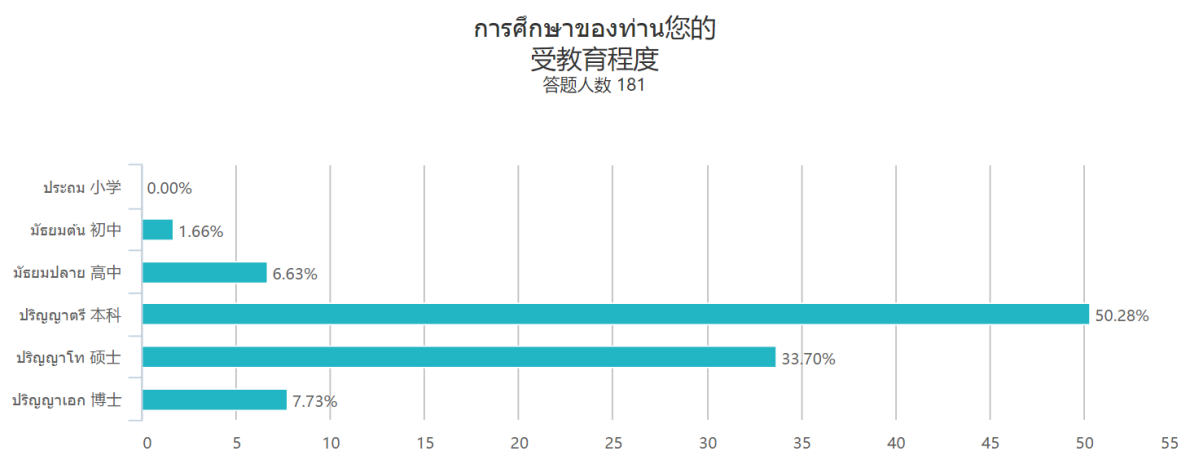


Figure 3: Education Status

The occupations of the respondents are diversified, while the places of residence are mainly concentrated in northern and central Thailand. This should be due to the limited contact of the author in Thailand.

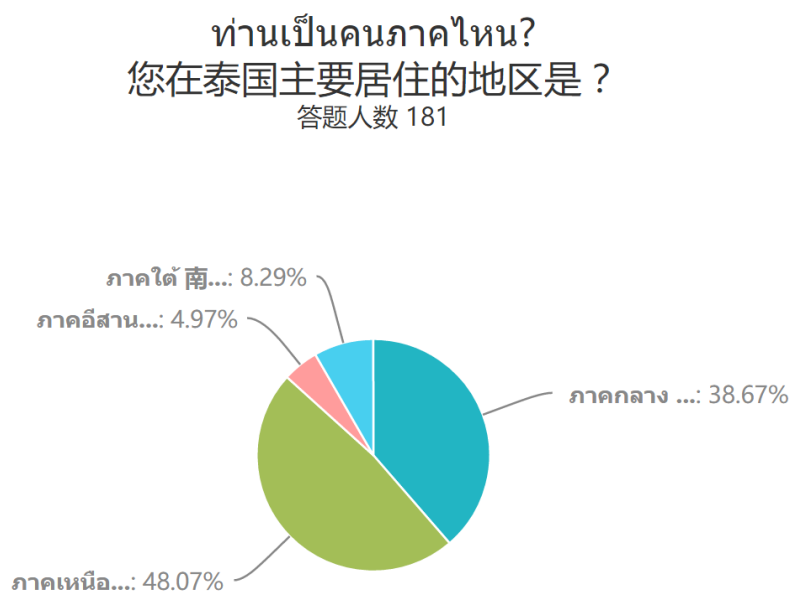


Figure 4: Places of residence

#### B. Questions related to Samkok:

At the beginning of this part, a question of “Culture of ‘Samkok’” was raised, because during the interview, a group of Thai people claimed that “Samkok” is a novel only, can not be seen as culture.



Thus came the following question:

Do you know the Culture of "Samkok"?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	101	55.8	55.8	55.8
	Not Really	28	15.5	15.5	71.3
	Not in Detail	52	28.7	28.7	100.0
	Total	181	100.0	100.0	

*Table 1: About "Samkok" Culture*

With this result, it is clear that most of the respondents admitted that "Samkok" could be seen as a culture already, even nearly one third of the respondents can not tell the detail.

Channels of getting reading materials related to "Samkok" is also counted.

**Channels to get Reading Materials related to Samkok**

	N	Mean
Buy from Book Store	181	.52
Rent from Book Store	181	.14
Borrow from Library	181	.43
Borrow from friends	181	.19
Buy online	181	.05
Free downloads	181	.29
Others	181	.07
Valid N (listwise)	181	

*Table 2: Channels to get "Samkok" reading materials*

From the statistics of the behaviors of Thai people to get "Samkok" reading materials showed that to buy from book store and to borrow from library, the most traditional ways are pointed out to be the top 2 ways. Online purchase is not occupying a good percentage, it might because free downloads are available and nearly 30% of respondents downloaded before.

Table 3 shows that nearly 60% of respondents do mind who is the translator, while they are choosing the translated "Samkok" books. This is quite interesting, most interviewees claim the stories and characters in "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms" are fascinating, but seems the condition to attract them is not only the original content, but also the translator. Translator with better writing skill in their native language should be a good reference to promote foreign books.

Do you mind the translator when choosing books?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	105	58.0	58.0	58.0
	No	76	42.0	42.0	100.0
	Total	181	100.0	100.0	

*Table 3: Idea on Translator*

For the language that Thai readers prefer to read the Samkok stories, doubtlessly Thai language. Again, a question regarding the reason to love Samkok stories was raised, the result is shown below:

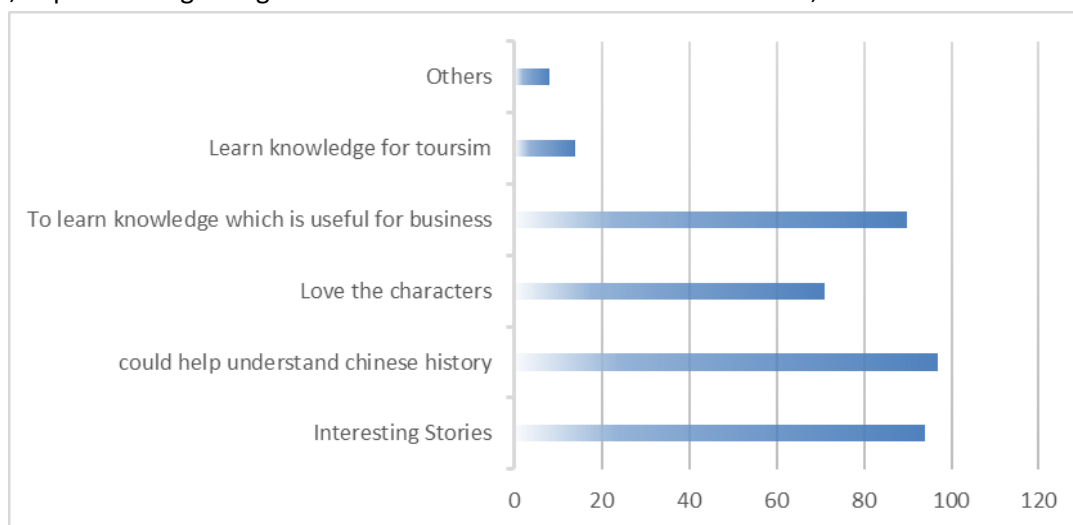


Figure 5: Reasons to Love Samkok Stories

Comparing with the result of interview survey, the result is quite similar, Samkok stories are seen as interesting reading materials, but beyond this, Thai people believe it can reflect Chinese history and culture, as well as the wisdom on daily behaviors.

At the same time, it could be found that famous and successful novels attracts foreigners, but also might also convey erroneous historical knowledge. Actually “The Romance of the Three Kingdoms” is based on the history, but not strictly following the history.

The media that help modern Thai people to understand the “Samkok” culture, is also investigated.

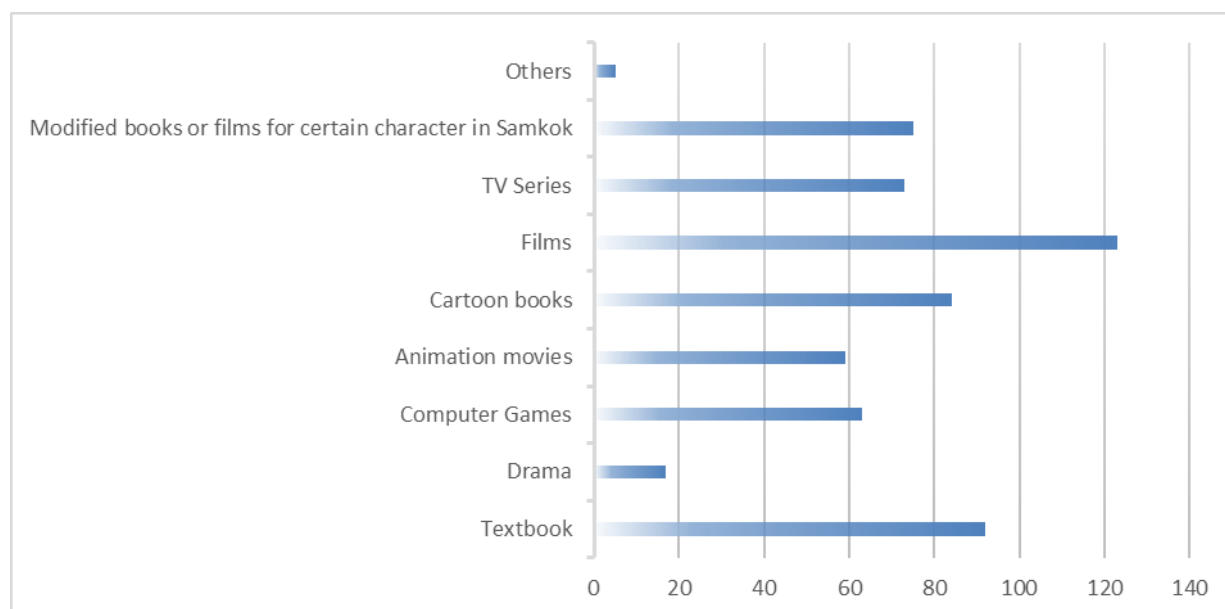


Figure 6: The popularity of different media

Figure 6 shows the popularity of different media spreading Samkok stories or culture, textbook is still ranked the second, which indicates the education industry are still quite interested in Samkok, either for literary reason or others.

Since Sichuan province is a rich area of Samkok related cultural and tourism resources, the following questions are more concentrated on Samkok related tourism.

Destination Ranking				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Sichuan	181	1	4	1.96
Hubei	181	1	4	2.55
Hebei	181	1	4	2.85
Henan	181	1	4	2.65
Valid N (listwise)	181			

*Table 4: Destination Ranking*

According to table 4, it is shows clearly that destinations which have stories related to the heroes belong to the kingdom “Shu” ranked at the top.

In the original novel, the author Luo Guanzhong would like to include the main idea: benevolent government gets more support. In the novel, Liu Bei is described as a man has an orthodox position and love his people as his own children, while Cao Cao is a man of brutality in the stories. Thus Liu Bei often win the struggle against Cao Cao, the idea of "benevolent invincible" is spread.

Regarding the results showed in the table above, Thai people are more interested in the destinations related to the kingdom “Shu” which belongs to Liu Bei, the reasoning could be made as below:

Thai readers agreed the author’s point of view, respect the hero with orthodox position, with his virtue of mercy, with strong power. This is fully in line with the values of the people of Thailand: loyal to the royal family and peace loving.

The last 5 questions are designed to check the Thai readers’ degree of interest of “Samkok”, and the current status of Samkok related organization in Thailand.

Below are the result for the 2 aspects.

For degree of interest:

Over 75% of the respondents claimed that they are interested in knowing more about “Samkok”, Over 95% agreed “Samkok” is helpful in daily study and work, Over 90% would like to suggest “Samkok” related reading materials to friends.

The data above showed high degree of interest, and huge potential to promote “Samkok” or “The Romance of the Three Kingdoms” in Thailand.

For current status of Samkok related organization in Thailand:

Over 65% of the respondents replied totally no idea on the “Samkok” research institutes in Thailand, while 30% replied have heard of that but have no idea, only 2.21% know “Samkok” research institutes in Thailand.

Over 90% of respondents have never been to the “Samkok” related attractions in Thailand, including 56% saying even don’t know there are such kind of attractions.

Summarized from the data above, most Thai people are interested in “Samkok” culture and “Samkok” related products, but the “Samkok” related institutes are still not well-known by local people. According to the experts interviewee and the field work, authors believe that it was because of the loss of “Samkok” culture and modern media. Firstly, “Samkok” is famous in Thailand, but stories are not happened in Thailand, thus the infrastructures in the attractions are not supported by the stories behind. Secondly, “Samkok” is now spread to Thailand from China and other countries like

Japan through modern media, such as films, digital games, animation, etc., while part of the attractions in Thailand are still showing artificial buildings only.



*Figure 7: Samkok Theme Park in Thailand*

## V. Conclusion

To conclude the analyze of data from both interview survey and questionnaire survey, the spread of “Samkok” culture has brought several meaningful aspects to Thailand till now, at the same time, according to the feedback of respondents and the current status of “Samkok” related organization in Thailand, there is still huge potential on the development of “Samkok” related products or even industries.

(1). Influence to Thailand brought by the “Samkok” culture

“Samkok” set off the upsurge of translation of Chinese literature.

In the history of Thai literature, there are three "upsurge" caused by Chinese literary works. “The Romance of the Three Kingdoms” is the reason for one of them. The unprecedented success of the "Samkok" in Thailand has aroused the interest of many Thai readers on the translated and original novels, which directly set off the upsurge of translation of Chinese literature.

“Samkok” had a tremendous impact on the development of Thai literature.

As the "Samkok" spread widely in Thailand, Thai people have high recognition on the novel itself and the stories selected from the novel, coupled with the dedication of many Thai literary masters, “Samkok” translated by Chaophraya Phrakhleng has become the undisputed classic of Thai literature, and This classic will inevitably impact the development of Thai literature.

“Samkok” on the impact of Thai culture. Thai version of the "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms" impact the Thai culture a lot. The main characters in the stories have become well-known heroes in Thailand, such as "Kong Ming" became a synonym for wisdom. Thai readers have never seen "Samkok" as a general literary works only, in addition to its profound literary attainments, Thai people admire more the war strategies in the novel.

(2). Potential Development

Although Thai respondents showed high degree of interest on “Samkok”, “Samkok” related organization such as research institutes and theme parks are still infamous in Thailand.

According to the status quo, there should be huge potential on the development of “Samkok” related products in Thailand.

Thai people are more familiar with heroes in “Samkok”, rather than the novel and history. Due to the development of the media, more people touched “Samkok” through new media, especially media for entertainment, such as film and digital games. Thus The content of the entertainment effect is more easily transmitted to the public, rational use of the new media could play a better role in promoting “Samkok” culture and products.

**References**

- Amornwanitsak, S. (2007). *The Communication and Influence of Chinese classical novel in Thailand*. Doctoral Dissertation, Zhejiang University, China.
- Dilokwanich, M. (1985). A Study of Samkok: The First Thai Translation of a Chinese Novel. *Journal of the Siam Society*, 77-112.
- Nivat, P. D., & Prince, H. H. (1955). The Reconstruction of Rama I of the Chakri Dynasty. *Journal of the Siam Society*, 43(1), 262-265.
- Wenhua Luan. (1998). *Literature history of Thailand*. Social Science Literature Publishing House.
- Wu, Q. (2014). The Historical Development of Sino-Thai Cultural Exchange. *Cultural Geography* (14), 252-253.
- Wu, Q. (2002). “The Romance of the Three Kingdoms” in Thailand. *The Research on Ming and Qing Dynasty Novels* (4), 94-103.
- Xiaorui, P. (2014). Localization of "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms in Thailand and its important value". *International Sinology*, (2), 150-158.

## Albino Eel and Virtuous Widow in Lost City – The Vernacular Records of a Natural Disaster in Northern Thai Folklore

Nakai, Senjo

Bachelor of Arts Program in Journalism  
Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication  
Thammasat University  
Thailand

---

### Abstract

This study is designed to archive the folkloric records of a catastrophic event, which is now believed to be earthquakes around Wiangnonglom Wetlands in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand. Through fieldworks, five types of the disaster-lore on the sunken city: belief, performing arts, oral tradition, place name, and urban folklore, are collected, and then archived as an online map. The fieldwork suggests that the oral transmission of the folklore gave away to the transmission through new channels. Governmental organizations, civil society, business sector and even international organizations, despite their different agendas, now play vital roles in preserving the local memory of the legendary disaster.

**Keywords:** folklore, natural disaster, Chiang Rai, eel, widow

### Introduction

There is a paucity of the historical documents of natural disasters in Northern Thailand although the region has experienced a myriad of natural disasters. In fact, any historical data in Thai language is virtually nonexistent prior to the fourteenth century. Instead, the region boasts vernacular records of natural disasters. This study is designed to collect, categorize, and archive the widespread legend of a catastrophic event, which is now believed to have been triggered by a series of earthquakes, around Wiangnonglom Wetlands (พื้นที่ชุ่มน้ำเวียงหนองหล่ม), Chiang Rai Province. The local legend says that a giant albino eel was captured by the people of Wiang Yonok [Yonok City]. After all the people except one widow ate the eel, a catastrophic disaster sent the city under water overnight along with the people except the widow.

This legendary catastrophe, recorded in the *Yonok Chronicle* [*Pongsawadan Yonok*], is well-known in the Northern region. The chronicle was assembled from so called *Chiang Saen Chronicles* (Pheun Muang Chiang Saen): Suwannakhomkham, Singhanawatkuman and Lawachakarat, by Chaem Bunnag (Phraya Chijakorachak) under the Fine Arts Department of the Siamese government. They were believed to have written by anonymous authors presumably from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. As is the case with other northern chronicles, it reports both factual and supernatural events, including the legendary catastrophe. The city state of Yonok is said to have disappeared along with the inhabitants, including the king, in 1003 B.E. or approximately 460 A.D. (Bunnag, 2014). It was during the reign of King Chaichana (พระเจ้ามหาไชยชนะ), who as the 46th king of the kingdom:

...One year after the coronation of King Chaichana, it was a Saturday on the waning of the seventh night of the seventh Lunar month, a person went to fish in Mae Kukanathi, and caught an albino eel the length of sugar palm tree, or some 14 meters. People beat it to death. They then tied a rope around the eel, and dragged it along a creek, which was later called as Mae Lak Creek. They offered it to Chaichana, the king of Yonok. He ordered to cut it and distribute it to all the people in the city. Later on the night of the same day, there was a roaring sound from the ground, again at the midnight, and the third time at dawn. The city of Yonok was submerged to become a large swamp. (p. 197)

Then, the chronicle mentions a testimony of a lone survivor. She told that she has survived the catastrophe because of a mysterious man's advice. He appeared from nowhere on the eve of the catastrophe, and asked her for a place to stay overnight. Noticing a good smell, he asked her what the king and others were eating (Chaiworasin, 2008, p.218). After she explained him it was eel soup, he told her to stay inside the hut, and not to come out until the day breaks. Although hearing commotions that night, she remained inside the hut. The next morning, she finally came out only to find the city turned into a large lake, and her hut stood on an island, which is now called the Widow's Island.

Today, the scientific research reveal that the wetlands were formed along the Mae Chan fault (Wood et. al., p.2008). As a result, some locals consider that the demise of the city was caused by devastating earthquakes. In fact, the Chiang Saen area has been subject to strong earthquakes, such as an earthquake (M. 6.8) in Shan State of Myanmar on the March 24, 2011 [see Figure 1], and the Mae Lao earthquake (M. 6.1) on May 5, 2014. The area is close to a number of active faults, such as Ma Chan, Mae Lao, and Mae Ing faults.

The objective of this study is to collect the folklore of the lost city from both Northern Thai chronicles and fieldworks in Mae Chan and Chiang Saen districts in Chiang Rai Province, where most of the wetlands are located. The collected folklore, plotted in an interactive map, is made accessible to interested individuals and organizations via the Internet. After data collection, the disaster-lore is sorted according to the categories proposed in Handbook of Folklore Survey (Ueno, Takakuwa, Fukuda & Miyata, 1987). In this study, the researcher also discusses how the disaster-lore, which may be regarded as obsolete in the modern society, is managed today.

Of course, it is not saying that disaster-lore should be uncritically treated as historical facts. A majority of Northern Thai chronicles were edited only from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries on. Before then, the transmission of historical records had been dependent on the verbal recitations and memorization (Stratton, 2004, p.93). Therefore, Northern Thai historiographies always poses a challenge in conducting an empirical study. The paucity of historical documents is further complicated by the fact that the northern historiographies are intertwined with myths and legends. Despite inherent difficulties in verifying recorded events in Northern Thai folklore, folkloric records help historians, scientists, and both local and central governments identify previously undocumented disasters.

## **Folkloric Records for Natural Disaster Prevention and Mitigation**

Folklore conveys a message in use of any one medium or combination of multiple media. It can preserve locally significant events, including natural disasters. Regardless of forms, folklore can transmit memories from one generation to another, or from one place to another in locally accessible manners. It can be created, and modified by the locals themselves to stay meaningful to the audience. Prior to the introduction of formal education system, folklore was one of a few media from which illiterate populations learned local history. Shōji Sasamoto (1994), in his study of Japanese folklore and local historical documents about debris flows, describes the role of folklore in natural disaster management as follows:

...[I]n a natural disaster-prone area, a culture has been created to cope with them [natural disasters] through the accumulation [of experiences]: it is the crystallization of people's desire to pass on their historical experiences to future generations in a variety of forms, and also to mitigate damages caused by natural disasters. Without the accumulation of culture against natural disasters, people cannot live in any areas with constant risk of natural disasters. (p.369)

As Sasamoto argues, folklore is one of a few 'soft' technologies, which may help the locals take necessary actions to save the lives and properties from natural disasters. Folklore is therefore seen as a locally sustainable time capsule of folk history. Although being anecdotal, a great majority of school students in Kamaishi City, Iwate Prefecture, survived the 2011 tsunami by following a local saying that encourages people to voluntarily escape to a higher ground (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, 2011, March 28):

In the city of Kamaishi, in which a total number of deaths and missing persons among the residents amount to more than 1,200, 5 students, out of approximately 2,900 students from elementary and junior high schools, who happened to take an early leave or sickness absence were dead. The rest were all confirmed alive. The city has been committed to teaching students [the importance of] disaster prevention efforts by inviting experts since 2005, and one of such efforts was [the promotion of an old saying called] 'tendeko.' The saying is a heritage of the tragic history scarred by the repeated attacks of tsunamis; it means that in case of tsunamis, run alone to a high place even if you are not with your parents or children. Around 80 percent of a total of 184 students from Kamaishi City Elementary School, had left the school earlier because it happened to be at the end of the final term. Almost all school areas were hit by the tsunami except for the hillside, but all the students survived. (my translation from Japanese)

Considering that the city was struck by a nine-meter-high tsunami, the majority of the students survived the catastrophic event. Although the proverb was re-introduced as part of a tsunami resilient community program by disaster management experts, this episode indicates that if folklore is incorporated into disaster management, it can improve the efficacy of the 'hard' technology against natural disasters. In fact, folklore has been utilized in many modern projects around the world, ranging family planning projects in developing countries (UNESCO, 1972), HIV/AIDS prevention projects in Thailand through the traditional shadow play of *nang talung* (Thida, 2005, p.9), those in Laos through the folk songs of *lam* (Yoshida et al. 2011), community development works in the Philippines (Valbuena, 1986), to protests in the colonial India by folk songs and plays



(Mohanty & Parhi, 2011).

Of course, technological development does mitigate the impacts of natural disasters, and may even help scientists predict the future occurrences. As is the case with the post 2011-2012 flood plans in Thailand focused upon technological measures, such as river bank reinforcement, and the constructions of early warning system and anti-flood walls. However, a technological measures alone is not sufficient for natural disaster management. Ironically, technological development may increase the modern society's vulnerability to natural disasters as a renowned seismologist and essayist Torahiko Terada (1934/2012, p.58) succinctly described:

As civilization progresses, human beings gradually become eager to conquer nature. Then, they build buildings that deviate from the natural laws of gravity, wind, and water pressure. Believing that they have done enough to contain the volatility of nature, nature returns in rage, destroys skyscrapers and dikes, poses threat to the lives of human beings, and destroys properties as if giant mobs of vicious animals broke free of a cage. I am not so far off the mark to say that disasters result from the cheap tricks of human beings, who try to resist nature.... (my translation from Japanese)

The technological approach may draw people into complacency about the risk of natural disasters. For example, the northeastern coast of Japan, due to frequent strikes of tsunamis, should have been better prepared for tsunamis in terms of infrastructure than any other parts of Japan. After the 1933 devastating tsunami, the local governments, including a small fishing town of Taro, Iwate Prefecture, initiated the construction of seawalls and improvement of ports because the town lost 1,867 lives out of 2,248 in the 1896 tsunami (Yamashita, 2008, p.37) In 1933, a 10-meter-high tsunami reached the town again, claiming 972 lives (Usami, 2003, cited in Yamashita, 2008, p.87). After that, the town built 10 meter high seawalls that circled the community, which were dubbed as 'the Great Walls.' The construction was followed by the introductions of warning system, escape drills, and hazard maps. The giant seawalls did protect the town from the 1960 Chilean tsunami, but, before the 2011 tsunami, civil engineering expert Nobuo Shutō (2006) sensed a growing complacency among the people in the area:

Today, we are confronted across Japan by the condition in which houses are mushrooming right next to the seawalls. The majority of the residents did not evacuate themselves even in case of strong earthquakes, and almost all participants in emergency drills were only those who had experienced the 1960 Chilean tsunami. Even in Taro, which is usually enthusiastic about tsunami management, the numbers of the participants are decreasing. Against tsunamis of similar severity as the Chilean tsunami, the current society is safer than before, but to much more severe tsunamis, it may become more vulnerable than during the pre-Chilean tsunami period. ...it cannot be denied that 'a false sense of security' that the construction [of anti-tsunami infrastructure] brewed hurt the progress of anti-disaster efforts, such as land use planning and disaster prevention systems. (p.188, my translation from Japanese)

On February 27, 2010, a tsunami warning was issued by Japan Meteorological Agency to cities along the Pacific Coast of Japan. At Kamaishi, 3-meter-high tsunami was expected. Despite the official warning, a survey conducted by Fire and Disaster Management Agency (2011, cited in Katada et. al., 2011, p.103) found that only 37.5 percent of the residents evacuated to a shelter or officially

designated place. In another research, 37 percent of the residents remained at home while 45.5 percent are reported to have evacuated (Kanai & Katada, 2011, p.44). And the 2011 tsunami finally occurred, and destroyed most of coastal cities, including Taro.

It is certain that devastating tsunamis will strike the region again, yet with an interval long enough for the people to forget the previous tragedies. The 2011 tsunami exposes the limitations of technological measures against 'low-probability high-consequence' disasters.

A seismologist's remark on the limitation of modern technology against natural disasters after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami remains relevant to resource-deprived societies where little or no comprehensive tsunami warning system exists: "Since no official warning can be issued, the only effective protection against near-source tsunamis is for populations to recognize the warning signs and to know that they must move immediately to a safe place" (Davies, 2002, p.31). Even if a warning of an approaching tsunami is issued in time, the people still have to voluntarily take an appropriate action. UNESCO Director-General Koichirō Matsuura (UNESCO, 2006) describes such challenge in anti-tsunami programs as follows:

A timely 100 percent accurate and precise warning will not provide any protection...if people do not know how to respond to the emergency. Early warning is as much an issue of 'soft' organizational technology, communication and community-based systems, as it is of 'hard' science and technology, numerical modeling and instrumental networks.... Building national preparedness is the most difficult part of establishing early warning systems.

Natural disasters are often considered as merely 'natural' phenomena, which only science and technology can effectively control. As a result, disaster-related research is typically led by scientists, such as seismologists and geologists. They often investigate the mechanism of natural disasters with little consideration of the social aspect (Sasamoto 1994, p.130). A similar oversight is observed in international tsunami management (Gaillard & Texier, 2008, p.346).

In relation to the debate of risk, Brian Wynne (2003) explains that because the culture of science is institutionalized and practiced as public knowledge in modern societies, lay knowledge is often dismissed as "effectively worthless" in public domains (p.20). Wynne however suggests that lay knowledge is "no less legitimate a form of rationality than the scientists', and build upon it, in both research and in practice" (ibid., p.41).

Modern natural disaster management is based on the previous records of natural disasters, as is the case with the height of the previous anti-tsunami walls which used to surround the town of Taro. The devastating tsunami swept the town in 1933, which was estimated to be 10 meter high. The local administration accordingly started building ten meter high and 2.4 kilometer long seawalls to protect the town in 1934, which was completed after almost half a century. Take Japan's management for sediment disasters as another example. Both the central government and regional administrative bodies have drawn the master plans for debris flows and landslides, the first of which was implemented nationwide in 1975. The national plan is designed to cope with the amount of sediment produced by only a 5-to-10 year probability rainfall, and Tajimi Sediment Control and National Highway Office of the Chūbu Bureau – a local branch of Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) in sediment disaster-prone Gifu prefecture – is currently upgrading the facilities for the risk of a 30 year probability rainfall, based on the available data of the recorded disasters (2012, p.5). Given the current limitations in resources, the sediment disaster management

is accountable only for a 5-to-30 year probability rainfall. This example indicates that the disaster control is effective only as long as nature does not surpass human estimation. Folklore may preserve invaluable local memories of natural disasters for a much longer period than modern disaster prevention plans are designed to deal with.

In the 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 was declared to urge disaster prevention efforts should include “relevant traditional and indigenous knowledge and culture heritage and be tailored to different target audiences, taking into account cultural and social factors” in order to reduce risks and build resilience against disasters (International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, 2005. P.9).

### **Data Collection and Classification Scheme**

There are reasonable concerns among historians about the reliability of folkloric records, which are prone to inconsistency. Carol Stratton (2004), for example, notes that “...the transmission of history in Siam has traditionally relied on verbal recitations of past events and learning has been based on memorization” (2004, p.93). Because of the centrality of orality in Northern Thai history, any researchers, in studying Northern Thai history before the fourteenth century, inevitably face the issue of reliability in the historical records. Laurent Hennequin (2003, p.47) resonated with Stratton’s view by stating that “the [Northern Thai] chronicles rarely agree between themselves, in particular concerning chronology, and there is no contemporary evidence to confirm any of them. In addition, Northern Thai chronicles are conflated with legends (Swearer 1974, p70).

The folklore of the ‘sunken city’ called Yonoknakaphan was collected around the Wiangnonglom Wetlands in Chiang Rai Province in 2011 and 2017. The data was first recorded in the data sheet ‘saigai carta (disaster record form),’ prepared by Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, and then plotted in an interactive map (Google Earth Pro <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1HoaLtCuu1AbgoPOGki1DGivPdXQlulmz&usp=sharing>). The data is made accessible via the Internet with a hope of promoting future research, and raising awareness of natural disasters among the public.

For better user experience of the digital archive, the lore must be clearly defined and divided into mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive categories. There is an attempt to classify disaster-lore: a group of Japanese researchers proposed six categories: ‘anti-disaster management/civil engineering,’ ‘facts/experiences/lessons from natural disasters,’ ‘beliefs,’ ‘proverbs,’ ‘literal arts/folk songs/poems,’ and ‘folk tales/legends’ (Research Unit on How to Pass on Lessons Learned from Natural Disasters in the Tenryu River Upper Reaches, 2009, p.8). In this study, collected folklore is sorted out according to 12 categories proposed in Handbook of Folklore Survey (1987): community, family and kinship, production and technology, clothes and food, housing, rites of passage, annual events, belief, performing arts, oral tradition, place name, and urban folklore.

Because the importance of folklore vis-à-vis modern disaster management has been recognized in recent years, a number of online and offline archives of disaster-lore and historical data of natural disasters were created. For example, a chronological table of natural disasters that occurred in Japan for the last 1,600 years was compiled by Fire and Disaster Management Agency of Japan in 2007. It can be downloaded from the website. In 2006, Kyoto University’s Research Center for Disaster Reduction Systems also released historical records on disasters [*Saigai shiryō dētabēsu*] ([maple.dpri.kyoto-u.ac.jp/saigaishiryo/](http://maple.dpri.kyoto-u.ac.jp/saigaishiryo/)). This online archive allows the users to search through the

archive of more than 20,000 cases of natural disasters in Japan. Japan's National Diet Library archives five types of data on Great East Japan Earthquake (document, website, photo, audio/video and other) from 55 archives, as of March 31, 2017 ([kn.ndl.go.jp/#/](http://kn.ndl.go.jp/#/)). The author also created an online map of sediment disaster-related folklore in Kiso Valley, Nagano and Gifu Prefectures (Isarangkura Na Ayuthaya & Nakai, 2011). Local folklore of sediment disasters in the valley, divided into five categories: folktale, monument, natural object, proverb, and place name, was made accessible. [see Figure 2]

### **Location and Geographical Characteristics**

The main site of fieldwork is Wiang Nonglom Wetlands, locally called as 'Mueang Nong [the swamp city]' today. They are about 7-kilometer-wide and 15-kilometer-long (Wood et.al., 2004, p.64). [see Figure 3 and 4] The wetlands, consisting of many lakes, swamps and rivers, cover some 20,000 rai (or 32,000 sq. kilometer) according to a team of researcher of community tourism (2015), and lie in the Kok valley over two districts of Chiang Saen and Mae Chan, or three sub-districts of Chan Chawa (or locally called Chan Chua จันทว้า), Tha Khao Plueak (ท่าข้าวเปลือก) and Sri Yonok (ศรีโชนก). The locals used to depend on the wetlands for their livelihood; they were the primary sources of water for farmers and livestock, and also a fertile fishing ground. In recent years, this sleepy hamlet draws public attention due to the growing tourism industry in Chiang Rai and an awareness of environmental issues. In fact, the wetlands are one of the most important sanctuaries for migratory birds in Southeast Asia. A part of the wetlands, Nong Bong Kai, was designated as a non-hunting area in 2001 under the Ramsar Convention.

However, the wetlands have been subject to drastic environmental changes due to intensifying human activities. The area has been encroached and converted into agricultural lands, such as orchards and rubber plantations. Numerous streams that used to flow in and out of the wetlands also disappeared. Due to the construction of irrigation system and small dams, the water level of the wetlands has been stabilized despite rainfall fluctuations between the Monsoon season and the dry season. However, the locals in recent years complained about declining water levels at the wetlands and also dwindling fish catch from the wetlands, which used to secure their livelihood.

Yonok (pop. 4,623, and 1,928 households, as of 2017) is a sub-district of Chiang Saen District. The town, located in the northeastern part of Chiang Rai Province, covers around 50 square kilometers or 31,532 rai (Yonok Sub-district Office, 2017). It is bordered by Mae Chan District to the south and the west, and by Doi Luang District to the south. 27 percent of the town is a vast stretch of wetland, lakes and river systems (8,554 rai), followed by paddies (4,815 rai), residential (2,624 rai), forestry (1,004 rai), orchard (956 rai), and agricultural lands other than paddies (35 rai). The town consists of 8 villages: Doichan, Rongbong, Kutao, Santhat, Thungfaham, Santonpao, Khonggam, and Doigam.

Chanchawa is another sub-district in the wetlands. Around 1786, 10 households Bannonglongsritia (บ้านหนองล่องศรีเตี้ย) of present-day Lumphun fled slave hunters to the area and found a commune called Bannongrong (บ้านหนองร่อง) in 1789. Bannongrong later prospered and was renamed to Chanchawa. The foundation of Chanchawa, along with South Chanchawa and Thakhaoplueak, is said to date back to 1919 when Chiang Mai and Lumphun suffered from severe drought. The people in these provinces moved to the Wiangnonglom area, such as Banmaekhamnamlat, Banhuainamrak, and Bandongrongruea. After that, people from the northeastern region also moved in the area, especially the Yonok district after 1957. Tha Khao Plueak is also one of three sub-districts, located in Mae Chan District. Tha Khao Plueak covers a total of 106.79 sq. kilometers, and comprises 14 villages.

This sub-district is bordered by Yonok to the north, and by Chanchawa to the west. As of January 2014, Tha Khao Plueak's population accounts to 7,421.

Archeologists discovered artifacts, such as the ruin of a monastery, pieces of ceramics, and Buddha images in the wetlands (Chiang Mai Province Office of Archeology District 8, 2015). The wetlands are some ten kilometers away from the city of Chiang Saen, which is one of the oldest cities in Thai history. Historians estimate that Tai speaking groups migrated from southern Yunnan to the area before 700 A.D. (Wyatt, 2003, p.25). Yonoknakaphan is said to have founded around the first century. According to the Yonok chronicle, Prince Singhonnawat (สิงหนวัต) is said to have migrated from Yunnan to the present-day Chiang Rai, and established a kingdom called Yonoknakaphan Singhonnawat. This city state was named after the founder Singhonnawat and mythical snake Naga, which is said to have chosen the location of the new city. This dynasty produced a total of 46 kings before a catastrophic event destroyed the city. Chiang Saen City is located on the western bank of Mekong River, bordered by Myanmar and Laos. Due to its close proximity to the river, the city has been affected by floods. Towns around the Wiang Nonglom Wetlands have also repeatedly been hit by severe floods as the locals in the wetlands also remembered severe floods in 1966 and 1971. Northern Thai chronicles of Suwannakhomkham City and Yonoknakaphan City mention the destructions of ancient cities. Historians estimate that Yonoknakaphan City was submerged in the eleventh century (Nithi, 1970, cited in Ongsakul, 2005, p.19). The Suwannakhomkham Chronicle described that the destruction of the world by the legendary flood and the eventual recovery. The Suwannakhomkham Chronicle also mentions the destruction of the legendary city: "The Mekong tore into the bank and cut towards the east. Mueang Suwannakhomkham then fell apart" (Prasert, n.d., p.25, cited in Ongsakul, *ibid.*).

The area is also in a close proximity to an active fault; the Mae Chan fault have caused earthquakes, such as a magnitude 4.8 earthquake of May 25, 1978. [see Figure 5] Today, scientists assume that the ancient city of Yonok may have been destroyed by a devastating earthquake. A team of American and Thai geologists conducted a survey at Ko Mae Mai Island (the Widow's Island) in Nong Luang Lake. The radiocarbon dating of a sample from the island suggests that the island may have been inhabitable between 9,270 B.C. and 1,786 A.D. The estimated time of inundation does not match the speculated timing of the catastrophic earthquake and submergence of the city (Wood, Singharajwarapan, Bundarnsin & Rothwell, 2004).

### **Five Types of the Disaster-lore**

Five types of the disaster-lore (i.e., belief, performing arts, oral tradition, place name, and urban folklore) on the sunken city are collected around Wiang Nonglom are described in detail.

#### **Belief**

From the fieldwork, two types of beliefs about the sunken city among the locals were collected: the holiness of the Widow's Island [Ko Mae Mai] and a food taboo. These beliefs give rise to a ritual and a shrine.

The Widow's Island is considered by the locals as a special place. Two old women of their 60s and 70s (personal communication, May 21, 2017) called the small island a "sacred place" because the sole survivor is believed to have lived there. The abbot of Wat Pa Makno (วัดป่าหมากหน่อ) expressed his belief that the island is a "miraculous place" (personal communication, May 22, 2017).

He also told that there is a rumor of a giant Buddha statue under the water of Nongluang Lake. According to the abbot of Wat Pa Makno Temple, the locals believed that there is a Buddha statue under the Nongluang Lake. A local fisherman was said to come across a large statue of the Buddha under the water while he was fishing in the lake. A rumor says that the fisherman and fellow villagers managed to remove the arm of the statue, but the rest sunk deeper into the mud.

The ancient ruin of a monastery on the island indicates that there was a temple in the past. However, the island was long deserted, and densely covered by mak trees. It was in 1980 that a Christian villager first moved in the island, who was not afraid of a curse, and others later started farming on the island. Wandering monks, such as Sonsak and Bunchum, has stayed on the island, and built shelters. After the current abbot moved in the island in 2015, the monastery was officially recognized as a temple.

To commemorate the destruction of the kingdom, the locals held ceremonies and staged a play on the island. A university lecturer, who is originally from Chiang Saen City, recalled the occurrence of a strange incident during the event, which reflects the local belief in this island:

Ten students from Chanchawa Witthayakhom School [a public school in Chanchawa] performed a play at Wat Mae Lak Temple in 2013. The ordination hall was used as a stage, and people from both the community [Chanchawa] and others came to see the play.... They played a historical drama of Wiang Nonglom and the giant white eel. While they practiced, a thunder storm occurred. It happened before the play started. It rained around 200 meters away from the stage, but it didn't rain in the monastery. Some ten kids started crying, and the actress who played the role of the widow told me that she saw a woman, who said to her she would play it herself. (personal communication, May 22, 2017)

#### Taboo

Local informants exhibited ambiguous attitudes toward eel consumption. The village headman and elderly women in the housewives' club of Ban Mae Lua, who used to fish in the wetlands, would not mind eating eels (personal communication, May 21, 2017). However the abbot of Wat Pa Makno considered eel meat as a taboo food (personal communication, May 22, 2017).

#### Ritual

On August 27, 2015, Wat Pa Makno Temple organized a memorial service for the victims of the sunken city. [see Figure 6]. However, it is unclear since when and how often the legend-related rituals were organized.

#### Shrine

The surviving widow is enshrined on the premises of Wat Pa Makno Temple. The statue of the widow is stored in the shelter, along with the dolls of Kumanthong, which are believed to bring luck. The statue and the shrine were built in a few years ago. She is called as 'Mrs. Buakhiao' (บัวเขียว, Green Lotus). [see Figure 7] The locals pay a visit to this shrine for various reasons, especially winning lotteries.

## Performing Arts

### Drama

In 2013, with help of researchers, ten students from the Chanchawa Witthayakhom School played a historical drama of Wiang Nonglom called “Ways of Life of Mueangnong People (วิถีคนเมืองหนอง)” at Wat Mae Lak Temple. One researcher from a nearby university explained of the event:

In 2011, a story telling contest was held to let kids create stories about water, economy and culture. After gathering the youth, we proposed that the children should play a drama because they had a talent in performance. Ten core members from Chanchawa Witthayakhom School performed a play at Wat Mae Lak Temple in 2013. The ordination hall was used as a stage, and the people from both the community [Chanchawa] and other villages came to see the play. The children wanted to play again, but there was no budget. [So the play was discontinued.] They played the history of Wiang Nonglom and the giant white eel.... (personal communication, May 21, 2017)

### Song

A NGO worker, who is not a local of Chiang Saen, but currently lives near the wetlands, created a song based on the local history, including the lost city. He performed it during events in order to raise awareness of environmental issues and local identity (personal communication, May 21, 2017).

## Oral Tradition

### Legend

All eleven informants are familiar with the legend. They were able to recite it in detail. Although they knew of the existence of the written chronicle, they had not read it. The locals, as children, learned the folklore from the elderly. They described the legend with minor differences in numbers of characters and causality behind events. Nonetheless, their descriptions share the plot and key characters.

A long time ago, a giant white eel was caught. [People] dragged it to the Mae Lua Creek, and cleaned it there. The locals ate it together, except for a widow, who didn't go help them catch fish. That's why she didn't get a share. That night, it rained very hard, with the sounds of thunder, and [the city] was flooded except for the Widow's Island. (personal communication, May 21, 2017)

The village headman of Ban Mae Lua in Tha Khao Plueak, aged 52, heard of the lore from his parents while working in the farm:

This area used to be an old city before it has become Chiang Saen. And a folktale (tamnan) says that the ruler of the city liked hunting animals, and made others catch animals. One day, they caught a big albino eel (ปลาเหียน), which was as big as the trunk of sugar palm tree, and then gut it at the Mae Tha Creek. They dragged it to Mae Lak Creek, and then cut it at Mae Kok River. Then there was an earthquake. It was a bad omen. There was a roaring sound in the sky. Those who ate the eel disappeared all but the widow and the Widow's Island. (personal

communication, May 21, 2017)

Although the social environment in the area has changed, the legend is still passed on among the locals. In 2011, a story-telling contest was held as a part of cultural tourism projects to let school students create stories about water, economy and culture. In 2013, ten students from Chanchawa Witthayakhom School performed a play that enacted the history of Wiang Nonglom and the legend of the sunken city at Wat Mae Lak Temple. The play is said to have attracted people from Chanchawa and other villages.

The informants seem to understand the destruction of the city as a divine retribution to those who consumed the meat of the giant albino eel. The legend provides the detailed description of natural phenomena, which appear to be earthquakes.

#### Poem

A local artist Praphan Chumchammut added a poem of the lost city to the georama of the Yonok Kingdom, which is displayed at Chalermraja Cultural Center of the Chanchawa Witthayakhom School [see Figure 8]

The Wiangnonglom must be swallowed by the earth. Because [the people] ate the white eel, they ran for life. [The eel] was dragged from Mae Ha, and chopped at Mae Lua. The royal city crumbled down in front of very eyes. The heaven was so furious to inflict the mark of punishment. Gone with all but a tiny island. All life perished, sucked into the ground. Only left was fish now the ruler of the swamp. (my translation)

#### Place Name

A number of place names reflect the legend of the sunken city. To start with, 'Nonglom (หนองลอม),' located in Yonok, Chiang Saen District, is a reference to the legend itself. The term 'lom' may refer to either the sunken city, or floating mats of vegetation (personal communication, May 21, 2017). 'Ko Mae Mai (The Widow's Island เกาะแม่มาช) in Nongluang Lake is named after the lone survivor of the catastrophe although the island today is connected to the shore by a bridge. Because the giant eel was believed to be captured, dragged, gutted, and chopped into pieces, the locals call the streams flowing in and out of the wetlands Mae Ha (หะ, to catch in the Northern Thai dialect), 'Mae Lak' River (ลาก, to drag), 'Mae Lua' River (ลัว, to gut in the Northern Thai dialect), and 'Mae Kok' River (กค, to chop into pieces in the Northern Thai dialect).

Chiang Mai-based writer Amphan Chaiworasin (2008, p.217) also noted some of the above-mentioned place names. Nong Waen is a swamp that is named after an episode of a prince's desperate effort to escape his demise. According to the legend, then prince's feet were stuck in mud as the city started sinking. He took off a ring in hope of freeing himself, but he was eventually sucked into mud. In the aftermath of the catastrophe, the remaining people of the city were said to meet. According to the Yonok Chronicle, they after discussions build a new city called 'Wiang Prueksa (The City of Consultation).'

#### Urban Folklore

##### Museum

A small museum called Chalermraja Cultural Center is located within the Chanchawa Witthayakhom



School. The museum curates archeological and cultural artifacts, including the painting of the legend of the sunken city by a local painter Praphan Chumchammut on January 12, 2002. Teachers train students to explain the local history and culture. In the scene of the destruction of the Yonok is accompanied by his poem [see Figure 9]

#### Statue

In more recent years, the locals built concrete statues of the albino eel and the widow, based on the legend. For example, the statue of giant albino eel was installed in front of the main hall of Wat Pa Makno Temple, which is on Ko Mae Mai Island in Chanchawa, Mae Chan District, along with the statues of Naga and a giant snake on the premises. [see Figure 10 and 11]

Within the monastery, there is the shrine of the widow. Inside the small shrine is the statue of the widow, who is locally called as Buakhiao. Both constructions are relatively new.

#### Mural and Painting

In addition to 'construction,' the legend inspired the locals to create visual arts on the catastrophe. The event is depicted in (a) the murals within two Buddhist monasteries, (b) a georama in a local museum, and (c) a tourist map of the wetlands.

Both Wat Pratatdoikukaeo Temple (วัดพระธาตุคอกแก้ว), located in Chanchawa, Mae Chan District, and Wat Pa Makno Temple have the murals that depict the legend, including the destruction of the city. Wat Pratatdoikukaeo Temple's murals on the interior walls of the ordination hall detail the series of events that begin with the foundation of the Yonok City to the destruction. Toward the end of the murals are the scenes of the people capturing and eating the giant eel, the widow being visited by the mysterious man in white robe, the occurrence of the catastrophe, and the widow standing on the island. Each scene of the murals is accompanied by an explanatory panel. [see Figure 12] In Wat Pa Makno Temple, the exterior walls of the main hall are similarly decorated by the murals of the Yonok Chronicle. [see Figure 13]

In Chalermraja Cultural Center, located in Chanchawa Witthayakhom School, there is a georama of the wetlands in the past. This painting was created by a local artist named Praphan Chumchammut on January 12, 2002. This painting is accompanied by a poem about the sunken city. [see Figure 14]

An illustrated map was created for tourism promotion. This map also indicates the legend by depicting Naga in Wiang Nonglom. This map has been distributed via the Internet and print media. During the fieldwork, the map was found in Chanchawa Witthayakhom School and the website of a local administrative organization. [see Figure 15]

#### Discussion

The legend of the lost city, according to Aarne-Thompson-Uther Classification, is classified as 'divine rewards and punishments' (779) within the upper-level category of 'religious tales.' The legend comprises five distinctive characters: the residents, the widow, the king, the giant eel, and the man in white robe. The widow, who did not eat the eel, was spared while the rest who ate the eel perished. As the legend may still influence the local people, some of whom view eels as a taboo food, there is a link between the giant albino eel and Naga King (Phaya Nak), considered as the divine ruler of the Mekong River. The Yonok Chronicle states that the legendary city of Yonoknakhaphan was built upon the recommendation of a mythical serpent Naga. It is suggested in the written records of the legend that Naga King's wrath was cast against those who killed the eel. In Wat Pa Makno Temple, there are

a number of Naga-related folklore, such as a giant statue of Naga in front of the entrance to the main hall, and the 'burrow' of Naga beside the monastery.

### **Difficulties in the Classification of the Disaster-lore**

A majority of the disaster-lore are newer than expected; they were in fact created within the last decade as parts of community development projects. The classification of the disaster-lore was by no means simple. For example, such categories as 'urban folklore,' 'oral tradition,' and performing arts' overlap. Urban folklore in particular proves too broad a category.

Although only five types of disaster-lore was identified in the current study, more information is required to determine whether there are more in the area, such as community, family and kinship, production and technology, clothes and food, housing, rites of passage, and annual events. Even five identified types, especially modern folklore, require further clarifications, such as when and how the ritual began, and when and why the statues and the shrine were built.

### **Similar Legends in the Northern Thai Region**

Although it is beyond the scope of the current study, the prevalence of the disaster-associated place names may indicate an evidence of the migrations of populations and their culture. In the northern region, there are a number of communities called 'Nonglom' (with spelling variations as นองล่อม or หล่อม), as in Mae Suwai in Chiang Rai Province, Dokkhamthai in Phayao Province, Chomthong and Phlao in Chiang Mai Province. There are also similar tales of a lost city, such as Nong Sariam of Yuwa Sub-district, San Pa Tong district, Chiang Mai Province, and Khungtaphao (ทุ่งตะเภา) of Uttaradit Province. Despite minor differences, they are identical with the legend of the Yonok Kingdom in both the plotline and dramatis personae. In Nong Sariam, there is even a statue of the giant albino eel. [see Figure 16] It is well documented in Northern Thai chronicles that the population in Chiang Saen had been subject to migration due to political factors and natural disasters. As people migrate, they carry their culture, including folklore; in a sense, cultural memories of natural disasters travel with people.

### **Revitalization of the Folklore**

A changing trend is observed in the transmission of the disaster-lore in the Wiangnonglom area. Due to the loss of the traditional communal lifestyle, where close and repeated interactions used to take place among the members of the society, it has become increasingly difficult to maintain the intergenerational transmission of local culture. The physical environment has been changing rapidly along with the development of the wetlands, just as the Ko Mae Mai Island is no longer island. Some creeks and swamps have converted into rice paddies or orchards. Such unprecedented environmental changes put the folklore at risk of disappearing. In a pre-modern time, folklore was maintained through intimate and repeated interactions with the members of a community as well as the social and geographical environments, just as a village headman of his early 50s, who is a native of Chanchawa, fondly recalled. He described his own childhood as "a life with the swamp and creeks" because he spent a majority of time in the wetlands (personal communication, May 21, 2017). He first learned the legend from his grandparents while he grazed buffalos in the wetlands. The legend and the related folklore, such as beliefs, and the related place names, must have been parts of his daily life. However, he no longer talks about the legend to his children because they have to go to school outside the community. Local children's behaviors have also changed; today they play outdoors less often than in the previous times. Even if they played, they might find it difficult to

relate the folklore to their cultural and geographical environments. A fewer number of adults today stay in the wetlands today because they work outside the community. It has become difficult for younger members of the 'swamp city (mueangnong)' to recognize the relevance of the folklore to their life.

However, this is not saying that the folklore is disappearing. The locals instead learn the legend and the related folklore from different communication channels. Wat Pa Makno Temple, for example, hosts own Facebook page to disseminate information, sometimes about the folklore. [see Figure 17] The aforementioned village headman stopped telling the legend to children, but now tell it as a part of development projects to both students and NGO workers from the outside. The case of the academic's experience highlights the revitalization of the folklore.

When I was a kid, I didn't hear about the story of the white eel. My parents were not born in Chiang Rai, but came to Chiang Rai as public servants. My father was originally from Phayao while my mother was from Korat. I myself grew up and studied in Chiang Saen. While I was a university student [in tourism], I didn't know the story of the white eel and Wiang Nonglom (the sunken city) because it isn't a popular tourist spot of the province unlike Doitung, Maesai, Chiang Saen. I learned a little bit from the tale of Yonoknakhaphan although it is not stressed. Instead, Lanna Kingdom is emphasized. I came to know the story because I did research with Dr. Sin Wacharobon. This research assembled knowledge of water resources, bio-economy, and cultural tourism, and made me understand the Wiang Nonglom area, and the outsiders also started knowing it... (Chadaphat, 21 May, 2017).

Based on the legend, a number of contemporary documents and fictional stories were written. 'The History of Chiang Rai City (Prawatmueang Chiang Rai)' – a pamphlet compiled by Wat Pa Makno Temple (n.d.), contains a detailed description of the sunken city. Northern Thai writer Amphan Chaiworasin, who wrote under the alias of Asithara, (2008) assembled northern Thai folktales (Laorueang mueangnuea). She wrote a story of the sunken city titled "The catastrophe caused by the albino eel (Wibat chak plalaiphueak)" (ibid.: 217), which contains information, including the length of the eel (seven wa or approximately 14 meters), which is the exact length as noted in the Yonok Chronicle. The chronicle inspires local media and webmasters to revitalize the time-honored legend and related folklore. The construction of statues, paintings remind the locals of the legend.

## Conclusion

This research collected and archived the local disaster-lore of the sunken city from fieldwork in the Wiangnonglom Wetlands of Chiang Rai Province. Five types of the disaster-lore: belief, performing arts, oral tradition, place name, and urban folklore, are identified, and then archived as an online map.

First of all, the oral tradition, which is the main interest of this study, comprises five distinct characters of 'the people of the sunken city (Yonok City),' 'the widow (Bua Khiao),' 'the ruler of Yonok (King Chaichana),' 'the giant albino eel (or a large carp),' and 'the mysterious man in white robe.' The legend says that the villagers one day caught a giant albino eel in a creek. They offered the eel to the ruler of the city. The butchered eel was offered as feasts to all the people in the city except for a solitary widow. On the very night of that day, the widow was visited by a mysterious man, who warned her should stay inside her hut, and then a catastrophe struck the city. The city disappeared

along with the all the people except for the widow. The next day, the widow found that the city turned into a large swamp. Despite minor variations, the informants in the wetlands were able to retain the legend.

The local chronicles also offer more detailed versions of the legend. The chronicles, mixtures of legends and historical accounts of significant events, are today canonized, and referred to by educators and journalists alike.

The findings of the current research indicate that drastic changes in the social and geographical environment have made it difficult for the locals to relate the legend-related folklore to themselves although the disaster-lore is still remembered by the residents of the wetlands as a part of their heritage. The modes of the inter-generational transmission of the legend have shifted from oral transmission within traditional communities toward more diverse modes of the transmission among various stakeholders of the wetlands, who are not necessarily the locals.

Although it is beyond the scope of the current study, there are similar legends of a lost city throughout the Northern Thailand. The diffusion of the legend might have been due to the migration of the people in the northern region. Alternatively, it may be due to the similar occurrences of catastrophic disasters in the region. Because *mueangs* or ancient city states of ethnic Tai groups were built in the valleys, where the inhabitants had an easy access to water sources, and were able to engage in rice cultivation. Despite the convenience of living in low-lying cities, the inhabitants must have been susceptible to water-related disasters as historical records and local folklore attest.

Scientific measures may mitigate the impact of natural disasters, or, in some cases, protect the people from them. But ironically technological advancement of anti-natural disaster measures fosters a sense of complacency about the risk of natural disasters among the people as foreign literature of natural disaster management document. The Northern Thai folklore of the sunken city can remind the locals of the inevitable return of catastrophic events. The legend, the statue, the names of places, paintings, murals and songs can be the locally meaningful reminders of the past disaster. Only with continuous efforts to remind the locals of the danger of natural disasters, the 'hard' technology could save human lives and properties, as the episode of Kamaishi City attests.

Folklore may preserve records of disasters, which are too local for the central government to document. Disaster-lore can be utilized to prevent the local population from being lured into complacency about the risks of recurring disasters, which the development of modern anti-disaster technology ironically entails. Because Thailand still lacks financial and technological resources to implement and maintain technologically driven anti-disaster measures outside the urban areas, the unfortunate fate of the ancestors can be used as a costly lesson to save the locals from future disasters.

## References

- Agency of Cultural Affairs. (1969). *Nihon minzoku shiryō Jiten*. [Dictionary of Japanese folk materials] Tokyo: Dai-ichi Hōki Shuppan.
- Chaiworasin, A. (Asithara). (2008). Catastrophe from of the albino eel [Wibatchakplalaiphueak]. In *Stories from Northern Cities [Laorueang mueangnuea]*. Complete Edition. (pp. 215-219). Bangkok: Rich Publishing.
- Dang Nghiem Van. (1993). The flood myth and the origin of ethnic groups in Southeast Asia. *Journal of American Folklore*, 106(421), pp.304-337.
- Hennequin, L. (2003). George Coedès' chronology of the kingdom of Haripunjaya. *Silapakorn University Journal of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts*, 3(1-2), 47-111.
- Isarangkura Na Ayuthaya, A; & Nakai, S. (2011). *Japanese disaster lore: Remembering natural disasters across generations*. Chiang Mai: Japanese Studies Center.
- Na Thalang, S. (2002). *Collected folklore, chronicles, local legends and religious tales related to Chiang Saen Basin*. [Chonchat Thai nai nitan: Lae lodwankatichon lae wannakam puenbaan].
- Phuwanatwichit, T; Matiang, S; & Srirat, S. (2015). *Sustainable community tourism planning for ASEAN economic community (AEC) preparation case study Of Wieng Nong Lom Wetland area, Mae Chan And Chiang Saen district, Chiang Rai province*. (Unpublished manuscript).
- Shutō, N. (2006). *Sichōson-ken-kuni no kinkyūtaisaku naikakufu chūōbōsaikaigi saigakyōkun no keishō ni kansuru senmonchōsakai hōkokusho 1960 chirijishin* [Central Disaster Prevention Council of Cabinet Office Expert Examination Committee's Report for Emergency Plan for Municipalities-prefectures-country on Preserving Experiences of Disasters, the Case of the 1960 Chilean Earthquake]. Retrieved from <http://www.bousai.go.jp/jishin/chubou/kyoukun/rep/1960-chile%20JISHINTSUNAMI/>.
- Stratton, C. (2004). *Buddhist scripture of Northern Thailand*. Chicago, Buppha Press.
- Swearer, D. K. (1974). Myth, legend and history in the Northern Thai chronicles. *Journal of the Siam Society*, 62 (pt.1), 68-88.
- Tajimi Sediment Control and National Highway Office. (2012). *Kisogawasuikei chokkatsusabōjigyō setsumeishiryō* [Document of erosion and sediment control projects for Kiso River system, implemented by the office]. Retrieved from [http://www.cbr.mlit.go.jp/tajimi/senmon/jimusho\\_naiyou/h23\\_gaiyo.pdf](http://www.cbr.mlit.go.jp/tajimi/senmon/jimusho_naiyou/h23_gaiyo.pdf).
- Terada, T. (1934/2012). Tensai to kokubo [Natural disasters and national security]. In T. Komiya (Ed.), *Terada Torahiko zuihistushu* [Anthology of Torahiko Terada] vo. 5. (pp.55-66). Tokyo: Iwanami.
- Ueno, K., Takakuwa, M., Fukuta, A., & Miyata, N. (Eds.). (1987). *Minzokuchōsa handobukku* [Handbook of folklore survey] (new edition). Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan.
- Wood, S. H., Singharajwarapan, F. S., Bundarnsin, T., & Rothwell, E. (2004). Mae Sae basin and Wiang Nong Lom: radiocarbon dating and relation to the active strike-slip Mae Chan fault, Northern Thailand. In Conference Proceeding from *International Conference on Applied. Geophysics*, November 26-27, 2004, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 60-69.
- Wood, S. H., Ziegler A. D., & Bundarnsin, T. (2008). Floodplain deposits, channel changes and riverbank stratigraphy of the Mekong River area at the 14th –century city of Chiang Saen, Northern Thailand. *Geomorphology*, 101, 510-523.
- Wyatt, D. (2003). *Thailand: A short history*. (2nd ed.). Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.

## Appendix



Figure 1: Wat Chediluang Temple in Chiang Saen, damaged by March 24, 2011 Earthquake.

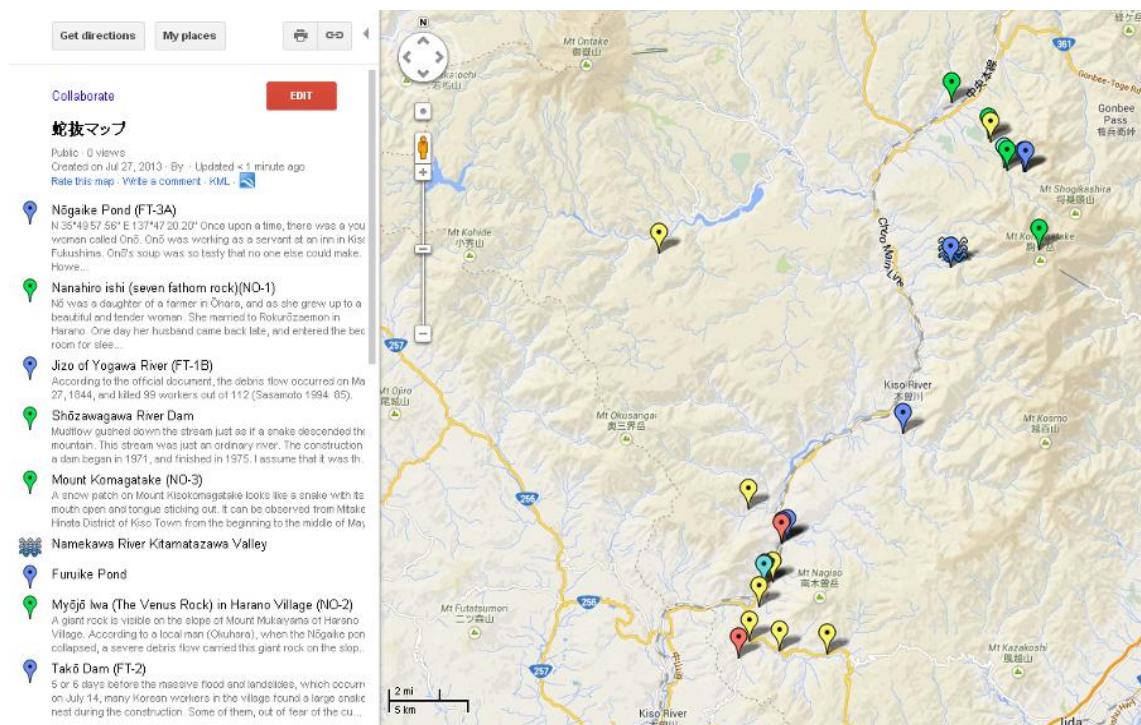


Figure 2: Januke Map [Debris Flow Map], accessible at <https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msid=203836673170013609159.0004e27f98458c40cf40a&msa=0>



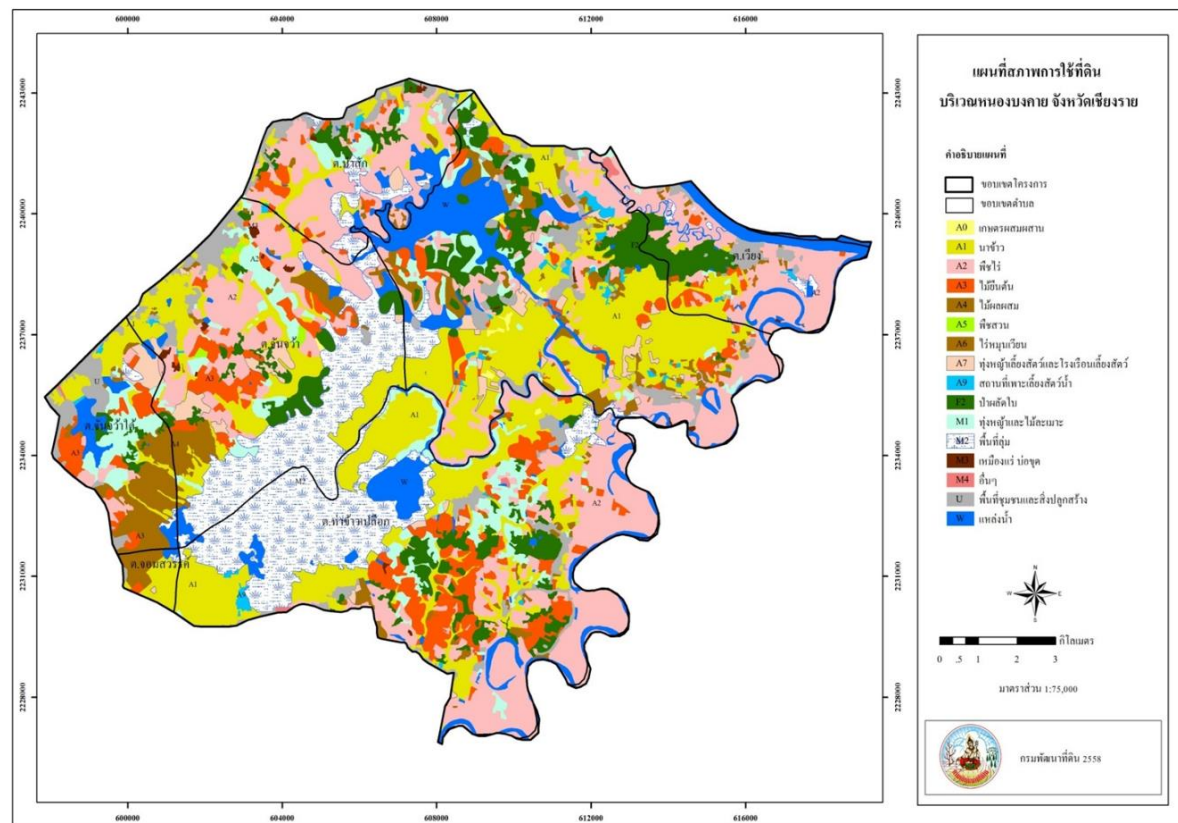


Figure 3 and 4: Location of Wiangnonglom Wetlands and Land Use. (Land Development Department)

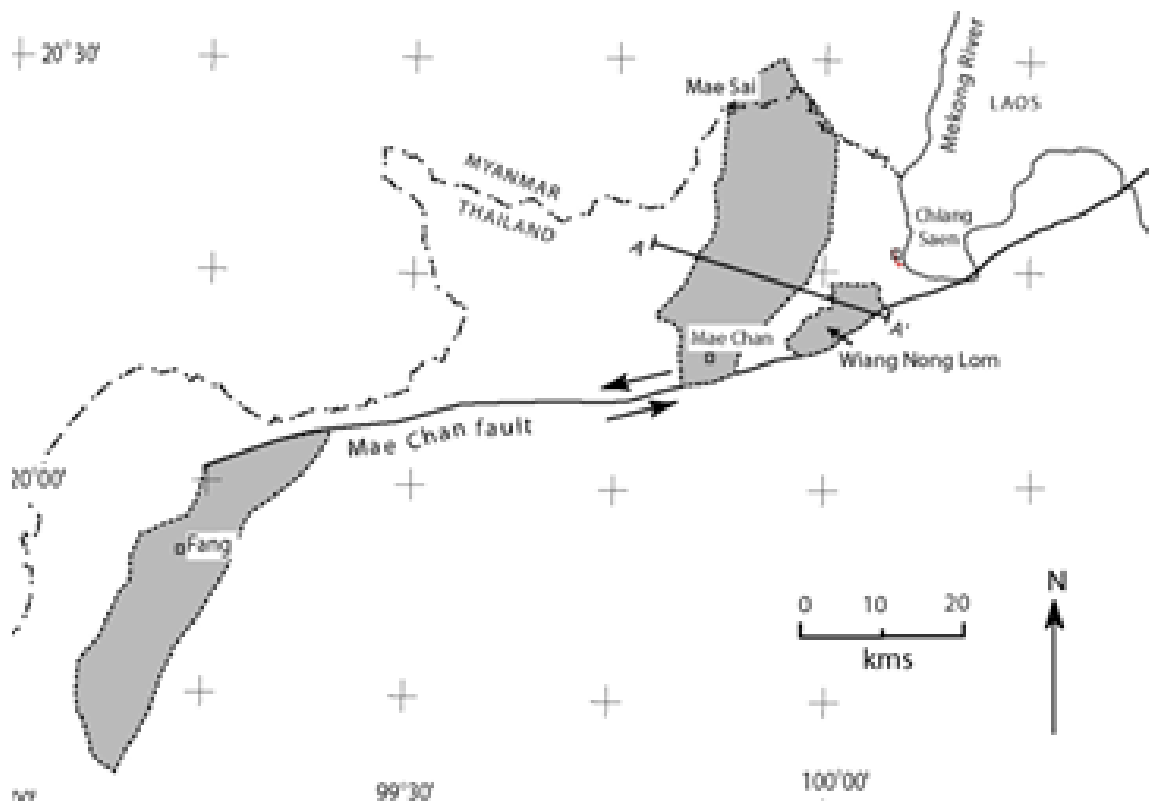


Figure 5: Location of Mae Chan Fault. (Wood et al., 2004. P.61)



Figure 6: Ritual for the Casualties of the Catastrophe at Wat Pa Makno Temple on August 27, 2015.  
 (Facebook of Watpa Mak No Temple)





Figure 7: Statue of Buakhiao at Wat Pa Makno Temple.



Figure 8: Poem on the Georama of the Wiangnonglom displayed at Chalmrajra Cultural Center.



Figure 9: Chalmrajra Cultural Center at Chanchawa Witthayakhom School.



Figure 10: Statue of the Albino Eel at Wat Pa Makno Temple



Figure 11 and 12: Murals at Wat Pratattoikukaeo Temple, Chanchawa.



Figure 13: Murals at Wat Pa Makno Temple.



Figure 14: Painting of the destruction of the Yonok Kingdom at Chalermsraja Cultural Center.





Figure 15: Tourist Map of the Wiangnonglom Wetlands. Figure 16: Statue of the Albino Eel at Nong Sariam, San Pa Tong district, Chiang Mai Province (2004)



Figure 17: Facebook of Wat Pa Makno Temple on the local belief

## How Did Villagers Become Preservers of the World Heritage? A Case Study of Ban Chiang Archaeological Site

Nakamura, Marie

National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka  
Japan

-----

### Abstract

The Ban Chiang archaeological site is located in Udon Thani province, Northeast Thailand. It is a prehistoric settlement with funerary areas whose discovery in 1966 was a sensational event for archaeologists. Since then Ban Chiang has become very famous, and its discovery has had a big influence on villagers' life even now. In 1992, the academic and historic value of the site increased when it was registered as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

Much research has reported on the value of this site from an archaeological point of view, but its ethnographic value has not yet been recognized. For this reason I have carried out fieldwork research in this area since 2015 to observe the change in society and life-history of local people since its discovery in 1966.

Around 1970, merchants of antique items were buying and selling them for high prices. Villagers were looking for archaeological remains, digging in their household area and selling them. Remains became very popular among the high class people of Thailand such as government officials and the aristocracy, as well as among Japanese, European and American collectors.

In the present day, villagers preserve the Ban Chiang Archaeological Site, participating in the World Heritage Festival, and working at Ban Chiang National Museum, souvenir shops, etc. They are proud to live in their village.

In this presentation I would like to introduce the change in the villagers' attitude over the last 40 years that has led to them becoming preservers of the World Heritage site, and think about how and why this has been so, by discussing data obtained from interviews conducted with them.

**Keywords:** cultural heritage, life history, social change, memory, Ban Chiang archaeological site

### 1. Introduction

Currently, UNESCO world heritage registration is an important cultural activity for each country as well as a subject of international concern for the sake of promoting both preservation of regional cultures and encouraging the tourism industry. Once registered, the area gains a public status which may sometimes become an object of conflict between countries over interests. Moreover, there are some aspects of it where local people's rights and freedoms become restricted. Under these circumstances, it seems to be interesting to investigate how a process of involving the villagers in an activity for preserving their cultural heritage has been shown to produce a sustainable relationship between the cultural heritage and the local villagers, especially from the viewpoint of the villagers'

life history. However many voices actively and favorably welcome cultural heritage registrations and these are growing year by year due to the mass media, such as newspapers and television, but the interests of the academic world in ethnography remains small.

The field site of this research is Ban Chiang prehistoric ruins. This is an archaeological site located in Chiang village in Northeastern Thailand, Udon Thani province. Before the ruins were registered as a World Cultural Heritage Site in 1992, the ruins and also the National Museum there, had been a subject of developing works and had become one of the few tourist attractions in the northeast. After the registration, both the ruins and the museum became a subject of more intensified care.

Since the discovery of the ruins in 1966, Chiang villagers have been at the mercy of the dating discussion and commoditization of the relics, registration in World Heritage and a wave of tourism. However, records on these aspects and conflicts among local villagers are only fragmentary and it is urgent to record and collect information on their life history in this period of rapid change.

Previous researches on the Ban Chiang ruins have been focused mainly on the archeological aspects of it, neglecting the ethnographic ones almost entirely. In particular, no previous researches have been found which related to social changes and the lives of the villagers, this paper is willing to contribute to such a deficiency by clarifying the social experience of the villagers in the context of the discovery of the Ban Chiang archaeological site and the subsequent boom of it.

About fifty years have passed since Ban Chiang attracted worldwide attention in 1967. Currently, the villagers are actively involved in events related to Ban Chiang, such as the Ban Chiang World Heritage Festival and they also work at the Ban Chiang National Museum as staff in the souvenir shop, etc. Nowadays, villagers wearing traditional costumes in indigo color and engaging in the events seem to be proud of living in Ban Chiang. The villagers at present seem as if they coexist with the ruins, although they were a long way away from this attitude before. Actually, it is a well-known fact that previously the villagers of Ban Chiang used to rob the site and sell stolen relics during the 1970s and 1980s while the village was attracting worldwide attention. However, eventually the villagers have changed their attitude and values toward the ruins and the relics.

This research answers a question about the relationship the villagers have built with the archeological site, based on an interview survey in which the process of change was as follows: before and after the discovery of the Ban Chiang Archaeological site, before and after the Ban Chiang boom until now. The purpose of this research is to clarify what transformation in villagers' values has taken place to make them continue the activity of preserving the ruins until now. Specifically, this research tries to explain how the villagers changed the relationship with the relics and ruins and what role the Ban Chiang boom has had in this transition period. We clarify the above two points using the interview survey data and, also, examine the influence that the Ban Chiang ruin discovery has had on the villagers' lives and the process in which they became the preservers of the culture.

## **2. General Information about Ban Chiang**

### **(1) Outline of Ban Chiang**

Chiang village along with the Ban Chiang archaeological site is located in the rural area, approximately 60 km. from the center of Udon Thani province in Northeastern Thailand. The village, surrounded by fields, is located in a hilly area with a river in the vicinity which shows that it was a terrain suitable for habitation. Since it is a prehistoric burial site, its academic value has been evaluated and the site itself was registered as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage in 1972. The area

registered as the World Heritage property is the same area inhabited by the villagers. In other words, the villagers still build their houses and live in the area of the World Heritage. From this point of view, it can be said that, after the discovery, they have lived their lives deeply related to the ruins receiving an influence from them.

Today, the village is a sightseeing village with souvenir shops and restaurants spread around the museum. Compared to Buddhist remains of other World Heritage Sites in Thailand such as Ayutthaya and Sukhothai, there is no visually gaudy buildings in Ban Chiang, like, for example, a big temple or a Buddha statue, therefore Ban Chiang area looks simple, modest and plain. When visiting Ban Chiang, there is no other place to see relics exhibited except in Ban Chiang National Museum and Poshinai Temple. Besides them, there is also a traditional house called a Thai Phuan House that it is possible to go and see. Nevertheless, even if a tourist did decide to visit all these places, it would not take him more than half a day, although he can also spend some time doing shopping in the souvenir shops near the museum.

### **(2) Swirl Pattern of Ban Chiang**

In such circumstances, a swirl pattern characteristic for Ban Chiang area has become one of its selling points. The Ban Chiang historical period was divided into three: the early, the middle and the late. This pattern of the pottery has been prescribed as the late one. This pottery, painted in red on buff backgrounds in swirls and bands, made Ban Chiang famous and one of its patterns, the motif of a swirling pattern, even nowadays is present everywhere in Ban Chiang. It is being used for souvenirs, in the design of signboards, murals, cups and also in large and small miniatures of replicas.

In the past, Ban Chiang also gained attention all over the world. What attracted attention the most, among the discovered painted pottery, was the unique pattern of swirls in a reddish brown color which is the symbol of the Ban Chiang ruins and is used as a logo everywhere.

In recent years, it has also been used for a pattern of a yarn dyeing textile (Mad-mee), and its commercialization is diversified. These swirly patterns are duplicated and miniaturized in patterns on textiles, T-shirts, mugs and many other things. This swirl pattern is probably the best tourist resource of Ban Chiang.

Although many cars and sightseeing buses stop over and there are many tourists coming up with such tours on holidays, there are not so many of them on weekdays. Only elementary and junior high school tours for social studies come on weekdays. Also, during some events in the village, people from the neighborhood gather and enjoy the situation. The World Heritage Festival held in February every year is the event when the village is crowded the most.

### **(3) Who are the Villagers?**

The villagers who live in Ban Chiang are of Tai Phuan ethnicity which are one of the Thai-ethnicity groups. They immigrated from Xieng Khouang in Laos in the late 18th century.

According to the villagers, their ethnic identity is different from the so-called Thai-Isan people who live in Northeastern Thailand but their food and culture are almost the same, although their pronunciation is slightly different from the Isan people. One of the famous elements of Thai Phuan culture was a tattoo which was put on a man's feet. However, this tattoo tradition was abandoned more than one hundred years ago and now, the only characteristic point for Thai Phuan ethnicity that has remained until today is the intonation in their pronunciation. According to some elderly villagers, although customarily and culturally they seem to be almost the same as the Isan people,

they are still living with the awareness of being Thai Phuan. For example, in relation to marriage, elderly people still think that the most preferred marriage is the one between Thai Phuan and it is a little hard to accept anybody from outside the village.

Thai Phuan people currently work for Ban Chiang Museum. They sell souvenirs at the shops and are the ones who take part in the World Heritage Festival every February. The villagers are aware of who they are and of the meaning of living in the Ban Chiang area.

In 2015, a new exhibition room of the traditional culture of the Thai Phuan was opened at the Ban Chiang National Museum. The exhibition introduces the history of migration, lifestyle, tools, textiles, religion and so on. Until 2015 the other exhibition rooms at Ban Chiang National Museum were related to archaeology. It can be said that the opening of the exhibition room of the Thai Phuan culture became a breaking point in the history of the museum. Moreover, in 2017, villagers cooperated and opened a small community museum near the National Museum in which they demonstrate aspects of their life in order to preserve their culture.

When visiting the village, it is noticeable that the villagers are wearing clothes dyed in indigo. In recent years, some villagers wear it on many occasions, often with a pottery pattern woven by hand. These patterns were invented by the villagers after a demand from the government office about ten years ago. Currently, officials, teachers and sales people in souvenir shops wear this costume daily and school students wear it every Friday.

In recent years, the number of signs with the phrase "Thai Phuan" has grown significantly and we can see it in public spaces like, for example, as a name of a cafeteria or a shop. The villagers appreciate their identity as the residents of Ban Chiang Archaeological Site, as ethnic Thai Phuan and as Thai people.

It does not need to be pointed out that the current villagers have no historical continuity with the ancient people who once lived in Ban Chiang during the prehistoric period. However, the people who live in Ban Chiang now are engaged in tourism and economic activities and organize festivals and events related to the Ban Chiang ruins. They work as employees at the museums and have a strong relationship to the archaeological site.

#### **(4) About the Survey**

The data underlying this research was obtained from short-term surveys which have been made four times since 2015, for about ten days at a time.

The main informants were the villagers of Ban Chiang. I interviewed them asking their life history, concentrating mainly on their experiences relating to the ruins and artifacts. In addition, I conducted an interview about their current life in Ban Chiang, focusing on social changes which have occurred there. Especially, I was interested in interviewing the elderly people who were the witnesses of the social changes beginning in the 1960s when the Ban Chiang Archaeological Site was discovered. In detail, the informants were as follows: people who were helping with the excavation, museum staff, salesmen and women at the souvenir shops, people who produce replicas, who make pottery, who repair relics and also those who robbed artifacts, as well as high school teachers, government officers, the village mayor, female members of the textile weavers and tailors, etc. Other informants were Thai and Japanese archaeologists, researchers of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, antique quotient in Bangkok. The total number of informants reached over twenty people. Moreover, I have also collected articles from newspapers and have conducted the participant observation of the Ban Chiang World Heritage Festival in February in 2016.

### **3. Transition of Relations Between Villagers and Relics**

Below, is a description, in chronological order, of the transformation of the Ban Chiang villagers, dividing the process into four parts, "Before the discovery of Ban Chiang"; "After the discovery of Ban Chiang"; "The Ban Chiang Boom" and "After the Ban Chiang Boom".

#### **(1) Before the Discovery of Ban Chiang**

Ban Chiang was far from the city. It was a typical rural area, a quiet place which outsiders hardly visited. However, it was not the same as other villages. The difference was noticeable during the rainy seasons when falling rain flooded the ground unveiling pottery buried under it. These made the villagers familiar with the relics and the fact that the pottery was there was not unusual for them.

An old woman, Ms. Y said about the past as follows:

Ms. Y (age 88)

Earthenware was found in the basement of the house when I was eight years old. Since the human bones came out together, I thought the pottery belonged to the ghosts. After that, a number of earthenware pots often appeared but as they were used by ghosts, we could not use them as containers for drinking water but only to keep in them the indigo dye for dying or use them as containers for tools.

According to Ms. Y, although the presence of the relics was usual for them, they were perceived as ghosts' belongings and this made the pottery a subject of awe at the same time.

In the 1960s, a teacher at the Ban Chiang Elementary School recognized the pottery of Ban Chiang as artifacts of an ancient culture. He collected them, recognizing their value, but he did not have any chance to introduce them broadly to Thai society and the world; thus Ban Chiang continued to stay just an ordinary village as before.

Stephen Young, a graduate student of Harvard University visited Ban Chiang in 1966 and was the one who released the information which made Ban Chiang and its relics famous.

#### **(2) After the Discovery of Ban Chiang**

Stephen Young was a graduate student majoring in cultural anthropology at Harvard University and he visited Ban Chiang for fieldwork in 1966. He was staying in a villager's house and conducting his research in the village. One day, when he stumbled over the root of a kapok tree, he found some pieces of old pottery.

He brought them back to Bangkok and took them to the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Arts. The next year, in 1967, the first excavation was started by the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Arts. Chin Yudee, a Thai archaeologist, sent pieces of the pottery to the University of Pennsylvania to determine their age. As a result of thermoluminescence dating at the University of Pennsylvania, that pottery was assessed as objects made between 5000 and 7000 years ago. It was introduced to the world since the age turned out to be old enough to change the existing historical view of Southeast Asia. Until that time, Southeast Asia had been historically placed between the large Chinese civilization and the Indus one. It was perceived as a buffering zone between these civilizations and it had not been considered to have its own characteristic features. The discovery of the Ban Chiang Archaeological Site revealed the possibility that Southeast Asia actually had its own old civilization. It became obvious that this fact could become a breakthrough for revising the existing historical view on



Southeast Asia. Therefore, this news was dealt with great excitement. Furthermore, some of the relics could make Ban Chiang more famous because of the pottery painted with a unique red pattern on buff backgrounds in swirls and bands (Nitta, 2017; Peleggi, 2015).

In this way, Ban Chiang, which was just a rural village in Northeastern Thailand, suddenly became a place which attracted the attention of academics all over the world. This discovery also had a great impact on the archaeological societies in Japan. Japanese archaeologists started organizing research meetings relating to this topic. Later these study groups became a reason for establishing the Japan Society for Southeast Asian Archaeology.

Along with this archaeological discovery, the environment of the villagers changed greatly. This is because the discovery of the Ban Chiang ruins not only attracted a great deal of attention from the academic world but also the pottery, bronzeware and beads that emerged, received attention from antique and art collectors. People from outside the village, foreigners like the Americans, the Japanese and the Europeans, and also high officials of Thailand began to come to see the site. Soldiers of the American military service, who were working in Udon Thani at that time, also started visiting the village.

The villagers, who previously had not been interested in the relics, realized the value of them and began to acquire them. Then they sold them to brokers, merchants and foreigners who came from Bangkok. Some of the villagers earned a lot of money by selling relics. The attitudes of the villagers toward the relics changed noticeably. Before, the relics were perceived by the villagers as not very useful objects, naturally being in the village area but, from the moment of excavation, the artifacts became a means to earn money.

A lot of outsiders came to visit the village and the villagers gained a chance to make contact with them. One kind of outsider who came to the village for the purpose of excavation were the archaeologists in their Land Rovers. This was an exciting scene for the villagers as they had never seen this type of a car before.

Gradually, some of the villagers became engaged in the excavation work. The following story is told by a woman who participated in the excavation.

Ms. N (age 62)

I was engaged in the excavation work around the ages of fourteen and fifteen. Mostly, I was in charge of washing the relics with a wage of 30B per day. That wage, at that time, was very good and I was able to help my family with this money.

The researchers of the Agency for Cultural Affairs were very kind. When taking a holiday, they took us to another prefecture in their Land Rover and we were treated to a delicious meal. Working with them was a lot of fun and I cried when my excavation work finished after His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej came. I really wanted to work with them again but, when the next excavation work began, I was sorry that I could not participate in it because I was married.

When I was working washing the relics, there were very beautiful beads, so I stole three of them in commemoration. My friend also stole two beads. Archaeologists had not counted them, so I thought it was fine. Then, the next morning, an archaeologist said at the meeting, "Beads are missing, I think that someone stole them. Please return them". I was very embarrassed and returned them. I promised

not to steal them ever again, and he said that he believed me.

Even now, I have some relics, such as pottery and bead bracelets. The museum researchers gave them to me without any problems because they were not complete so they could not be used as materials for research. But to me, they are beautiful and important. Actually, other villagers also have relics like me but they are not willing to talk about it. But in my case, I have permission to keep them so I can talk about them. I think it is better that we people of Ban Chiang have these relics than outsiders have them. I have the relics because I had an experience of working at the excavation site and I want to keep them as a souvenir. This is also an important point to me. Occasionally, some people want them and contact me to buy them but I am not going to sell them.

According to N's narrative, for her, the relics are just important items which remind her of the excavation in her younger days and her work with archaeologists.

### **(3) The Ban Chiang Boom**

The 20th of March 1972 was a special day for the villagers of Ban Chiang. It was the day in which the former King Rama IX Bhumibol and the Queen visited Ban Chiang. The King and the Queen went to the village to see the world famous relics and ruins. On that day, many people of Ban Chiang and neighboring villages gathered to see the King and Queen which was as a great honor for them. In addition to seeing the relics, the King visited the excavation site and also came to one villager's private house nearby to participate in the villager's life. Later, the house was donated by its owner to The Fine Arts Department. It is called "Thai Phuan House" and it is open for visitors. It is administered by the Ban Chiang National Museum now. The official of The Fine Arts Department initially said that they wanted to purchase this house but its owner refused that offer and said that he would like to donate the house because it was an honor for him to have the King in his house.

Other villagers also remember this day very well and feel honorable as well. One elderly woman had a small baby at that time but she left the child with her friend and ran to see the King and the Queen. She said that she would never forget the King's honorable behavior and the Queen's beautiful appearance.

Another man in his fifties was an elementary school student at the time. He showed me one picture in which he was photographed with the King. The King was walking through the crowd and the man was visible on the left in that photograph. The villager was saying continually, "I am very happy because I had an opportunity to appear in the same photograph as His Majesty the King."

The photographs of the King's visit to the village on that day were displayed in many places in Ban Chiang. The entrance to the National Museum are adorned with photographs of the King. One famous photograph is a scene in which the King is descending from a helicopter to the ground near Ban Chiang.

Then there are many photographs of the King and other royals. Most of the space in the first room of the National Museum is decorated with photographs of when the King and the royals visited the village. It shows a deep relationship between Ban Chiang and the royal family. The first room shows the Ban Chiang ruins along with the words that the King issued when he visited them. Therefore, it can be said that the connection between the King, the royal family and Ban Chiang is strong.

The King's visit on that day was also reported in the newspapers and the name of Ban Chiang was

more and more widely spread around the country. Thanks to the King's visit, it has been noticeable that Ban Chiang has been booming since 1972.

Anticipating the growth of interest caused by the King's visit, a woman bought some land in front of the temple and opened a shop there. The reason of choosing the place was that the temple was where the remains were displayed and the King had visited it. At first, she was selling clothes in her shop but she started to sell relics as well. As she expected, her shop was very prosperous, foreign antique dealers such as the Japanese came visiting all the time.

There were many people coming to Ban Chiang to buy relics from outside the village around 1974. When a Thai archaeologist came to Ban Chiang in 1975 he saw villagers in a part of the excavation area which they hid with cloth. They were imitating the professional archaeologists' digging technique to unearth relics for their own purposes. The situation seemed very funny and strange at the same time. The villagers began digging down in their own land and also in the area of the temple to obtain relics which they planned to sell to art dealers afterwards. As a result, digging was a good way of earning quick money for them.

Many villagers talk about the bustle of the village at that time. A woman told me a story from her childhood. "The villagers who wanted to sell artifacts were digging the ground at night because they were scared they might be found by someone. As a result, when I woke up in the morning and walked outside, there were holes that I had not known about on the previous day. So if I was not walking cautiously, I would have fallen down a hole."

Another villager said that she could not sleep when it was getting dark because of the noise of the many cars coming with people who wanted to buy relics. Outsiders were constantly coming to Ban Chiang by car from far away and they were staying in cars in a vacant area near the temple. They were frequently exchanging the relics for money with the villagers.

Also, one villager said that he was asked by many unknown people to visit his house and let them dig under the house, but he rejected all the requests. People were also coming from Bangkok and other places. Sometimes it was so noisy that he could not sleep at night. There were a lot of cars and unknown people who were staying in the village. He said that it was a strange feeling to see so many strangers in the village.

However, a woman who was a child at that time, remembers this situation as a nice one. She mentioned a few of her good memories. For example, when, as a child, she got unusual sweets from the U.S. soldiers who came from the city in Udon Thani. Another example is when one archaeologist, who stayed in Ban Chiang, asked her to do some shopping for him, and in return he gave her money for buying her a juice.

After the King's visit to Ban Chiang, Ban Chiang was booming and the situation continued to be unusual for villagers for several years afterwards.

#### **(4) After the Ban Chiang Boom**

The Ban Chiang boom did not last long and went away slowly from the 1980s. Gradually, the villagers stopped selling relics.

When I asked the villagers about the reason for...for stopping selling the relics, most of them answered that they stopped buying and selling the relics because the new Act on Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and the National Museum forbade it. However, when I tried to interview them more about the end of the boom and how they stopped selling relics in detail, I realized that it was not true.

There were two reasons for the discontinuation of the sale of relics.

First, it was more and more difficult to dig and find the relics in the village because a lot of the relics were dug out and sold already. Certainly, the villagers gradually came to sell less and less relics. If they wanted to continue digging and selling relics, they had to go to another village far from Ban Chiang, bring relics from there to Ban Chiang and sell them as "Ban Chiang relics". It was heavy and difficult work, so many villagers stopped selling them.

Second, the awareness that selling relics was illegal spread among the villagers. However it did not occur immediately after the new Act and regulations came out. A few villagers declared that they were actually buying and selling the relics although it was prohibited by law. A man who dug relics and sold them for many years said that he and some villagers did not stop selling relics after the Act was passed, because the Act was not very effective at that time. However he had to go to a distant village like one in the Kalasin prefecture to get relics similar to Ban Chiang relics because there were only a few relics in Ban Chiang. When carrying the relics to Bangkok, he mixed the old relics and the new fake pottery in order to escape the examination. When he was checked by the police, he showed them the fake pottery scraping its surface to prove that they were fake and that they had no value. He could pass the check. However, after that incident, he stopped selling relics when he heard that a person, who was selling relics, was arrested in Bangkok.

As we can see above, the timing to stop selling was different depending on each person, but it is noticeable that it was not stopped immediately as a result of the declaration of laws and ordinances. The process of raising the awareness among people that selling relics was forbidden once the laws and ordinances had been issued, took time.

One researcher said to me that the Act was issued too late because, at that time, many relics had already been dug up and sold. This may be proof that Ban Chiang's boom was too big and too sudden.

#### **4. Nowadays in Ban Chiang**

##### **(1) Ban Chiang World Heritage Festival**

Today, when fifty years have passed since the discovery of the Ban Chiang archaeological site, Ban Chiang is one of the World Heritage sites and has become an important tourist spot in Northeast Thailand. Ban Chiang is a place for sightseeing which makes use of the archaeological site.

The time when Ban Chiang is most crowded and busy, is a period during the Ban Chiang World Heritage Festival which is held every February for four days. On these days, people who grew up in Ban Chiang but are now living in other prefectures, go back to Ban Chiang. Many people, both from the neighborhood and from distant places also come to the village for the festival. One villager suggested to me that I might participate in this World Heritage Festival if I wanted to know the real culture of Ban Chiang, so I visited for participant observation in February 2016.

There were a lot of food and game shops. A mobile amusement park came to the village and the children were playing there. Many groups consisted of villagers and junior high and high school students took part in the parade. They showed and advertised local cultures such as pottery, textiles, cloths, villagers' life styles and the history of immigration. The lighting show was held on the lake at night.

There was a main central stage and a sub stage in the center of the village and a lot of performances were shown on the stages. One villager explained that the main stage is preferred for the formal

performance, for example for the play about the history of Ban Chiang by students. On the other hand, the sub stage is preferred to be used for the local performance such as the Luk Thung and Molam traditional music of Northeastern Thailand. This traditional music is very popular and many villagers came to see the performances and had fun until morning.

I will show here the reconstruction of the historical event which is the play on the main stage during the festival.

The play is about the history of Ban Chiang as performed on the main stage by Ban Chiang junior and high school students for three nights every year. In 2016, there were seats prepared for VIPs in front of the auditorium, where prestigious and high officials of the prefecture and the village sat, watching the drama while eating. According to the villagers, every year it looks the same.

The content of this play is as follows. At first, there is a scene in which villagers, who came from Laos to Ban Chiang, are cultivating rice fields. They often see archaeological relics around them but are not interested in them. Then, Stephen Young visits Ban Chiang and discovers the pieces of old pottery. After that, many foreigners visit Ban Chiang, and the villagers dig and sell archaeological relics to them. King Bhumipol visits Ban Chiang and makes a speech. The kneeling villagers listen carefully to the King's speech about the need for preserving the cultural heritage and passing it on to the next generation. At the end, there is an announcement of the registration of Ban Chiang as a World Heritage Site and the villagers celebrate the event.

## **(2) Sharing Experience and Memory**

The rough content of the play is similar to the facts which I introduced in the previous chapter. However, there are two points which should be clarified.

One point is about Stephen Young. In the interview with the villagers, Young was the man who made Ban Chiang famous but he was not its first discoverer. Formal information in books and museum also say that. However, in the play he was described as the discoverer. Some of the villagers actually misunderstand that Young was the first man who discovered the relics. Here we can notice the gap between the villagers' beliefs and the facts.

I conducted a short interview on this point with an educated lady from Ban Chiang. She explained to me that "At the time, the so called "Farang Fever" took place among the villagers. Farang means white people - she continued to say, - thus, the above story was actually created by villagers and later spread by word of mouth". Farang fever describes the attitude of Thai people towards white people. It had a very positive meaning. White people were treated as Hollywood stars at the Ban Chiang boom. At that boom, there were a lot of foreign visitors and the situation surrounding the villagers suddenly changed very much. Rural villagers were excited by that situation. There are people who tend to remember facts in a more sensational and dramatic way rather than the real one.

The second point which should be clarified is the King's visit. In the play, the King strongly influenced villagers' awareness by saying that relics as artifacts should be preserved. I have heard some villagers said the same. However, according to the people who were actually engaged in selling the relics, the real Ban Chiang boom began after the King's visit because the visit made the village more attractive and popular. Then many outsiders visited Ban Chiang to obtain relics and villagers continued to sell them after the King's visit.

The Act on relics could not immediately stop the sale of artifacts. Initially, its effect was small and actually, the biggest reason for stopping it was that the number of undiscovered relics was getting

small in the area of the village and it became more difficult to get them. Because of that, most sellers left the trade. After that, a few villagers continued to sell the relics. However, they also stopped it finally because they had heard that a few sellers were arrested in Bangkok. The sale of relics had become an unsafe and unprofitable activity for the villagers.

In this way, the timing, when the seller actually stopped selling the relics, was different according to different people. However, by summarizing in the play that villagers stopped selling the relics after the King's visit and speech, the story becomes more concise and memorable. However, on the other hand, many individual experiences and detailed facts were dealt with in ignorance and trivialized. For the villagers, it is a fact that the King's visit was a very big event of which they have beautiful memories, many of them personal and, therefore, some illegal experiences have been pushed into oblivion.

## **5. Summary and Conclusion**

As I said before, the villagers were not interested in the relics in the past. They did not realize that the relics could have any price. The relics had no value for them at that time.

After Stephen Young's coming, they started to realize that the relics might have a value as the foreigner showed an interest in them. I would like to point out that useless relics (as they thought until then), became a commodity in their perception and that meant that the relics could be sold as a commodity. This was the important and big change for the villagers.

The second important thing I want to point out is as follows:

The law concerning the Ban Chiang remains was implemented later on. Selling relics became prohibited. The villagers again changed their attitude towards the relics. It took a long time for the villagers to recognize the cultural value of the relics and museum pieces. The people of Ban Chiang then treated them not as products for selling, but as a cultural heritage and a symbol of their identity.

Also, from the 1980s, the Thai Government has started to educate people in all of Thailand to make them feel a stronger attachment to their region. This policy had an influence on the villagers of Ban Chiang as well. In such a situation, the villagers reconstructed the history of discovering the Ban Chiang Archeological Site. One of its examples is the play I mentioned before.

The story about the history of Ban Chiang is an important tool nowadays for sharing memories of the past. It makes the villagers enhance their identity based on their consciousness of living in a special place. The King and foreigners' visits had an especially important and positive influence. Through the local events, villagers have become more attached to the relics and the Archaeological Site. In this way they have changed their attitudes and become the preservers of it. The villagers have finally internalized the story of fifty years of change which they share in the village and which includes the truth and its interpretations.

During my interview, the villagers talked much about their memories. I could reveal in detail fifty years of Ban Chiang real history by investigating villagers' experiences. They have not had the opportunity to talk about such experiences and memories before. Through my investigation, it turns out that both the shared experience of the village and the unshared experience of each individual have made the villagers' identity. The individual experience includes behaviors which can be perceived as inappropriate like selling relics without permission etc. Although, as time passed, these behaviors changed to be perceived as just interesting, challenging and a kind of adventure, thus they

were internalized as positive ones. These open and shared experiences, together with these positive ones nowadays, have made the villagers of Ban Chiang become authentic residents of the archaeological site and the preservers of it.

One villager said "Villagers in Ban Chiang are lucky that there are lots of visitors in Ban Chiang who come to see the Archaeological Site. Some time ago, thanks to this site, we could meet our King. Every day we meet tourists and researchers from all over the world and we can work for them and, thus, we get income to support our families".

## Acknowledgement

I would like to express my gratitude to Ms. Supataranana Suthiboon and Ms. Nittaya Angsila for their great support for my fieldwork. This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP15K16906.

## References

- Ban Chiang National Museum (2007). *Ban Chiang: A World Heritage in Thailand*.
- Imamura, K. (1982). Ban Chiang Bunka no Hurusu [Date of the Ban Chiang Culture], *Tokyo daigaku bungakubu koukogaku kenkyushitsu kenkyu kiyou* [Bulletin of the Department of Archaeology, the University of Tokyo], 1, 215-234.
- Institute for Southeast Asian Archaeology (ISEAA). (n.d.). *Pages of Pensilvania University*, Retrieved April 8, 2017, from <http://iseaarchaeology.org/background/>
- Nikom, S. (1973). Sensi jidai hakkutsu chousa houkokusyo [Report on Prehistoric Excavation at Ban Chiang] (translated by Yoshikawa, T), *Minzokugaku kenkyu* [The Japanese journal of ethnology], 8(2), 173-179.
- Nitta, E. (2016). *Resume of presentation on January 28th, 2017* during research meeting organized by Institute of Asian, African, and Middle Eastern Studies at Sophia University.
- Peleggi, M. (2015). Excavation Southeast Asia's prehistory in the Cold War: American archaeology in neocolonial Thailand, *Journal of the Social Archaeology*, 16(1), 94-111.
- Sakurada, C. (2013). "Midikana kokuou" he no pafo-mansu: tai kokuou phu-mipon niyoru chihou gyokou no jittai to sono yakuwari [How the King Created a Popular Monarchy: The Reality and Role of King Bhumibol's Provincial Visits], *AGLOS: Journal of Area-based Global Studies* (Special Edition), 1-27.
- The Fine Arts Department, Thailand (2014). *Act on Ancient Monument, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museums*, B.E.2504(1961).
- Young, S. B. (1968). The Northeastern Thai Village: A Non-Participatory Democracy, *Asian Survey*, 8-11, 873-886.
- Yudee, C. (1974). Sensi ijidai ni okeru Ban Chiang bunka [Ban Chiang Culture on Prehistoric Period] (translated by Ikuko Nakazawa), *Bunka Asahi Ajia Rebyu* [Asahi Ajia Revue], 5(2), 48-55.
- พิพิธภัณฑ์ธรรมชาติเฉลิมพระเกียรติ (2016). บ้านเชียง ปฐมบทโบราณคดีไทย.

## **Natural Disasters and Disaster Management in Thailand: Status, Risks, and Trend**

**Nakasu, Tadashi**  
Chulalongkorn University  
Thailand

---

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to overview the status, risks, and trends of the natural disasters in Thailand with a discussion of necessary future actions. Data was collected from EM-DAT for quantitatively analyzing natural disasters, along with past studies, media and government reports and field surveys. All types of natural disasters from 1900 to 2014 are visualized and put into disaster risk assessment maps, and categorized and evaluated by disaster impact, death toll, affected population and economic damage. The results indicate that Thailand faced 131 disasters during the period, ranging from floods (72) to extreme temperature (1). Although only five earthquakes, including the 2004 tsunami, were recorded, they were so devastating that they account for 29.8% (8,847) of the total disaster-related mortality in comparison with floods (13%). Floods affected a large number of people (30.7% or 55,542,471) and entailed enormous economic damage (47.5% or 45 billion USD). The impact of droughts is also considerably severe in terms of the affected population (16.5%). Assessment of the maps (frequency-impact by disaster type) indicates that floods, tsunamis, and droughts should be the top priorities for countermeasures, with immediate action needed for future floods. In addition, the paper briefly explains the three significant natural disaster events in Thailand, namely the 1988 floods and landslides, the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, and the 2011 Chao Phraya River flood from historical and socio-economic perspectives.

### **1. Introduction**

In the last few decades, Thailand has faced a number of major natural disasters, including the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the 2011 floods, the 2015-16 droughts, irregular rainfall, decreased agricultural and fishery yields and rising sea-levels. The impact of disaster variability and extreme natural hazards results in not only loss of human lives, but also damage to infrastructure, along with disruption of livelihoods and economic activity. The purpose of this paper is to overview the status, risks and trends of the natural disasters in Thailand with discussion of necessary future actions. In particular, the following three points are examined:

- Overview of the natural disasters in Thailand with data.
- Visualization of the risks by disaster type in Thailand and suggestions for the priority of disaster management by type.
- Indication of the significant natural disaster events from historical and socio-economic



perspectives.

Through the above analyses, this paper answers the following inquiries: “What are the characteristics of natural disasters in Thailand?”; “What disaster type countermeasures are required in Thailand?”; and “How to consider the natural disasters in Thailand?”

## 2. Disaster Definitions and Methodologies

### 2.1. Disaster Definitions

This paper defines natural disasters using an EM-DAT definition for risk analysis and also considers the literature, especially the sociological perspectives, for the definition. Concerning risk analysis, EM-DAT defines natural disasters as follows:

- Deaths: 10 or more human deaths.
- Affected: 100 or more people affected/injured/homeless.
- Declaration/international appeal: Declaration by the country of a state of emergency and/or an appeal for international assistance.

At least one of the above criteria must be fulfilled in order for an event to be entered into the database as a disaster (EM-DAT, 2016).

In regard to the sociological perspectives for the definition, disasters can be categorized into the following: natural disasters, technological disasters and human-made disasters. Natural disasters occur at the interaction between nature and societies (people). Technological disasters reflect the interaction between technologies, which are created by people and societies (people). Human-made disasters happen at the interactions between societies (people) and societies (people) (Akimoto, 1982). This paper uses the above mentioned definition and related notion for the analyses.

### 2.2. Methodologies

This paper used data from EM-DAT and also information collected from the related database sources and literature. Using EM-DAT “Advanced Research” and “Country Profile” statistical data, this paper outlines natural disasters in Thailand. Then, the paper overviews natural disasters in Thailand by analyzing the natural disaster list. After the Thailand natural disasters list by disaster type was created, the proportion of the event number, the death toll, the number affected and the economic damage by disaster type were calculated. These results were visualized by R software using the risk assessment mapping method. This risk assessment mapping method is used by the European Commission (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2010). To assess the natural disaster risk by disaster type using such mapping, the evaluation matrix provided by the service office of the state of Oregon in the US was used (State of Oregon, 2016). On the scatter plots by disaster type, the vertical line indicates impact and the horizontal lines denotes frequency. This study calculated the

*Table 1: Death Top 10 (1955 –2014)*

Date	Type	Totals
2004-Dec.26	Earthquake(Tsunami)	8,345
2011-Aug.5	Flood	813
1962-Oct.27	Storm	769
1988-Nov.19	Flood	664
1955-Jun.	Earthquake	500
1989-Nov.3	Storm	458
2010-Oct.10	Flood	258
1975-Jan.3	Flood	239
1995-Aug.1	Flood	231
2006-Aug.20	Flood	164

impact and the probability by each disaster type. The impacts were divided into deaths, affected and economic damage. The deaths, affected and cost by each disaster type, for example, earthquake or flood, was divided by all disaster types for each. The probability was calculated using the number of events by each disaster type, divided by the total event number as a frequency, then categorized into a risk map option matrix and evaluated. In addition to the data based analyses, this paper also points out three key natural disaster events in Thailand with historical and socio-economic background analyses by investigating literature and data sources.

### 3. Findings

#### 3. 1. Overviews of the Natural Disasters in Thailand

*Table 2: Affected Top 10 (1955 –2014)*

Date	Type	Total affected
2008-Apr	Drought	10,000,000
2011-Aug5	Flood	9,500,000
2010-Oct.10	Flood	8,970,653
2010-Mar.	Drought	6,482,602
1999-Jan.	Drought	6,000,000
1996-Jun.30	Flood	5,000,000
2002-Feb.	Drought	5,000,000
1995-Aug.1	Flood	4,280,984
2013-Sep.30	Flood	3,500,000
2002-Oct.	Flood	3,289,420

*Table 3: Economic Damage Top 10 (1955 –2014)*

Date	Type	Total damage ( 000 USD)
2011-Aug.5	Flood	40,000,000
1993-Nov.27	Flood	1,261,000
2004-Dec.26	Earthquake(Tsunami)	1,000,000
2013-Sep.30	Flood	482,000
1989-Nov.3	Storm	452,000
2005-Jan.	Drought	420,000
1993-Dec.	Flood	400,100
1984-Jan.19	Flood	400,000
1978-Aug.	Flood	400,000
2010-Oct.10	Flood	332,000

An advanced search of EM-DAT indicates a total of 131 natural disaster events in Thailand from 1955 to 2014, with floods (72) and storms (33) being the major disasters by disaster type. However, earthquake (including tsunami) disasters have the highest death rate by 29.8 percent (8,847) of all disaster types. The second high death rate, 13 percent, has been from flood disaster. Flood disaster is most dominant regarding the number affected (30.7 percent, 55,542,471) and economic damage (47.5 percent, 45 billion USD). Drought has also had a serious impact on the number affected (16.5 percent). The Thai Country Profile of EM-DAT indicates the top 10 disasters by death toll, affected and economic damage in Tables 1, 2 and 3 below. The death toll list explains that the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 had a huge influence, with droughts and floods being the major events on the affected numbers. The economic damage list shows the tremendous impact of the 2011 Chao Phraya River flood which inundated seven industrial estates/parks in the central region of Thailand.

#### 3.2. National Disaster Risk Assessment Mapping and Necessary Risk Management

In this section, the paper visualizes the risk of disaster type in Thailand and suggests the priority of disaster management by type. In Figure 1, we can see each disaster type risk caused by different impacts, such as death, affected and economic damage, by using a risk assessment mapping methodology. These results, death, affected and economic damage risk, can be evaluated by the risk map option matrix as indicated in Figures 2 and 3. The “affected” can be defined as “People requiring immediate assistance during a period of emergency, i.e. requiring basic survival needs such as food, water, shelter, sanitation and immediate medical assistance” (EM-DAT, 2016).

Concerning a) death risk, earthquake (tsunami) and flood are the main concern. Management is required and immediate action should be made for those types of disasters. Acceptance of risk, but monitoring and periodic attention should be made of the storms. Other disaster types require acceptance of risk and conducting of annual re-evaluation.

In regard to b) affected risk, extensive management and monitoring are essential and immediate action should be made for flooding. Acceptance of risk, but monitoring and periodic attention, should be paid for droughts. Other disaster countermeasures are the same as for death risk.

With reference to c) economic damage risk, flood risk is tremendously high, while drought risk is not so high, with other disaster types risk almost same as for affected risk.

From the overall point of view, flood countermeasures should be the first priority and earthquake (tsunami) the second, with drought countermeasures following.

This risk assessment mapping enables us to see the whole picture of the natural disaster risks in Thailand and also make it possible to prioritize the specific disaster type countermeasures. These risks also can be numerically expressed by multiplying the frequency with the impact. In addition, we can confirm recent disaster trends from the timeline (2001-2016) shown in the Appendix.

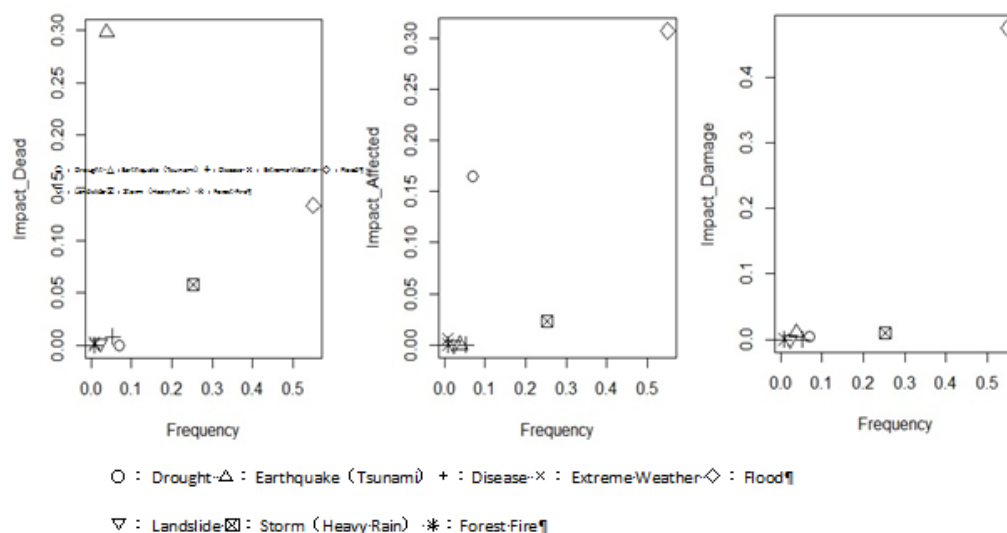


Figure 1: Risk Assessment Mapping (Death, Affected, Economic Damage)

Impact of Risk	High	Management required	Considerable management and monitoring required	Extensive management and monitoring essential
	Medium	Accept risk but monitor	Management worthwhile	Management required
	Low	Accept risk	Accept risk but monitor	Manage and monitor
		Low	Medium	High
Probability of Risk				

Figure 2: Risk Matrix Option (1)

Impact	High	6						
		5						
	Medium	4						
		3						
	Low	2						
		1						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	
		Low		Medium		High		
		Probability						
			Annual Reevaluate					
			Periodic Attention					
			Immediate Attention					

### **3.3. Historical Overviews of Natural Disasters in Thailand**

With reference to an historical overview of natural disasters, there is some literature on natural disasters in Thailand, however, almost all are case studies focusing on one specific disaster or are government or organization related reports, such as the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and the 2011 Chao Phraya River flood. Such literature tends not to focus on the historical and socio-economic contexts. Therefore, this paper describes the natural disasters in Thailand in the context of such background in a narrative way. To do so, the paper provides an historical overview of natural disasters in Thailand, focusing on three key turning points of natural disaster events related to government policies. Then, the paper briefly examines the social background of these three events. Concerning the overall views of natural disasters in Thailand, the death toll trend in Thailand from 1955 can be seen in Figure 4 using EM-DAT data (EM-DAT, 2016). In this paper, the three high death toll events, namely the 1988 floods and landslides, the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, and the 2011 flood, are highlighted as key turning point events. First, the 1988 floods and landslides have been selected because these events changed the environmental policy in Thailand. Second, the paper emphasizes the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, and one of the most severely affected areas, Phi Phi Island, to explain the socio-economic background. Third, the paper examines the 2011 Chao Phraya River flood, especially Japanese enterprises, economic damage in the affected areas within a historical and socio-economic context.

The first turning point was the 1988 floods and landslides in the south, especially Nakhon Si Thammarat province. The numbers of reported casualties was 664 (EM-DAT, 2016). This number is different from the sources. This event was considered to be caused by deforestation. Deforestation makes lands vulnerable and causes floods and landslides triggered by storms and heavy rains. The important aspect of this event is that King Rama IX emphasized the needs for environmental protection in Thailand in his birthday speech on 4 December 1989 because His Majesty was worried about the situation. Thailand forest covered land decreased from 53 percent (1961) to 28 percent (1988) (Niren, 1994). Thailand policy changed dramatically after this speech (Funatsu, 1997). For instance, the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment (MOSTE) was established, five environment-related laws were enacted, and also the Environmental Fund was established in 1992. Thailand's "environmental boom" continued until the economic (baht) crisis in 1997 (Nakasu, Okazumi, & Shimizu, 2013).

The second turning point was the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami; the paper focuses on Phi Phi Islands that were one of the most severely devastated by the tsunami to explain the socio-economic background of the damages. The severeness of the damage to the islands was estimated by using the Human Vulnerability Index that was developed to estimate the vulnerability of local communities (Nakasu & Kurahara, 2013) (Goto & Nakasu, 2017). This index indicates that Krabi province, which includes Phi Phi Islands, was more severely affected by the tsunami as compared to Phangnga province, which had the largest number of casualties. The numbers can be seen in Table 4 (Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, 2006; National Response and Contribution of International Partners, 2005). The Phi Phi Islands were totally devastated by the tsunami. The islands were developing as a tourist spot before the disaster, with development accelerating especially after the 1990s and the economic (baht) crisis in 1997. After the economic crises, Thailand policy changed again to facilitate the tourist economy to recover from the crisis. One of the symbolic examples was the "beach debate" (Forsyth, 2002). The debate started in 1998 when a filming crew tried to change the environment on Maya beach on Phi Phi Lei Island. Bulldozers made the sand beach wider. Coconut

trees, which are not indigenous, were planted there to create a tropical image. These activities conflicted with the 1961 national park law. Even though they were not legal, the Royal Forest Department allowed the activities. This changed the environment in the islands. When this situation was recognized, local NGOs started to do research and make accusations. The movie, entitled “The Beach”, was released in 2000, after which so many foreigners rushed to the islands. The tourism industry built many new hotels. The 2004 tsunami hit there during this time of rapid growth. This is one of the reasons why so many foreign visitors suffered from this disaster. After the event, the tsunami drew international attention. In Thailand, the National Disaster Warning Center was established in 2005. The Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Act was enacted in 2007. The outline of the above two turning point events is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 4: Death Toll Caused by Natural Disaster in Thailand

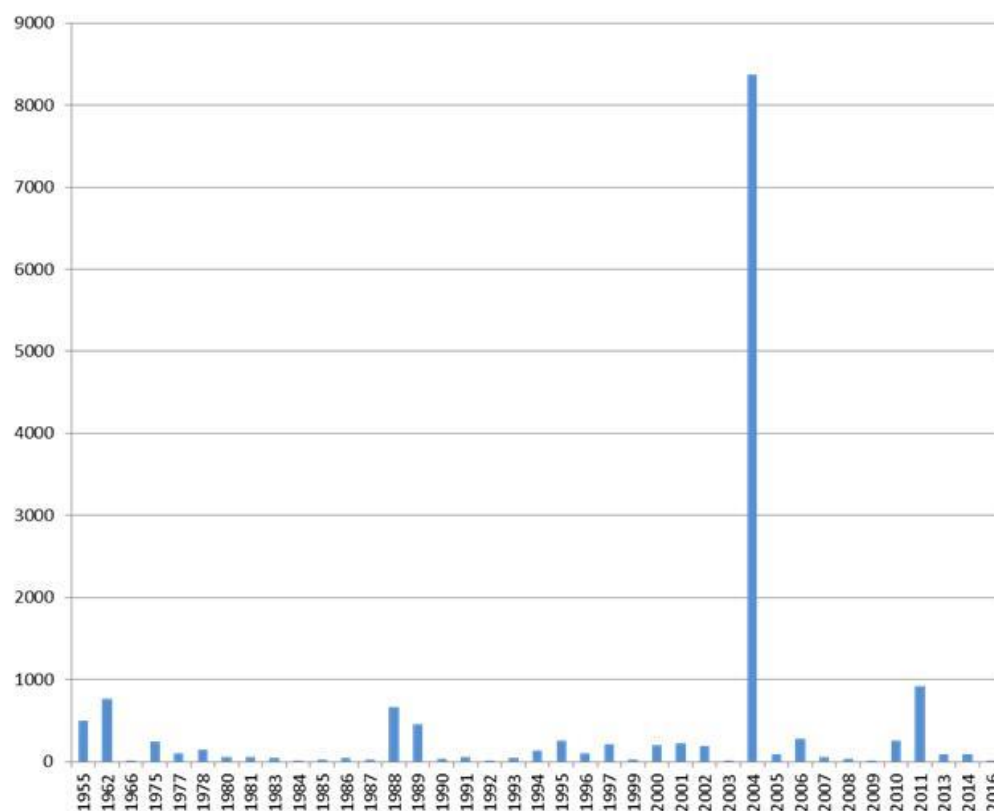


Table 4: Indian Ocean Tsunami's Victims by Province

Province	Dead				Missing		
	Thai	Foreigner	Unidentified	Total	Thai	Foreigner	Total
Krabi	357	203	161	721	314	230	544
Phang Nga	1,389	2,114	722	4,225	1,352	303	1,655
Phuket	151	111	17	279	245	363	608
Ranong	153	6		159	9		9
Satun	6						
Trang	3	2			1		1
Total	2,059	2,436	900	5,395	1,921	896	2,817

Source: (National Response and Contribution of International Partners, 2005)

- 1988-1989 Floods, Landslides, and Storms in the South
- 1989 King's Speech → "Environmental Boom" (After 1990)
- 1997 Economic (Baht) Crisis → Economy First Trends
- 1998 "The Beach" Debates → Tourism Development Facilitation (Phi Phi Islands)
- 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami disaster

National Disaster Warning Center (2005), Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Act (2007)

Figure 6: Affected Industrial Estates and Parks (within a dotted line) (Modified JETRO's figure with their permission) Source: (Nakasu, Okazumi, & Shimizu, 2013; Okazumi & Nakasu, 2015)

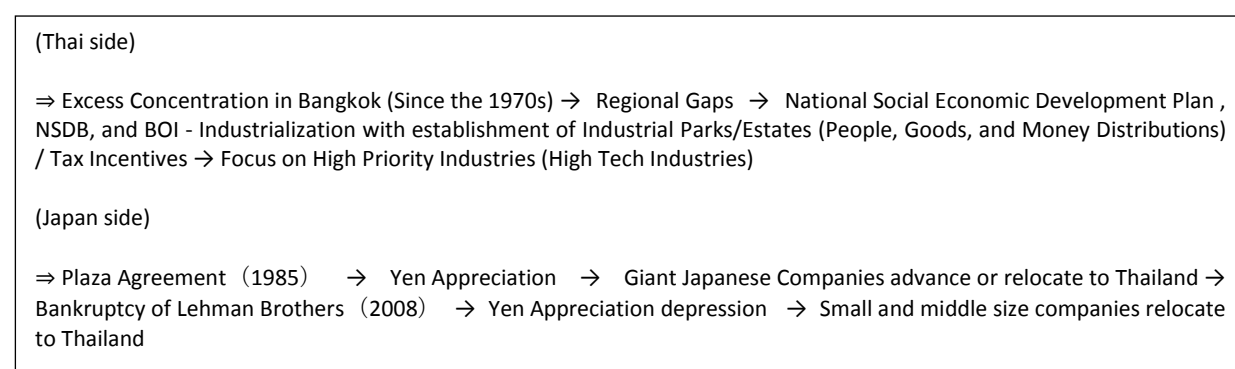


Year	Numbers of Japanese Companies Registered to Japanese Chamber and Commerce in BKK (JCCB)	
1960s	4	30
1970s	18	
1980s	(109)	
1980-1984	8	
1985-1899	101	239
1990s	97	
2000s	41	

The third turning point, the 2011 Chao Phraya River flood was one of the most symbolic events to demonstrate the impact of the global economy and supply chain connections. The paper focuses on the Japanese enterprises because 451 of 804 inundated companies were Japanese related (Tokyo Marine & Nichido Fire Insurance Co., Ltd., 2011). Figure 6 shows the seven international industrial parks/estates in central Thailand. The paper explains

the outlines of the historical and socio-economic backgrounds. From the Thai side, The Fifth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1982-1986) deeply emphasized decentralization because of over concentration in Bangkok and huge gaps between Bangkok and other regions, even if this had been the policy since the Third National Economic and Social Development Plan (1972-1976) (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), 2016). To solve the gap, the Thai government, in particular, the Office of The National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), facilitated establishment of industrial parks/estates to distribute people, goods and money out of Bangkok. The Board of Investment (BOI) also set tax incentives for foreign companies to advance or relocate to Thailand (Suehiro, 1993). The Thai government also facilitated high tech industries. Ayutthaya and Pathum Thani were two of the areas set to have such industrial parks/estates because they were close to the airport and also the Chao Phraya River as a good water source. A lot of places in the areas were originally paddy fields (Kitahara, 1995). There were also

other attractive reasons for Japanese companies to advance or relocate, such as a not expensive, but good labor force, good medical care and education, Thai people's welcoming character for Japanese, and social stability (SME Support, Japan, 2006). From Japan's side, after the Plaza Agreement in 1985, the value of the yen dramatically increased and giant companies could not stay in Japan to do export business. Thailand was a very suitable place for them to do business because of the location and the above mentioned reasons. The next challenge happened after the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers investment bank, one of the largest investment banks in the US, in 2008. The economic conditions became worse and the value of the yen rose again rapidly. Small and middle size companies decided to relocate to Thailand to deal with the giant companies that were already there in order to survive. They were mainly automobile or electronic suppliers. The rapid growth of advanced companies, especially since 1985, can be seen in Table 5 (Japanese Chamber of Commerce, Bangkok, 2012). Thai and Japanese needs were matched which were key factors for why so many Japanese enterprises advanced or relocated to the industrial parks/estates. After the disaster, economic damage aspects, especially, globalization and supply chain issues were realized (Okazumi & Nakasu, 2015). The National Catastrophe Insurance Fund (NCIF) was established in 2012 to respond to future's needs. The budget size on the national level for disaster prevention and mitigation dramatically increased from 2,546,163,300 (2011) to 3,918,637,000 (2012) (Chariyaphan, 2012). Figure 7 outlines the flows.



*Figure 7: Background of the facilitation of the relocation of Japanese enterprises to the industrial parks/estates in Thailand*

#### 4. Discussions and Conclusions

This paper overviews the natural disaster status, risks and trends in Thailand with the following three points: 1) an overview of the natural disasters in Thailand with data; 2) visualization of the risk by disaster type in Thailand and suggestion of the priority of the disaster management by type; and 3) indication of the significant natural disaster events within historical and socio-economic perspectives. With reference to 1), an overview of natural disasters in Thailand with data, the top 10 natural disasters indicates the trends in Thailand. The general trend for natural disasters is usually from human suffering to economic damage within the economic development process (Nakasu, 2005). In the case of Thailand, this trend cannot be seen clearly because of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and the 2011 Chao Phraya River flood. These disasters had high death tolls and huge economic damages, respectively, as compared to other disasters. In addition, both disasters were very internationally related. Over half of all deaths in Thailand caused by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami were unknown and foreigners. The Chao Phraya River flood also involved many foreign companies in industrial

estates/parks that were affected and this interrupted international economic activities and made the disaster economically worse. These two “international disasters” made Thailand’s natural disaster trend unusual.

With respect to the 2), visualization of the risks by disaster type and suggestion of the priority of the disaster management by the type, national risk assessment mapping was created to put those results in a risk matrix option in order to evaluate. Flooding is the most important natural disaster to cope with in Thailand and immediate actions should be made. The tsunami countermeasures were also significant in order to reduce the death risk to foreign visitors, as well as Thai tourists. Disaster management should be considered with scientific evidence in order to use the necessary resources effectively within a limited budget and resources.

Concerning 3), indication of the significant natural disaster events within historical and socio-economic perspectives, it is apparent that “natural” disasters clarify socio-economic issues. For example, the 1988 floods and landslides make clear deforestation and logging problems in the south of Thailand; the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami highlighted tourism industries, especially for foreign visitors, and economic development with natural resources deterioration; the 2011 Chao Phraya River flood showed foreign companies supply chain structures, globalization, decentralization policies and domestic and international socio-economic contexts.

With the above examination, this paper overviews the characteristics of natural disasters in Thailand, the disaster type countermeasures that are most required, and historical and socio-economic issues embedded in the natural disasters. The paper is just beginning to grasp the whole picture of disasters in Thailand as a first step. Detailed research will be undertaken as a next challenge.

## Appendix

Timeline of Disaster Events in Thailand (2001- 2016)- see below

## References

- Akimoto, R. (1982). *Urban Areas and Disasters*. Tokyo: Shibundo.
- Asian Disaster Preparedness Center. (2006). *The Economic Impact of the 26 December 2004 Earthquake & Indian Ocean Tsunami in Thailand*. ADPC. Retrieved from [http://www.adpc.net/igo/category/ID628/doc/2014-a17HxI-ADPC-Tsunami\\_impacts\\_in\\_Thailand.pdf](http://www.adpc.net/igo/category/ID628/doc/2014-a17HxI-ADPC-Tsunami_impacts_in_Thailand.pdf)
- Chariyaphan, R. (2012). Thailand’s country profile 2012. Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation , Ministry of Interior.
- EM-DAT. (2016). The Emergency Events Database - Université catholique de Louvain (UCL) - CRED, D. Guha-Sapir, Retrieved May 3, 2017, from [www.emdat.be](http://www.emdat.be)
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION. (2010). Risk Assessment and Mapping Guidelines for Disaster Management. Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/about/COMM\\_PDF\\_SEC\\_2010\\_1626\\_F\\_staff\\_working\\_document\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/about/COMM_PDF_SEC_2010_1626_F_staff_working_document_en.pdf)
- Forsyth, T. (2002). What happened on ‘The Beach’? Social movements and governance of tourism in Thailand. *International Journal of Sustainable Development*, 5(3), 326–337.
- Funatsu, T. (1997). Environmental Awareness in Thailand: “Institutionalization” of Environmental Problems and the State of the Save-Nature Boom. In Nisihira Sigeki, Kojima Reeitsu, Okamoto Hideo, & Fujisaki Shigeki (Eds.), *Environmental Awareness in Developing Countries - The Cases of China and Thailand*. Institute of Developing Economies.



13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

- Goto, Y., & Nakasu, T. (2017). Human Development Index for Evaluating Tsunami Evacuation Capability of Communities. *Proceedings of 16th World Conference on Earthquake Engineering*.
- Japanese Chamber of Commerce, Bangkok. (2012). *2011 Economic Overview of Thailand (2011/2012)*. Japanese Chamber of Commerce, Bangkok.
- Kitahara, J. (1995). Climate and geography. In *Want to know more Thailand* (2nd ed.). Tokyo: Kobundo.
- Nakasu, T. (2005). Expansion Process of Human Damages Caused by Hurricane Katrina : A Case of New Orleans. *Natural Disaster Research Report of NIED*, 41, 55–69.
- Nakasu, T., Okazumi, T., & Shimizu, Y. (2013). Establishment of Industrial Areas and New Risk Management: Chain Reactions of Economic Damage caused by 2011 Thailand Chao Phraya River Flood Disasters and Local Societies. *The Journal of Urban Social Studies*, (No.5), pp.159-169.
- National Response and Contribution of International Partners. (2005). Tsunami Thailand, One Year Later, National Response and the Contribution of International Partners | GFDRR. Retrieved May 3, 2017, from <https://www.gfdr.org/tsunami-thailand-one-year-later-national-response-and-contribution-international-partners>
- Niren, T. (1994). Developing Countries which face the dilemma of Development and Environment. In K. Ueda (Ed.), *The Key Words of Global Environment* (p. 129). Tokyo: Yuhikaku.
- Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB). (2016). The National Economic and Social Development Plan. Retrieved May 4, 2017, from [http://www.nesdb.go.th/nesdb\\_en/ewt\\_w3c/main.php?filename=develop\\_issue](http://www.nesdb.go.th/nesdb_en/ewt_w3c/main.php?filename=develop_issue)
- Okazumi, T., & Nakasu, T. (2015, September). Lessons learned from two unprecedented disasters in 2011 – Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami in Japan and Chao Phraya River flood in Thailand. Retrieved November 2, 2016, from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212420915300157>
- SME Support, Japan. (2006). Survey on Japanese Small and medium-sized enterprises in Thailand. SME Support, Japan.
- State of Oregon. (2016). State of Oregon: Risk management - Risk Management. Retrieved February 12, 2016, from <http://www.oregon.gov/das/Risk/Pages/Index.aspx>
- Suehiro, A. (1993). *Thailand : Development and Democracy*. Iwanami shoten.
- Tokyo Marine & Nichido Fire Insurance Co., Ltd. (2011). Lessons Learned from the 2011 Thailand Flood disaster: Points of flood risk countermeasure at overseas bases.

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

Date	Places (Provinces, etc.)	Disaster Type	Situations	Primary Source
2001.8.21	North, upper central, northeastern and eastern provinces	Flood	A flash flood swept down a mountainside through villages in Lomsak district death:164 people damage estimate : 24.4 million dollars	Relief Web
2001.12.24	Southern Provinces	Flood	Thousands of people in southern Thailand fled their houses after heavy rains triggered floods.	ADRC
2002.4.29	The Thailand's largest refugee camp near the Myanmar border	Storm	A freak tropical storm has killed five people at the refugee camp. The storm made damaged about 300 bamboo shelters as it tore through the camp. Around 40,000 Karen people live in shelters near the Myanmar border.	ADRC
2002.9.3	Northern Provinces	Heavy Rain	At least 14 people were killed and more than 20 were missing after their makeshift houses on the banks of an overflowing stream collapsed after heavy rain. Death:39 people Damaged house: 150,000	ADRC
2002.9.18	Northern Provinces	Mud Slide	Some 800 people narrowly escaped a huge mudslide in northern Thailand on Tuesday as it swept through three villages in a tangle of uprooted trees and destroyed buildings, a district official said.	ADRC
2002.10.4	Bangkok	Flood	Residents of the Thai capital, Bangkok, are bracing themselves for severe flooding following forecasts that floodwaters coming from the north of the country.	ADRC
2003.10.26	Eight Provinces	Flood	Five days of heavy monsoon rains have brought severe floods to Thailand, killing a 13-year-old boy, forcing hundreds of people from their homes and disrupting road and rail transport, officials said. Dead: 1 person Affected: at least 200,000 people (in 8 provinces) Evacuated: more than 1,600 people	ADRC
2003.12.14	Southern Provinces	Flood	Floods in Thailand have killed at least eight people and damaged tens of thousands of homes.	ADRC
2004.12.24	Krabi, Trang, PhangNa, Phuket, Ranong, Saturn	Tsunami	On 26 December 2004, Tsunami occurred off the Sumatra Island killed 5,395, affected 58,550, and whose total loss was US\$ 399.78 million in Thailand	ADRC
2005.8.31	Northern Provinces (Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai and Mae Hong Sorn Provinces)	Flood	Over 100,000 families have been affected by severe flooding in Northern Thailand in the middle of August. Torrential rains which earlier in August hammered Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai and Mae Hong Sorn inundated more than 4 500 villagers' homes in these three provinces alone leaving 11 people dead and making several roads impassable to small vehicles.	ADRC
2005.12.18	Southern Provinces	Torrential monsoon rains	Torrential monsoon rains have wreaked havoc across Thailand's south, killing 12 people and leaving two missing in the past week, officials said on Sunday. Seven of the victims died in two mudslides.	ADRC
2006.05.23	Northern Provinces	Flood, Mud Slide	Heavy monsoon rains unleashed flash floods and mudslides in northern Thailand which killed at least 10 people, left 47 missing and thousands homeless, officials said on Tuesday.	ADRC

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

2006.10.09	43 provinces in the country's north, northeast and central Thailand	Flood	More than 32 dead in Thai floods since August 2006, reported on October 10.	BBC
2007.04.14	Trang	Flood	Flash floods killed at least 23 holidaymakers and injured more than 20 at three waterfalls in the southern Thai province of Trang on Saturday as they celebrated the Thai New Year, disaster officials said.	ADRC
2008.04.27	Thak	Flood	The rains have continued pouring in Thak province, Thailand at least four consecutive days. Over 1,000 people are currently homeless.	ADRC
2008.8.15	Nakhon Phanom	Flood	The disaster prevention special command center in Nakhon Phanom province is in the midst of assessing damage caused by inundation in 12 districts. More than 100,000 people have been affected by flooding. Meanwhile the death toll has reportedly stood at 1.	ADRC
2008.09.08	North and Northeast Provinces	Flood	Heavy downpours due to a low pressure trough and the southwestern monsoon in the past week have triggered more flash floods and inundated villages and farmland in north and northeast Thailand. According to disaster officials, five people have been killed, 114,345 (34,182 families) have been affected.	ADRC
2008.10.01	Northern, north-eastern and central provinces	Heavy Rain	The death toll from floods triggered by heavy monsoon rains has risen to 23, while nearly 230,588 people have been treated for water-related illnesses and injuries.	IRIN
2008.09.31-10.01	Si Sa Ket Province	Typhoon	Typhoon Mekkahl hit between 31 September and 1 October 2008. The cyclone caused torrential rains which killed 32, affected 2,864,484 and whose total loss was US\$ 21.6 million including Vietnam.	Relief Web, ADRC
2008.11.19	Southern Provinces	Flood	201,434 people affected, 10 people died and 190 families homeless (685 persons) from heavy rain in southern Thailand.	ADRC
2008.12.08	Yala	Flood	After heavy rains in the southern Yala province, Thailand, the Disasters' Prevention Special Command Centre in Yala has issued warnings on 8 December 2008 to the people in the area to be cautious of potential hazards and flash floods after over 3,000 local families being affected.	ADRC
2009.11.07	Southern border provinces	Flood	The flooding which started in the southern border province in Thailand so far killed 10 people	ADRC
2010.08.13	Lampang	Flood	The flood struck the northern province of Lampang on Friday night (13 August 2010) with the water level as high as one meter. Over 1,200 households and 36 villages in 7 districts have been affected.	ADRC
2010.10.16	Nakhon Ratchasima	Flash Flood	Nakhon Ratchasima has been ravaged as flash floods wreak havoc in the Northeast and Central Plains following heavy weekend monsoon rains.	ADRC
2011.03	47 Provinces	Drought	The Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, Thailand announced drought in 47 provinces.	ADRC
2011.03.27	Southern Provinces	Flash Flood	Since 23 March 2011 there has been a prolonged heavy rainfall causing flash floods in many provinces in the South.	ADRC

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

2011.07-2012.02	Provinces of Northern, Northeastern and Central Thailand along the Mekong and Chao Phraya river	Flood	Severe flooding occurred during the 2011 monsoon season in Thailand, beginning at the end of July and ceasing mid-January 2012. The flooding affected the provinces of Northern, Northeastern and Central Thailand along the Mekong and Chao Phraya river basins, as well as parts of the capital city of Bangkok. It resulted in a total of 813 deaths, 9.5 million people affected and economic damage of USD40 billion.	ADRC
2011.08.03	North and the northeast provinces	Tropical Storm, Flood	Tropical Storm Nock Ten has caused continuous rainfalls in the north and the northeast of Thailand, causing floods in 15 provinces.	ADRC
2012.06.06	Surat Thani	Heavy Rain, Flood	Continuous rain has caused flooding in five districts in Surat Thani province of southern Thailand, affecting 8,500 households and over 27,000 residents.	ADRC
2012.09.12	Northern Provinces	Flood	Thousands have fled their homes in Northern Thailand after heavy rain caused a major river to overflow at the start of September.	ADRC
2013.06	Phuket, Ranong, Nan, Phang Nga, Trang, Satun, Krabi	Flood	Torrential rain has been constant in the south for around 3 or 4 days already, flooding streets and town centers. Outside the towns, many roads have been made impassable by mudslides and floods. The western coast of south Thailand suffered the most, especially the provinces of Phuket, Ranong, Nan, Phang Nga, Trang, Satun and Krabi. Six houses were damaged by mudslides in Nan province, with one person reported as missing. All seven districts in Satun Province have been declared a disaster zone after they had been hit by flash floods. There have been reports that as many as 9,000 homes have been affected.	Phuket Gazette;
2013.07.05	Phang-Nga	Flood	Nearly 13cm of rain has fallen in a 24 hour period on 4th July 2013 in the Phang-Nga province. Particularly badly affected was the Takua Pa district. Other areas of southern Thailand have also seen heavy rainfall. Floods and landslides killed one person and many houses and buildings were damaged in Phang-Nga.	Thai Financial Post
2013.07.18	Trat, Ranong	Flood	The heavy rain has caused flooding in Trat and Ranong provinces. Over 500 residents of Trat province have been affected.	ADRC
2013.08.01	Chiang Rai, Kanjanaburi, Tak, Nan, Payao, Sakon Nakorn, Prajinburi	Flood	The recent floods had affected nearly 20,000 homes across 7 provinces in Thailand. According to DDPM, 18,788 homes in Chiang Rai, Kanjanaburi, Tak, Nan, Payao, Sakon Nakorn and Prajinburi have been affected by flash floods as heavy rains continue raging across these provinces.	Pattaya Mail; Thai Financial Post
2013.09.17	30 provinces of Thailand	Flood	Two million people in 30 provinces of Thailand have been affected by floods since 17 September 2013.	ADRC
2013.11.26	Surat Thani	Flood	Four districts in the Surat Thani province have also been declared disaster zones, with 4,070 households affected and 41 roads and 21 bridges left damaged or impassable. At least five people have reportedly died in the flood.	Flood list
2013.12.05	Southern Thailand	Flood	Floods in Thailand's South have intensified with heavy rains lashing towns and water levels rising. Water has been flowing down from nearby mountain ranges to Mueang district and affected approximately 16,500 households.	ADRC

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

2013.12.07	Prachuap Khiri Khan, Chumphon, Ranong, Surat Thani, Satun, Yala and Pattani, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Songkhla, Phatthalung, Trang, Narathiwat	Flood	On Saturday 7 December, Thailand's Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Department announced that floods had started to recede in the seven affected of Prachuap Khiri Khan, Chumphon, Ranong, Surat Thani, Satun, Yala and Pattani, the department also stated that flooding remains in Nakhon Si Thammarat, Songkhla, Phatthalung, Trang and Narathiwat provinces, affecting around 125,000 people.	National News Bureau of Thailand (NNT)
2013.12.16	Southern, Central, and Northern	Flood	Thailand's Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) announced that the floods that had affected much of the country's southern region has receded in 10 provinces, but remain in Phutthalung and Trang. The DDPM said that as many as 6,000 people are still affected by flooding in these two provinces. Northern and central areas of Thailand have been affected by flooding throughout the monsoon. Heavy rainfall around 21 November led to severe flooding across 12 provinces, resulting in 20 deaths. The worst affected area was Nakhon Si Thammarat province, where as many as 6 people died.	FloodList
2013.12.16	Loei, Tak, Nan, Chiang Mai, Nakhon Phanom, Nong Bua Lamphu	Cold Spell	The cold spell has affected the north of the country, affecting over 1 million people in the six provinces of Loei, Tak, Nan, Chiang Mai, Nakhon Phanom, and Nong Bua Lamphu, all of which have been declared disaster zones as a result of the cold temperatures.	FloodList
2014.01.13	Narathiwat	Flood	Floods have struck in the Su-ngai Kolok and Waeng districts of Narathiwat in Thailand following continuous rainfall throughout last week. The rainfall increased levels of the Buketa Canal until it eventually overflowed, flooding around 20 villages and leaving around 1,088 homes under 50cm to 100cm of water.	FloodList
2014.05.05	Chiang Rai	Earthquake	An earthquake with a magnitude of 6.3 on the Richter scale struck the northern province of Chiang Rai at 6.08pm Monday, May 5. The epicenter was located at a point 9 km (6 mi) south of Mae Lao District, 27 km (17 mi) southwest of Chiang Rai, Thailand. Windows, walls and roads as well as temples all suffered damage from the quake. It was the strongest earthquake ever recorded in Thailand, according to National Disaster Warning Center. In Phan district of Chiang Rai, a road was split by serious cracks. A Buddha statue's head at the Udomwaree Temple fell off due to the quake and a residential building of the temple suffered exterior cracks and ceiling damage.	USGS, BKKPOST, ABC News, Thai PBS
2014.07.24	Sakon Nakhon, Prachin Buri, Si Sa Ket, Ubon Ratchathani, Yasothon	Flood	Thailand's Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) stated earlier today that, after several days of steady rain, flooding is affecting the 5 provinces of Sakon Nakhon, Prachin Buri, Si Sa Ket, Ubon Ratchathani and Yasothon. Ubon Ratchathani saw over 80 mm of rain fall 24 hours between 22 and 23 July 2014. Sakon Nakhon province was one of the worst hit, where floods have affected around 4,000 families. Elsewhere, flooding has damaged homes and roads in Si Sa Ket and Ubon Ratchathani provinces. Access to several parts of Si Sa Ket has been difficult for the last few days. At one stage flood waters were so high the Provincial Electricity Authority (PEA) had to cut power supply in the Benchalak district as a safety measure.	Floodlist
2014.02	Buriram, Sakon Nakhon	Drought	Thailand's northeastern provinces of Buriram and Sakon Nakhon are being plagued by the worst drought in decades and are in urgent need of assistance.	ADRC
2014.07.10	Chiang Rai	Flood, Landslide	The northernmost province of Chiang Rai has been hit again by landslides and flash floods following three days of abundant raining. As many as a thousand families in 8 districts of the province have reportedly been afflicted.	ADRC

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

2014.07.21	Northeastern Provinces	Typhoon	Rivers across several communities in northeastern Thailand have overflowed due to the effects of Typhoon Rammasun, which has caused heavy rains throughout the area.	ADRC
2014.7.23	Sakon Nakhon, Prachin Buri, Si Sa Ket, Ubon Ratchathani, Yasothon	Flood	On 23 July, the 5 provinces of Sakon Nakhon, Prachin Buri, Si Sa Ket, Ubon Ratchathani and Yasothon were badly affected by flooding.	FloodList
2014.07.30	Sakhon Nakhon, Ubon Ratchathani	Flood	Due to the heavy rainfall in the Northeast, flooding has occurred in Sakhon Nakhon and Ubon Ratchathani provinces, Thailand, affecting 19,183 households	ADRC
2014.7.31	Amnat Charoen	Flood	The Mekong river in the northeastern Thai province of Amnat Charoen has overflowed and submerged several villages on 31 July 2014, damaging over 1,000 houses.	FloodList
2014.8.21	Nan	Flood	Heavy rain in Nan province in northern Thailand caused local rivers to overflow earlier this week, flooding several districts in the province. Further flood warnings have been issued for 20 provinces, especially in northern and northeastern areas. Flooding has particularly affected the districts of Thung Chang, Muang and Song, where around 50 houses and areas of farmland have been damaged.	Floodlist
2014.09.01	17 Provinces	Flood	Thailand's Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) reported on Monday, 01 September 2014 that at least 17 provinces have been affected by recent flooding. Six people have been killed and at least 1 person remains missing.	FloodList
2014.09.05	Nan, Shkhothai, Chaiyaphum, Tak, Nakhonsawan	Flood	Due to heavy rainfall, several provinces in Northern Thailand experienced flooding. As of 5 September, the affected areas are 1. Nan Province: Nanoy and Namoen district 2. Shkhothai Province: Muang, Srisuehanalai Srinakorn and Tung Saleam. 500 houses are still inundated. 3. Chaiyaphum Province: 80 houses are submerged. 4. Tak Province 5. Nakhonsawan Province: 30 houses are inundated. Impact: 7404 families or (estimated) 15000 people 17479 ha agricultural fields damaged 3000 ha of rice field damaged.	AHA
2014.09.06	28 Provinces. Deaths occurred in Kamphaeng Phet, Mea Hong Son, Chiang Rai, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Phayao, Phrae, and Sukhothai Provinces.	Flood	Thailand's Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Department (DDPM) states 07 September 2014, that flooding that has affected at least 28 provinces in the country since late August, has resulted in the deaths of 10 people and 14,562 houses had been affected in the floods in over 700 villages. The deaths occurred in the provinces of Kamphaeng Phet (2), Mae Hong Son (2), Chiang Rai (2), Nakhon Si Thammarat, Phayao, Phrae and Sukhothai.	FloodList
2014.09.29	Chiang Mai and Chai Nat Provinces	Flood	Due to continuous heavy rain, Fung District of Chiang Mai is affected by flood, Chai Nat province was also affected. Impact: 55houses damaged 94 houses affected in Chai Nat province.	AHA
2014.10.01	Chantaburi Province	Flood	Due to heavy rainfall, flood is affecting Chantaburi Province. Impact: 100 families affected.	AHA
2014.10.02	Chiang Mai and Chai Nat Provinces	Flood	Heavy rainfall has caused deadly floods in northern Thailand over the last few days. The heavy rain has moved south, to affect central and southern areas of the country. Chiang Mai Province faced continuous heavy rain and flash floods between 28 September and 01 October 2014. Three people tragically drowned in the flooding in Fang District. More than 50 homes in the district have been damaged by the floods. In Chai Nat Province, flooding was so severe that authorities had to make emergency rescues in Hunkha District. Nearly 100 homes have been damaged on the province.	FloodList

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

2014.10.07	Petchaburi, Rachaburi, Prachuap khiri kham, Krabi, Satun, Surathani	Flood	Due to heavy rain since 6 October 2014, several provinces in central and south of Thailand have been affected provinces include: Petchaburi (6districts),Rachaburi (2 districts), Prachuap khiri kham, Krabi (2 districts), Satun (5districts), Surathani (2districts). Impact: more than 4700 families or more than 20000 people affected (estimated)	AHA
2014.10.20	Lampang Province	Flood	Heavy rain has caused the Lam Huai Mae River to overflow. Consequently, flood inundated more than 200 houses in Thoen District, Lampang Province. Impact: over 200 families were affected more than 200 houses were inundated.	AHA
2014.10.22	Lampang Province	Flood	Floods in 5 villages in Lampang Province, Thailand have affected 200 families. NNT (National News Bureau of Thailand) are reporting that the Lam Huai Mae Wa River overflowed its banks causing flooding in Thoen District in the northern province of Lampang, earlier today 22 October 2014.Around 200 families in 5 different villages in the area have been severely affected, although no injuries have been reported. Homes of the families are said to have been completely inundated and officials from Thailand's Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Department (DDPM) are coordinating distribution of food, water and other supplies.	FloodList
2014.11.07	Pattani, Nakhon si Thamamarat and Surat thani	Flood	Due to continuous heavy rainfall, flood was affecting several southern provinces including Pattani (Muang), Nakhon si Thamamarat (Phra phrom, Chang Klang) and Surat thani. Impact: 2408 households or 7237 people were affected 2000 acres of agricultural lands were inundated.	AHA
2014.11.10	Trang	Flood	Heavy rain has generated flash flood incident in Trang Province. The consecutive days of rain have created flooding in the southern province. Impact: Over 200 families were affected in Trang 5,000 ha of farmland have been submerged.	AHA
2014.11.14	Trang, Nakhon Si Thammarat	Flood	Trang Province: Trang province has been one of the worst affected areas after persistent heavy rain over the last 4 days caused flash floods across several southern provinces. Around 1,000 villagers in Trang have been evacuated since the flooding began. Houses and farmland have been damaged. The flood water level was almost two meters high, according to NNT.  Nakhon Si Thammarat: At least 5 districts – Chawang, Chang Klang, Pipoon, Lan Ska, and Phra Phrom in Nakhon Si Thammarat experienced severe floods. More than 4,400 households and 12,000 people have been affected in the province.	FloodList
2014.12.14	7 Provinces in the South	Flood, Landslide	Since 14 December 2014, Thailand's seven provinces in the south have been affected by floods and landslides. Seven people died and three were injured.	ADRC
2014.12.15	Nakhon Si Thammarat, Phatthalung	Flood	Floods in the southern Thai provinces of Nakhon Si Thammarat and Phatthalung have forced evacuations in as many as 50 villages, some of which are under more than 1 meter of water. One person is reported as missing after being swept away by the floods in Phrom Khiri district, Nakhon Si Thammarat.	FloodList

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

2014.12.17	Narathiwat, Yala, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Phatthalung	Flood	Narathiwat: National News Bureau Thailand (NNT) say that floods in Narathiwat have been caused by heavy rain over the last 4 days has and run-off from the Sankalakhiri mountain range flowing down to the Su-ngai Kolok River. Houses along the river have been inundated. Flooding has also affected over 300 families in the districts of Sukhirin, Waeng and Su-ngai Kolok. Yala: Many low lying areas of the province are already seeing some flooding, and more are expected.  Nakhon Si Thammarat and Phatthalung: Floods struck in the provinces of Nakhon Si Thammarat and Phatthalung. Two people have been reported as missing after being swept away in the floods – one in Nakhon Si Thammarat, the other in Phatthalung.	FloodList
2014.12.19	Southern Provinces	Flood	Heavy rain and flooding has continued in southern Thailand and is now also affecting areas along the Thailand-Malaysian border. Several southern provinces in Thailand have been under water for the last week. Across the region a total of four people have been reported as killed in the floods and 14,000 people evacuated (12,000 in Malaysia). Two people remain missing in the floods in Thailand.	FloodList
2015.01.08	Bangkok	Flood	In Bangkok, commuters faced a Monday morning rush hour driving in flood water up to 50 cm deep in some areas. A heavy downpour and thunderstorm lasting 5 hours dumped over 100 mm of rain on the city in the early hours between 2 am and 5 am. Some schools and colleges have closed.	FloodList
2015.04.07	8 Provinces	Storm	Seasonal storms pounded about 50 villages in 11 districts of eight provinces, damaging more than 900 houses.	ADRC
2015.08.06	North, North East, and South Nakhorn Phanom	Flood	Several areas in the North, North East and South of Thailand have reportedly been flooded by overflowing rivers after several days of rainfall. In Nakhon Phanom, more than 3,000 homes and 30,000 rai of rice paddies have been inundated.\	ADRC
2015.08.06	Nakhon Phanom	Flood	In Nakhon Phanom, more than 3,000 homes and 30,000 rai of rice paddies have been inundated in Sri Songkram district after the Songkram River overflowed the embankment and flooded surrounding areas. Residents were forced out of their homes, and had to take refuge on the street.	FloodList
2016.03		Drought	The worst drought in 50 years in being predicted for Thailand in 2016. The agricultural sector will bear the largest impact, as the quantities of many agricultural products fall, especially rice, tapioca, sugarcane, and sugar.	InterRisk Asia
2016.06.21	Bangkok	Flood	Wide areas of Bangkok, Thailand, were flooded on 21 June after a period of heavy rain across the city. The flooding brought traffic to a standstill forced some schools and businesses to close. The Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) stated that heavy rains during the evening of 20 June caused flooding in 36 areas of Bangkok, leaving streets under 60cm of water in some areas.	Flood list



13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

2016.09.06	Phang-Nga	Flood	The floods have affected areas of Phang Nga Province. The worst hit area is the village of Ban Bang Yai Village in Taku Pa District, where at least 40 houses have been damaged and left without drinking water. Vehicles, crops and livestock have also suffered damage. No injuries or fatalities have been reported however.	FloodList
2016.10.07	Nakornsawan Province	Flood	3 people have been killed by floods in Nakornsawan province. Wide areas of farmland have been submerged and 27,000 houses inundated. Flooding is affecting a total of 14 provinces across the country. Many areas have been reported persistent heavy rain over the last 2 weeks. Ayutthaya province in particular is seeing some severe flooding, with around 22,000 homes inundated as well as a number of important historical buildings and temples.	FloodList
2016.11.06-09	Kanchanaburi, Phetchaburi, Krabi and Satun	Flood	Thailand's Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) reported on 06 November that over 6,000 households have been affected by flooding in the central provinces of Kanchanaburi and Phetchaburi, and the southern provinces of Krabi and Satun.	FloodList
2016.12.05	Surat Thani, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Songkhla, Phatthalung, Pattani, Chumphon, Krabi, Trang, Yala, and Narathiwat	Flood	Thailand's Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) says that 11 people have died in the floods and 2 people remain missing. Over 360,000 people have been affected. Flooding has also caused major disruption to train travel in the south. The fatalities were reported in the provinces of Surat Thani (2), Nakhon Si Thammarat (3), Songkhla (2), Phatthalung (2), Pattani (2). Flooding has also affected the provinces of Chumphon, Krabi, Trang, Yala and Narathiwat.	FloodList

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

References

ABC News/ ADRC/ AHA/ Asia News Network/ Bangkok Post/ BBC/ Daily News Thailand/ DDPM/ FloodList/ GLIDE number/ InterRisk/ National News Bureau of Thailand (NNT)/ Pattaya Mail/ Phuket Gazette/ Relief Web/ USGS/ Thai PBS/ Thai Financial Post

Related URLs

<p>ABC News</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="http://abcnews.go.com/">http://abcnews.go.com/</a></li> </ul> <p>ADRC (Thailand)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="http://www.adrc.asia/nationinformation.php?NationCode=764&amp;Lang=en&amp;NationNum=09">http://www.adrc.asia/nationinformation.php?NationCode=764&amp;Lang=en&amp;NationNum=09</a></li> </ul> <p>AHA (ADI net)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="http://adinet.ahacentre.org/">http://adinet.ahacentre.org/</a></li> </ul> <p>Asia News Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="http://www.asianews.network/">http://www.asianews.network/</a></li> </ul> <p>Bangkok Post</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="http://www.bangkokpost.com/">http://www.bangkokpost.com/</a></li> </ul> <p>BBC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="http://www.bbc.com/">http://www.bbc.com/</a></li> </ul> <p>Daily News Thailand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="http://www.pressreader.com/thailand/daily-news-thailand/textview">http://www.pressreader.com/thailand/daily-news-thailand/textview</a></li> </ul> <p>DDPM (Database System)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="http://61.19.54.136/">http://61.19.54.136/</a></li> </ul> <p>FloodList (Thailand)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="http://floodlist.com/tag/thailand">http://floodlist.com/tag/thailand</a></li> </ul>	<p>GLIDE number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="http://glidenumber.net/glide/public/search/search.jsp">http://glidenumber.net/glide/public/search/search.jsp</a></li> </ul> <p>InterRisk (Thailand)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="http://www.interriskthai.co.th/th/">http://www.interriskthai.co.th/th/</a></li> </ul> <p>National News Bureau of Thailand (NNT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="http://thainews.prd.go.th/website_en/home/index">http://thainews.prd.go.th/website_en/home/index</a></li> </ul> <p>Pattaya Mail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="http://www.pattayamail.com/">http://www.pattayamail.com/</a></li> </ul> <p>Phuket Gazette</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="http://www.phuketgazette.net/">http://www.phuketgazette.net/</a></li> </ul> <p>Relief Web (Disasters)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="http://reliefweb.int/disasters">http://reliefweb.int/disasters</a></li> </ul> <p>USGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="https://www.usgs.gov/">https://www.usgs.gov/</a></li> </ul> <p>Thai PBS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="http://www.thaipbs.or.th/home">http://www.thaipbs.or.th/home</a></li> </ul> <p>Thai Financial Post</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="http://business.financialpost.com/tag/thailand">http://business.financialpost.com/tag/thailand</a></li> </ul>
--	--

## **Local History of the *Phanom Rung* Festival: Contested Meaning of Sanctuary Ownership**

**Narasaj, Benjawan**

Center for Research on Plurality in the Mekong region (CERP)  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Science  
Khon Kaen University  
Thailand

---

### **Abstract**

The Phanom Rung annual festival in April is the most important activity for local people and the state, represented by FAD and Buriram provincial office. Before the state has legally occupied the sanctuary area and all activities there, the festival was managed by local groups who lived around the sanctuary, including Bu people. After taking its name and historical background, the state has manipulated a new content of the festival until it had definitely different from the traditional festival and local people no more freely participation to the festival which is still promoted as a local festival. Thus, Bu people often retell about the traditional Phanom Rung annual festival to claim as the 'right' festival and point out the 'wrong' content of the state festival. However, I found that they have not any attention to fight for returning to the 'right' festival or even claiming their right to manage the festival by themselves. In order to find out why they do that, I focus Bu people's relationship with Phanom Rung sanctuary under the FAD management and the influence discourses.

According to my in-depth interviewing and participant observation, as an anthropological fieldwork, from 2011-2013 and Foucauldian discourse analysis. I found that under the influence of authorized heritage discourse (AHD), Bu people respect FAD legal power to control everything of Phanom Rung without their participation. However, under 'Counter authorized heritage' discourse and 'Decentralization' discourse, they expect to be respected of their local rights while FAD office order something effect to their quality of life. Thus, the local history has told to memorize their previous ownership, which supports their authorized to fight with FAD, especially when they asking a Buriram politician to support.

**Keywords:** Phanom Rung Khmer Heritage; Heritage Ownership ; Heritage Discourses

### **Introduction**

The annual festival of an archaeological heritage site often represents its identity and relates to its owners as the hosts of the festival. In the case of this Thailand historical park, under the control and management of the Fine Arts Department (FAD), a state agency, its annual festival often is arranged for tourism promotion and is claimed as a local custom of the localities surrounding the site. Thus, local people seem to be recognized for their ownership of the site; however, that cultural ownership is not directly linked to their rights to manage activities on the site, or at least, to freely participate in

the festival. This situation is obvious in the case of the *Phanom Rung* Khmer sanctuary in *Buriram* province. The annual festival, held in April, is the most important activity at the site and is arranged by the state. The event is under the stewardship of the FAD, with the cooperation of the *Buriram* provincial administrative office, and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). The festival is known by a traditional name and uses the background of a local festival called *Prapaenee Khun Kao Phanom Rung*, previously hosted by the local groups who lived around the sanctuary, including the *Bu* community. Unfortunately, the state has manipulated the new content of the festival to the extent that it is now considerably different from its traditional origins and local people no longer have free participation in the festival. Consequently, the *Bu* people often speak of their local history concerning the traditional festival in order to claim their ownership of it and to recall its 'correct' pattern, while pointing out the 'inaccurate' content of the state festival and its organizer's lack of knowledge concerning local customs. From this retelling of history, it seems they need to claim their rights and fight for a return to the 'correct' festival or to claim their right to manage the festival by themselves. However, I found that there was no intention to take such action.

In order to find out the purposes of the retelling of local history concerning the festival, I will focus on the *Bu* people's relationship with the *Phanom Rung* sanctuary under the FAD management and the influence of the discourse regarding heritage management in the locality.

### **Heritage Discourse**

The concept of 'discourses' drawn upon here derives from Michel Foucault's discourse analysis, which concerns 'discourse' as a system of thought or knowledge which, it is claimed, make the world meaningful according to its own episteme. It constitutes and reflects a range of social practices and then, in turn, organizes social relations and power relations around a society, nation, or locality (Foucault, 1991: 55). Discourse contestation aimed at generating truth or knowledge, under a varying episteme, is present in every period of time. The most influential discourse is termed 'dominant discourse', while less influential discourse may exist as 'counter discourse' or just disappear (Foucault, 1991: 55; Foucault, 1980: 82-83).

In the field of heritage management, there are various competing discourses. The dominant one is termed by Laurajane Smith as the 'Authorized Heritage Discourse' (AHD), which is based on archaeological knowledge and practice (Smith, 2012: 1). It has developed in modern, western societies and has had influence in Thailand since the state agency (the Royal institute) started their task of heritage management in 1926 (*Prachum Khod Mai Pracham Sok* leam 39, 1934: 55) The AHD can be classified as (1) the professional discourse and (2) the popular discourse. The first is based on academic knowledge and practice, the second, while under influence of the first, has developed in a socio-political frame and is different from the first. (Smith, 2007: 7). In this paper, I consider the popular discourse, with its stronger influence on local perception and the state management of this case rather than the professional discourse, while considering the main ideas regarding local history and local interaction with the state to point out the foundations of a 'counter discourse'.

### **Collective Memory**

Paul Connerton (1989) argued that memory can be invented, reproduced, and continuously transmitted in a society through a repeated practice, including commemorative ceremonies, and/or

bodily practices, which generate a habitual memory for the present generation and beyond. Due to memory of the past being an important background for both an individual's and a social group's perception of themselves and the world, it is a key factor of the power relation and social organization within a society. To study a social memory is to learn about a social structure in a way which leads us to know it more deeply than from the study of surface phenomenon, such as an individual behavior or situation.

Moreover, many heritage studies, which focus on people's memory, confirm that heritage is a form of collective memory that is socially constructed under a present-centeredness agenda (e.g. Harvey, 2008; Atkinson, 2008; Hancock, 2008). Thus, the local history retelling not only relates to some kind of power relation and social structure in the *Bu*'s locality, but is also a response, in some way, to their current agenda, which I attend to search for.

The memory of the past is not a fixed, constant, singular narrative, but something that is continually being made and reproduced in different voices, telling different versions of the same heritage. The fluid, polyphonic, and dissonant memories of the past are concerned in heritage studies, while the main issue is the reproduction, negotiation, and contesting of memories of the past in a heritage or a group of heritages. (e.g. Harvey, 2008; Atkinson, 2008; Hancock, 2008). My study concerns local polyphonic memories of the *Phanom Rung* festival by comparing the main version, as retold by the *Bu*, with the main version of the *Tapek* community, another community found close to the sanctuary, and the story as recorded in local documents and published in various periodicals.

## Methodology

Anthropological fieldwork, with in-depth interviews and participant observations, was applied as the key method of data collection during 2011-2013. The focus was the *Bu* and *Tapek* communities, the closest communities to the sanctuary, and the local agents who are the staff arranging the festival within the multiple layers of the administrative office; province, district, sub-district, local school and college.

Secondary sources of data, e.g. local documents concerning the site and/or local history, and a provincial primary school textbook, were also studied.

To discover what content should be selected, repeated, or disregarded in the *Bu* history retelling of the main version, I classified the similar plots and highlighted points in detail, considering those that were most frequent as the main version. The current main version of the *Bu* retelling was then compared to other versions from the *Tapek* community and the other key informant groups. The history records from secondary data were also compared to find similarities and differences between each current version.

To identify the most influential discourses, I analyzed them using 'genealogy', a Foucauldian methodology.

## The *Phanom Rung* Festival Background

The *Phanom Rung* sanctuary is a Khmer monument, which was built in Angkorian style during the 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> century, as a Hindu temple dedicated to *Shiva*. It is one of the most famous Khmer sanctuaries in Thailand; this was especially so after a national campaign for the return of the *Naraibuntomsin* lintel from U.S.A. during 1987-1988, which led to the lintel being reinstalled in its

original location within the *Phanom Rung* central building.

The sanctuary is located on the rim of an extinct volcano at an elevation of 402 meters. There are three platform levels, which conform to a Khmer temple complex set that symbolizes Mount *Sumaru*, *Shiva's* heavenly dwelling. *Barai*, a reservoir which is a key symbol of ancient Khmer architecture, is found at the foot of the hill. The hill is located bordering two districts, *Chaloemphrakiat* and *Prakhonchai*, while the *Tapek* and the *Bu* are known locally as the two closest communities to the sanctuary, with their location and practices providing a sense of belonging. However, the *Phanom Rung* sanctuary is formally located in *Tapek* sub-district, *Chaloemphrakiat* district, while some parts of the hill are officially located in the *Bu* community, *Prakhonchai* district. Hence, *Chaloemphrakiat* district and the *Tapek* are currently considered to be the owners of the sanctuary, due to its administrative location, while the *Bu* community is known locally as the former owner, by way of its location and cultural practices.

Prior to 1971, the *Phanom Rung* main building, main gate, and stairs from the middle level to the top level were in disrepair, while other parts still exist and impress the visitors. It was locally perceived as a spiritual, sacred place and as a site for Buddhist pilgrimage, taken care of by local communities who, periodically, installed a new Buddha footprint and other Buddha offerings in a small building within the old one, covering the small building (*Prang Noi*) with a contemporary roof (as the ancient construction had no roof).

The local practices at the site were recorded by Aymonier, a French explorer and archaeologist who surveyed the area in 1885. He noted that local people from the surrounding villages had a custom of gathering in the sanctuary to celebrate New Year feasts by washing the few Buddhist statues found there, and worshipping the Buddha footprint (Aymonier, 1999: 161). According to the local memory of both the *Bu* and *Tapek* people, this celebration was a pilgrimage practice which could take place at any time, not only during the New Year period, until in 1938 when the *Bu* community had started arranging it as an annual festival on a fixed day, the waxing moon of the fifth month of the lunar calendar. This festival was known as *Prapaenee Khun Kao Phanom Rung*, which means 'walking to the *Phanom Rung* hill (for praying at the Buddha footprint)', and became the most important activity of the site for the locals around the hill, with the *Tapek* community joining in as the hosts on the west side while the *Bu* were the hosts on the east side.

In 1956, the *Bu* people created a further temple on the middle level of the *Phanom Rung* sanctuary. The temple has been their religious center until now. Thus, the *Bu* people have a sense of belonging to the sanctuary, in the same way as the *Tapek* people, without it being clearly classified which community was formally the owner. The sanctuary was taken care of due to their efforts, including periodic cleaning up of the tree cover near the building and surrounding area, construction and maintenance of a weir for the pond at the hilltop for use by visitors, and protecting it from any human harm.

In 1926, the Royal institute was established. Archaeological knowledge and conservation practices started to be promoted as being the correct knowledge and principles to explain and preserve the ancient ruins in a better way than provided previously. After the Fine Arts Department (FAD) was re-founded to take on the task of the institute in 1933, it became the key state agency for providing archaeological knowledge and conservation practices at all heritage sites in Thailand.

During 1971-1988, the FAD restored the *Phanom Rung* sanctuary as a beautiful monument, no longer subject to collapse. The restoration made the local people appreciate the FAD's knowledge,

which explained to them the when, why and how of the sanctuary's construction in a more convincing manner than local legend.

Since 1987, the FAD has managed the sanctuary as an historical park, the highest rank of Thai national heritage management, by fencing and controlling every activity in the site. Moreover, a FAD office at the site, in cooperation with the *Buriram* provincial administrative office, and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), has acted as the host of the *Phanom Rung* festival, *Prapaenee Khun Kao Phanom Rung*, instead of the local communities. They have arranged the festival to promote the site for tourism, not for cultural purposes as they had announced. New activities were invented to highlight the site's identity as an Angkorian Hindu temple, e.g. the imaginary ancient Khmer parade, the *Shiva* worship, the festive day changing to a forecast day of the 'rising sun, visible through 15 gates of the sanctuary', which is promoted as a miracle of the site. As a result, the festival has definitely lost its traditional meaning and value for local people.

However, under the state hierarchy which commits to the high ranking of the provincial governor as a leader of all state agencies and local government organizations in a province, the local staff of those organizations had to join in with arranging the festival under the *Buriram* provincial governor's command. Thus, the sanctuary became perceived as the most interesting tourism spot of *Buriram* province and its annual festival, in April, is the largest provincial activity, with a thousand local people joining in. The ordinary people have lost their free participation and the state is recognized as the festival owner group. Conversely, when it became a state festival, it retained the name of the local festival and would often be announced as being for the same purpose as the traditional festival but without any of its traditional practices. Thus, this prevents the opportunity to use the same name and purpose for another festival of their own, if the *Bu* people wish to do so.

Moreover, the *Bu* temple was forced to move out of the sanctuary before the fencing of the site in 1986, and consequently they had to start constructing a new temple on allocated land on the hill. It was no longer recognized as a center of the festival, and the Buddha footprint also became one of the sculptures in the temple, not a highlight.

This is the local history, which I concluded from searching documents and interviewing local people from various groups.

### **The *Bu* Retelling History**

The main version of the history that the *Bu* people often retold to me and other outsiders who ask about the annual festival does not contrast too much from my analysis version, but there are some points that should be noted;

- 1) The initial name of the annual festival was '*LaungPhuPleain*' (meaning, "The old monk named *Pleain*"). He was a well-known Khmer monk who came from a temple in *Surin* province, the homeland of the first generation of *Bu*, where they still retained a social connection with their relatives and friends. He was a leader of the annual festival of '*Phnom Sawai*' in *Nabua* sub-district, *Muang* district, *Surin* province, which was arranged on the waning moon of the fifth month of the lunar calendar. Thus, he proposed that the *Bu* believers should arrange their pilgrimage as an annual festival of the waxing moon of the fifth month of the lunar calendar, in parallel with the annual festival of '*Phnom Sawai*'.

- 2) Due to their loyalty to the monk, both Khmer communities had joined in each other's festivals each year. Hence, the *Phanom Rung* festival quickly became well-known in both provinces and nearby. The large number of Khmer visitors from *Surin*, and their participation in the festival are key details that the *Bu* people were pleased to recount.
- 3) The main activity was walking from the foot of the hill to pay homage to the Buddha footprint at the top. However, the story tellers often recalled meeting with their Khmer relatives and friends, and enjoying various Khmer performances.
- 4) Compared to the oral history of the festival from four local elders, an academic booklet by Phumjid Reuang-dech (1986), a local folklore researcher, suggested that they had forgotten the participation in the festival of the *Tapek* people, whose ethnic culture was Thai (Korat) mixed with Khmer. The ritual of paying homage to the sacred spirit of the *Phanom Rung*, which they had faith in, is also absent.
- 5) They often criticized the state festival for having 'mistaken' content and pattern, especially as the way of arranging it did not recognize local people as 'free participants'.

From this version of history, it seems those recounting the story need to claim their rights as an initiator group and as the owner group of the festival, which would imply their ownership of the sanctuary. However, after further rechecking their suggestions regarding what they expect to do in the current situation, and what they wish to happen, if possible, I found that they do not have any intention to fight for the return to the 'correct' festival or to claim their rights to manage the festival by themselves. Thus, I have to investigate why and for what purpose is their retelling of history and their perception and their interaction with the sanctuary management by FAD under the influence of some dominant discourses, as detailed in the next topic.

### **Bu Memory in the FAD management discourses**

To understand what they perceived and then to analyze their purpose in retelling, I considered the three discourses which influence upon the FAD management and local people's interaction, (1) the 'Authorized heritage discourse' or AHD (2) the 'Counter authorized heritage discourse', and (3) the 'Decentralization discourse', as follows;

#### **(1) The Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD)**

Despite concerning only archaeological knowledge and practice, another part of the popular AHD involves tourism promotion for economic purposes, which affects the festival retelling in different aspects, as follows;

##### **(1.1) The *Bu* Ownership under the Archaeological Knowledge and Practices of the AHD**

Under the archaeological part of the AHD, the FAD, as the formal representative of the Thai nation, is authorized, as archaeological experts who have the ability, knowledge, and understanding to identify the innate value of the knowledge contained within each of the sites. Since the FAD restoration project was started, some local people in the *Bu* and *Tapek* communities, who would have wished to gain this knowledge, realized that they would not be allowed to share in any discussion of the sanctuary with the FAD staff, then, they are claimed to have a lack of knowledge and potential for sanctuary management. Thus, they have to yield to the FAD management of the site by taking grants for their cultural practices and knowledge. Their 'local' ownership has also been



committed to a lower rank than the 'national' ownership, which is managed by the FAD. Unfortunately, the FAD is a bureaucracy that divides each resource to belong to only one community. The FAD registration documents state the sanctuary's location at *Nang Rung* district (later, establish as part of *Chaloemphrakiat* district) and the *Tapek* community since 1935. Thus, the *Tapek* community is officially recognized as the *Phanom Rung* sanctuary's owner by means of the current administrative boundary. Conversely, as per Aymonier's survey record of 1885, the sanctuary was in the *Prakhonchai* district (Aymonier, 1999: 158). *Prakhonchai* district and the *Bu* community had therefore continuously perceived that the sanctuary was located within their administrative boundary. Until the clarification of the administrative boundary was made regarding the FAD working after 1977, the *Bu* people had a strong sense of loss. Nowadays, they are concerned about their distinct status from the *Tapek* people, and it is obvious that their retelling of history is not necessary to authorize the cultural ownership of the *Tapek* community.

### **(1.2) The *Bu* Participation in *Phanom Rung* Tourism**

Another part of the AHD focus has been on tourism promotion, which is considered as a key method of passing on archaeological knowledge to the public while bringing economic benefit. The FAD has to arrange its activity for tourism promotion by cooperating with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), the local government offices at provincial, district, or sub-district level, and with the local groups in the vicinity of the heritage. Thus, the invention of a state festival has been committed to by the *Bu* people due to its success in attracting a large number of tourists from other provinces and other countries, making the site and the locality more famous than in the past when the festival was arranged by their communities. Both economic and social impacts are valuable to the *Bu* people. In their retelling of the story of their traditional festival, one of their gratifications is in the large number of visitors who came from *Surin* province due to them being part of the same network of a Khmer monk. However, they voiced concern that the number of visitors and the widespread knowledge of their traditional festival were less than for the state festival. The traditional festival pattern was less fascinating for non-local tourists than the modern activities of the state festival, and the local groups had access to limited budget, people, and other resources when arranging their own festival.

This point indicates that the value of the tourists attracted prevents them from having any ideas of fighting for the return to the traditional pattern of the festival or asking for their right to arrange the festival because they realize that the state can arrange this kind of festival better than any local community.

Moreover, under the AHD tourism promotion, the FAD management at the site provides economic benefit to the local traders by setting up trading zones in various part of the park for the tourists to buy food, drink, and souvenirs. The *Bu* and *Tapek* had the chance to rent the area and become a group of small traders; however, most of the *Tapek* traders failed and left to do other things, while most of the *Bu* traders had success in their businesses. Despite their success, they had to endure periodic changes in management, depend on the policy of the head of the FAD office, which sometime provided a negative effect on their business, and they still needed to rent in the trading zone and hope for more space. Unfortunately the FAD office could not provide unlimited trading zones, causing some of them to ask the abbot of the *Bu* temple to respond to their needs.

After relocating in 1986, the *Bu* temple area was located to the east of the site and the frontal zone, is currently a tourist's parking lot and home to a group of souvenir shops. There is a good chance for

the temple to follow the TAT's slogan, 'welcoming tourists as a good host', by not only managing *Bu* religious practices, but also by building structures for the non-local tourist group who need an economical resting place, where payment can be considered as a donation for making merit.

When the abbot became aware of the *Bu* traders' need for a trading zone, he decided to manage a part of the temple's front zone to become a trading zone for the *Bu* traders who missed out on renting in the FAD zone. In the temple trading zone, and different from the FAD's, each shop can sell cooked food, snack food and drinks, or souvenirs, without any classification between each type of shop. It would be a good idea, in supporting tourist convenience, to allow purchase from more shops, but the FAD office has strongly disagreed.

### **(1.3) Heritage Landscape Management**

Under the archaeological part of AHD, 'heritage landscape management' is a new concept which expands the experts' management of the surrounding area of the heritage site. In other words, not only the area of the heritage, but also that outside, which has to exclude anything classified by the experts as 'disturbing' the authenticity or aesthetics of the archaeological heritage. For example, the head of the FAD office commented that the temple trading zone was not well-organized, and could be a disturbance to the site's landscape; he then commanded them to stop. This should be an authorized practice which the temple has to follow, in this case the abbot and his believers have perceived this concept the same as the FAD staff. But while they yield to the FAD to authorize management within the boundary of the park, they indicated that the temple has a land certification, and no one should violate its owners' rights to use the land. They refused the FAD office's command as the FAD abused its authority, and they often mentioned the temple's relocation (in 1986) and the occupation of their annual festival as the FAD previously abusing its authority to them.

These differing concerns have led to a severe conflict between the FAD and the temple trading zone renters, resulting in the FAD chasing prosecution, and the *Bu* defendants asking for their politicians to help. Their ex-representatives from the national election, who still have the power to put pressure on the state agencies in the province, decided to help them after realizing their protest was valid. They forced the FAD to halt its prosecution. The temple trading zone continues to exist.

The concept of 'heritage landscape management' has also scared another group of *Bu* people since 2004, when the FAD told them about the preparation of a master plan for the site, together with other Khmer monuments, to be submitted to UNESCO's World Heritage list. In the plan, there were 174 households in the *Bu* community that were planned to be moved out, due to them being located in the heritage registration area and the further management zone (Fine Arts Department, 2005: 143). Even though the relocation has never been started, the FAD staff periodically announced that any construction of their houses, building or renovating, has been prohibited since 2004, due to its effect upon the heritage landscape. The 'heritage' may not refer to the *Phanom Rung* sanctuary, which is located on a high hill, but to a small Angkorian sanctuary at the foot of the hill, *KutiReusiNongBuaRai*, which is located on a lower level than most houses on the left side of the road to the hill. Also, the *Phanom Rung Barai*, named *NongBuaRai*, which is located on the lower level to the right side. Both of them are part of the *Phanom Rung* historical park.

Without any concerns for 'heritage landscape management', the affected *Bu* households have become depressed and insecure in their lives. The history retelling point, concerning the *Bu* people whose houses are near to the hill, had a crucial role in being hosts of the festival. It represents their

need to authorize their cultural ownership, which should be claimed so that their rights to stay in their houses, and to renovate when needed, are protected. Their cultural rights may be ignored by the FAD, which has legal power, but it is crucial that the political representative's decided to support them in the same way as the temple trading zone renters. This point is in regard to other discourse, as I will describe later.

There is no component of the *Phanom Rung* sanctuary, or the park, which is located near to the *Tapek* community houses, so they are not affected. The retelling of their story is not necessary in referring to them.

## **(2) The 'Counter Authorized Heritage Discourse'**

As Foucault noticed, whatever is dominated by a discourse, it will be protected by different discourses. Since 1967, the AHD in Thailand has been opposed by a group of archaeologists who require a different methodology and purpose of heritage management. The counter discourse is, similar to the AHD, based on archaeological knowledge, and the management's purpose is to protect the heritage as academic evidence and realize tourism as a vehicle for people learning about the heritage, but it originates the principle of heritage management keeping local cultural meanings and practices as a living heritage. In other words, the local people and their cultures are recognized under this discourse's influence. It has influenced upon various cases of heritage confrontation between local groups and the state in *Bangkok* and elsewhere (Askew, 1996: 183-210; Ho & Pornpan, 2012: 77).

In this case, after the traditional practices and legends were devalued under the AHD influence, fewer of the *Bu* and *Tapek* elders passed their knowledge on to the younger generation. The retelling of local history has come along with the idea of passing on the key legends of the *Phanom Rung*, which the *Bu* and *Tapek* people had perceived as 'real' history before they were aware of the FAD knowledge. Since 2005, the *Bu* sub-district administrative organization has established the first sound and light show in Muang Tam sanctuary, the nearest big Angkorian sanctuary to the *Phanom Rung*, which is located in their administrative boundary and is a part of the legend.

The sound and light show, without other tourist attracting activities, attracts a limited number of tourists (compared to the state festival at the *Phanom Rung* sanctuary). It does not bring about high economic benefit, but they are proud of their cultural legend representation to the public, as something they know more about than the outsiders, and it confirms their cultural ownership.

Under the AHD, the FAD office has never confirmed any local communities to be heir to the Angkorian heritage, due to the villages around the site not having any direct linkage, by blood or culture, to the constructor group in the ancient civilization. (All Khmer villagers are newcomers after the Angkorians left this area, due to them not having any evidence to prove their settlement during the 10<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> century)

On the contrary, the counter-AHD influence of the *Bu* people concerns their local knowledge and practices relating to the heritage, e.g. folk legend, local history, customs, festivals, that are evidence of locals inheriting the heritage ownership but not necessarily having a direct linkage to the constructors group in the ancient civilization. Thus, the *Bu* people often argue that if their ancestors and their heirs had not protected the sanctuary, or had done something to destroy it, then the sanctuary would not have existed when the FAD arrived. The preparation for their annual festival was also the big cleaning period of the sanctuary, from the walkway to the raised floor of the top level of the sanctuary. Thus, their way of life, including temple management, and house renovation,

should be recognized as valuable practices. By this concept, they have highlighted the FAD prohibition on landscape management as an abuse of authority, and, they have protested by civil disobedience.

To ignore the FAD prohibitions increases the risk of FAD punishment, by law or state command. Moreover, most of the owners of the houses planned to be relocated have never had land certification for their houses, due to their first generation not having enough concern to contact the state agency for land certification, which were bought or given to others by local custom. This condition leaves them with nothing to negotiate with pending a further relocation command by the FAD. Consequently, they prepared to ask their local politicians to support them in confronting the FAD authority, similar to the temple traders group. Therefore, their local history retelling is not only memorizing their previous ownership, but also authorizing their rights to protestation, which will be a good reason for the politicians to support them.

### **(3) The 'Decentralization Discourse'**

Prior to 1997, the democratic trend in Thailand led to generating the idea of decentralization becoming a part of the 1997 Thai constitution, providing a crucial change in Thai bureaucracy with the delegation of some of the state agencies' tasks and authority to the local government, i.e. municipality, sub-district administrative organization (SAO). Though the *Phanom Rung* sanctuary does not locate in their administrative boundary, this discourse encourages them to be concerned that local people should have the authority to decide what should be done in their locality, including heritage management. However, under the archaeological part of AHD, local government organizations are identified as having limited knowledge and budget to manage national heritages as well as is required. The historical park management is an exception to transfer to the local government.

Under the influence of the 'Decentralization discourse', the FAD office can give permission to a local government office, which then asks to arrange a cultural activity in a heritage in their administrative boundary, and it was this that led to the sound and light show arrangement being possible. However, it confirms the distinct status of the *Bu* and *Tapek* communities, and they hardly cooperate with each other in doing things at the *Phanom Rung* site. Due to each local government having to work under the state administrative structure, focusing on responsibility within their administrative boundary and hierarchy, e.g. the district administrative office, and their cultural activities are often arranged during the same period, they often ignore joining in with each other's activities and do not have a sense of having the same locality. In other words, this discourse encourages them to have more confidence in their local potential and authority, but to separate them in their local management practices. Therefore, the *Bu* retelling of history hardly recognizes the *Tapek* people as being from the same locality.

### **Conclusion**

This *Bu* retelling of the *Phanom Rung* festival indicates the basic characteristics of the social memory for which details are selected, excluded, or emphasized in representing what is significant for the people's agenda under their power relation with the stakeholders, e.g. the FAD, the *Tapek* community, and social structure in their locality, which can provide a deeper understanding by analyzing what discourses influence upon each stakeholder group's perception and interaction in

each situation.

There are at least three discourses that influence this retelling of the heritage practice; (1) the 'Authorized heritage discourse' (2) the 'Counter authorized heritage discourse' (3) the 'Decentralization discourse'. Each of them not only influences the presenting or leaving out of some content, but also guides what purpose is expected to be possible and what details are necessary to be represented. For example, the *Bu* history retelling version excludes the Tapek's participation in the festival, due to it not being necessary to authorize their ownership of the *Phanom Rung* sanctuary, and it being impossible to cooperate with them in doing something about the sanctuary. The possible purpose of this history retelling is to recall the *Bu* community and temple's crucial role in the festival, which authorizes their community and the temple as an owner group of the festival. Then, it indicates the cultural ownership of the sanctuary, which should not be destroyed by relocation, as in the FAD plan.

## References

- Askew, M. (1996). The rise of *Moradok* and the decline of the *Yarn*: Heritage and cultural construction in urban Thailand. *SOJOURN*, 11(2), 183-210.
- Atkinson, D. (2008). The heritage of mundane places. In Graham, Brian and Howard, Peter (eds) *The Ashgate research companion to heritage and identity*. Cornwall, Great Britain: MPG books, pp.381-395
- Aymonier, E. (1999). *Khmer heritage in Thailand*. Bangkok: White Lotus.
- Connerton, P. (1989). *How societies remember*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University.
- Fine Arts Department. (2005). Panmaebeut khrongkan Anurak lae pattana muang Phanom Rung. (in Thai) [The master plan of *Phanom Rung* town conservation and development project.] Bangkok: Fine Arts Department.
- Foucault, M. (1980). Two lectures. In C. Gordon (Ed.), *Power/knowledge: selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977* (pp. 78-108). New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Foucault, M. (1991). Politics and the study of discourse. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect: studies in governmentality*. Chicago: The University of Chicago.
- Hancock, Mary E. (2008) *The politics of heritage from Madras to Chennai*. Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Harvey, D. C. (2008) The History of Heritage. In Graham, Brian and Howard, Peter (eds) *The Ashgate research companion to heritage and identity*. ASHGATE. pp.19-36.
- Ho, K. C. & Pornpan Chinnapong. (2012). Conserving Bangkok's premier heritage district: ambitious plans and ambiguous rights. In C. Barry (Ed.), *Rights to culture: heritage, language, and community in Thailand* (pp. 59-83). Chiang Mai: Silkworm.
- Prachum Khod Mai Pracham Sok leam 39*. (in Thai) [An annual collection of law vol.39] (1934) Bangkok: Daily Mail.
- Reuang-dech, P. (1986). *Prapaenee Khun Kao Phanom Rung, Changwat Buriram*. (In Thai) [The festival of walking to the *Phanom Rung* hill in *Buriram* province]. Buriram: *Buriram* teacher collage, the cultural center.
- Smith, L. (2012). *Discourse of the heritage: implications for archaeological community practice*. Retrieved from [www.nuevomundo.revues.org/64148](http://www.nuevomundo.revues.org/64148)
- Smith, L. (2007). The discourse of the past. In S. Grabow, D. Hull & E. Waterton (Eds.), *Which past, whose future? treatments of the past at the start of the 21st century: an international perspective* (pp. 5-14). Proceedings of a Conference held at the University of York 20-21 May 2005.

## Globalized World, Modern *Khruba* (Venerable Monk) and the Construction of Network in Thai Buddhist Society

Nasee, Pisith  
Chiang Mai University  
Thailand  
-----

### Abstract

Having a large group of devotees, constituted as networks are one of the main characteristics, and is to testify, the charismatic leadership of modern *khruba* in the north of Thailand. Network implies communication or flows of information and objects, passed and shared through the linkages. I suggest here that the use of network concept is important to understand the relationships between people, between information and people, and between people and objects within *khruba*'s religious networks. This paper aims to examine networks of modern *khruba* which are viewed as a critical part of the ongoing process to construct *khruba* charisma. I shall focus on roles of various agents, human and non-human like objects (sacred-magic) and stories of the sacredness of *khruba* as linkages of the networks. Networks of three modern *khruba* are investigated through in-depth interviews and participatory observation to represent the heterogeneity, fluidity of network in the modern Thai society where formal organization, specific teaching, common ideology or membership is no longer relevant. And this characteristic endorses the status of modern *khruba* as charismatic monks to the world, who can respond to the globalized world and capitalist desires. This article employs Castells's theory of network society, popular Buddhism, charisma as well as qualitative approach. Data were collected during 2015-2016 as part of my Ph.D. dissertation at Chiang Mai University, Thailand.

**Keywords:** *khruba*, network, charisma, sacred stories, sacred-magic objects

### Introduction

Having a large group of devotees, constituted as networks are one of the main characteristics, and is to testify, the charismatic leadership. Networks built through symbiotic relationship between monks (monasteries) and laypeople (wealthy businesspersons) by donating a large donation, hosting, or sponsoring a grand ritual such as *Thot Kathin Ceremony*, including the close relationship with royalties, senior and high-ranking monks, army officers, or politicians as suggested by Apinya (1993, 1998 in case of Wat Phrathammakai) and Pattana (2008, 2012 in case of magic monks) are also found in the networks of modern *khruba*<sup>54</sup> these days. In the same vein, the network is a key

---

<sup>54</sup> Modern *khruba* here is not meant *khruba* monks who stand in opposition to traditional order in the pre-modern era, or *khruba* monks who are characterized by less mysterious and are more rational (by sciences and technologies) as suggested by modernization theorists (e.g. Giddens 1990). Modernity here is rather relied on what Appadurai (1996) has suggested where difference, disjuncture, heterogenization lead to the new emergence, re-evaluation, and re-intervention of cultural

mechanism to draw, maintain, and expand groups of believers/devotees. However, the important thing is how to understand networks of *khrua* in the present time which is typically different from networks of the former-day *khrua* or Wat Phrathammakai. The network of Wat Phrathammakai was run through an established organization with determined goal, mission, plan, and set-up groups of lay members (*klum ganlayanamit*- groups of true friends) but networks of *khrua* have none of these (and Pattana did not touch on this issue in his magic monks).

This paper tries to examine networks of modern *khrua* as a critical part of the ongoing process to construct *khrua* charisma. I shall focus on roles of various agents, human, objects (sacred-magic) and stories of sacredness related to *khrua*, as linkages of the networks. I draw upon Castells's theory of network society analogizing Internet linking of computers or networks of computers located in different geographical locations around the world, making information flows possible. In this study, the network also implies communication or flows of information and objects, passed and shared through the linkages while formal structure and organization are no longer dominant. I suggest here that the use of network concept is important to understand the relationships between people, between information and people, and between people and objects within *khrua*'s religious networks.

However, social network here is not to be confused with social media networking like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, or many other available on the Internet. Yet, they are included as of today's powerful tool to enhance social networking in order to gain social capital, popularizing images of modern *khrua* as suggested by Amporn (2016). Flexibility and fluidity are the main characteristics of the networks in modern society whereby connections can be direct and indirect, and linkages can be centralized or decentralized within differing levels of segmentation. Therefore, the network could grow and expand every time, everywhere.

In the next section, I shall describe *khrua* monks in their historical context to understand their significance in Tai Buddhist communities in the upper Mekong region. Networks of former-day *khrua* and modern-day *khrua* are discussed. Lastly, I shall show the working of linkages of modern *khrua*'s networks through stories of three human agents which are typically revolved around stories of sacredness and sacred-magic objects of *khrua*.

### ***Khrua* in Their Historical Context**

The term "*khrua*" is well known among the northern Thai people. It literally means a 'great teacher'; 'teacher of teachers'; and the one who has advanced knowledge and has attained spiritual perfection. In practice, this term is used as an honorary title either conferred or awarded to certain Buddhist monks specifically among the Tai Buddhist communities in the upper Mekong region covering the area of today's northern Thailand, eastern Shan state of Myanmar, northern Laos and Xishuangbanna (Sipsong Panna) in the Yunnan region (PRC).

In the northern Sangha (former Lan Na Kingdom) centuries ago, *khrua* was believed to be an official title conferred by the king (Kwanchewan 2002; Wilak 2010; Tanabe 2012). Up to the present, in Keng Tung (Tai Khun), Mong Yawng (Tai Lue) in eastern Shan State and Sipsong Panna (Tai Lue) in Yunnan, *khrua* is still an official title conferred by the Sangha(s). In these areas, the Sangha(s) set the specific

---

identities. Therefore, modern *khrua* is used to represent the re-enchantment of the world in which diverse arrays of opposition subvert and undermine the imperial of formal-rational logics and processes (see Jenkins 2000).

criteria as well as require a sacred ceremony for conferring the title (*phitii thera phisek*), i.e. a monk should be over 40 years old, he should have been in monkhood for at least 20 years, and he should preferably get the approval from the Sangha, the council for religion and culture, his community, and lay sponsors (Phra Svami Maha Chatchawan, Khruba Anond, and Phrakhru Adoonsilakit in Phra Nakorn 2010; Wilak 2010, 15). In Sibsong Panna's Sangha system nowadays, *khruba* is the second-highest rank following that of "*Sangharaja* (supreme patriarch). In Thailand, local Lan Na Sangha was dissolved as a result of the centralization of the Sangha by the Bangkok's authority (the Sangha Act 1902). However, even after that, the term "*khruba*" has been continuously used by northerners unofficially in addressing their venerable monks.

The most renowned *khruba* in Thai Buddhist history is Sriwichai (1878-1938) and his religious movement at the turn of the twentieth century in the north of Thailand (e.g. Keyes 1981; Tambiah 1984; Sopha 1991; Isara 2011; Easum 2013; Bowie 2014a, 2014b). Statues of Khruba Sriwichai were built for worship all over the northern region especially in Chiang Mai and Lamphun provinces. The most popular statue is located at the foot of Mt. Doi Suthep in Chiang Mai City.

Cohen (2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2002) describes that *khruba*, as well as a local Buddhist tradition, is a unique practice in Theravada Buddhism of this area characterized by a belief in *ton bun* (meritorious person/savior saint) combined with Phra Si Ariya Maitreya, a legend of the coming of the fifth Buddha, the so-called "*Yuan Buddhism*". This tradition relates to the concepts of "millennial Buddhism" and "Buddhism revivalism" as can be seen by the terms used to call Khruba Sriwichai (and Khruba Khao Pi) as *naw pha Buddha chao*, a scion of the Buddha, or *pha cao*, the Buddha. The two *khruba* were also called *Phaya Dhamma, Bodhisattva* who were born to disseminate *dhamma* to laypeople, and to give them opportunities to make merit, in order to build up the moral community to prepare for the coming of the future and the fifth Buddha (Kwanchewan 2002, 262- 293).

A major source of *ton bun* attributes was explained, apart from great merit accumulated in the past existences, by concentration on Buddhist practices such as insight meditation, asceticism, vegetarianism, etc. Moreover, *ton bun* has been actively involved in this-worldly matters and "gain[s] a reputation for his organization of major efforts to construct and/or repair Buddhist monuments" (Keyes 1981, 149-50) as found in the sacred biographies of Khruba Sriwichai and Khruba Khao Pi (see Kwanchewan 1988, 1999, 2002; Phra Phongsak Khampheerathammo 1997). Generally, it is believed that Khruba Sriwichai's practices were carried on by his disciples such as Khruba Khao Pi (of Wat Pha Nam 1889-1977) and Khruba Wong (of Wat Huay Tom 1913-2000 see Gravers 2012) who were also originally from Lee district, Lamphun province. The last and living *khruba* monk who is known as a successor of Khruba Sriwichai's lineage is Khruba Phan of Wat Huay Tom (also a younger cousin of Khruba Wong). Nevertheless, there are a number of *khruba* monks who recently claim to be disciples/followers of Khruba Sriwichai across the northern region.

### **Networks of Former-day *Khruba***

Here I shall examine main characteristics of former *khruba*'s networks, largely of Khruba Sriwichai and Khruba Khao Pi. During those times, *khruba*'s networks were formed at various levels, through various kinds of information, and involved both human and nonhuman agents (e.g. religious buildings and sacred-magic objects). Many studies of *khruba* have shown the importance of human network for the success of *khruba* movements. Sirisak (2016, 329-342) suggests that human network of Khruba Siwichai had greatly contributed to the success of the construction and renovation works



across the region. According to Sirisak (ibid.), the networks comprised of diverse groups of people in Lan Na region namely (1) local monks, (2) local royalties, (3) wealthy merchants, (4) civil officers and local politicians, (5) wealthy Chinese merchants, (6) wealthy Shans and Mons, (7) Karens (as a major workforce), (8) devotees from other ethnicities such as Khamu and Sikh and (9) groups of craftsmen (Chinese, Yuan, Shan and Burmese). Sirisak also shows us the different groups of devotees who had come to *Khruba* for diverse purposes, apart from making merit with *ton bun*, for instances, Khruba Sriwichai movement as a social space for Lan Na royalties to regain their social status, government officers and local politicians could gain more reputation while Chinese merchants could show off their devotion to local Buddhism that would benefit their business in the locales at the same time (see also Sopha 1991, 63-70). This illustrates the diversity and heterogeneity of *Khruba's* network and reminds us again not to consider the religious network as a uniformed entity. Similarly, Kwanchewan (1988, 2010) has confirmed us with Khruba Khao Pi's network, where Karen followers, portrayed as the majority of the network, have been characterized by heterogeneity. They had diverse and differentiated desires and needs; however, they could live together because of their faith in *Khruba*.

Tambiah (1984), Sopha (1991) and Isara (2011) have suggested that Khruba Sriwichai's saintly reputation was a result of the ascetic mode of life. He then became the center of public attention and devotion. He attracted followers and converts from tribal peoples like Karen, Meo, and Muser who previously evinced no interest in the *sangha*; parents brought their sons to be his novices-disciples, and he was the focus of merit-seeking donations. Upon these activities, he had formed networks among different groups of people, lay followers of multi-ethnicities, including a network through monastic lineage. These networks had contributed to the success of religious constructions throughout the north (Kwanchewan, 2002). Khruba Sriwichai was considered as an exceptional 'field of merit' (*na bun*). Through his organization of efforts to construct and/or renovate Buddhist monuments, participation in such activities was believed, by the northerners, as a means to accumulate 'great merit' (*bun yai*). In this sense, they worked as human agents to convey information about Khruba Sriwichai's charismatic attributes as well as to form a linkage of believers/devotees (of *Khruba's* lineage) throughout the region. As found by Kwanchewan (1988, 2010) that most of the first-generation Pwo Karen in Pha Nam community of Khruba Khao Pi had participated in Khruba Sriwichai's construction of the road to Phrathat Doi Suthep in 1933. Khruba Khao Pi (Phra Apichai Khao Pi no date, 25) also recorded that he himself had brought 500 Karens to help out Khruba Sriwichai in this project.

Pensupa<sup>55</sup> (2016a, Facebook @pensupa.sukkatajaiinn, posted on 7 September 2016) found that a network of *Khruba's* lineage was widely spread through the northern region. According to Khruba Sriwichai's biography, he had issued around 2,000 ordination certificates for monks ordained by him such as Khruba Khao Pi. Relationships between Khruba Sriwichai and his disciples in the lineage can be found through activities they had done together, especially in numerous construction works. According to Pensupa (ibid.), key disciples of Khruba Sriwichai such as Khruba Kaew Kanthawangso from Ban Hong district, Lamphun province who was specialized in building construction. Khruba

---

<sup>55</sup> Khruba Sriwichai is in a process to be nominated as the world's important person of UNESCO, Pensupa Sukkata is a principal researcher conducting a research on Khruba Sriwichai for Khrubachao Srivichai Institute Foundation. The research has not been finished yet but she regularly posts her preliminary analysis on her Facebook page.

Kaew was later entrusted by Khruba Sriwichai to supervise major construction works such as the renovation of Wat Phrathat Hariphunchai in Lamphun province and had accompanied Khruba Sriwichai to many places as a principal craftsman (as listed to more than 30 sites in Phayao and Lampang provinces). Khruba Nor Kham and Khruba Suriya had served as key assistants in construction works too. Khruba Nor Kham was assigned to supervise the construction sites in Phrao district of Chiang Mai and Wiang Pa Pao district of Chiang Rai while Khruba Suriya was assigned to supervise the construction works in Chae Hom district of Lampang.

Moreover, Khruba Sriwichai's network was expanded through a group of monks who later came to subscribe as Khruba's disciples such as Khruba Choom Phothiko of Wat Wang Mui in Lamphun province, Khruba Sri Nuan Yansiri of Wat Charoen Muang in Phan district of Chiang Rai, Khruba Duang Di Suphattho of Wat Tha Cham Pi in San Pa Thong district of Chiang Mai, Khruba Wong of Wat Huay Tom in Lee district of Lamphun, and Khruba Thammachai Thammachayo of Wat Thung Luang in Mae Taeng district of Chiang Mai. Pensupa (Pensupa 2016b, Facebook posted on 9 September 2016) also notes that disciples in the latter group were bigger and more famous which was implied that they could make a larger group of believers/devotees of *Khruba's* lineage through their disciples and followers. The exemplary case to prove network's efficiency was the road construction to Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep in Chiang Mai city. As detailed in a document sent to the government (original information from Office of Principal Private Secretary div.22/22, subject "Phra Sriwichai tawai ratcha kuson" [Phra Sriwichai presented as an act of charity for His Majesty the King] dated 8-16 October 1935, cited in Sirisak 2016: 308-309), the number of peoples who volunteered in the road construction during November 1934 to April 1935 (5 months and 22 days, recorded by Khruba Sriwichai) was totally 118,304<sup>56</sup>, (67,818 men and 50,486 women) from Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lamphun, and Lampang provinces. Among them, there might have been a significant figure of volunteers brought and/or connected by Khruba Sriwichai's networks.

The networks, especially in Khruba's lineage, had also contributed to a political movement against the centralization of the Bangkok's Sangha. Kamala (1997, 43-46) has shown that during the political reaction of Khruba Sriwichai, after the passage of the 1902 Sangha Act, Khruba Sriwichai's disciples as counted over 2,000 (monks and novices) from ninety monasteries in the north (Chiang Mai, Lamphun, and Chiang Rai provinces) refused to stay under the Centralized Sangha. With respect to an ideological level, the sacred story of Khruba Sriwichai as 'field of merit' and a millennial savior; *Ariya Maitreya* had played a significant role as a key message circulated among the northerners. The message was passed and shared in a form of rumors. With a local belief in *ton bun*, the rumors were widely and intensely spread during the time of social crisis. *Ton bun* is associated with possession of magical and supernatural powers such as having a divine ear, a divine eye, and the abilities to read minds, assume various forms, and recollect past lives (Tambiah 1987: 115-16 cited in Bowie 2014: 687). For example, four out of eight charges which led to Khruba Sriwichai's confinement in Bangkok in 1920 related to the popular believe about his supernatural power<sup>57</sup> (Singkha 1979; Wat Srisoda 2000 cited Kwanchewan 2010: 2). Bowie (2014) underlines the importance of rumor towards the mentality of the northerners who believe in *ton bun*. Additionally, it played a significant role in the expansion of millennial movement in northern Thailand. Rumor flowed freely throughout the

---

<sup>56</sup> However, a process to record as to get the exact number in that situation is unclear.

<sup>57</sup> (1) he is not wet when walking under the rain, (2) he possessed the *Sri Kan Chai* sword which was given by the Lord Indra, (3) when walking his feet are 2-sok above the ground (1 sok = 50 centimeters and (4) he can walk on the water surface.

society, "Khruba Sriwichai was attracting huge crowds wherever he went, and rumors of his magical protective powers mushroomed. People spread turmeric on his feet and saved the white cloth on which he had walked for worship and protection there were so many people coming to pay him a respect that every day was like a temple festival" (ibid., 689-90).

As we have seen above, the networks of Khruba Sriwichai was also characterized by informality. However, the ideology of *Khruba* movement was clearly seen, at least in two separate yet overlapping points; (i) resistance to the centralization of the Sangha by Siamese authority, (ii) revival of Buddhism in the north through the construction/renovation projects<sup>58</sup>. These were driving forces as well as the main attraction of *Khruba* movement. Hence, the majority of disciples and followers of Khruba was accordingly limited to the northerners. Nonetheless, in Khruba Wong's period (after Khruba Khruba Pi) this ideology was no longer dominant in *Khruba* movement. Khruba Wong was promoted in the Sangha system and was in addition patronized by the royal family. His teaching and practices which were branded in Yuan Buddhist tradition were not emphasized by Khruba Wong. Owing to and as a consequent of changing in meaning and form of *khruba*, Khruba Wong's network was extended to embraced disciples and devotees in a national scale. What attracted people in a larger amount were also centered on Khruba Wong and his activities such as the establishment of Huay Tom (Karen) community and the wide reputation as a sacred-magic monk (Gravers 2012). Additionally, his amulets were credited for protective and magical powers especially among the middle classes in the central region. He usually arranged numerous trips to Bangkok to visit well-known senior monks as well as his lay devotees. In macro-perspective, it was related to the politico-economic context of Thailand during that time as Tambiah (1984, 344-346) has suggested in a notion of crisis of legitimacy of the Sangha (ecclesiastical establishment), and the loss of self-confidence of Thai political center which brought to the shining of ascetic forest-monks at the margin and searching for and latching onto the merit of the holy men who were mostly peripheral to its established form by urban ruling elements, the intelligentsia and the military, for example.

If we treat Khruba Wong as the declining of old *khruba*'s ideology, therefore we could not find either the ideology to resist the centralized Sangha or the effort to revive the Buddhism from the state of deterioration in present-day *khruba*. What is new in modern *khruba*'s networks, what kind of message they convey? These questions are important so as to understand the characteristics of *khruba* in the present time.

## **Networks of Modern-day *Khruba***

### **Local Network**

We have to accept that a local network is a very crucial element for *khruba*'s charismatic leadership. Here local network is meant a network of local people. In the past, a local network had played a crucial role in *Khruba* movement as well as a stronghold and a testifier of *khruba*'s charisma. *Khruba* monks are recognized in the first stage by local people before being *khruba* for the country and the world, even though local people nowadays have played a lesser role for *khruba*'s wealth and prosperity compared to the long-distance devotees (I will discuss later). Among the three *khruba* discussed in this study, Khruba Don of Wat Pha Nam in Lee district of Lamphun, Khruba Noi of Wat Sri Don Moon in Saraphi district of Chiang Mai and Khruba Ariyachart of Wat Saengkaew Phothiyai

---

<sup>58</sup> See also in the case of Khruba Khuen in Wasan 2013.

in Mae Suay district of Chiang Rai, Khruba Don is the most active monk in the mission to build a local network. Khruba Don is regarded as the official successor of Khruba Khao Pi (also Khruba Wong), even his reputation and charisma is relatively limited. What he realizes is how to maintain and expand a network by relying upon the name of Khruba Khao Pi whose devotees/believers are dispersed across the region. Throughout the duty of Wat Pha Nam's abbot, Khruba Don has maintained and expanded a local network mainly through the following activities.

1. Khruba-cao Apichai Khao Pi Foundation: this foundation had served well for a purpose of networking which is carried out primarily through the patronage in construction/renovation works. Its priority is to maintain and re-connect the former religious network of Khruba Khao Pi. Although it has been 40 years of his death, Khruba Don's activities refresh memories of elder people who used to see and work with Khruba Khao Pi while the youths get to know Khruba Khao Pi (and Khruba Don) in the same way. For example, the renovations of a sermon hall of Wat Mae Wang Loom in Lee district, Lamphun province, and a sermon hall of Wat Ban Rai in Doi Tao district, Chiang Mai province. The foundation has also supported the construction works for new monasteries such as Wat Huay Bong, Wat Sao Hin, Wat Sala Jiang Tong in Mae Sariang district, Mae Hong Son province, and Wat Thung Khok Chang in Doi Tao district, Chiang Mai province.

2. Buddhist education (*Pariyatti-Dhamma* study): Khruba Don often arranges numerous trips to remote/mountainous areas in Lamphun, Tak, and Mae Hong Son provinces to see if there are any Karen boys want to ordain in Buddhism and study in Wat Pha Nam. They would be brought to Wat Pha Nam and then enroll in *Pariyatti-Dhamma* school in Wat Phrabat Huay Tom (of Khruba Wong). Recently (2015), there were around 15 Karen novices and monks under the care of Wat Pha Nam (not included from Karen communities nearby). Additionally, a fellow monk of Wat Pha Nam is currently in charge of a director of that school.

3. Religious activities: Religious activities are used to affirm good relationships with the network as well as to display *khruba's* charisma. I accompanied Khruba Don to this kind of activities once in October 2015 in *Tan Kuay Salak Festival* of Wat Don Moon in Mae Ramat district, Tak province. The current abbot of this monastery is Khruba Kaew who is a disciple of Khruba Wong (also a senior friend of Khruba Don). Twice in November 2015, I accompanied Khruba Don to *Thot Kathin* in Wat Ban Rai in Doi Tao district, Chiang Mai province where once was renovated by Khruba Khao Pi. In Wat Don Moon, Khruba Don came with four cars of monks and laymen (Yuan and Karen) including a group of schoolchildren (mixed Yuan and Karen) who formed a folk music band under the support of Wat Pha Nam. In the festival, Khruba Don, in association with a group of devotees in the locale (*Khum Phawo*: Phawo village cluster), formed a big procession. People on the monastery ground were impressed by a folk music band, hundreds of attendants and three four-meter tall *Kathin* trees (*ton kathin*) to represent the three greatest *khruba* in Lan Na (who also the great masters of them); Sriwichai, Khao Pi, and Wong. In Wat Ban Rai, Khruba Don came with a *Kathin* tree presented to the monastery after finished *Thot Kathin Ceremony* in Wat Pha Nam.

Regarding Khruba Ariyachart's local network, I found that even though he is very young, and is not a native of Mae Suay district, he has tried so hard to form a local network through various activities.

During the course of my fieldwork (2015-2016), Khruba's birthday celebration, *Thot Katin Festival* and *Thot Pha Pa Festival* (forest-robe presenting ceremony) were noteworthy events to discuss. In his birthday celebration (9-10 January 2015 which was also the celebration for 9<sup>th</sup> year, 9<sup>th</sup> month and 9<sup>th</sup> day of the establishment of Wat Saengkaew), he conducted great donations (*dhana*) to show his compassion and loving-kindness to Mae Suay people such as (1) computers and amplifiers (cost 212,000 baht) to Mae Suay Hospital, (2) 5,000 scholarships for school students in Mae Suay district (sponsored by Government Savings Bank), (3) 5,000 sheets of blankets for cold weather victims in Mae Suay and (4) monetary funds for communities. The giving ceremony was held very special (on 9 November) because he invited one of King Bhumibol's granddaughters to preside over. The highlight was on 9-10 November when the monastery was filled with thousands of people, mostly from Chiang Rai province, attended the abovementioned activities. Local people were really enjoying nearly hundred almshouses provided by wealthy devotees mainly from the central region. I also really enjoyed the food at almshouses every time I attended the monastery's events, because, compared to other *khruba*'s events, there was a variety of food and was tasty. At night on November 10, Khruba staged a concert show from famous local singers and nationally famous comedians (from *Konbai* and *The comedian Thailand*). There, hundreds of people were enjoying themselves by singing, dancing, drinking and flirting. And this kind of amusement is usually staged on his major events to attract the locals from nearby communities.

In *Thot Kathin* and *Thot Pha Pa* in 2016, Khruba Ariyachart extended his activity to cover other monasteries. As shown on Facebook page of Wat Saengkaew (@saengkaewphothiyan), he presented *Kathin* to Wat Pa Tueng Ngam (ibid., posted on 10 November 2016), Wat Chedi Luang and Wat Mae Suay Luang<sup>59</sup> (ibid., posted on 13 November 2016) in Mae Suay district. In Chiang Mai, he presented *Kathin* for Wat Nong Si Chaeng in Saraphi district and Wat Kor Chok in San Pa Tong district<sup>60</sup>. In early 2017, he continually presented *Pha Pa* to five villages in Tambon Chedi Luang of Mae Suay (ibid., posted on 14 February 2017). Additionally, he joined the ceremony (*sangha dhana*) of a spirit medium in Mae Suay named *sam nak tam nak phramae kab phorphu ngong pla sadet* (posted on 14 January 2017)<sup>61</sup>.

Khruba Noi has formed his local network through construction works in Saraphi district. The masterpiece is the construction of a small-sized hospital located 500 meters away from his monastery. The hospital was given to the government (under the ministry public health) and was officially open in March 2015 by the then-minister of public health. The hospital was named after Khruba Noi "*Saraphibowonpattana Hospital (Kruha Noi Tejapanyo Ubpatam)*" or a Saraphi hospital by the collaborative development of the village, temple, and school (under the patronage of Khruba

---

<sup>59</sup> Around 600,000 baht for Wat Chedi Luang and Wat Mae Suay Luang respectively

<sup>60</sup> Around 1,000,000 baht for Wat Nong Si Chaeng and around 640,000 baht for Wat Kor Chok

<sup>61</sup> It is noticeable that Khruba Ariyachart has conducted religious activities outside his monastery more frequently during the past two years (2015-early 2017) which correlates with a rumor that he was a candidate for one clerical title in the Sangha system. The rumor was true when the king promoted him to a high rank at *phrarachakhana chan saman (vipassana dhura)* as "*Phra Pawanarattanayan*" on 5 December 2016 (khaosod 2016). He is now a *khruba* monk who has the highest rank in the Sangha system, while other *khruba* are promoted at *phrakhru* title (which is a lower degree such as Khruba Noi and Khruba Don). Other interesting activities he has conducted during this time such as the casting of a large statue of *Phramahapa Kesonpunyo* in Wat Lai Hin, Lampang province, the construction of a bell tower in Wat Nong Si Chaeng in Saraphi district, Chiang Mai province and the installation of a gold top-tier (6 kg. of gold) of Chom Yong Pagoda (*Phrathat Luang Chom Yong*) in Mong Yawng, Shan State of Myanmar (will be completed in May 2017). All activities were presented in video clips by a hired professional studio and were uploaded on the Facebook page of Wat Saengkaew and YouTube (see YouTube channel 'Watsangkaew Phothiyan').

Noi). His life-sized statue was built outstandingly at the front gate to honor the great compassion. Stone engraved plaque behind the statue says, to the grand opening, he donated 45 million baht for the land and the buildings. Recently, he is constantly raising fund for its operation and medical devices through various activities such as *Thot Kathin* and production of amulets. By this means, he could draw a close relation with government officials, especially in the ministry of public health, as well as the people around his monastery in general.

In the former-day *khrua*'s networks, many studies have demonstrated the close relationships with ethnic minorities (especially Karen) such as in the case of Khruba Sriwichai. In the present time, this element is still meaningful in *khrua*'s network, even though their contribution to a major workforce for *khrua*'s movement is no longer found. Nonetheless, Khruba Don is the exemplary case who has huge amounts of Karen devotees (mainly the former devotees of Khruba Khao Pi and Khruba Wong). Khruba Noi and Khruba Ariyachart also have devotees from groups of ethnic minorities, to a lesser degree, such as Shan migrant workers as I found during the grand ceremonies. Other cases of modern *khrua* who have tried more apparently to form connection with ethnic groups are Khruba Boonchum with Shan and many other ethnic groups along the borders of Myanmar and Thailand (see Cohen 2000a, 2000b; Amporn 2016), Khruba Jao Theuang with Dara'ang or Silver Palaung in Chiang Dao district, Chiang Mai province (see Ashley 2011), and Khruba Yawichai with Karen and Shan ethnic groups in Chom Thong district, Chiang Mai province whom I have observed during 2015-2016.

Additionally, connections with other Tai ethnic communities, which share common cultural characteristics, are also formed extensively by modern *khrua* through religious activities such as hosting/sponsoring in religious construction and promotion of monastic education as I found in cases of Khruba Samnuan with Shan (Tai Yai), Tai Khun and Tai Lue ethnicities in Keng Tung and Xishuangbanna (interview 18 February 2016), Khruba Boonchum in Keng Tung, Mong Yawng, Xishuangbanna and Muang Sing (in northern Laos), Khruba Ariyachart in Mong Yawng (mentioned above), Khruba Jao Theung in Tachileik (Myanmar's borderland), Khruba Jetsada in Mong Yawng, for example. For Khruba Don, he chooses to re-connect with Karen community on the border of Karen State of Myanmar near Tak province where Khruba Khao Pi had built a small pagoda in B.E. 2470s (his first visit was on 3 May 2016). He also plans to extend the support, through renovation project, to this community.

### Network for Business

My friend, Nattapong Duangkaew who is an M.A. student from Thammasat University (majoring in history) conducting a thesis on modern-day *khrua*<sup>62</sup> shared with me an interesting issue, during our field trips to collect data, that modern *khrua*, especially the young ones who are not quite popular, choose to get involved in amulet business through a business contract signed with amulet traders/producers. After the contract is signed, Nattapong continued, one or a series of amulets of that *khrua* are produced, and proceeds of the sale will be appropriated according to the fixed rate as detailed in the contract. By this way, *khrua* could predict possible income for a development project in a monastery while amulet producers/traders work as dealers, conveyors, and promoters of *khrua*'s amulets and his charismatic/magic powers embedded in these objects. Owing to their expertise in this business, people tend to believe and follow them easier. With business strategy,

---

<sup>62</sup> Nattapong uses the term 'neo-*khrua*' in his study (see Nattapong 2016).

they prepare various channels to promote (and sell) *khrua*'s amulets such as on cheap amulet magazines, TV programs, websites and in related events. By this way, *khrua*'s charisma, as well as groups of believers/followers, could be also expanded. However, even though this story was told by a young *khrua* in Chiang Rai, we do not have any supportive data to prove it. Moreover, we are aware that although the story is true, it should not be disclosed since it would affect *khrua*'s reputation and charismatic status. Thus, we decided not to insult *khrua* by asking about this issue directly, and we should take this story suspiciously until we have the evidence in the future.

I met Khong (pseudonym) who is running a foundry and minting factory in Chiang Mai province (interview 7 September 2016). Khong is also serving as vice-chairman for the northern Thai amulet association (*samakom phra khruang phra bucha thai pak nua*)<sup>63</sup>. His factory claims to be the largest in the north (up to 2016). I discussed with Khong about the issue of amulet business contract, of monks especially *khrua*. He stated that there was a possibility in the present time that modern *khrua* would engage in this kind of business because, as he observed, sacred-magic objects in various types are now playing an important role for monks. These objects are used as magnetism or exchanged objects in order to draw people's attention and donations. In any case, if the monks want to raise fund, for whatever project, but there is nothing to exchange or attract people, people will not want to join or donate to him. Thus, a reputation of a particular monk including a beautiful monastery is in part from the success of these sacred-magic objects. However, Khong suggests me to think about two important points; (i) production of amulets is relied on varied purposes; it is not only for sale or raise fund but sometimes it is also for free distribution for lay devotees.

Moreover, consecration ceremony (*phitii pluksek phra*) by monks themselves has a cost too. Therefore, monks may not gain a lot of money and sometimes gain nothing from their amulets, (ii) primary and vital factor contributes to the success of amulets is the popularity of the monk himself. The popularity is meant he has a great number of devotees who could serve as customers of his amulets as well. Another factor that followed is marketing technique which is very crucial at the present time. Khong gave me an example of the marketing technique of one *khrua* in Lamphun province. That *Khrua*, with his team, combined the modern communication technology with highly commercialized strategy by opening the reservation of new batch of amulet on Facebook. The Time to make the reservation was 9 am which is the auspicious number and time for Thai Buddhists. On a first- come, first-served basis, only one minute past, there were around five thousand reservations made by customers worldwide (mainly from China and Singapore) while there were a few hundred of products available. Significantly, the highly demanded amulets could make huge profits for resellers too.

Therefore, if the monk is not famous enough, his amulets will not be popular in the market, and producers/traders will not want to invest for or connect with him. According to Khong, modern *khrua*, as well as other monks, must have primarily been credited for some extraordinary quality. For example, Khrua Ariyachart and Khrua Noi, I am not to say that they have signed a business contract with amulet producers/traders, Khrua Ariyachart is famous for supernatural power which is believed to bring prosperity and success in various aspects of life. His reputation is spread out through mystical stories, revolving around him and his amulets, by his devotees<sup>64</sup> and via various channels (see watsangkaew.com 2010a, 2010b; Sor Sutthipan 2011, 2013, 2015). His amulets are

---

<sup>63</sup> sub-region which covers Lamphun, Lampang, Chiang Mai and Mae Hong Son provinces.

<sup>64</sup> Khong's factory is now hired to produce a new batch of Khrua Ariyachart's amulet (September 2016).

thus booming in the market and as a consequence, his monastery is being well constructed as his charisma and network are expanded. Khruba Noi is famous for a magical subject and as the successor of Khruba Phad, who was a former disciple of Khruba Sriwichai (see amulet.in.th 2008; Wat Sri Don Moon 2012; *Perd Ban Tuek Tam Nan* on YouTube 2015a, 2015 b). Khong added that, among the northerners, we had a strong belief in Khruba Sriwichai and whosoever acclaimed to be a direct disciple of Khruba was then highly respected as a holy, magic monk too.

Nonetheless, even this issue is unclear; we could find a kind of business network of modern *khruba* with amulet traders/producers inside and outside the country, and it has a tendency to grow faster in the present time. Moreover, this network of amulet traders/producers has proved their significance in the construction of charisma of modern *khruba*. I found that Khruba Ariyachart and Khruba Noi frequently appeared on TV programs and YouTube Channels with amulet gurus, as hosts, talking about their amulets and its efficacy, e.g. YouTube channel *Wanchai Suphan* on “*khui phueng ruang phra khruba ariyachart*” (a talk with Khruba Ariyachart) in 2014<sup>65</sup>. For Khruba Noi, medallion batch named “*kin mai mod*” (eternal wealth) with *Phra Upagupta* imprinted on the other side (category: unspecific mass) and *phra phong* (tablet amulet made from powders) in oval shape imprinted of Khruba Noi’s full body were awarded the best amulets of 2013 in a competition organized by amulets traders/collectors in Bangkok<sup>66</sup>.

Additionally, I met a business connection of Khruba Noi, by the great assistance of my Chinese classmate Miss Xiaolan, on 14 September 2015. Miss Sally (pseudonym) from Beijing, PRC, is running an amulet business in China. She had her own amulet shop in Beijing (also online shop on *Wechat* application). Every year, she kept going back and forth between Thailand and China to select the products by herself. Her customers were a small group of Chinese middle classes and her products were a variety of sacred-magic objects from various places in Thailand (as well as from other countries in Southeast Asia). In Chiang Mai, as well as the north, she often dealt a business with Khruba Noi and other magic monks such as Khruba Boonyang in Lamphun and Khruba Phongsit in Chiang Mai provinces. She revealed that she would spend around one million baht for the products each time in Chiang Mai (in 2-3 days), because this kind of products was quite popular among Chinese middle classes while amulet shops in China were being mushroomed<sup>67</sup>. Furthermore, in 2016 (March 4) when I came to interview Khruba Noi at Wat Sri Don Moon, I was lucky enough, because I arrived there before the appointment time, to witness the rite for sacralizing amulets. As I and Nattapong observed the ritual, a female staff in *sangha dhana* station described that two Chinese women came and bought a lot of amulets and asked Khruba Noi to sacralize them. Furthermore, they were allowed to make video recording while Khruba Noi was performing a ritual. The staff continued, Khruba Noi was recently famous among Chinese people and his amulets were the ones among the best sellers. This is the answer for my curiosity when I found the Chinese language was included in Khruba's PR photos, and Chinese currency banknotes were inscribed with a symbolic diagram (*yantra*) and sacred word (*gāthā*) for sale (*bucha*). Moreover, I heard some

---

<sup>65</sup> also found video clips with other modern *khruba* such as Khruba Krishna (in Nakhon Ratchasima province in 2013) and Khruba Nuachai (in Kanchanaburi province in 2012)

<sup>66</sup> Pramai Dot Com Company and the association of country-wide new amulets collectors

<sup>67</sup> She has been in this business for four years and came to see me because she wanted my recommendation about magic monks in the north. She wanted to introduce new magic monks as well as new kinds of exotic amulets so as to increase opportunity in business. She showed me some photos of amulets which were currently popular in China such as *pun neng* or a small piece of central part of human forehead inscribed with a symbolic diagram (*yantra*) and sacred formula (*gāthā*) produced by one magic monk in the north.



Chinese words in his *mantra* verses for the blessing too<sup>68</sup>.

### **Mobile Khruba**

Even though the modern communication technology brings modern *khruba*'s reputation beyond the national boundaries and their networks could be found in every corner of the world. And even though the mediatized and globalized world provides numerous channels for followers in the distance to keep updated with their *khruba* while modern transportation could bring them to see their *khruba* at any time they need, traveling out from the center is still significant for modern *khruba*. Modern *khruba* have to rely on both centripetal (bringing followers to the center) and centrifugal flows of charisma (the power flows out from the center to its periphery). Weller (2008) has suggested that this kind of travel out from the center has been an important technique to maintain leadership for followers outside the center as we have seen in cases of religious groups/movements such as current Dalai Lama, recent Pope and many leaders of smaller groups. Moreover, traveling abroad of the leaders is a more direct solution to the problem of authenticity in the circulation of objects, and online technologies, which are treated by followers as second-hand charisma (ibid., 23-29).

If Weller (ibid.), including Cohen (2000a,b) in case of Khruba Boonchum, view the travelling abroad of movement's leader is an important technique to maintain and strengthen the network, as well as to expand its teachings and ideology, there will be more aspects to consider in case of modern *khruba*'s mobility because the travelling out of the center of modern *khruba* is rather prioritized to (i) maintain charismatic leadership for followers outside the center, (ii) maintain loyalty of the followers, and (iii) provide ritually rich religious services for followers. Furthermore, this is a means to promote themselves to the public in order to seek new followers, new networks.

One key devotee of Khruba Ariyachart (interview 7 November 2015) reveals that this kind of traveling out from the center (to Bangkok and overseas) is arranged for lay devotees including general public to pay homage (*grab*) to Khruba. They usually donate (*tawai*) money or things for Khruba, and Khruba will bless them, give them his amulets in return. Sometimes, Khruba performs a ritual for them. No specific teaching or ideology is taught or highlighted during the gathering. Wat Saengkaew's facebook (@watsangkaewphothiyan) is the main channel to announce schedules of Khruba Ariyachart for long-distance devotees. The gatherings are mostly taken place in houses and company offices of main devotees, well-to-do middle classes, such as TQM Company (ibid., posted on 18 July 2016), DaraDaily (ibid., posted on 19 July 2016), Nusasiri Rajapruk Village (ibid., posted on 7 September 2016), and Koh-Kae Company (ibid., posted on 8 September 2016). For overseas trips, his destinations are frequented to Malaysia and China such as a trip to Malaysia on 4-6 June 2010 (see YouTube channel "*watsangkae*", two video clips posted on 28 July 2010 and 13 August 2010) where hundreds of devotees gathered to pay homage to Khruba and buy some amulets. One comment on the video clips sarcastically says "this trip is rather arranged to sell amulets".

Khruba Noi also arranges numerous trips to visit overseas devotees. In the gathering, he performs the ritual for life prolongation with *nam mon thorani sarn luang* and *na nathong*. For example, as posted on Facebook @Watsridonmoon posted on 19 July 2016, the event was staged in one Dhamma center in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In there, around 50 Malaysian Chinese were being undergone the ritual. Khruba Noi adds that he has devotees in several countries, and he has already

---

<sup>68</sup> As I observed, the *mantra* verses are a combination of northern Thai, Shan, Chinese, Burmese and Pali languages.

visited them for several times such as China, Malaysia, Singapore, Macao, or even in the West, “I don’t know how they know me, but merit and charisma is an uncontrollable quality. It all depends on faith they have in me” (4 March 2016).

For this study, the networks which modern *khruha* have formed are observed through religious ceremonies where people from different groups were gathering and display different degrees of relationships with *khruha*. In Khruha Don’s major events, the surveys I did during the ceremony revealed that in *Thot Kathin* (24-25 November 2015) the majority of guests were the (former) local network (Yuan and Karen) of Khruha Khao Pi and Khruha Wong from Lee, Ban Hong and Mae Ta districts of Lamphun province, Doi Tao, Hod, Chom Thong and Chiang Dao district of Chiang Mai province. These included a number of devotees from Lampang province, Mae Sariang district (from Wat Huay Bong) of Mae Hong Son province and Mea Sot district of Tak province. The main hosts of *Kathin* were the well-to-do family from Bangkok (but based in Singapore) and Phra-acan Sirisak (Papassorncitto) from Wat Khao Sawantak in Chanthaburi province. Phra-acan Sirisak is the one who previously enshrined ‘*Phra Thammaracha Phothisat*’ (Dhammaraja Bodhisattva) image in a newly built pavilion located next to the white pagoda on the top of Pha Nam Mountain<sup>69</sup> (in 2015, according to Wat Pha Nam’s brochure). In *Thot Kathin*, Phra-acan Srisak brought 60 guests from his place to join the ceremony with 500,000 baht of *ton kathin*<sup>70</sup>. I also found ten guests (mixed of Thai northeasterners and Malaysian Chinese) from Malaysia who accompanied Phra Phakhinai from Wat Umong in Chiang Mai province. Additionally, there were 35 guests formed as ‘Khon Khaen-Bangkok’ group of devotees (*khana sattha*) and seven guests from Ratchaburi province.

In the Robe Changing Ceremony (1-4 March 2016), the host was the owner of a big textile company in Bangkok, who is also serving as chairperson of Wat Huay Tom Foundation, while the chief of the laity was the deputy supreme commander of the royal Thai armed forces. In this event, Khruha Don invited 400 monasteries (*hua wat*) to receive offerings (*taiya tan*). 400 monasteries covered the local network in Lamphun, Lampang, Chiang Mai, Tak, Sukhothai, Chiang Rai, Phrae and Mae Hong Son provinces, according to the booklet of the event (2016). And even though the majority of guests are predominantly people in the north (Karen and Yuan), according to the survey<sup>71</sup>, I also found guests from other places across the country such as 22 guests from Chonburi province, 33 guests from central region (mostly Bangkok) and 5 guests from Bueng Kan province in the northeast. However, we believed that there might have been more guests who were not found by us since the event was crowded by more than 20,000 guests and surrounded by more than one hundred almshouses (*rong tan*).

In *Thot Kathin* of Khruha Noi in 2015 (31 October-1 November), the host was a family of a big petrochemical company in Thailand<sup>72</sup> including thirteen co-hosts from four regions who donated nearly seven million baht combined (as told by the master of the ceremony). Additionally, one devotee who owned an auto company in Bangkok donated an ambulance which cost two million

---

<sup>69</sup> He also claimed to be the main supporter of several construction projects on the top of Pha Nam Mountain (interview 24 November 2015).

<sup>70</sup> The co-hosts from Bangkok were also the disciples of Phra-acan Sirisak.

<sup>71</sup> with the assistance of three students from Wiang Chedi Wittaya School in Lee district

<sup>72</sup> Since 2003, they in addition support construction materials and other products from the company such as cement, paints, and fertilizers. Vinyl banners were hung in many spots on the monastery ground to promote the company’s products. Moreover, I found a booth of the company (to introduce the products to local guests) in *Thot Kathin* in 2015 too.

baht to Khruba Noi's hospital. By the ambulance presented a *ton kathin*<sup>73</sup> (*kathin* tree) of physicians, nurses and medical staff of his hospital. This year, Khruba Noi would present *kathin tok khang* (the leftover *kathin*) to other six monasteries (100,000 baht for each)<sup>74</sup> in his local network. The six monasteries also set their booths at Wat Sri Don Moon to invite people to join (donate) their own *ton kathin*.

From 31 October, around 30 army soldiers from Chiang Mai military camp came to contribute their workforce in the event. One senior devotee revealed that (interview 31 October 2015) Khruba Noi had a good connection with the military camp because he usually sent amulets to them and in addition before soldiers took up duty in the deep south, they usually came to get blessed by Khruba. The same devotee added that every year there would have been around 30 coach buses hauling devotees from Malaysia (Malaysian Chinese) to join this event, and that would make the traffic around the monastery such chaotic<sup>75</sup>. Ten almshouses (*rong tan*) of this event were hosted by the middle-class devotees in Chiang Mai while the biggest one was hosted by the monastery, and was taken care of by lay devotee in Sri Don Moon village. I met one host of almshouse who was a retired teacher from demonstration school of Chiang Mai Rajabhat University. She also suggested me enthusiastically not forget to buy (*bucha*) sacred candles (*tian sivali*) of Khruba because it could enhance the personal charm and bring success to everything as she had ever experienced before (interview 1 November 2015). Before the *Thot Kathin* ceremony was started, a couple of singers in sixties (male and female) sung two songs before Khruba Noi in the hall to entertain the guests. A male singer was named the national artist (*silapin haeng chat*)<sup>76</sup>.

For Khruba Ariyachart, *Thot Kathin Festival* in 2015 (7-9 November), the then deputy prime minister and the minister of ministry of defense; Gen. Prawit Wongsuwan was invited to preside over the groundbreaking ceremony of a large statue named '*phra somdet borom phothiyan*'<sup>77</sup>. The nine '*phraao khot tanjai*' images were hosted by wealthy devotees from Bangkok. The *kathin* parade on 8 November was hosted by a well-to-do devotee<sup>78</sup> who ran a real estate development business in Chiang Mai while a workforce in the parade was contributed by army soldiers from Chiang Rai military camp (hired). In the ceremony on 7 November, 12 senior monks, mostly from Chiang Rai province, were invited such as *chao khana pak 6* (head of cleric office region 6), *cao khana chang wat Chiang Rai* (head of the cleric office, Chiang Rai province), and *cao khana amphur mae suay* (head of cleric office, Mae Suay district). Additionally, popular TV star and her family were invited too. Around ten almshouses (*rong tan*) in this event were hosted by well-to-do devotees from Chiang Rai, Bangkok, and the northeast such as '*chern yim*' comedy group (TV stars), tea plantation in Chiang Rai and division of public works of Nakhon Ratchasima provincial administrative organization. While a concert show at the night of 8 November was hosted by the comedian group from Channel 3 (*chong sam*) in order to entertain local people. Additionally, Khruba arranged *Salak Yom Festival* (originally from Lamphun province) during *Thot Kathin Festival*. As observed, hosts of *ton salak yom* were the local monasteries in Khruba's network mainly from Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai

<sup>73</sup> On 1 November, the then director of Saraphi Hospital was present to receive the ambulance from Khruba Noi and before the distinguished guests and local-national correspondents.

<sup>74</sup> He chooses the monasteries around his area to receive *kathin tok khang* ranged from 6 to 9 every year.

<sup>75</sup> However, in 2015, I did not found guests from Malaysia as that devotee claimed. I asked him again why they did not come that year; he said he also had no idea.

<sup>76</sup> The songs were not a kind to eulogize Khruba Noi.

<sup>77</sup> To be built in 21-meter wide and 38-meter tall right behind the statue of Khruba Sriwichai.

<sup>78</sup> The parade cost around 800,000 baht (interview head of event organizer, 7 November 2015).

and Lamphun provinces. Nonetheless, I also found around twenty-*ton salak yom* which were hosted by devotees from Bangkok and the central region<sup>79</sup>.

In Khruba Ariyachart's birthday celebration in 2016 (8-10 January), he invited one of the King Bhumibol's granddaughters to preside over the ceremony on 9 January. On 10 January, in *phitii sub chata luang* (ritual for life prolongation) for him, he invited popular TV star and her family (the ones as in *Thot Kathin* Festival) to join including a famous TV host to shoot a special episode about Khruba Ariyachart (broadcasted on Modern Nine TV on 24 January 2016, see YouTube Channel 'WoodyTalk' 2016,). Wealthy devotees also came as usual and significantly played a major role in the ceremony. As observed, 25 devotees who were purposively selected to light the candles to worship *nawalokuttaratham* (the nine supramundane states) and the candles of *mahamongkhon* (auspiciousness) were key (wealthy) devotees from all parts of the country such as the owners of a snack company, the owners of a fire extinguisher company and the owners of insurance company in Bangkok, the executive of a real estate development company in Chiang Mai, and the high-ranking official in provincial administrative organization of Nakhon Ratchasima province. Master of the ceremony named them '*rattana ubasok*' and '*rattana ubasika*' or laymen and laywomen who were worth as gemstones in order to highlight the close relationship as well as their great contribution to Khruba. Moreover, they were a group who took center stage at the auction for four paintings (of a famous painter) and two teeth of Khruba<sup>80</sup>. At the same time, at one corner of the hall, local devotees (from Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai, Phayao and Lamphun provinces) came to present small *ton nger* (money trees) to Khruba. Even though the latter were in a larger number, the level of money donations was not high as the former.

### Linkages in the Networks

Diverse groups of people are connected in modern *khruba*'s networks by informal approach revolving around stories of the sacredness of *khruba* and their sacred-magic objects. Even though they are so diverse, and have various forms of relationships, they have contributed to the growing networks of these *khruba* monks as followers, sponsors, and conveyors while formal organization and an established group of members are no longer irrelevant. Moreover, there is no common goal and ideology for being *khruba*'s followers. The network could grow at any time in any place and is open for any kind of connection. Below I shall give some stories of modern *khruba*'s followers who have worked as linkages of the networks so as to illustrate heterogeneity and fluidity including the competency of human and non-human agents in the work of network building and expansion.

#### **Na Siripa<sup>81</sup> (Auntie Siripa)**

Na Siripa (pseudonym) is in the early sixties based in Bangkok and London, UK. She was born to a wealthy family (her former surname is well known to Thai people in general) and was raised in Bangkok. She has many businesses but mainly in real estate. She claims to be a close disciple of

<sup>79</sup> On 28 August 2015 during the visit to Wat Wang Mui in Lamphun province, I found some elder devotees were preparing *ton salak yom* on the monastery ground. They said Khruba Ariyachart hired them to make it for his monastery's event.

<sup>80</sup> One Singaporean Chinese running cooking gas business in Singapore also joined the auction. Four paintings by one famous painter were sold at 199,999, 49,999, 88,888, and 111,111 baht respectively while two teeth of Khruba were sold at 1,299,999 and 1,008,000 baht respectively.

<sup>81</sup> It is a Thai custom to call oneself in relation to the second person by a using family-related title such as '*phee*' (elder brother or sister) and '*nong*' (younger brother or sister). '*Na*' here is to indicate that she is pretty much older than me but is still younger than my mother.

Khruba Ariyachart since he was a little novice living in Wat Wang Mui. I met her twice during 2015-2016 in Wat Saengkaewphothiyan (in *Thot Khatin* Ceremony in 2015 and Khruba's birthday celebration in 2016). But after that, we are friends on Facebook and had chatted through Facebook messenger for several times. From mid-2016 she flew to London and has stayed there until now (early 2017).

Around 10 pm during the ritual to install the Buddha's hearts (*phitii sai hua jai phracao*) of *Phracao Khot Tanjai* (super speedy god) in *Thot Kathin* (7 November 2015) of Khruba Ariyachart, My friend, Nattapong, introduced me to *Na Siripa*. We also met her (second) husband who was a high-ranking general in the royal Thai armed forces. They drove from Bangkok since in the morning to join this important event.

During the ceremony, we were chatting while waiting to pay homage to Khruba Ariyachart. *Na Siripa* started a conversation with her first impression with Khruba Ariyachart. She recalled, she met Khruba for the first time around fifteen years ago. At that time, Khruba was a little novice living in Wat Wang Mui in Lamphun province (of Khruba Choom), and she who had a serious problem in marriage life (with her first husband and his relatives). She felt very much stressed out, and it caused her a severe headache consequently. Firstly, she received a treatment from a psychiatrist but it did not promise a good result until her friend introduced Khruba Ariyachart to her. Soon after, she came to see a little novice Ariyachart in Lamphun province. A novice looked very ordinary, she thought, but why her friend suggested him to her? Novice Ariyachart liked molding small Buddha tablets (*pun phra*) from clay. All she did was chatting with him many stories of her crisis. Ariyachart was listening quietly while his two hands were molding tablets and gave some to her. Then, after all, he enumerated the stories of her previous lives and her old karma that caused many problems in the present time. She listened startingly yet skeptically. But a headache was gradually disappeared in time. "It was surprising!" she said, and she believed it was a miracle; it was because of a supernatural power of Ariyachart. From then on, she declared to be a devotee of novice Ariyachart. She also served as the host in the monk ordination ceremony for Khruba (*buat phra*). Two things that reminded *Na Siripa* about Khruba Ariyachart's charismatic status were (1) he told her once when he was a novice that he was a reincarnation of Khruba Khao Pi<sup>82</sup> and (2) he said that, during his stay in Wat Phrathat Dong Sima (of Khruba Jao Theung in Mae Suay district, Chiang Rai province), he would be the most famous *khruba* in Chiang Rai province, and now he was.

*Na Siripa* followed Khruba Ariyachart to everywhere. When he decided to move out from Wat Wang Mui to stay at Wat Phrathat Dong Sima in Mae Suay district (8 km away from Wat Saengkaew) under the care of Khruba Jao Theung, his former patron, *Na Siripa* bought a large piece of land near the monastery (a speculative buy). And in early years of Wat Saengkaew (since 2006), she played a significant role as a key conveyor for young Khruba Ariyachart. She suggested Khruba Ariyachart to her friends, relatives of her and her husband in order to get support for his newly-founded monastery. In late 2015 (to early 2016), she sends her son, who was based in London, to take part in a group ordination program (*uppasombot mu*) in Wat Saengkaew (which is held every year). During the program, she rented a house close to the monastery in order to stay close if her son needed some help. She also posted photos of her son and his activities as a monk on Facebook frequently. Before we proceeded to Khruba, she gave a hand-molded tablet that she mentioned before to me

---

<sup>82</sup> In order to confirm this claim, she sent me a photo of young Khruba Ariyachart to emphasize the physical resemblance of the two Khruba through Facebook messenger.

and my friend respectively. She instructed us firmly to keep these tablets very well since they were rare and valuable nowadays. Afterward, we prostrated Khruba and had some talk. Khruba greeted by calling *Na Siripa* 'yom mea' (lay mother). *Na Siripa* introduced Nattapong and me to Khruba, and then she pointed to her husband who sat behind us. In her bag, she revealed more tablets (*phra khrueng*) to Khruba and in front of many other devotees sat around us. She said to Khruba and others that these were the very first batch of Khruba's amulets made when he was very young. Some tablets were encased by gold case. Khruba looked surprisingly while other devotees, mostly well-to-do middle classes from Bangkok, looked interestingly as *Na Siripa* described a story of each item. For example, one item was made during a forest wandering (*thudong*) outing and there were only 108 pieces for this batch. The specialty was he used earth from a cave wall, where he had stayed and practiced meditation to mold it. Khruba grinned and then turned to other devotees sat nearby and said: "these items were the first batch, I made by hand when I was a novice". Then he talked to one male devotee "do you want to have it? Try it! Have it and you will be super rich (*khot ruay*), even richer than *phra somdet*. There were only 222 pieces for this batch, the back of these tablets were inscribed in a shape of Khruba Sriwichai's peacock fan". Then Khruba asked *Na Siripa* to give one to that devotee. She also stressed again that these items were very rare and could not be found anywhere else. That male devotee seemed delighted as received it. *Na Siripa* went on, in fact, she intended to give all of these to Khruba for the auction on tomorrow because she felt she was getting older and there was no point to keep them with her. In the past, she had a lot of Khruba's amulets and gave them to friends, relatives, or even acquaintances (like me) from time to time. Additionally, she added, she had the first batch of Khruba's poster and bee wax at home, and she would bring them to Khruba again on January 9 (in his birthday celebration) for the auction as well. Again, via Facebook messenger, *Na Siripa* shared with me another story about Khruba Ariyachart's supernatural power, among many, that made her more believe in him (31 December 2015). She said that Khruba molded a small Buddha images for her birthdays. Moreover, he used earth under the Bodhi tree to mold it. She kept them in her houses both in Bangkok and London. Importantly, Khruba inserted a Buddha relic at the base of each image. It was surprising that the relic could be multiplying in numbers (around a thousand) after she worshiped it properly. In London, she asked her son to bring some relics to Thai Buddhist monastery. After she came back to Thailand, she found that the relics kept in her house in Bangkok were multiplied too. She kept this story to herself until during the cracking down of Red Shirt demonstration by the government in 2010. At that time, the cops came to visit her husband for some reason. She then gave some relics to the cops in order to have them witnessed the unexplainable phenomenon. She was taken by surprise again when the relics were multiplied again after the cops left. She soon after made a phone call to Khruba and told all that happened, Khruba said: "yes, he saw by his *nimit* (vision) the relic flew from his place to Bangkok and also to London". This story was often told among many other stories about Khruba Ariyachart's supernatural power by *Na Siripa*.

### ***Nong Man* (young brother 'Man')**

*Nong Man* was 23 years old when I met him (in late 2015). He lives in Tha Song Yang district, the northwestern most district of Tak Province. He is a spirit medium of several guardian spirits, mainly *caopho kho mue lek* (the iron wrist god), *caopho mokhala* (*Mokhala* god), and Khruba Khao Pi. I recognized him by the time I visited his family in Tha Song Yang during the field trip for a research project on Khruba Khao Pi (4-5 November 2015, see Kwanchewan and Pisith 2016) because he was a

young man I saw in *Thot Kathin* ceremony of Khruba Noi and Khruba Kaew (in Mae Ramat district) and the Robe Changing Ceremonies of Khruba Khao Pi and Khruba Wong (in 2015). After that in 2016, I met him in the Robe Changing Ceremonies of the two Khruba again.

*Nong Man's* family is familiar to people in this area (*Ban Mae Tan*) as his mother is a representative of the subdistrict municipality (*samachick thesaban tambon*) and their house, on the second floor, is open for *Nong Man's* mediumship business (*sam nak*). They are Yuan native of this area. In March each year, *Nong Man's* *sam nak* stages a ritual to pay homage to teachers' spirits (*phitii wai khru*). The road in front of their house is closed on that day in order to receive hundreds of guests and to stage a worship ceremony (ghostly dance or *phon phae*). It is a big and most turbulent event of the village. *Nong Man* started the career as a spirit medium since he was 11 years old. After finished high school, he passed the entrance exam to study in the faculty of Fine Art, Chiang Mai University. However, only one year past, he decided to drop out because some activities were not appropriate for him, as a spirit medium. He came back and later enrolled in a nearby community college (now already graduated). Staying in his house is, in fact, more convenient for the spirit medium activities; however, he still keeps in touch with university friends and invites them to join his annual ceremony every year.

As a spirit medium, *Nong Man* has a wide connection across the region with other spirit mediums as well as monks credited for magical potency. Making large donations by hosting *Kathin* tree (*ton kathin*) or money tree (*ton ngern*), in the name of *caopho kho mue lek*, is the main technique he uses to draw/maintain connections with these groups of people. *Nong Man* explained that *caopho kho mue lek* liked to make merit and offering (*tam bun tam tan*), therefore every event if he knew he would attend and present *ton ngern* to them (let alone the ceremonies of other spirit mediums (*sam nak*) as well as major spirit worship ceremonies across the north where he usually attends all-year-round). This is why I met him quite often in those religious ceremonies during the course of fieldwork. *Nong Man* claims to have good connection with many renowned monks in the north such as Khruba Noi, Khruba Ariyachart, Khruba Kaew, Khruba Soi (in Tha Song Yang), Khruba Chantarangsi (in Muang Chiang Mai), Khruba Duang Di (in San Pa Thong) and Khruba Don (as a medium of Khruba Khao Pi), for example.

*Nong Man* also showed me a red thread (*dai daeng*) on his wrist which was given and tied by Khruba Ariyachart whom he went to see quite often. He stated that Khruba Ariyachart was a holy monk (*phra sak sit*), and was believed to be a reincarnation of Khruba Sriwichai. His monastery was built very large where importantly the large statues of the three greatest *khru* were enshrined. Additionally, *Nong Man* would get a lot of red threads every time he came to Khruba. These were then given to people in this village. The red thread had a protective power to keep its owner from all sorts of danger, he added.

In the area of Tak province, the most famous *khru* in *Nong Man's* view is Khruba Kaew of Wat Don Moon in Mae Ramat district, substituting the late Khruba Soi of Wat Mongkhon Khiri Khet (in Tha Song Yang district). Khruba Kaew is also known as a disciple of Khruba Wong and a senior friend of Khruba Don as I mentioned earlier. For *Nong Man*, as a medium who performs spiritual healing (e.g. for those who are possessed by bad spirits or are cursed by black magic), if patients' condition reaches a severe stage, he will refer them to Khruba Kaew. Khruba Kaew is also famous for *takrut* and magic tattoo (*sak yan*). *Nong Man* revealed that he had already undergone oil tattooing by Khruba Kaew for several times, and he usually brought his friends to Khruba Kaew for this too.

Because these rituals were not open for general public, people thus prefer to rely on *Nong Man*'s close relationship to bring them to Khruba Kaew.

As a medium of Khruba Khao Pi, he has to keep in touch with Khruba Don and Wat Pha Nam. Phra Songkran stated that (5 November 2015), Khruba Don came to visit *Nong Man* and his family quite often as he traveled along this area (Tak-Mae Hong Son) because *Nong Man* was the main devotee of Wat Pha Nam as well as the main linkage of its network in this area. Every year, *Nong Man*, in the name of *caopho kho mue lek*, presents a big money tree (*ton ngern*) collected from the villagers to Wat Pha Nam in the Robe Changing Ceremony of Khruba Khao Pi (as well as of Khruba Wong). Because the villagers (Yuan and Karen) in this area were followers/believers of Khruba Khao Pi since he had renovated *Phrathat Huay Luek*<sup>83</sup> (a reliquary) for them around 1927. As I observed, owing to the close relationship with Khruba Don *Nong Man* could access the inner (restricted) area during the robe changing ceremony in 2015 and 2016. And according to their close relationship, our research team, my supervisor Dr. Kwanchewan Buadaeng, Phra Songkran from Wat Pha Nam, and I, were welcome to stay for one night in their house.

*Nong Man* added that each year he could collect around twenty to thirty thousand baht for *ton ngern* to present to Wat Pha Nam. Before the Robe Changing Ceremony, his family will announce people in this community, also through voice on the line, calling for donations both money and objects. After finishes the ceremony each year, *Nong Man* will get a large piece of white robe of Khruba Khao Pi from Khruba Don. He then cuts it into tiny pieces and gives them to donors as well as to whosoever person who comes to ask for. He said "if they (villagers) know that I came back from the ceremony, they will soon come to my house and ask for a piece of white robe, even I said nothing, they know by themselves. The white robe is very sacred (*sak sit mak*), people in Tha Song Yang had a car accident but they were miraculously saved because they kept a piece of white robe of Khruba Khao Pi in a car. That's why they want it" (interview 4 November 2015). Regarding *Nong Man*'s experience with Khruba Khao Pi's spirit, apart from being a spirit medium, he won the lottery once after came back from the 36<sup>th</sup> Robe Changing Ceremony. Moreover, Khruba Don also gives him lots of medallions of Khruba Khao Pi every year. As the main linkage, in 2015 he got around 40 pieces to distribute in this area. One of them was given to and was being hung by, his grandmother.

Another *khruba* whom *Nong Man* has drawn a close connection with is Khruba Noi. A relationship grew after *Nong Man* brought one kind of medicinal plant called '*ton krai hang nak*' (a kind of climbing palm) which was found only in this area to Khruba Noi. Khruba had searched for this plant for many years and finally, *Nong Man* fulfilled Khruba's need. From then on, *Nong Man* serves as a supplier of this plant for Khruba. I found that *Nong Man*'s mother also hung a locket of Khruba Noi which was enclosed by diamond around her neck. She explained that it was all about faith (interview 4 November 2015). At first, she did not know Khruba Noi but one day her son brought her to Khruba. It was in 2012 after a decision to run for election in subdistrict municipality. As a matter of fact that she was an independent candidate and had no backup from any political party. And this was her major concern. Khruba Noi then made magic candles for her called '*tian sivali dern dong*' (*Phra Sivali* wandering in the forest) for worship. Khruba Noi explained that the candles could increase personal charm and enable one to persuade others. Khruba Noi instructed her to light the candles and sit pray before them three days before the election date. Even though he did not give any mantra (*gatha*), "believe it or not elderly people in the villages can remember my number (number 7) while

---

<sup>83</sup> Khruba Don also brought novices and monks from Wat Pha Nam to visit this reliquary.



forgetting other candidates". And eventually, among 30 candidates, she was elected by the second-highest votes (ibid.).

Since then, she and her family, especially his son, keep going to Khruba Noi and devote to him in many ways. Apart from what I mentioned above, they serve as the main linkage for Khruba Noi in this area too. Each year, they present *ton kathin* (*Katin* tree) to Khruba Noi in *Thot Kathin* ceremony. They invite villagers to join by donating some amounts of money through voice on the line in the village, and the network in community monasteries, and present it in the name of devotees from Mae Sot (*khana mae sot*)<sup>84</sup>. In return, Khruba Noi gives them his amulets, for example in 2015 Khruba gave eight big boxes of *takut salika*<sup>85</sup> to them. They then distributed to donors and villagers in general as usual. My supervisor and I were given one *takut salika* respectively during the conversation too. *Nong* Man's father, who carried a box of *takut salika* from the second floor to us, claimed that *Nong* Man was a very close disciple of Khruba Noi (*sit ek*) to such an extent that Khruba Noi put *Nong* Man in the first priority even among his V.I.P guests (interview 5 November 2015). *Nong* Man added, he can even access to the inner space of Khruba Noi's *kuti* (residence).

### ***Maeliang*<sup>86</sup> Kai (wealthy mother 'Kai')**

*Maeliang* Kai (pseudonym) was 58 years old (in 2015). She was born in Mae Ramat district but is now living in Mae Sot district, a borderland of Tak province with the Karen State of Myanmar. We had a long interview since the first time we met (during the trip accompanied Khruba Don to *Tan Kuay Salak Festival* (*tan salak bhatta*- the act of offering to monks) of Wat Don Moon (of Khruba Kaew whom I mentioned in a case of *Nong* Man) in Mae Ramat on 24-25 October 2015). Khruba Don stopped by at her house to pay a visit and received food offering (vegetarian) from her family. Later on 3-4 November 2015, my supervisor, Phra Songkran from Wat Pha Nam and I visited her again during the fieldwork in a research project on Khruba Khao Pi. We also stayed for a night in her house and had a long conversation again.

*Maeliang* Kai was born to a very poor family. She was raised by a single mother because her father untimely died when she was very little. Moreover, as she grew up she had to look after her siblings and cousins. Therefore, she had no chance to enter a school. However, she was a diligent person who could do whatsoever job to earn a living. In her youth, she used to be a food seller in the market, a ruby dealer (buy-and-sell) going back and forth between Tak (crossed to Myanmar) and Chanthaburi provinces, a money lender, and a real estate investor. Now (2015), *Maeliang* Kai and her family run many kinds of business such as cross-border logistics services, gardening, food selling and own several houses and lands in this area (some are for rent).

*Maeliang* Kai's mother and grandmother were followers of Khruba Khao Pi, like many people in this area, because Khruba Khao Pi had been traveling in Tak and Mae Hong Son provinces during B.E. 2467-2474. During that time, he had built/renovated the school and religious buildings in many places such as a sermon hall of Wat Don Kaew in Mae Ramat (including inside a borderland of Myanmar, see Apichai Khao Pi no date; Pradit 1982). *Maeliang* Kai recalled that she met Khruba Khao Pi once while she was around 14-15 years old during the almsgiving in one morning with her

---

<sup>84</sup> as I found *Nong* Man during *Thot Kathin* Ceremony of Wat Sri Don Moon in 2015

<sup>85</sup> which is believed to bring personal charm and evoke love, however it is not only for romantic conquests but also for trade and client-patron relationship

<sup>86</sup> '*maeliang*' is a northern Thai style calling a well-to-do woman while '*pholiang*' is used to call a well-to-do man, however, it is applied for middle-aged persons onwards.

grandmother, who was a devotee of Khruba and joined the construction work in Wat Don Kaew. She claimed, Khruba foretold that she would be rich and told her grandmother to raise her well (interview 24 October 2015). This was the one and the only occasion she met Khruba Khao Pi in person until 2008, or 31 years later after his death, she met Khruba Khao Pi again in the Robe Changing Ceremony. She explained that before 2008, she was very busy with many tasks. Even though she wanted to see Khruba and join the Robe Changing Ceremony, as she heard from the villagers, she had no merit yet (*yang mai mee bun*). Until she thought that she was ready, with money and time, she and her husband began to reconnect with Khruba Khao Pi and Wat Pha Nam. She invited people in the village to join the Robe Changing Ceremony as well as to co-host for almshouse in the event. She had been joined by spirit mediums in this area during the first few years. She also knows *Nong Man* very well since they are both the active linkages for Wat Pha Nam in Tak province.

*Maeliang Kai* is thus a key devotee of Khruba Don. She and her husband visit Khruba Don at Wat Pha Nam very often throughout the year in order to join the major events of him<sup>87</sup>. She stated that each year, she spent around 100,000 baht for almshouse in the Robe Changing Ceremony of Khruba Khao Pi<sup>88</sup>. In 2015, she was the host for a new set of curtains and artificial flowers decorating the elaborated platform and glass coffin of Khruba (known as *hor mane*). Moreover, her nephew, born in Mae Sot, was ordained as a monk in Wat Pha Nam who was later sent to Wat Huay Bong in Mae Sa Rieng district, Mae Hong Son province by Khruba Don. Her nephew was then based in that monastery as an abbot, and she was a key devotee of him as well<sup>89</sup> (also in Khruba Don's network). She claimed that even she was not a spirit medium; she could contact the spirit of Khruba Khao Pi while she was in deep meditation. She went on, the reason why she wanted to change the curtains and artificial flowers because one day while she was in deep meditation next to the mummified body of Khruba, Khruba contacted her and told her that those curtains and flowers were quite old, and he wanted to have them replaced (interview 3 November 2015). On 24 October 2015 during a conversation with me, she suddenly turned to Khruba Don and told him that Khruba Khao Pi contacted her the other day to warn us about a big flood during *Loy Krathong Festival* (usually in November each year). The flood would cause huge damage to Mae Ramat as well as a great number of victims. In order to reduce the damage, Khruba Khao Pi asked her to bring artificial lotus flowers decorating around his coffin to the villagers. Khruba Don listened carefully but said nothing. She added since she observed *Sila* (moral precepts) strictly, she had the power to contact Khruba's spirit, and this made her extremely believe in Khruba Khao Pi's holiness (*kwam sak sit*).

For Khruba Don, *Maeliang Kai* is very devout. She will prepare the food for him every time he travels to Mae Sot and Mae Ramat, such as on 24 October 2015. Because Khruba Don is a vegetarian and some kind of food is not good for his health. *Maeliang Kai* is the one, among others, who knows well about him. She, in addition, provides the medicinal herbs for Khruba Don regularly since he is suffering from anemia. She stated that the herbs were ordered directly from Bangkok, and importantly it was the same recipe which was being served to the very important persons in the country. She also takes it and feels better relief from current ailments (4 November 2015). Additionally, in 2015, *Maeliang Kai* won the lottery during Khruba Don's birthday as she bought the

<sup>87</sup> As I found her *ton kathin* (*kathin* tree) in Wat Pha Nam's *Thot Kathin* Festival in November 2015.

<sup>88</sup> In the Robe Changing Ceremony in 2016, I found *Maeliang* and her husband since the first day of the event (1-4 March).

<sup>89</sup> For example, on 6 November 2015, as I found during the fieldwork, *Maeliang Kai* was the host of an almshouse in *Thot Kathin* Ceremony of Wat Huay Bong.

lottery with the age numbers of him. She told this news to us right away we arrived at her house on 3 November 2015. She seemed very surprised and emphasized that this was the second time Khruba Don's age numbers won the lottery (the first time in 2014). The news was spread widely to people in this area by *Maeliang* as a symbolic message to indicate Khruba Don's early stage of charismatic status which is a result of the restless attempt to carry on Khruba Khao Pi's works.

## Conclusion

In this paper, we found both the continuation and emergence of a new connection in modern *khruba*'s network. A local network is discussed here to demonstrate this continuation. Nonetheless, I found that the local network of modern *khruba* have lost their significance as the key success for *khruba*'s movement as they had before since money and material wealth is more important than free labors for modern *khruba*'s activities. Therefore, the relationships between *khruba* and the local network are changed consequently especially among ethnic minorities whom sometimes are brought into play as a symbolic message to demonstrate modern *khruba*'s charismatic leadership imitating the Buddhist saint of Lan Na Khruba Sriwichai in the previous decades (e.g. Khruba Jao Theuang, see Ashley 2011).

However, the local network is still important for modern *khruba* because they serve as a fundamental element for *khruba*'s charismatic leadership which testifies the recognition of local people towards *khruba*. This recognition supports a reputation of *khruba* as a holy-charismatic monk among people in a greater area. As we have seen from the three cases of modern *khruba* in this study the great attempt to construct and maintain/strengthen their local networks through various kinds of activity. Additionally, the construction and strengthening of local networks by hosting and sponsoring religious constructions and grand ceremonies of modern *khruba* are considered as a means to redistribute wealth and money donations to the locales as well as to show their wealthy devotees that they spent money in a proper way.

Moreover, I found new connections in modern *khruba*'s networks as a result of the growing middle class, modern transportation, and modern communication technology in Thailand and the globalized world. In Buddhist Thai society, we have undergone a period of proliferation of popular Buddhism during the three-four decades as well as religious commodification as experienced throughout Asia (see Pattana 2008, 2012). New networks are drawn with business people, wealthy middle classes (Thais and Chinese throughout Asia) or even with spirit mediums, while a core message is centered on supernatural power and sacred-magic objects of *khruba* which are believed to bring prosperity and success including a potency to solve problems in the modern life. Activities of modern *khruba*, inside and outside monasteries, are considered as a space for gathering, ritual performing and amulet distributing which let the relationships grow and flows of information possible among devotees and devotees with *khruba*.

The stories of three devotees of modern *khruba* indicate that the connection could be made at different levels of relations with *khruba* through the linkages located in different locations and via various channels (online-offline). Moreover, they show the capacity of sacred stories and sacred-magic objects of *khruba* which are used as a core message as well as objects to link people, expand the network. The networks of modern *khruba* thus represent the heterogeneity, fluidity of network in the modern Thai society where formal organization, specific teaching, common ideology or membership is no longer irrelevant. And this characteristic endorses the status of modern *khruba*

as charismatic monks to the world, who can respond to the globalized world and capitalist desires, not limited to the locality and specific ethnic groups like the former-day *khruaba*.

## References

- Apisakmontri, S. (2016). *Khor vinijchai prawat khruaba jao sriwichai [Statement on the Biography of Khruaba Jao Sriwichai]*. Chiang Mai: Putthamalai Group.
- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity At Large*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota University Press.
- Bowie, K. A. (2014a). Of Buddhism and Militarism in Northern Thailand: Solving the Puzzle of the Saint Khruubaa Srivichai. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 73(3), 711- 732.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2014b). The Saint with Indra's Sword: Khruubaa Srivichai and Buddhist Millenarianism in Northern Thailand. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 56(3), 681- 713.
- Chanamun, S. (1991). *Khruaba Sriwichai 'ton bun' haeng Lanna (BE 2421- 2481) [Khruaba Sriwichai 'ton bun' of Lanna]* (MA Thesis, Thammasat University, Thailand).
- Cohen, P. (2000a). Lue across Borders: Pilgrimage and the Muang Sing Reliquary in Northern Laos. In G. Evans, C. Hutton, & K. K. Eng (Eds.), *Where China meets Southeast Asia* (pp. 145- 161). Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2000b). A Buddha Kingdom in the Golden Triangle: Buddhist Revivalism and the Charismatic Monk Khruaba Bunchum. *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 11(2), 141-154.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2001). Buddhism unshackled: The Yuan "holy man" tradition and the nation-state in the Tai world. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 32(2), 176–203.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2002). Buddhist Revivalism in the Tai World. In H. Yukio, & T. Sayavongkhamdy (Eds.), *Cultural Diversity and Conservation in the Making of Mainland Southeast Asia and Southwestern China Regional Dynamics in the Past and Present* (pp.243-321). Kyoto: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University.
- Duangkaew, N. (2016). "sathu...jao ton bun pik ma kerd" kamnerd khruaba kati mai phap saton kan plian plaeng puthasasna thongthin phak nuaa khong thai ["sathu...ton bun saint was reborn" the birth of neo-khruaba, reflection of changes in local Buddhism of northern Thailand]. *Proceedings of the annual conference of The Foundation for the Promotion of Social Sciences and Humanities Textbooks Project*. University of Phayao, Bangkok: Toyota Thailand Foundation and The Foundation for the Promotion of Social Sciences and Humanities Textbooks Project.
- Easum M. T. (2013). A Thorn in Bangkok's side: Khruaba Sriwichai, Sacred Space and the Last Stand of the Pre-modern Chiang Mai State. *South East Asia Research*, 21(2): 211- 236.
- Feungfusakul, A. (1993). *Buddhist Reform Movements in Contemporary Urban Thai Context: Dhammakaya and Santi Asoka* (PhD diss., Bielefeld University, Germany).
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1998). *Sasnatud khong chumchon muang samai mai: sukka korani wat phra thammakai [Religious view of Modern Urban Society: A Case Study of Wat Phrathammakai]*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Center for Buddhist Studies.
- Giddens, A. (1990). *The Consequences of Modernity*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
- Gravers, M. (2012). Waiting for the righteous ruler: The Karen royal imaginary in Thailand and Burma. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 43(2), 340–363.
- Jenkins, R. (2000). Disenchantment, Enchantment and Re-Enchantment: Max Weber at the Millennium. *Max Weber Studies*, 1(1), 11-32.
- Jirattikorn, A. (2016). Buddhist Holy Man Khruaba Bunchum: The Shift in a Millenarian Movement at the Thailand-Myanmar Border. *SOJOURN: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, 31(2), 377-412.
- Kampeerathammo, P., Phra. (1997). *Prawat cheewit Khruaba chao Apichai (Khao Pi) wat phraphutthabat pha Nam, lee, lamphun [A biography of Khruaba Khao Pi, Wat Phraphutthabat Pha Nam, Lee, Lamphun]*. Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai Sahanawakit.
- Keyes, C. F. (1981). The Death of Two Buddhist Saints. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion, Thematic Studies*, 48(3-4), 149- 80.
- Khao Pi, A., Phra. (n.d.). *Nang sue cheva prawat ong samai sam hong lea prawat karn kor sang satharana prayote tang tang tung nai adeet lae patchuban prom duay prawat khruaba sriwichai [A biography of the three periods and records of the constructions for public benefits in the past to the present, with a biography of Khruaba Sriwichai]*. Chiang Mai: Ratanakarn Printing.

- Kitiarsa, P. (2008). Buddha Phanit: Thailand's prosperity religion and its commodifying tactics. In P. Kitiarsa (Ed.), *Religious Commodification in Asia* (pp. 120-144). Axon, U.S.A, Canada: Routledge.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2012). *Mediums, Monks, & Amulets Thai Popular Buddhism Today*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books in association with University of Washington Press, Seattle.
- Kwanchewan, B. (1988). *The Karen and the Khruba Khao Pi Movement: A Historical Study of the Response to the Transformation in Northern Thailand* (M.A. Thesis, Ateneo de Manila University, The Philippines).
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1999). *Apichai (Khao Pi), Khruba (B.E. 2432-2520)*. In *Saranukrom thai pak nue lem 15 [Encyclopedia of Northern Thai Region Episode 15]* (pp. 7788- 7793). Bangkok: Thai Cultural Encyclopedia Foundation, Siam Commercial Bank.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2002). Kruba Movements and the Karen in Northern Thailand: Negotiating Sacred Space and Identity. In H. Yukio, & T. Sayavongkhamdy (Eds.), *Cultural Diversity and Conservation in the Making of Mainland Southeast Asia and Southwestern China Regional Dynamics in the Past and Present* (pp. 262-293). Kyoto: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2010). Becoming Khuba Followers: Migrated Karen Peoples in a Religious Community in Li District, Lamphun Province, presented at the Workshop on Communities of Becoming in Mainland South East Asia, Chiang Mai, 2010. Chiang Mai University.
- Panyagaew, W. (2013). Remembering with Respect: History, Social Memory and the Cross-Border Journeys of a Charismatic Lue Monk. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, 14(1), 23-40.
- Prangrit (Panyawachiro), N. Phra. (2010). *Theraphisek phitee yokyorsamanasak phrasong nai Lanna [Theraphisek the ceremony of conferment for Buddhist monks in Lan Na]* (Ed.). Chiang Mai: Center for Buddhist Studies in Neighboring Countries Project, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Chiang Mai Campus.
- Rattanaprom, P. (1982). *Prawat cheevit khruba apichai (khao pi) [Biography of Khruba Apichai (Khao Pi)]*. Lamphun: Natthaphon Kanpim.
- Sripasang, W. (2010). *Ton bun Lanna, Prawat Khruba Chabab Arn-muan 2 [Ton bun Lanna, a biography of Khruba, amusing version 2]*. Chiang Mai, Punmai.
- Sutthipan, S. (2011). *Khruba Ariyachart Ariyajitto thip nai tham [Khruba Ariyachart Ariyajitto, Divinity in Dhamm]*. Bangkok: Thamsathaporn.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2013). *Thong daen putthatham kab khruba ariyachart ariyacitto [Travel through Buddha Land with Khruba Ariyachart Ariyacitto]* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Bangkok: Thamsathaporn.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2015). *Sam khruba saksit haeng wat saengkaew phothiyan [Three sacred khruba monks of Wat Saengkaew Phothiyan]*. Bangkok: Satapornbooks.
- Tambiah, S. J. (1984). *The Buddhist saints of the forest and the cult of amulets: a study in charisma, hagiography, sectarianism, and millennial Buddhism*. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Tanabe, S. (2012). Notes on Tonbun, Millennialism and Revivalism in Lanna. In K. Buadaeng, & A. Fuengfusakul (Eds.), *Piteekam lae patibatkan nai sungkom chaw na pak nhuer kong prathet thai [Rituals and Practices of Peasant Society in Northern Thailand]* by Shigeharu Tanabe (pp. 101- 111), Chiang Mai: CESD Chiang Mai University.
- Tiyavanich, K. (1997). *Forest Recollections: Wandering Monks in Twentieth-Century Thailand*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.
- Treesahakiat, I. (2011). *The Significance of Khruba Sriwichai's Role in Northern Thai Buddhism: His Sacred Biography, Meditation Practice and Influence* (MA Thesis, University of Otago, New Zealand).
- Wat Sri Don Moon. (2012). Kru-Baa Noi Tejapanyo. Chiang Mai: Ming Muang.
- Weller, R. P. (2008). Asia and the Global Economies of Charisma. In P. Kitiarsa (Ed.), *Religious Commodifications in Asia*. UK, USA and Canada: Routledge. Pp. 15-30.

## Online

- amulet.in.th. (2008). *Khruba noi wat sri don moon, chiang mai* [Khruba Noi Wat Sri Don Moon, Chiang Mai province]. Retrieved June 16, 2015, from Web Amulet Website: [http://www.amulet.in.th/forums/view\\_topic.php?t=666](http://www.amulet.in.th/forums/view_topic.php?t=666)
- Khaosod. (2016). *Perd rai chue somdej-phra racha khana 159 rup nai okat klai wan phra racha somphob nai luang ro 9* [open the list of monks 159 somdej-phrarachakhana who have been promoted in the occasion of H.M the King Bhumibol's Birthday]. Retrieved December 1, 2016, from Khaosod Online

- Website: [https://www.khaosod.co.th/breaking-news/news\\_121943](https://www.khaosod.co.th/breaking-news/news_121943)
- Perd Ban Tuek Tam Nan (Official). (2015a). *Perd ban tuek tam nan ton khrua noi wat sri don moon* [open the legend of Khrua Noi Wat Sri Don Moon]. Retrieved June 1, 2016, from Perd Ban Tuek Tam Nan (Official) Website: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKnVkmHUIII>
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2015b). *Perd ban tuek tam nan ton khrua phad wat sri don moon* [open the legend of Khrua Phad Wat Sri Don Moon]. Retrieved June 1, 2016, from Perd Ban Tuek Tam Nan (Official) Website: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKDINe7YRg4>
- Sukkata, P. (2015). Retrieved September 10, 2016, from Facebook @pensupa.sukkatajaiinn posted August 25, 2015, Website: <https://www.facebook.com/pensupa.sukkatajaiinn/posts/10153521583618851:0>
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2016a). Retrieved September 10, 2016, from Facebook @pensupa.sukkatajaiinn posted September 7, 2016, Website: <https://www.facebook.com/pensupa.sukkatajaiinn/posts/10154463003418851>
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2016b). Retrieved September 10, 2016, from Facebook @pensupa.sukkatajaiinn posted September 9, 2016, Website: [https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10154468320693851&set=a.443651988850.245438.700973850&type=3&hc\\_location=ufi](https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10154468320693851&set=a.443651988850.245438.700973850&type=3&hc_location=ufi)
- Suphan, W. (2014). Khui fuang ruang phra khrua ariyachart (part 1-4) [A talk about monk and amulet: Khrua Ariyachart (part 1-4)]. Retrieved September 9, 2016, from Wanchai Suphan Website: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7vQtLE1Fal>
- Wat Saengkaew Phothiyan. (2016a). Retrieved August 2, 2016, from Facebook @saengkaewphothiyan posted July 18, 2016, Website: <https://www.facebook.com/วัดแสงแก้วโพธิญาณ-111979062216424/?fref=ts>
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2016b). Retrieved August 2, 2016, from Facebook @saengkaewphothiyan posted July 19, 2016, Website: <https://www.facebook.com/วัดแสงแก้วโพธิญาณ-111979062216424/?fref=ts>
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2016c). Retrieved September 10, 2016, from Facebook @saengkaewphothiyan posted September 7, 2016, Website: <https://www.facebook.com/วัดแสงแก้วโพธิญาณ-111979062216424/?fref=ts>
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2016d). Retrieved September 10, 2016, from Facebook @saengkaewphothiyan posted September 8, 2016, Website: <https://www.facebook.com/วัดแสงแก้วโพธิญาณ-111979062216424/?fref=ts>
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2016e). Retrieved November 10, 2016, from Facebook @saengkaewphothiyan posted November 10, 2016, Website: <https://www.facebook.com/วัดแสงแก้วโพธิญาณ-111979062216424/?fref=ts>
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2016f). Retrieved November 15, 2016, from Facebook @saengkaewphothiyan posted November 13, 2016, Website: <https://www.facebook.com/วัดแสงแก้วโพธิญาณ-111979062216424/?fref=ts>
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2017g). Retrieved January 17, 2017, from Facebook @saengkaewphothiyan posted January 14, 2017, Website: <https://www.facebook.com/วัดแสงแก้วโพธิญาณ-111979062216424/?fref=ts>
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2017h). Retrieved January 17, 2017, from Facebook @saengkaewphothiyan posted February 14, 2017, Website: <https://www.facebook.com/วัดแสงแก้วโพธิญาณ-111979062216424/?fref=ts>
- watsangkaew.com. (2010). Prawat khrua ariyachart ariyacitto doey yor [A brief biography of Khrua Ariyachart Ariyacitto]. Retrieved June 16, 2015, from watsangkaew.com Website: <http://www.watsangkaew.com/webboard/index.php?PHPSESSID=6660d3ae6a2b4eb0a7d979be3df724d9&topic=33.0>
- watsangkae, YouTube Channel. (2010a). *Khruba yeun malaysia* 1-2 [Khrua Visits Malaysia] 28 July 2010. Retrieved November 10, 2016, from watsangkae Website: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsxOzPxpBRA>
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2010b) *Khruba yeun malaysia* 1-1 [Khrua Visits Malaysia] 13 August 2010. Retrieved November 10, 2016, from watsangkae Website: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tog2p\\_QhiJQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tog2p_QhiJQ)
- Watsridonmoon. (2016). Retrieved July 20, 2016, from Facebook @Watsridonmoon posted July 19, 2016, Website: <https://www.facebook.com/Watsridonmoon/?fref=ts>

## Interview

- Interview Miss Sally 14 September 2015
- Interview Maeliang Kai 24 October 2015, 3-4 November 2015
- Interview one senior devotee of Khrua Noi 31 October 2015
- Interview female devotee of Khrua Noi 1 November 2015
- Interview Nong Man 4-5 November 2015

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

Interview *Nong* Man's mother 4-5 November 2015  
Interview *Nong* Man's father 4-5 November 2015  
Interview Phra Songkran 5 November 2015  
Interview *Na* Siripa 7 November 2015  
Interview one key devotee of Khruba Ariyachart 7 November 2015  
Interview head of event organizer in Khruba Ariyachat's *Thot Kathin* Festival 7 November 2015  
Interview Phra-acan Sirisak (Papassorncitto) 24 November 2015  
Interview Khruba Samnuan 18 February 2016  
Interview Khruba Noi 4 March 2016  
Interview Khong 7 September 2016

## How to Maintain the Passion for Da'wa Movement - from the Case of Pai Town

Nishii, Ryoko

Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa  
Tokyo University of Foreign Studies  
Japan

---

### Abstract

On the streets of Pai town in Thailand, women in full black veils zip their scooters around backpackers, wandering Chinese tourists - who started flowing in two years ago because of a locally filmed TV drama - as well as hill tribes such as Tai Yai and Lisu so on. Pai also attracts artists from all over the country. A resident painter gushed about the different peoples co-existing peacefully in Pai. This does not seem to be new. One Thai Buddhist living in Pai after retiring from the U.S. told me of Pai's history as a trading nexus for hill tribes and Chinese Muslims. Muslims in Pai are almost all of Chinese descent, and most engage in the Da'wa movement. Da'wa's education system for Muslims in Pai is unique in that it consists primarily of home schooling, with hired teachers or volunteers teaching English, Arabic, mathematics, and so on. 67-year-old Ko Tui brought the Da'wa movement to Pai, is responsible for its Islamic schooling, and is also Imam (religious leader) of the Pai Mosque. He first attended Da'wa aged 27 with Haji Yusof of Mae Sot, who was instrumental in introducing the Da'wa movement to Thailand. Da'wa routine currently involves visiting Pai Muslims on Wednesday afternoons, and visiting Muslims outside Pai on Thursday afternoons. Active Da'wa members are young: 15 to 20 persons around 30-40 years old, with only two in their fifties. They undertake three day journeys every month to the north parts of Thailand. I interviewed one of Pai's most devout members who described himself before Da'wa as a 'hippie' who drank alcohol and neglected the five daily prayers. His life-transforming experiences are an interesting case study of involvement with the Da'wa movement.

**Keywords:** Muslim community, Da'wa movement, Tablighi Jama'at, Pai

### 1. Introduction

In Thailand, the most popular Da'wa movement is Tablighi Jama'at<sup>90</sup>. However, I use 'Da'wa' - how villagers refer to such activities in Thailand – instead.

'Tablighi' is the root verbal form of 'tabligh', which connotes reaching one's destination, to arrive, to

---

<sup>90</sup>Several other observers have mentioned this movement. For example, it is referred to in Malaysia as 'Jemaah Tabligh' (Nakazawa 1988) and 'Jema'ah Tabligh' (Nagata 1980), in Thailand as 'Jema'ah Tabligh' (Preeda 2001), and in South India as 'Tablighi Jama'at' (Masud 2000) (Oishi 20029) and Tablighi Jama'at (Afmad 1991). I use the original Urdu term for the movement in this paper. Furthermore, as most Thai villagers call this movement 'Da'wa', when they go on a Tablighi journey they say 'ork da'wa' (going *da'wa*). *Da'wa* in Malaysia is called 'Dakwah' (Shamusul 1997, Nakazawa 1988).



achieve one's objective, to come to hear, or to come of age. In modern Urdu 'tabligh' has come to mean 'mission' or 'to proselytize'. However, probably to avoid this particular sense of 'tabligh' and 'da'wa', the Tablighi Jama'at defines 'tabligh' without reference to conversion (Masud 2000a: xx–xxi). Rather than literally "calling others toward one's religion", the avowed purpose of the Tablighi Jama'at is to bring about spiritual revival among Muslims themselves. Tablighi Jama'at calls Muslims back to Islam through regular Islamic practice modeled upon the life of Prophet Mohammad (Preeda 2001:110)<sup>91</sup>.

While there is some controversy about when Tablighi Jama'at actually began its work, most researchers agree that the founder Mawlana<sup>92</sup> Llyas began his activities in the mid-1920s. Some report that Mawlana Llyas began Tablighi in Mewat to the south of Delhi in Central India some time after his return from Hajj in 1926 (Masud 2000b:9). The historical headquarters of the Tablighi Jama'at is at Nizamud Din in Delhi, India. The movement currently operates in more than 80 countries (Masud 2000a: vii). The movement's annual gatherings in many counties are generally well-attended. The largest congregation occurs in Raiwind, just outside Lahore in Pakistan, accommodating over a million people under makeshift arrangements (Azmi 2000:239). In effect, "The Raiwind International Conference of the Tablighi Jama'at has become the second-largest congregation of the Muslim world after the Haji" (Masud 2000a: vi) (Ahmad 1991:510). At the same time, the importance of Raiwind in Pakistan as a decision-making center is said to be growing (Gaborieau 2000:130).

The Da'wa movement is reputed to have been spreading throughout Thailand since the 1980s. Its introduction around 40 years ago is usually attributed to Haji Yusuf Kan, a resident of Mae Sot (Saowani 1988:239, Nishii 2016:111-112). He is said to have been of Indian Muslim origin, and died in 2000. In August and September 2007, while researching Muslim communities in Chiang Mai, I discovered that the Da'wa movement had spread earlier into Northern Thailand than into other areas, including Southern Thailand, where the majority of Thai Muslims live<sup>93</sup>. Many Muslims in Chiang Mai knew Haji Yusuf Kan personally, and informed me that 20 to 30 years ago, most Muslims in their communities were attending Da'wa activities. There are presently two main Da'wa (Tablighi Jama'at) centers in Bangkok (Minburi) and Yala. 30 years ago, there was no center at Yala.

Bai T, a Muslim interviewee of Indian origin living in the Chang Klang community, told me in 2007 that when he was 22 years old he first encountered Tablighi Jama'at members of Indian origin who had come from South Africa. They kept to themselves at Chang Klang mosque and did not try to preach to or convert others. After that, other groups came from Sri Lanka.

Haji Yusuf used his influence (*ithipphon*) to propagate Da'wa all over Northern Thailand. Bai T told me that Haji Yusuf's son had become addicted to drugs, but when he returned after four months traveling in a Da'wa group, he had become a good Muslim. This transformation so impressed Haji

---

<sup>91</sup> Gaborieau writes, '...scholars also drew attention to the fact that the Jama'at no longer aimed only at helping Muslims to strengthen their faith: it also attempts, often with success, to convert non-Muslims to Islam.' (Gaborieau 2000:121). This new tendency has not yet become apparent in Southern Thailand, although village rumor has it that missions to convert hill people in Northern Thailand have succeeded in a few villages.

<sup>92</sup> 'Mawlana' is an honorific, meaning 'our master' in Arabic.

<sup>93</sup> According to Thai government statistics, Muslims account for 4.6% of Thailand's population. The remaining 95.4% are almost all Buddhist (National Statistics Office, 2014). Concentrated in the four border provinces on the Malay Peninsula, two-thirds of Thai Muslims live in the south of Thailand. There, Muslims comprise 60% to 80% of the total population in each of the four provinces.

Yusuf that he mobilized many Muslims in Northern Thailand to spread Da'wa<sup>94</sup>.

Initially, the movement spread among ethnic Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Indian Muslims in the city. It later spread into villages. To this day, the movement uses peculiar words of Urdu origin in referring to their activities, organization, and institutions. Their distinctive style of dress, such as long robes, also follows the South Asian Muslim style, and differs from that worn by local Muslims in Thailand. Locals recognize Da'wa adherents when they see them in these robes.

## 2. Two Types of Communities

Comparative studies of the Da'wa movement clearly show that Muslim communities in Thailand are not monolithic. There are at least two distinct types of community, which mirror differences in the interactions between existing religious leaders and newer Da'wa leadership. In the course of researching the Da'wa movement in several Muslim communities, I found varying relationships between Da'wa and more conventional Mosque groups, depending on the leadership style of the local Imam (Muslim community leader). Broadly speaking, I found that these relationships resulted in two types of community: 1) Da'wa and Mosque groups integrated into one central community, and 2) both groups acting independently, each with separate ideals and ways of teaching.

In Type 1 communities, the mosque leader and Da'wa leader are usually one and the same person, relying on the Da'wa movement to invigorate the Muslim community. I will now describe some such Southern Thailand communities.

Imam (religious leader) Phon (37 years old in a 2007 interview) lived in Satun on the Thai-Malaysian border and had gone on Da'wa journeys since he was 12 years old. His uncle introduced him to Da'wa activities. When he came to the village at the age of 21 through marrying a local village girl, he became Imam of the village mosque which served 200 Muslim households. In those days, Muslims in the village drank alcohol, gambled, and did not attend mosque. Only around 15 households attended twice-yearly mosque festivals. Fewer attended Friday group prayers. Imam Phon actively approached villagers to come to mosque. He persisted through a lot of rejection and insults by trying to see the good side of people. Through his efforts, the Friday mosque is now full of villagers coming to pray. Many of these villagers have also become involved in the Da'wa movement. For Imam Phon's villagers, becoming a good Muslim has become synonymous with following Da'wa. A similar case comes from Trang village in the north part of Satun (Ogawa 2016:67-69). The Da'wa group first entered the village in 1978. In those days, villagers did not practice Islam sincerely, and were only nominal Muslims. The Imam attended Da'wa activities and came to see it as "the true Islam". He successfully encouraged many of his fellow villagers to attend Da'wa activities, which they continue with to this day. The case of Trang village supports the idea that when religious leaders endorse and lead Da'wa activities, their parishioners unquestioningly consider Da'wa activities to be legitimate Islamic activities.

---

<sup>94</sup> Muslims in Chiang Mai are often classified into two major groups: Subcontinental Muslims and Yunnanese Muslims (Suthep 1977, Scupin 1980). Tablighi Jama'at spread first to Subcontinental Muslims, then to other Muslims, including the Yunnanese.

Type 2 communities – where Da'wa and Mosque groups remain separate – can be found in Chiang Mai and Mae Sot.

Although the Da'wa movement had spread into northern Thailand earlier than into other areas – Muslims in Chiang Mai were attending Da'wa activities twenty to thirty years ago and many knew Haji Yusuf Kan personally – most of Chiang Mai's early Da'wa members have stopped participating. Da'wa still remains somewhat popular in Chiang Mai, with enthusiastic newer participants.

Mae Sot was the entry point for the Da'wa movement into Thailand, being situated on the Thai-Myanmar border, between the South Asian and Southeast Asian worlds. Many Muslims trace their origins to Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India, including Haji Yusuf Kan who was of Indian origin. It seems natural that the Da'wa movement, which started in India, would enter Thailand through Mae Sot.

But sentiment in present day Mae Sot about the Da'wa movement is mixed. While it is said that more than 90 percent of Muslims in Mae Sot have been on Da'wa, not everyone is an enthusiastic or even willing participant. One Mae Sot Muslim reckoned an even split between those who think Da'wa beneficial and those who do not.

One enthusiast said, "Da'wa teaches us to practice good things and avoid bad things." Another said, "The purpose of Da'wa is personal practice. It is more about practice than about speaking." One characteristic tenet of Da'wa is that travel is the most effective means of personal reform. This involves travel in groups of at least ten persons, staying a few days at one mosque before moving on to another. These 'retreats' vary in duration: three days, forty days, up to four months. Da'wa adherents say that separation from their daily lives reminds them of Islamic teaching and practice, and that this transforms them. This practice evokes anti-Da'wa sentiment. A typical criticism is that Da'wa participants abandon spouses and children to go on their journeys, leaving families hungry while chasing personal salvation.

Similar criticism also heard from the Imam of the oldest and biggest mosque in Mae Sot, who studied in Libya for seven years. He told me that "Da'wa" used to mean promoting knowledge of Islam as a way of life. The purpose of Da'wa activities in his father's time was to contribute to the Islamic community through spreading Islamic knowledge. Comparatively, the present day aim of Da'wa seems to be personal salvation.

From these differences arise two points. First, most Type 1 communities into which existing Muslim leaders accepted or introduced the Da'wa movement often had weak Islamic education systems before Da'wa arrived, leaving a vacuum for Da'wa to be welcomed credulously as an opportunity to study Islam and practice being a good Muslim. However, communities with Islamic leaders who had either studied in the middle east or held established, intellectual links with orthodox Islam tended to be skeptical of Da'wa, which originated in South Asia. They often criticized Da'wa for not being a legitimate theory of Islam.

Secondly, Da'wa – and Islamic practice on the whole – in the region seems to be moving around. As in Satun and Chiang Mai, the passion for Da'wa activities present 20 or 30 years ago appears to have moved elsewhere, instead of simply dying out. One enthusiastic Da'wa leader in Satun likened the spread of the Da'wa movement to a fire: a blaze dying in one place may still spread to another.

From these considerations comes the question of why Da'wa fades in some communities but not in others. An answer may be found in the Da'wa movement in Pai town, which has remained very active for 30 years, with no sign of diminishing. This paper consider how to maintain the passion for

Da'wa movement in Pai for exploring the immanent force of dynamism of the movement.

### **3. The Da'wa Movement in Pai**

#### **1. Overview of Pai Town**

Pai has a Type 1 Muslim community. The leader of mosque personally introduced the Da'wa movement to his congregation.

A Chiang Mai Muslim told me that all Muslims in Pai were devout Da'wa adherents, and that Pai Muslim women all covered their faces with black veils. I wondered how they maintained their devotion to Da'wa even as the movement declined in nearby Chiang Mai.

In August 2015, I arrived in Pai after a 4-5 hour drive from Chiang Mai. I immediately noticed women in full black veils, zipping their scooters around backpackers, wandering Chinese tourists (who started flowing in two years earlier because of a locally filmed TV drama) as well as Thai Yai, Lisu, and other hill tribes-people. Pai also attracts artists from all over the country. A resident painter gushed about the different peoples co-existing peacefully in Pai. This does not seem recent. One Thai Buddhist living in Pai after retiring from the U.S. told me of Pai's history as a trading nexus for hill tribes and Chinese Muslims.

Muslims in Pai are almost all of Chinese descent and most of them engage in Da'wa. Ko Tui (67 years old in 2015) brought the Da'wa movement to Pai, and is also Imam of the Pai Mosque. He first went on Da'wa aged 27 with Haji Yusuf Kan (mentioned previously) of Mae Sot, who was instrumental in introducing the Da'wa movement to Thailand. Ko Tui is famous as a Muslim leader, and has been the Northern Thailand delegate of the Islamic Committee of Thailand for many years, as well as a distinguished Da'wa leader.

Approximately 60 Muslim households dwell in Pai town, according to estimates derived from several interviews of Pai Mosque members. Pai district recorded 12,832 households in 2015. But although Pai Muslims are few, their presence in Pai town is strong. Pai Mosque is situated in the center of the town and there are many shops around the mosque, including souvenir shops, bakeries, and restaurants.

#### **2. Da'wa Activities**

Pai Da'wa membership tends to be young: 15 to 20 persons around 30-40 years old, with only two in their fifties. They undertake three-day journeys every month to northern parts of Thailand. In Pai, there is no distinction in terms of religious value between Da'wa activities and religious practice at the mosque. The Muslim community seems to be inseparable from the Da'wa community.

Pai's Da'wa community runs a unique education system. The system consists primarily of providing home schooling, with hired teachers or volunteers teaching English, Arabic, mathematics, and so on. They began in 1987, when one of Ko Tui's grand-daughter graduated elementary school. She did not want to go to a co-ed junior high school, where boys and girls studied together. Furthermore, she and her parents worried that the school would not be able to accommodate her obligatory worship. Her mother, Ko Tui's daughter-in-law Anon, had just quit her job as an English teacher to be a stay-at-home mom, in accordance with Da'wa teaching. Anon set up a Da'wa-tailored home-school for her daughter, but soon extended it to other students. At first they began with 5 students. It has grown to provide 2-year junior high school and 2-year high school courses. (Conventional junior high and high school courses run for 3 years each.) The Da'wa school teaches Islam every day from 8:30

to 15:30. Other subjects include mathematics, science, sociology, Thai, and English. Anon told me that there was no need for physical education, because women should get their daily exercise through housework.

#### **4. Various Pai Muslim community Members**

Two families dominate the Pai Muslim community: Ko Tui's family and Usto's. Apart from these two families, the community includes the minority of Muslims who do not attend Da'wa, and newcomers from outside who join the Da'wa community. Following are descriptions of their various ways of life.

##### **1. Ko Tui's Family**

###### ***Ko Tui (age: 67<sup>95</sup>)***

When he was 5 years old in 1954, Ko Tui's family moved to Pai from Chiang Mai. His father was Chinese Muslim from Yunnan and had married in China. In 1949 he found that he could not return to China from Thailand because the Chinese Communist Party had gained power. In those days, there were only two Muslim households in Pai. The other family also had a Chinese Muslim husband, with a Thai Yai wife who converted to Islam. However, the Thai Yai wife and her children reverted back to their original religion after her husband died. Ko Tui's father married the daughter of a Chinese Muslim father and a Thai-Indian mother. He engaged in the sugar and salt trade between Chiang Mai and Pai. Ko Tui was the eldest son, with two younger sisters and two younger brothers. All of them stayed in Pai and had many grandchildren, growing into one of Pai's big families.

Ko Tui married a Chinese-Muslim wife whose father was an army officer escaping from Communist China. They had seven children: three girls, then three boys. The eldest child married a doctor living in Maesai on the Thai-Myanmar border. Her husband is active in Da'wa. The second helped run the family business in Pai. The third moved to Chiang Mai with a husband who had studied in Medina, Saudi Arabia. The fourth child devotes their time to Da'wa activities in Pai. The fifth studied in Pakistan for eight years and, failing to obtain a British visa, studied Islam in South Africa for 3 years. Now he is preparing for a one year Da'wa journey to India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. The sixth studied in Malaysia for 3 years and recently departed for Pakistan. The seventh boy, 16 years at the time of interview, studied in Bangladesh after graduating from elementary school in Pai.

Ko Tui's family appears to be a wide, international network.

###### ***Islh (age: 31)***

I got to know Islh, Ko Tui's nephew, after a Chiang Mai Muslim boasted about a blind Thai boy winning a Qu'ran contest in Saudi Arabia, and showed me YouTube video of Islh being interviewed after winning.

Islh began his studies in Phatthalung and Yala in south Thailand, for about 6 months at each place. He then studied in South Africa from age 14 to 22 at the Madorasa Nor Islamic school for the blind. Such schools are rare, but Madorasa Nor has grown from 10 students at inception to about 30-40 at present. Islh's mother, the aforementioned Anon, is Ko Tui's daughter-in-law and a home-school teacher in Pai. Anon herself has a Bangladeshi father and a Thai Muslim mother. She is the youngest of 13 children and has 3 children of her own. Islh's oldest sibling, a sister who married a Muslim

---

<sup>95</sup>The age of interviewee at time of interview in 1995.

from Phatthalung, now runs a bakery near Pai Mosque. Isllh was referred to Madorasa Nor by the principal of his brother's school in Sri Lanka. Isllh and his brother were sent to study in South Africa, although at different schools because his brother was not blind. An Indian businessman in South Africa supported their schooling, and their parents only paid for their flight.

While studying at Madorasa Nor, Isllh was selected by visiting Saudi officials to enter a Qu'ran contest. Flying with a Saudi airline, Isllh made a stopover in Saudi Arabia on the way home and won the contest. When I met Isllh, he told me that the interview I saw in Chiang Mai was recorded as he was being taken to see a blind friend in Scotland 6-15 years previously, then uploaded to YouTube.

## **2. Usto's Family**

### ***Usto (age: 56)***

Usto is the second of nine children. His family came to Pai 37 years ago. While one sibling has moved to Taiwan and another to Chiang Mai, Usto and the others stayed in Pai.

'Usto' is a nickname, which comes from '*ustaz*' or 'Islamic intellectual'. He earned the moniker through a career which included teaching Islam. He told me that he is multilingual in Burmese, Arab, Urdu, English Chinese, Thai-Yai, and Thai. He became a broker for prospective Chinese *hajis* (Muslim pilgrims) in 1995. Saudi Arabia allocates each country a number of persons for the annual *Hajj* pilgrimage to Mecca. As the number of Chinese hajis consistently exceeds China's allocation, Usto arranged for them to make their pilgrimage through a transit country. He continued this job until 2008 when China prohibited the practice in preparation for the Beijing Olympic Games. Over his 14 years in the role, Usto arranged about 1300 visas, taking around 50 U.S. dollars in fees from each client.

Usto's wife was a Buddhist from Yunnan province in southern China who converted to Islam upon marriage. Her parents were Buddhist, and her maternal grandmother converted from Islam to Buddhism. Usto has 5 children. At the time of interview, the eldest son, aged 19, was studying Islam in Bangkok. His second and third sons, aged 17 and 15, had studied in Malaysia for 3 years, with the former in Bangkok and the latter returning to Pai. Usto's fourth and fifth children were daughters, aged 9 and 6, studying Arabic and Chinese in Pai. Usto's family's activity also extends beyond national borders.

## **3. Others**

### ***Ko Et (age: 62)***

Ko Et's family is the only family I met in Pai that that participates in mosque activities without getting involved with Da'wa. Ko Et's wife was the only Muslim woman I met in Pai who was not veiled<sup>96</sup>

Ko Et and family came to Pai in 1964, before Usto's family. However, his family ties to Pai are not as strong. Of his 5 siblings and children, only Ko Et and his third sister – an unmarried teacher – remain in Pai. Ko Et's father was Yunnanese Muslim from China, who married in Chiang Mai to a woman with an Indian father and a Thai Muslim mother. Ko Et stayed in Chiang Mai after graduating high school in 1970 and returned to Pai in 1975. He married a Buddhist wife whose mother converted to Islam from Buddhism in 1985. He was 30 at the time, and his wife 28. She graduated university in Bangkok.

---

<sup>96</sup> Some Muslim newcomers, e.g. many artists, are not involved in the Muslim community at all.

Ko Et made Chinese pancakes for early morning sales at the Pai market. Ko Et's eldest daughter was a teacher in Chiang Mai. His second daughter also taught in Hua Hin in central Thailand. His third and only son was studying in Chiang Rai.

In Ko Et's case, I feel that his main concerns lay outside Pai. All of his children and most of his siblings lived outside Pai and he often traveled to Chiang Mai to visit his children and relatives.

***Faisan (age: 48)***

Faisan was born in Bangkok. His father was a local *Imam*. He studied at a polytechnic and worked as a skin designer, becoming an independent entrepreneur. After 8 years, he began wandering all over Thailand to search for meaning in his life. He wore long hair, drank beer, and never went to mosque or practiced Islam.

He came to Pai several years ago and supported himself by running a local guest house. While he lived his 'hippie' lifestyle, drinking alcohol and neglecting the five daily prayers, Da'wa members began to visit him. They talked to him persistently about Islam, and helped him with his difficulties. After 2 years, he changed drastically, becoming one of Pai's most active Da'wa members. He now attends daily Da'wa meetings and visits fellow Muslims every day. He also goes on 3-day Da'wa journeys every month, and has gone on longer journeys lasting up to 40 days.

## **5. Conclusion**

The characteristics of the Pai Muslim community go some way to explaining why the Pai Da'wa community is as active as it was 30 years ago, instead of fading after one generation, as it has in other locations.

First, Pai's Muslim community is small, consisting of two large families and other households, counting about 60 households only. Its small size has allowed it to become an intertwined, intimate network, with close relations that are exercised daily.

Secondly, Pai's Da'wa network is global, allowing new ideas and opportunities from outside the village and the nation to flow into, and re-invigorate the community, as was the case with Ko Tui's and Usto's families. This idea is reinforced by Isllh, who said at our 1 August 2015 interview, "The Pai network has merged (*chuamyon*) with the Chiang Mai network, merged with the Bangkok network, and so on internationally."

Finally, newcomers from outside are a source of new fuel for Da'wa. Pai attracts many tourists and artists. Faisan's case is one example of how the Pai Muslim community can attract new members and keep developing.

In conclusion, a long lasting Da'wa community seems to be one that has adopted an independent life of its own, using various complementary means to attract and maintain passionate supporters. This would be the key to understand the dynamism of the Da'wa movement. The movement should be open to revitalizing influences from outside beyond its border, to maintain the vitality of the movement.

## References

- Afmad, M. (1991). Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia: The Jamaat-i-Islami and the Tablighi Jamaat of South Asia. In Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Eds.), *Fundamentalisms Observed, The Fundamentalism*. Project Volume 1. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, pp. 457–530.
- Azmi, S. H. (2000). A movement or a Jama'at? Tablighi Jama'at in Canada. In M. Masud (Ed.), *Travellers in faith: Studies of the Tablighi Jama'at as a translational Islamic movement for faith renewal* (pp. 222-239). Boston: Brill.
- Gaboricau, M. (2000). The transformation of Tablighi Jam'at into a transnational movement. In M. Masud (Ed.), *Travellers in faith: Studies of the Tablighi Jama'at as a transnational Islamic movement for faith renewal* (pp. 121-138). Boston: Brill.
- Ikeda, A. (2017). Ogawa Hisashi. Dynamism over the "True" Islam: Religious Ethnography of a Muslim Village in Southern Thailand. Osaka: Osaka University Press, 2016, ix+260p. *Tonan Ajia Kenkyu*, vol. 54, no. 2: 274-275.
- Masud, M. K. (2000). Introduction. In Muhammad Khalid Masud (ed.), *Travellers in Faith: Studies of the Tablighi Jama'at as a Transnational Movement for Faith Renewal* (pp. viii-ix). Leiden, Brill.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2000). The growth and development of the Tablighi Jama'at in India. In M. Masud (Ed.), *Travellers in faith: Studies of the Tablighi Jama'at as a transnational Islamic movement for faith renewal* (pp. 3-43). Boston: Brill.
- Marty, M. E., & Appleby, R.S. (1991). *Fundamentalisms observed*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Nakazawa, M. (1988). *Jemaah Tabligh: Malay Islam Genrishugi Undo Shiron Jemaah Tabligh*. Essay on Malay Islam Fundamentalism, in *Malaysia shakai Ronshu 1*, a comparative Study on the Modes of Inter-Action in Multi-Ethnic Societies, Institute for the Study of Language and Cultures of Asia and Africa (pp. 73–106). Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.
- Nagata, J.(1980). The New Fundamentalism: Islam in Contemporary Malaysia. *Asian Thought and Society*, vol. 5: 128-141.
- Nishi, R. (2016). The Muslim community in Mae Sot. In T. Shigeharu (Ed.), *Communities of potential: Social assemblages in Thailand and beyond* (pp. 107-127). Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.
- Oishi, T. (2002). Tablighi Jama'a. In Otuka et al (eds.), *Iwanami Islam jiten*, Tokyo, Iwanami shoten, pp. 613.
- Otsuka, K. (2002). *Iwanami Isuramu jiten*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Prapertchob, P. (2001). Islam and civil society in Thailand: The role of NGOs. In S. Siddique, M. Nakamura & O. Farouk (Ed.), *Islam and Civil Society in Southeast Asia* (pp. 104-116). Singapore: Institute Asian Studies.
- Saowani, C., & Klum C. (1988). *Chao Tai Muslim*. Bangkok: Kongthun Sangaruchiraamphon.
- Scupin, R. (1980). The Politics of Islamic Reformism in Thailand. *Asian Survey*, vol. 20, no. 12: 1223-1235.
- Shamsul, A. B. (1997). Identity construction, Nation Formation, and Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia. In H. Robert & P. Horvatic (Ed.), *Islam in an era of nation-states: politics and religious renewal in Muslim Southeast Asia* (pp. 207-227). Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Soonthornpasuk, S. (1997). *Islamic identity in Chiang Mai city: A historical and structural comparison of two communities*. Berkeley: University of California.



## **The Poetics of Destructions: Demolitions of Iconic Modernist Buildings in Bangkok**

**Noobanjong, Koompong**

King Mongkut's Institute of Technology, Ladkrabang  
Thailand

---

### **Abstract**

Whereas the creations of modern architecture in Siam and Thailand were extensively examined, the demolitions of these structures did not seem to capture a similar level of intellectual attention. Since the dawn of the new millennium, however, not only had several academic publications provided alternative narratives against the Euro-centric view on the history of modern architecture as deviations from Modernism in the West, but also incorporated studies on the destructions of some iconic Modernist buildings in Bangkok, including those commissioned by the People's Party (or Khana Ratsadon).

Fostered by the abovementioned developments, this research presented a critical inquiry on the obliterations of three prominent public Modernist structures in the capital city, encompassing two main scholarly foci. Via discourse and semiological analyses, the investigations revealed that the demolitions of Chaloemthai Theater in 1989 and the Supreme Court Building in 2013 resulted from collaborative efforts by the conservative elites in eradicating the cultural legacies of the People's Party. In contrast, the destruction of the Department of Public Relations Headquarters in 1992 exemplified a bloody struggle by ordinary citizens in overthrowing a military regime, which became entrenched in the collective memories of many Thais.

By utilizing the politics of representations and discourse of Thainess as a mode of problematization, the upcoming discussions illustrated that there was nothing intrinsic to associations between modern architecture and political ideologies. Modernist structures did not contain any form of power by themselves. They were, in fact, employed by the state as a strategic device to assert, legitimize, and maintain power via allusions to ideologies and construction of the Thai identity. Yet, through a discursive mode of significations, the symbolism and iconography of those edifices could also serve interests for which they were not originally intended, as shown by the changes of meanings leading to their demolitions.

**Keywords:** Modern Architecture in Thailand, Politics of Representations, Contested Space, Thainess, The People's Party and Junta Regimes, Historiography

## Introduction

Whereas the creations of modern architecture in Siam and Thailand were extensively researched, demolitions of Modernist structures did not quite receive the same level of scholarly attentions. In spite of their historical importance and values as cultural artifacts, the stigmatic view in that these buildings were too old to be preserved, yet too new to be remembered seemed to prevail in the collective Thai psyche.<sup>97</sup>

Since the dawn of the new millennium, however, several investigations undertaken by Thai and foreign academics alike had produced valuable contributions to the corpus of knowledge on the historiography of modern architecture in Siam and Thailand. Some had provided alternative narratives against the Euro-centric view on modern architecture as a deviation of Modernism in the West with adjustments to suit local climates and cultures of Thailand (Fusinpaiboon, 2014, pp. 8-10). Fostered by these developments, both the creations and demolitions of Modernist buildings--especially the ones erected by the People's Party (Khana Ratsadon) between 1932 and 1947--had increasingly become the subjects of studies, resulting in publications of many penetrating inquiries.<sup>98</sup>

In a corollary view to those contemporary studies, this research presented a critical inquiry on the obliterations of three prominent public Modernist edifices in the capital city, consisting of two major arguments. Via discourse and semiological analyses, the investigations revealed that the demolitions of Chaloemthai Theater in 1989 and the Supreme Court Buildings in 2013 were caused by collaborative efforts of the conservative elites in eradicating the cultural legacies of the People's Party from the collective memories of the Thais. In contrast, the destruction of the Department of Public Relations Headquarters in 1992 exemplified a contested space wherein ordinary citizens struggled to overthrow an oppressive military regime from power.

By utilizing the politics of representations as a mode of problematization, the upcoming discussions also illustrated the following propositions. First, all the three case studies represented conscious undertakings by the state to assert, legitimize, and maintain hegemonic power, through which architecture performed as *media par excellent*. Via ideological allusions, the said Modernist structures gave the ruling authorities a definitive shape and force to pursue their political agenda and to construct the national and cultural identity known as Thainess, or *khwampenthai*. Second, their novel architectural characteristics and representational contents were shaped by--as much shaped--the social, cultural, political, and economic contexts that brought them into existence. Third, there was nothing intrinsic to associations between modern architecture and political ideologies. As exhibited by the commissions and demolitions of Chaloemthai Theater, Department of Public Relations Headquarters, and Supreme Court Buildings, Modernist buildings did not contain

---

<sup>97</sup> As epistemologically demonstrated by a couple of seminal works on the history of modern architecture in Thailand. See: (Horayangkura, Indravichit, Chantavilasong, and Inpuntung, 1993); (Tiptus, 1996). Modernist edifices were widely explored in terms of physical descriptions, as well as formal and stylistic analyses. Nevertheless, coherent and perceptive explanations on the socio-political factors leading to the destructions of some iconic buildings in Bangkok were still missing from a number of key academic literatures published during the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>98</sup> Examples could be seen from pioneering scholarly works such as (Noobanjong, 2003); (Noobanjong 2013a); (Prakitnondhakarn, 2004); (Prakitnondhakarn, 2009); (Wong, 2006), coupled with recent master's theses as well as doctoral dissertations, such as (Sirikiatikul, 2007); (Chua, 2012); (Fusinpaiboon, 2014).

any form of power by themselves--neither inherently subjugating, empowering, nor emancipating--but were employed by their creators to create such meanings. Nonetheless, while those built forms were used as a strategic device to mediate power, their symbolism and iconography sometimes ironically served political interests for which they were not originally intended through a discursive mode of significations (See: Bentley, 1999, p. 16).

Informed by critical and semiological theories, the thematic discussions evolved around two main foci. Initially, the three edifices were examined for their original roles as a means of power meditation for the state, as a material manifestation of the ideological views of the ruling authorities on the Thai nationhood, and as a propagandistic tool to express the Thai identities. Subsequently, the scholarly attentions shifted to investigating the three case studies in terms of a contested space, whose meanings were altered by means of semantic re-appropriations from both the state and ordinary citizens, resulting in their physical demises.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

By perceiving architecture as a system of signs, a remark could be made that buildings signified their meanings through representations in the same way as proper names (the signified) stood for the objects denoted by them (the signifier) (For instance, see: Saussure, 1966, pp. 14, 65, 68-69, 112-113). Because the meanings were given, along with the practices that created them, the uses of stylistic elements presupposed the practices aimed to provide justifications for architectural designs and significations (Goodman, 1968, pp. 1-12).

For state-sponsored architecture like the Department of Public Relations Headquarters, Supreme Court Buildings, and Chaloemthai Theater, the practice of power mediation signified its meanings that were interpreted by, as much as become interpretations of, other signs, buildings, or texts. In effect, the symbolism and iconography of these edifices became a "discourse" for mediating power (See: Habermas, 1972 for detailed theoretical reviews).

According to Foucault (1972), discourse was a construction of subjectivity within certain historical, social and cultural systems of knowledge in a society. Just as the subject was produced by, and must operate within, the laws of language, a discourse generated a subject equally dependent upon the rules of the system of knowledge that generated it. Discourse was used to legitimate the exercise of power and therefore was always associated with desire, but these links had to be masked if the desire and power were to be manifested (pp. 86, 140-141).

Dovey (1999) elaborated that the masking of power in built forms resulted from rapid changes in political situations, requiring swift moves from one method of exercising power to another to conceal itself in the transitional process. Since a naked will to power was morally unacceptable, one's rise to power must be legitimized and portrayed as the common good of a society, which was normally carried out through an allusion to ideologies (p. 15).

With respect to architectural and urban designs, buildings and public space propagating political contents usually operated under an ideological guise via the creation of identity: a projection of specific characteristics that could mobilize people to come together to express their solidarity and feeling of belonging, which could be politically exploited. Nevertheless, the identification ascribed to an ideology did not present any intrinsic quality of it, but simply represented what it created: a discourse for power mediation (Ibid., pp. 16-19). Notwithstanding such complexities, examining the dialogue between architecture, power, identity, and ideology remains quintessential to understand

both the creations and demolitions of the three case studies, as demonstrated by the below discussions.

### The Commissions of Supreme Court Buildings, Chaloemthai Theater, and Department of Public Relations Headquarters

Constructed between 1939 and 1963, the geneses of these edifices along with their politics of representations can be succinctly elucidated as the followings.

#### The Construction of the Supreme Court

The Supreme Court Buildings were commissioned by the People's Party-led administration. Its key members consisted of foreign-educated military personnel and civil servants--collectively known as

Khana Ratsadon--who staged a bloodless *coup d'état* triggering the revolution that terminated the age of absolute monarchy in Siam on June 24, 1932.<sup>99</sup> Situated north of the Grand Place next to the City Pillar Shrine at the eastern edge of the Royal Field (Sanam Luang), the courthouses occupied a prominent position in the urban fabric of Historic Bangkok.<sup>100</sup>

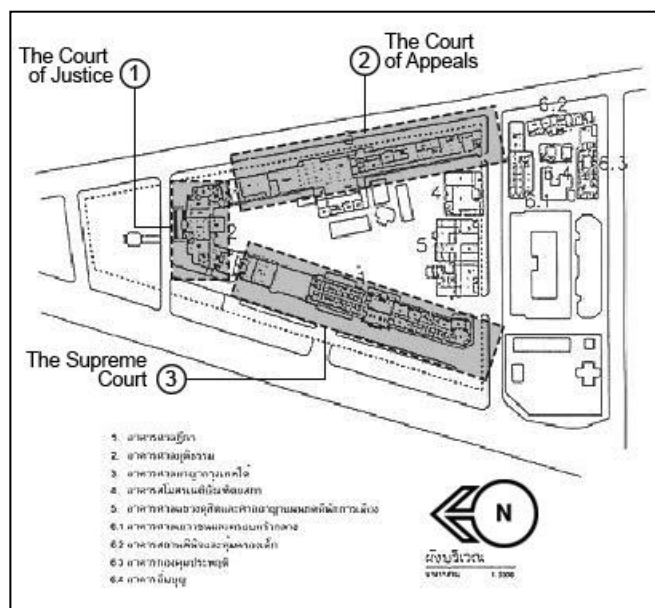


Figure 1: Layout of the Supreme Court Complex, ca. 1980s.

Source: The Fine Arts Department with Notations from

Under the supervision of Phra Sarocharattanimmaan (Saroch Sukkayang), a chief architect from Fine Arts Department (FAD), the Supreme Court featured a building compound comprising three sections. Although all were conceived in concert and laid out together in a V-shaped plan, their constructions did not commence at the same time. The first portion, sitting at

the pivoting point in the V-shaped plan, housed the Court of Justice. Erected in 1939 during the first Phibunsongkhram administration (Phibun, 1938-1944), its opening ceremony was held on June 24, 1941 marking the ninth anniversary of the 1932 revolution (Ministry of Justice, 1992, pp. 173-175). The second part sheltering the Court of Appeals was built in 1941.

Located near Ku Muang Doem Canal, it was finished in 1943. The third component was the Supreme Court building, standing on the site of a former Court of Justice used during the reign of King Rama V (Chulalongkorn, r. 1868-1910). Highly visible from the inner section of Ratchadamnoen Avenue, the construction did not start until 1959 due to shortage of raw materials during World War II. The

<sup>99</sup> In this research, the term "Siam" referred to the absolutist kingdom whose monarchical rule ended in 1932, whereas "Thailand" denoted the democratic nation after the 1932 revolution, in spite of the fact that the constitutional government continued to use "Siam" as the name of the country until 1939.

<sup>100</sup> The term signified the oldest part of the city covering an area of 4 sq.m. centering at the Grand Palace which was built in 1782. Surrounded by the Chao Praya River and canals, it was also commonly referred to in Thai as *Koh Rattanakosin* (Rattanakosin Island).

edifice took four years to complete (Ibid., p. 191) [Figure 1].

In terms of spatial organization, each courthouse similarly contained an entrance at the center with large pillars. Tectonically, the entire complex employed reinforced concrete structures with flat slab roofs. In consideration of aesthetics, the overall stylistic attribute was obviously influenced by Modernism, a very popular architectural trend at that time.



*Figure 2: Front Façade of Supreme Court Building, 2008.*  
*Source: John Muzi via Panoramio.*

As for symbolism, many contemporary studies contended that numerology played a vital role in signifying the Six Principles of Khana Ratsadon--Independence, Security, Economic, Equality, Liberty, and Education--which could be witnessed from the six columns in front of the Supreme Court and Court of Justice buildings (Prakitnondhakarn, 2009, p. 109) [Figure 2].<sup>101</sup>

The said interpretations were strengthened by the fact that the

entire courthouse compound was erected to commemorate the sovereignty of Thai judicial body (Ministry of Education. (4) Sor. Tor. 2.3.6/11, 1941); (Docomomo Thailand, 2014). In consequence of the legal reforms and arduous diplomatic negotiations that began long before 1932, Thailand was able to end of all unequal treaties with foreign powers, which were epitomized by an abolishment of the extraterritorial rights of France in 1938 (Wattanatham Thangkarnsan, 1943, p. 39). Such an origin lent a contextual ground to inquire further on the roles of the courthouses as a tool to mediate the power of the People's Party.

In this regard, by envisioning architecture as a system of signs, it could be construed from a semiological point of view that public structures like the Supreme Court were not only tangible images of the aspirations of the society that produced them, but they were also an attempt to mold social attitudes (See: Kostof, 1995, p. 19). On that account, the symbolic reference to the Six Principles--the six columns--functioned as a material manifestation for the political legitimacy and ascendancy of the 1932-coup promoters, by whom the country's judicial sovereignty was firmly secured.<sup>102</sup> As a matter of fact, the Khana Ratsadon regime comprehensively incorporated modern architecture into its Nation-building Program operating under the directives of Luang Wichit Wathakan, the chief ideologue and predominant cultural architect who served as the Director General of the FAD from 1934 to 1942.<sup>103</sup> Between 1939 and 1942, the first Phibun administration

<sup>101</sup> Numerological significations of the Six Principles could be witnessed from other architecture of the state commissioned by Khana Ratsadon as well. Prime examples encompassed the six-tiered spire of the main stupa at Wat Phra Sri Mahathat, Bangkok (the Democracy Temple), coupled with the six gates and swords at the central turret of the Democracy Monument (Anusawari Prachathipatai) in Bangkok.

<sup>102</sup> This elucidation was substantiated by document from the inauguration of the Court of Justice building in 1941, indicating Phibun as a powerful force behind the realization of the Supreme Court complex (Office of the Prime Minister, (2) Sor. Ror. 0201.87.3.1/4, 1941, p. 1).

<sup>103</sup> In any case, it was crucial to note that although the rise of modern architecture was a global phenomenon that emerged since the age of royal absolutism in Siam, its popularity in Thailand was not clearly visible until

issued a series of twelve cultural mandates--known as the *rathniyom*--intended to “uplift the national spirit and moral code of the nation and instilling progressive tendencies and a newness into Thai life” (National Archives of Thailand, 0701.22.1/7, 1942).<sup>104</sup>

In conveying the quality of newness as stipulated by the edicts, all edifices in the Supreme Court compound were devised in consistence with the Modernist concepts of simplicity, massive and voluminous formal and spatial configurations, functional and rational compositions, structural and materialistic expressions. The Supreme Court building in particular was adorned with simplified Thai decorative arts, which could be seen from toned-down lotus motifs embellishing the six columns at the main entrance [Figure 2]. In order to accommodate the tectonic capability of reinforced concrete, its façades were regulated by perpendicular and straight lines, based on a symmetrical rectangular plan [Figure 1 and 2].

The aforementioned geometrical simplicity in conjunction with minimal use of decorative elements of the courthouse implied the two cardinal values of Khana Ratsadon--Equality and Economic--thus promoting the democratic ideology along with the idea of modern egalitarianism in built forms. Aside from symbolizing Thailand’s engagement with modernity, the tectonic novelty of the Supreme Court not only denoted the modernization and Westernization processes of the country, but also differentiated the post-1932 regime as more technologically advanced and socially progressive, and therefore “superior” from the “inferior” rule of royal absolutism.

In addition, as state by the Six Principles, the notion of Independence occupied the first order, testifying that the idea of the Thai nationhood as an autonomous modern nation-state ranked among the top priorities for the 1932-coup promoters.<sup>105</sup> The fact that the commission of the Supreme Court complex was a tribute to Thailand’s judicial sovereignty supported this observation, calling for further examinations into the manners in which the Thai identity were manifested.<sup>106</sup>

As evident from the Thai and Modernistic elements of the Supreme Court, the symbolic allusion to the Six Principles suggested that *khwampenthai* operated in a postulate of hybridity. On the one hand, the Modernist architectural elements echoed the *rathniyom* mandates, constituting a comprehensive Nation-building Program, to “refashion” the self-image of the country and its citizens via new materials and modes of representations. On the other hand, those six stylistically hybridized columns exemplified a discursive practice where the dominant Western culture found itself being appropriated by an asymmetric resistance, drawing upon various methods of self-determination to

---

after 1932. Following the revolution, Modernistic designs were employed for various important buildings, ranging from public and civic to religious and monumental structures (See: Noobanjong, 2003; Noobanjong, 2013a for detailed examinations on the use modern architecture by the state during the era of the People’s Party).

<sup>104</sup> The twelve edicts required Thai citizens to know the national anthem, use Central Thai dialect as the *lingua franca*, eat with spoon and fork, buy Thai products, and dress in modern (meaning Western) fashion. People were also forbidden from consuming four meals per day, and from chewing betel nut. Later edicts instructed husbands to treat their wives with respect, including kissing them both before leaving for work and when arriving home. Any kind of physical abuses was prohibited as well (National Archives of Thailand, 0701.22.1/7, 1942, as cited in Nuan la-or, 1997, p. 83).

<sup>105</sup> (See: Khana Ratsadon, 1932 for the full-length transcript of *The First Revolutionary Manifesto of the People’s Party*).

<sup>106</sup> With assistance from Luang Wichit Wathakan, Phibun modified King Rama VI (Vajiravudh, r. 1910-1925)’s concept of the Thai nationhood--centering on nation, religion (Buddhism), and monarchy--but substituted the regal institution with the notions of constitutionalism and modern egalitarianism (Baker and Phongpaichit, 2014, p. 137).

defy, delegitimize, discard, and displace tremendous power of the West (Parry, 1995, pp. 36-44).<sup>107</sup> Apparently, the hybridity of the courthouses disclosed that the Thai identity, too, was indeed a discourse of binary oppositions, reflecting inherent problems of Thainess that resulted in its intricate dynamism and paradoxical, if not schizophrenic, nature. Whereas the West and modernity were normally viewed by the Khana Ratsadon regime as “suspected Other,” the *rathniyom* edicts framing definitions of *khwampenthai* could not possibly exist without non-Thai contributors assuming the role of otherness.<sup>108</sup> Apart from the syncretic aesthetics of the Supreme Court as explained earlier, the most vivid example was perhaps the name of the country, which was switched in 1939 from *Siam*, a native word signifying an *ancien régime*, to *Thailand*, a hybrid Thai-English term meaning “the land of ethnic *Tai*” as well as a modern and democratic nation-state (Also see: Kasetsiri, 1974, pp. 25-88).

### The Creation of Chaloemthai Theater

A proper study on Chaloemthai Theater could not be undertaken in separation from the immediate environment, since the building was a constituent of the fifteen Modernist edifices occupying the urban space along the middle section of Ratchadamnoen Avenue. Catalyzed by Phibun’s grand scheme for urban development projects to honor the 1932 revolution, not only was this 1.2 km.-long portion of the Ratchadamnoen (Ratchadamnoen Klang) enlarged and beautified, but also bequeathed with the Democracy Monument (Anusawari Prachathipatai), standing on a circular plinth in a traffic roundabout at an intersection between the Ratchadamnoen Klang and Dinso Road [Figure 3] (Noobanjong, 2013b, p. 39).<sup>109</sup>



Figure 3: Aerial View of Chaloemthai Theater and Its Adjacent Urban Environment, ca. 1940.  
Source: Peter Williams



Figure 4: Chaloemthai Theater, ca. 1940.  
Source: 2Bangkok.com

<sup>107</sup> Albeit operating under different political ideologies, the Siamese royal elites, People’s Party, junta regimes, and successive administrations in modern Thailand resorted to the discourse of Thainess via dissimilar definitions to mediate, legitimize, and maintain power, including by constructing, reinterpreting, and re-inscribing the meanings of architectural of the state.

<sup>108</sup> During the first Phibun administration, “Thailand” signified a close kinship with Tai-speaking populations in Southeast Asia, reflecting the premier’s vision of creating “the Great Thai Empire,” a *terra firma* for all Tai-speaking ethnic groups to dwell in unison (Terwiel, 1980, pp. 133-151).

<sup>109</sup> Similar to the absolutist regime, the transformation of the Ratchadamnoen was dominated by top-down processes of globalization, homogenization, Westernization, and the regime’s construction of power over its subjects. As a part of the Nation-building Program, the designs of those Modernist structures contained an amalgam of several modern stylistic features from the West derived from Expressionism, Futurism, Social Realism, and Art Deco (Noobanjong, 2013b, p. 39).

Being an amalgamation of architectural expressions, such as Art Deco and the International Style, these fifteen edifice--commonly called the Ratchadamnoen Building Group--installed several fashionable shops, offices, restaurants, a hotel, and a theater, performing as a sensational stage full of vibrant urban activities for Anusawari Prachathipatai to proclaim its glory. Ten of them--including Chaloemthai Theater--were designed by Jitrsean (Mew) Abhaiwongse, an Ecole des Beaux Arts-graduate who worked for the Crown Property Bureau<sup>110</sup> (Ibid.) [Figure 4].

Situated at a corner of an intersection between the Ratchadamnoen Klang and Mahachai Road, Chaloemthai Theater dwelled on a prime site where the outer part of the Ratchadamnoen turned and met its middle portion at Phan Fa Lilat Bridge spanning across Lod Canal [Figure 3]. Devised from the onset for stage performance, this curve-shaped building was transformed to a cinema in 1953. Prior to the conversion, the Chaloemthai could accommodate approximately 1,200 seats (Chatrabhuti, 2004, pp. 56-57).<sup>111</sup> In 1949, Silpathai Company signed a lease and spent about a million baht to refurbish the building, making it a premier venue for theatrical performance. Equipped with high-quality acoustic and lighting systems, the Chaloemthai boasted the country's first hydraulic stage platform. Owing to creative efforts from an architect Siwawongse Kunchon na Ayutthaya, a Cambridge-graduate, the renovated theater was widely recognized for its *grandeur* and *décor*.



Figure 5: "Do and DON'T in Thai Culture," a Page from the Office of the Prime Minister's Document in 1940.

Source: Krom Khotsanakan (Department of Public Relations).

Behind the austere Modernistic façades, the lobby, foyer areas, stairwells, and auditorium were abundant with admixtures of Thai and Western decorative elements, generating a glamorous

<sup>110</sup> Being a half-brother of Khuang Aphaiwong, one of the key 1932-coup promoters, it was not too far-fetched to hazard that the architect was well acquainted with other founding members of the People's Party, namely Phibun and Pridi Banomyong, who studied in France as well. Such personal connections might be one of the reasons why the commissions of many high-profile public structures during the Khana Ratsadon period--e.g. the Central Post Office, National Stadium, and Dome Building at Thammasat University in Bangkok--were entrusted to him (Prakitnondhakarn, 2007, pp. 72-73).

<sup>111</sup> Some Thai sources contended that while Phibun foresaw the Chaloemthai assume a role of the national theater, he edifice was actually utilized as a fabric storage instead during World War II (Chatrabhuti, 2004, pp. 56-57).



atmosphere for the interior space (Ibid.).<sup>112</sup>

Considering the politics of representations, a plan to memorialize the 1932 revolution in built forms was conceived since the early years of the constitutional period, but materialized in 1938 after Phibun consolidated his position and ascended to the premiership. Under an ideological pretext of propagating nationalism and democracy, the prime minister fashioned a semi-fascist state, emphasizing a symbolic modernization process.<sup>113</sup>

As much as Phibun and his politics shaped the designs of the built environment along Ratchadamnoen Klang, these built forms supplied the premier and his military clique in Khana Ratsadon with a self-serving discourse to assert, legitimize, and maintain power. Not unlike the Supreme Court complex, the urban development projects at the middle section of the Ratchadamnoen was associated with the Nation-building Program in both socio-cultural and political dimensions. As stated before, the twelve *rathniyom* mandates instructed the people in every aspect of their social life such as communication, dress, behavior, and how to be a Thai citizen. These parameters of *khwampenthai* were “necessarily in the interests of progress and civilization that the world might see that Thailand was a modern nation” (National Archives of Thailand, 0701.22.1/7, 1942) [Figure 5].

Nevertheless, Phibun’s *rathniyom* mandates on *khwampenthai*—proved to be conceptually schizophrenic because several measures taken to define the new Thai identity were as much Western as Thai [Figure 5]. Moreover, while members of the People’s Party generally subscribed to the values of nationalism, constitutionalism, and democracy as promulgated by the Six Principles, their visions of the Thai nationhood were diverse, mirroring an internal rift within the group between Phibun’s fascist-oriented military faction versus Pridi Banomyong’s socialist-oriented civilian faction (Baker and Phongpaichit, 2014, p. 120).<sup>114</sup>

Despite their ideological dissimilarity, both factions resorted to the virtue of modernity, particularly by means of Western-type modernization. As evident from the built environment along Ratchadamnoen Klang, Phibun envisioned the avenue to be the “Champs-Élysées” and the Democracy Monument the “Arc de Triomphe” of Bangkok (Krom Khotsanakan, 1942, p. 982). Surrounded by handsome Ratchadamnoen Building Group, Anusawari Prachathipatai, he said, would act as “a center of all things progressive, from which the thoroughfares linking the capital to other parts of the country would originate” [Figure 3] (National Archives of Thailand, 0701.22.1/7, 1942, as

---

<sup>112</sup> Initially however, both the Ratchadamnoen Building Group and the Democracy Monument were unpopular with Bangkok residents, because the government evicted local residents and shopkeepers from the area for their construction. The widening of Ratchadamnoen Klang to create a ceremonial pathway involved cutting down hundreds of shade trees as well. Be that as it may, as time progressed, Chaloemthai Theater eventually became a vital part in the social life for people living in the capital city during the post-war era (Wong, 2006, pp. 65-66).

<sup>113</sup> Besides, Phibun was known for being an admirer of European dictators of the same age, namely Mussolini and Hitler, especially the ways in which *il Duce* and *der Führer* transformed their nations through modern architecture and urban planning.

<sup>114</sup> Divided into two circles roughly identified with the civilian and military members and their respective leaders, Pridi Banomyong and Phibun, the two factions held dissimilar perspectives on the roles and purposes of the state, as well as different views on nationalism. Seeing the nation and constitution as a new focus of public loyalty for Thai citizens consisting of various ethnic groups, the socialist-oriented faction headed by Pridi believed in a liberal version of nationalism. On the contrary, the fascist-oriented clique led by Phibun advocated a militarized one, promoting a strong military leadership to govern a well-ordered society and a civilized nation-state, populated predominantly by the Thai race (Baker and Phongpaichit, 2014, p. 128).

cited in Nuan la-or, 1997, p. 83). In addition, the main axis of Ratchadamnoen Avenue, constructed in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century during the reign of King Chulalongkorn, “would be widened and lined with handsome edifices, becoming the pride of the modern and civilized Thailand” (Ibid.).<sup>115</sup>

At the urban scale, as shown by Chaloemthai Theater, the new projects both enhanced and transformed Ratchadamnoen Avenue. As they intercepted the connection between the two palatial nodes--the Grand Palace to the south and Dusit Palace to the north--the Ratchadamnoen Building Group and Democracy Monument performed a discourse which negated the authority and legitimacy of the absolutist rule to a subservient status under the guise of advocating democratic ideology and modernity. Apart from disrupting the physical continuity of the “royal processional path,” their positioning at the middle of Ratchadamnoen symbolized the monarchy’s succession. In fact, the Ratchadamnoen Building Group also occupied the plots of land owned by the Crown Property Bureau. By establishing their place in the modern history of Thailand, Khana Ratsadon turned the entire Ratchadamnoen into a contested space to signify a “corridor of egalitarian power,” based on their definitions [Figure 3].<sup>116</sup>

In brief, the creations of Chaloemthai Theater, Ratchadamnoen Building Group, and Anusawari Prachathipatai, in combination with the expansion and modification of Ratchadamnoen Avenue jointly illustrated that the post-1932 regime employed Western-type modernization to represent Thailand as a progressive and democratic nation-state. Conversely, the image they developed portrayed the former monarchy, rendering it as agrarian, authoritarian, and backward. Members of the People’s Party were fascinated by the promise of industrialization, Western technology, knowledge, ways of life, and forms of consciousness. Hence, the Khana Ratsadon-led administrations set out to promote a modern and Western Thai society via modern architecture.

Due to the fact that Thailand in the 1940s was mostly unindustrialized, such allusions to Westernization and modernity embodied in the designs of the built environment offered a persuasive method for the People’s Party regime to present itself as superior to the inferior agrarian-oriented absolutist rule. So, stylistic associations with modern architecture became a preferred choice to materialize the politics of representations for the new Thai identity, which occurred through the expressive characteristics of newness, congruence between tectonic and decorative principles in design philosophy, and use of industrial materials such as reinforced concrete, steel, and glass. The expansion and modification of Ratchadamnoen Klang, notably the constructions of the Democracy Monument and Ratchadamnoen Building Group, were visual-spatial examples.

---

<sup>115</sup> Taken as a whole, aside from representing Thailand’s engagement with Western material culture and modernity, the quality of novelty embedded in the design of the monument and the renovation projects for the Ratchadamnoen displayed the modernization and Westernization processes of Thainess (Noobanjong, 2013b, p. 39).

<sup>116</sup> In the social arena, the Modernist structures mentioned above were invigorated by the Constitutional Celebration Fair (*Nganchalong Ratthathammanun*). Started in 1934, the annual *fête* ran from November 28 to December 8 to celebrate the progress of the nation during the post-1932 period. Several state agencies organized exhibitions in their stalls coupled with many festivities including beauty contests. As a consequence, apart from being a showcase for the modernization process under the directive of the People’s Party, Modernist architecture and urban space along the Ratchadamnoen Klang operated as a public relations device, enabling the government to cultivate popularity among people through social practice and self-ascription (Ibid., p. 40).

### The Construction of the Department of Public Relations Headquarters

Within less than two decades since the fall of the absolutist rule, the People's Party regime met its demise after a long and bitter vying for political domination between the military and civilian factions that resulted in an exile of Pridi in 1947. Although the armed forces brought Phibun back to the premiership in 1948, he was ousted from power again nine years later (Fineman, 1997, pp. 12-16). The *coup d'état* that brought down Phibun in 1957 proved to be another decisive turning point in modern Thai history, since it bolstered the return of royalist advocates in national politics occasioned by the internal rift in the People's Party. Up to the mid- 1970s, Thailand was mostly governed by a series of military dictators, beset with coups and counter-coups (Mokarapong, 1972, p. 229). Espousing orderliness, cleanliness, and conformity, the junta leaders--Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat (1959-1963) and Thanom Kittikachorn (1963-1973)--were traditionalists. The nationalist ethos of these locally educated strongmen embraced King Rama VI (Vajiravudh, r. 1910-1925)'s concept of Thai nationhood--and by extension, the Thai identity--consisting of the triad values of nation, religion (Buddhism), and monarchy, in place of exogenic and intangible ideas like constitutionalism and democratic egalitarianism as promulgated by Khana Ratsadon.

Centering on the crown, Sarit utilized the monarchical institution as both the focus of loyalty for the citizenry and the source of legitimacy for his despotic rule (See: Chaloeontiarana, 1979). Apart from reviving regal ceremonies, he resuscitated the role, status, and ancient custom of sacred kingship, strengthened by a strict enforcement of the 1908 *lèse majesté* law (Streckfuss, 1995, pp. 445, 453).<sup>117</sup> By claiming to be a servant of the divine kingship, Sarit assumed the duty of a secular arm of the semisacral sovereign, demanding respect and obedience from the people by virtue of that connection. The restoration of the monarchy therefore elevated the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX, r. 1946-2016), to an omnipotent and sacrosanct status (Mokarapong, 1972, pp. 283-293).

With supports from royal apologists in undermining the political legitimacy of the 1932 revolution and its perpetrators, the junta abolished and/or altered most of the cultural policies and social



Figure 6: The Department of Public Relations Headquarters, ca. 1965.

Source: Association of Siamese Architects under Royal Patronage.

practices initiated by the People's Party, retaining only some aspects of the Nation-building Program, namely the modernization process. Yet, similar to Khana Ratsadon, the military strongmen saw modern architecture as an object of their aspirations, which were energetic and desirable, signifying pride, progress, and parity with the West, while at the same time proving a "novelty of propaganda for the new government" (Wong, 2006, p. 58). As a consequence, the junta

<sup>117</sup> Section 112 of Thai penal code (criminal law) prohibited any criticism and act of defaming, threatening, or insulting to the king, queen, heir-apparent, and regent. While the original penalty was a maximum seven-year imprisonment, it was toughened during the late 1970s to a minimum of three years and a maximum of fifteen years (See: Champion, 2014 for further discussions of Thailand's *lèse-majesté* law).

regime continued to employ Modernism for architecture of the state (Ibid.).

Among several state-sponsored public structures erected between 1957 and 1973, the Department of Public Relations Headquarters was one of the structures that stood out [Figure 6].<sup>118</sup> Devised by Phichai Watsanasong, the construction was finished in 1963. The edifice was an amalgam of Modernist aesthetics, encompassing elements from both the International Style and Brise Soleil. Aside from installing state-run printing presses and other mass media outlets including a radio station, the building contained a large auditorium and three floors of office space. By sheltering the Headquarters of the Department of Public Relations, it also functioned as an advertisement in built form for the military government, notwithstanding a lack of coherent politico-cultural policies to signify its representational contents as opposed to the *rathniyom* mandates on Thainess and Six Principles of the People's Party that framed the symbolic meanings for architecture of the state commissioned between 1932 and 1948.

In an analogous fashion to Chaloemthai Theater, this curved-edifice occupied a prime locale in Historic Bangkok where Ratchadamnoen Klang turned and met the inner section of Ratchadamnoen Avenue at Phan Phipob Lila Bridge crossing Ku Muang Doem Canal.<sup>119</sup> Apart from employing two Brise Soleil patterns made of modular reinforced concrete blocks wrapping the south façade to shut out excessive direct sunlight, another distinguished architectural attribute was the expressive structural system of the auditorium. Its long-span cantilever was held up by butterfly-wing-shaped reinforced concrete beams at the top, with leaning V-shaped reinforced concrete piers forming the supports at the ground level. These novel design characteristics rendered a futuristic appearance for the building--reminiscent of some works by Le Corbusier and Oscar Niemeyer erected after World War II--in spite the fact that the architect, Phichai Watsanasong, was not educated abroad<sup>120</sup> (Noobanjong, 2013a, p. 198) [Figure 6].

Whereas a Euro-centric critique could be readily levied on the Department of Public Relations Headquarters as a copy or merely a deviation of Modernism in the West with a Brise Soleil adjustment to suit Thailand's tropical climate, a closer examination on the politics of representations suggested otherwise. Rather, the stylistic peculiarities of the building seemed to be influenced by the political situations of the country during that time.<sup>121</sup>

---

<sup>118</sup> The Department of Public Relations was founded 1933 as a propagandistic agency for the post-absolutist state. In the contexts of rising Cold War in the 1950s, coupled with escalating armed conflicts in Indochina and intensifying internal insurgency by the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) during the 1960s, it became a mouthpiece of the oppressive junta regime, who ironically claimed to be a defender of democracy by sending contingents of Thai troops to join the Americans in fighting against communist expansions in Korea, and later in South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

<sup>119</sup> Standing on the site of a former Harry A. Badman and Co. department store, the building faced southward to the Royal Field, Supreme Court compound, and Grand Palace (Department of Public Relations, 2005, p. 7).

<sup>120</sup> Unlike Phra Sarocharattanimmaan and Jitrsean Abhaiwongse, who graduated from University of Liverpool and Ecole des Beaux Arts respectively, Phichai Watsanasong received his Bachelor of Architecture degree from Chulalongkorn University. Before becoming a spokesperson and international news analysis, the professional roles for which he was known the most, Pichai worked as an architect at the State Railway of Thailand (SRT) for several years.

<sup>121</sup> In fact, many studies argued that Thailand was a client state of the U.S. during the Cold War. The two countries strengthened their mutual ties through what was known as the Rusk-Thanat agreement (named after then-Secretary of State Dean Rusk and then-Minister of Foreign Affairs Thanat Khoman) in 1962. Under the accord, the United States pledged that it would help Thailand unilaterally in the event of foreign aggression. In return, Thailand allowed American armed forces to construct military installations in several

Domestically, the overall Modernistic look could help depict the despotic rules of Sarit and his progenies as progressive regimes in the eyes of the local populace through the qualities of newness that stood for the modernization of *khwampenthai*. Internationally, the junta administrations aimed to create an image of Thailand as a country that could still preserve its own traditions and culture, while successfully assimilating capitalism, democracy, and modernity, just like other members of the “Free World” nations.”<sup>122</sup> Correspondingly, another remark could then be formulated and put forward that the Modernistic expressions of the Department of Public Relations Headquarters seemed to fall into a well-established Occidentalizing project initiated since the reign of King Mongkut (Rama IV, r. 1851-1858) (See: Said, 1978, pp. 65-67; Spivak, 1985, pp. 120-121, considering the theoretical bases and duality between the discourses of Orientalism and Occidentalism).

Because both the Siamese royal elites and military strongmen perceived the Western model of modernization as the sources of and methods for achieving a respectable status among the civilized countries, the Occidentalizing project--i.e. modern architecture--furnished them a new and refined identity and framed their worldview about the West and modernity itself, by historical and cultural experiences with and/or against Western powers and modern world. On that basis, it might be concluded that the design of the Department of Public Relations Headquarters indeed represented an active and authoritative role of the Thais in generating, combining, and projecting their versions of contested meanings upon the immediate world and beyond, while asserting their self-identity through the consumptions of imported materials supplanted in their cultural soil (Aphornsuvan, 2004, p. 98).

### **The Politics of Destructions at the Supreme Court Buildings, Chaloemthai Theater, and Department of Public Relations Headquarters**

With a suspension of the constitution and termination of the *rathniyom* edicts, architecture of the state commissioned between 1932 and 1947 along the Ratchadamnoen lost their *raison d'être* and faded into symbolic obscurity. Whereas their original significations became a vague vestige in public memory, these built forms were assimilated into a long strip of urban space along the royal passageway, and re-semanticized to convey the regal authority and power of the military regime at expense of democratic egalitarianism.

Such a slippage of meanings rendered the Supreme Court, Democracy Monument, and Ratchadamnoen Building Group as a continuation of the grand-scale modernization process inaugurated by King Rama V, operating merely as historic artifacts with limited ability to mediate

---

strategic locations. As the armed conflicts in Indochina progressed, the presence of the American military became evident throughout the country. A significant number of combat sorties during the Vietnam War were flown from airbases inside Thailand (Anderson, 1983, pp. 85-116). As mentioned earlier, from 1965 to 1971, Thailand sent ground troops to Vietnam to fight alongside the Americans, while also participating in the secret war in Laos from 1964 to 1972, sponsored by the CIA (Anderson, 1998, pp. 174-191).

<sup>122</sup> Nonetheless, an irony arose when considering that the junta was able to legitimize their violent suppressions of political dissidents--under the pretexts of maintaining national security and combating communist expansions--by gaining acceptance and support from international community, namely the United States, Western Europe, and Japan (See: Fineman, 1997 for detailed inquiries on relationships between the U.S. and military government in Thailand).

power and to represent the Thai identity (Prakitnondhakarn, 2004, p.333)<sup>123</sup> In contrast to the regal reinstatement, Sarit and his royalist collaborators portrayed the People's Party and its members as anti-monarchist and hence "un-Thai." Through their collective efforts, the 1932-coup promoters were depicted as a group of inept intelligentsias who prematurely brought democracy to Thailand (Chaiching, 2005, pp. 113-114). By the same token, the arts and architecture sponsored by the People's Party were denounced by several influential royalist advocates as the most degraded form of aesthetics ever existed (For instance, see: Pramoj, 1985, pp. 2-14).<sup>124</sup>



*Figure 7: Mahajetsadabadin Royal Pavilion, 2015.*  
*Source: www.tripadvisor.com.*

The endeavors to undermine and/or obliterate the cultural legacies of the People's Party, in fact, emerged since the second Phibun administration (1948-1957). With their growing political clouts, royalist elements in the government began to push for a more visible and authoritative role for the monarchical institution in Thai society. To cite some examples, in 1952, the cabinet proposed to replace the central portion of the

Democracy Monument with a statue of King Rama VII (Prajadhipok, r. 1925-1935), the first constitutional monarch (Ministry of Interior. (1) Mor. Tor. 1.1.3.3/1, 1952, p. 56). The project failed to proceed because Phibun did not sanction it, citing a lack of available funds (Ministry of Interior. (1) Mor. Tor. Mor. Tor. 1.1.3.3/1, 1953, p. 1). Three decades later, an identical proposal resurfaced when the FAD classified Anusawari Prachathipatai in 1982 as "not worthy of conservation," and tried to substitute its central portion with a statue of King Rama VII.<sup>125</sup> Be that as it may, such a physical modification was once again shelved, owing to oppositions from those in the academia and architectural profession (Rojpojchanarat, 1987, pp. 155-162).

<sup>123</sup> Under Sarit's authoritarian rule, the military government suppressed activities commemorating the 1932 revolution. At the same time, the junta regime resumed royal functions, and restored or even exaggerated the priority of social festivities and state ceremonies within the nation. Many regal rituals took place along Ratchadamnoen Avenue. Consequently, the two palatial compounds re-emerged in Bangkok's urban fabric as the city's twin cultural-cum-political nodes. The Ratchadamnoen was therefore able to revitalize its "Royal Processional Path" namesake, while emasculating its meaning fashioned by the People's Party as a "corridor of egalitarian power."

<sup>124</sup> Leading the charge was Kukrit Pramoj, a conservative scholar and ardent royalist. He condemned that there was no "Thai" arts and architecture produced during the age of Khana Ratsadon at all. Leaders of the 1932-coup promoters had no understanding beauty, let alone appreciations for Thai cultural heritage. Their knowledge and taste, Kukrit went on, did not venture beyond nude images in Parisian street *cafés*. As a result, the arts and architecture sponsored by the People's Party contained no value to be preserved (Pramoj, 1985, pp. 2-14).

<sup>125</sup> Aside from signifying the concept of divine constitutional monarchy, Prajadhipok's image would insinuate the People's Party as the national villains by being anti-monarchic and therefore unfaithful to one of the three foundations of the Thai nationhood.

### **The Erasure of Chaloemthai Theater**

In 1989, the physicality of the Ratchadamnoen Klang was eventually altered regardless of repeated objections from the academics, professional organizations, such as the Association of Siamese Architects under Royal Patronage (ASA), and concerned citizens. Chaloemthai Theater was razed to make room for a reception pavilion for honorary guests of the state, and to clear the vista for the Sino-Siamese architecture of Wat Ratchanatdaram built by King Rama III (Nangklao, r. 1824-1851) behind it. Named Mahajetsadabadin Pavilion after the third king of the ruling Chakri Dynasty, the plaza occupied a park-like setting [Figure 7].

A number of recent investigations pointed out that the destruction of the theater held more significance than simply a change in the urban environment along Ratchadamnoen Avenue, but a victory of royal protagonists in erasing the memories of Khana Ratsadon from public recollection and in propagating the ascendancy of the regal authority in built forms (For example, see: Noobanjong, 2013a, p. 232). As demonstrated by a polemical essay by Kukrit Pramoj, a conservative scholar and a royal descent who became a prime minister between 1975 and 1976 justified his endorsement for the removal of Chaloemthai Theater via an allusion to the triad foundations of *khwampenthai*. The Modernistic Chaloemthai, he castigated, was totally alien to the Thai identity. The fact that the People's Party constructed this building that had a Western origin and secular purpose to obscure the exquisite Ratchanatdaram royal temple reaffirmed that the 1932-coup promoters valued neither Buddhism nor traditional Thai arts and architecture, not to mention the crown. So, by eliminating such an eyesore structure, Kukrit wrote, the majestic splendor of the Ratchadamnoen Avenue was restored [Figure 7]. For that reason, citizens of the Thai nation should rejoice, and press for demolitions of Khana Ratsadon's architectural heritage from Bangkok altogether (Pramoj, 1989).

In retrospect, Kukrit's dismissive commentary subversively raised many critical questions on the politics of destruction at Chaloemthai Theater against the accepted convention on *khwampenthai*. For instance, why was the Mahajetsadabadin Royal Pavilion, which was mostly ceremonial in function and occasionally used, considered to be more "Thai" than the theater that became an integral part in the daily life of people living in the capital city? If pluralism, accommodation, and assimilation were unique characteristics of Thainess, why did the Chaloemthai have to be razed instead of coexisting with Wat Ratchanatdaram? If the overall stylistic expression of the Chaloemthai were so foreign and incompatible with *khwampenthai*, why would the Sinic architectural elements of the Ratchanatdaram temple be acknowledged as a valid component of the Thai identity? Likewise, if taking into account that Thainess itself was discursive and hybridized in several aspects, why should not this Modernistic theater be appreciated as a constituent of *khwampenthai* too?<sup>126</sup>

### **The Obliteration of the Department of Public Relations Headquarters**

From the 1960s onward, various groups had re-appropriated and re-inscribed Ratchadamnoen Avenue and adjacent areas in Historic Bangkok, turning them into a contested space that epitomized Thai people's fights for democracy and self-empowerment. Notable examples of such incidents were

---

<sup>126</sup> Kukrit's negative readings of Chaloemthai Theater conveniently forgot that the Siamese absolutist regime utilized modern architecture as well, as evident from the creation of Chaloemkrung Royal Theater in 1930 during the Seventh reign. Moreover, the fact that the Chaloemkrung was preserved whereas the Chaloemthai was not, led to another fundamental question. What were the logically-sound justifications for an inclusion the former and exclusion of the latter theater as a part of national treasures and representation of Thainess exactly?

the 1973 violent uprising of college students against the military rules of Thanom Kittikachorn and Prapas Charusathien (1958-1973) on October 14-16,<sup>127</sup> and the 1992 riots led by the urban *bourgeoisie* to oust a junta-installed administration of General Suchinda Kraprayoon on May 17-19.<sup>128</sup> The inner section of the Ratchadamnoen and Royal Field, in particular, also witnessed the abuses and slaughters of unarmed students by combat troops and paramilitary forces on October 6, 1976.<sup>129</sup>

Notwithstanding the fact that the physical environment was not much altered, the meanings and memories of Ratchadamnoen Avenue were transformed to signify and incorporate the abovementioned socio-political acts, rendering this 3.2 km-long thoroughfare and its vicinity the supreme contested space in Thailand.<sup>130</sup> Since then, such a signification had coexisted with and challenged the regal connotations of the thoroughfare. Among the few visible changes occasioned by the political upheavals, the destruction of the Department of Public Relations Headquarters in 1992 was one of them.

By sheltering state-owned media, namely the National Broadcasting Services of Thailand (NBST), the edifice operated as a mount piece for the regimes in power, disseminating state-sanctioned news, ideologies, and propagandas to the populace.<sup>131</sup> Nonetheless, the practices of censorship, control, and distortion of public information caused mistrust from those who sought to challenge the authority of the state, and developed into anger and resentment that backfired on the agency when the junta leaders ordered crackdowns on the protestors in 1973 and 1992.<sup>132</sup>

As shown by an arson attack during the 1973 October uprising, the building became a symbol of the hatred military administration, instead of progress, novelty, and modern Thai identity. Although the fire wrecked severe havocs, the structural integrity of the edifice was still intact. After extensive repair works, the Department of Public Relations Headquarters resumed its operations. Yet in 1992, infuriated demonstrators set it ablaze once again. Since the fire damages were beyond salvation, the remains of the edifice were razed to the ground for safety concerns (See: Setabutr, 2016).<sup>133</sup>

---

<sup>127</sup> The late King Bhumibol also granted permission to cremate seventy-seven fallen protestors at the Royal Field which was hitherto reserved for royal cremations and state ceremonies on October 14-15, 1974 (Winichakul, 1999, p. 11).

<sup>128</sup> The total death-toll was still unknown, but was estimated to range anywhere from fifty to over two-hundred (Human Rights Watch, 1992).

<sup>129</sup> In spite of the atrocities committed, the massacre largely remained a silent chapter in the history of the nation. Whether the dead students were idealists who “abhorred injustice, anarchists who hated every kind of state power, or Leftists of any shade” had been left unresolved (See: Mallet, 1987, p. 91; Jumbala, 1992, pp. 83-85). Be that as it may, Noranit Setabutr (2016)—a former president of Thammasat University—wrote in his essay published online by King Prajadhipok’s Institute that the death-toll of the student massacre in 1976 was in the same vicinity as that of the uprising in 1992, fluctuating between fifty to over two-hundred bodies.

<sup>130</sup> (See: Duncan, 1989, p. 18; Hershkovitz, 2002, pp. 395-420 for comparable studies on contested space in Asia).

<sup>131</sup> Owing to such a strategic importance, the Department of Public Relations Headquarters was among the first objectives to be secured under control, when a military *coup d’état* happened in the capital city.

<sup>132</sup> King Rama IX interceded in both the 1973 and 1992 uprisings, appearing on national television and calling for the bloodsheds to be stopped. The crown’s interventions twice averted the prospects of a civil war in Thailand, and re-established the regal authority as the country’s supreme socio-political arbitrate force.

<sup>133</sup> In hindsight, one might argue that the angry mobs would attack the Department of Public Relations Headquarters, regardless of the stylistic expression mainly because the agency who owned this building acted as a mouthpiece for the state, and therefore represented the regime in power. While the said observation sounded very reasonable, a counter argument could be put forward in terms of a hypothetical question. What



The politics of destruction, however, did not end with the demise of this Modernist structure. After the demolition of the building, the site where the Department of Public Relations Headquarters once stood was transformed into a park named by the Supreme Patriarch as Santiphorn, meaning “blessing for peace.” Throughout the next decades, endeavors to erect a memorial to honor the sacrifice of the protestors who lost their lives during the 1992 uprising (also known as the Black May Incident) endured.<sup>134</sup> It was not until 2005 when a winning design proposal for the long-overdue Black May Memorial was announced following an architectural competition. The stone-laying ceremony took place on May 17, 2005 to mark the thirteenth anniversary of the bloodshed (Hutasingh, 2005).<sup>135</sup>

At the time of this writing in mid-2017, merely a portion of the monumental project was constructed. A 10 m.-tall landmark was unveiled to the public on May 17, 2015 [Figure 8]. Devised by artist Sompot Upa-in, this sculptural piece consisted of three portions. The tapering base, furnished with black granite slabs engraved by curved lines, represented Thai people and their traumatic scars from the Black May Incident. The middle part contained a rotating black tetragonal bipyramid marked by vertical lines, symbolizing the dynamism of Thai society. The apex, occupied by a gilded sculptural form pointing upward to the sky, insinuated a pigeon whose iconography stood for liberty, peace, and national reconciliation (Matichon, 2015).

Since it was evident that the Black May Monument bore no symbolic reference to mediate regal



Figure 8: The Black May Incident Monument, 2015.

authority, some recent studies elaborated that the delay of its construction resulted from collective attempts by powerful conservative and ultra-royalist elements who operated in various state agencies working together to prevent the project from fully materializing and instead relegating it to signify the royal authority (For example, see: Prakitnondhakarn, 2015, pp. 317-334). Whereas the Treasury Department had already granted a 6,400 sq.m. plot of land to erected the memorial since 2005 (Hutasingh,

---

would happen if the edifice were to incorporate the symbols of regal authority, such as royal emblems, together with traditional Thai architectural elements into its aesthetic appearance? Would such a practice deter the protestors from setting the building ablaze, and saving it from destruction?

<sup>134</sup> According to the convention, whereas a “monument” referred to a structure, statue, or a building commissioned as a tribute to someone notable or a special event, a “memorial” denoted a structure or a statue erected to remember a dead person or a group of people who died in an important past event. Although the author recognized such a difference in architectural significations, the two terms were used interchangeably in this research. Because he proposed structure would be constructed to commemorate Thai people’s fights for democracy and self-empowerment and to honor the deceased from the 1992 Black May Incident, it essentially operated in both the capacities of a monument and a memorial.

<sup>135</sup> The winning proposal featured as a *pagoda*-shaped monument accompanied by a 1,000-seat amphitheater and a small public park, said Pinai Sirikiatikul, one of the three architects working on the design of the proposed memorial. The *pagoda* would be divided vertically into two parts to reflect the loss of lives and to pay homage to the fight for democracy by Thai citizens. Crystals, lit up by rays from the sun, would bear the names of the deceased in 1992 along a pathway leading into the *pagoda*. This symbolic aspect should help to provide a connection between visitors and the victims of Black May. The monument was expected to cost twenty-five million baht (Hutasingh, 2005).

2005), the Crown Property Bureau subsequently withdrew its land parcel constituting the site of the defunct Department of Public Relations Headquarters. Bordering the Ratchadamnoen Klang, this piece of property became a locale to build a plaza and pavilions to commemorate King Rama IX's eightieth birthday in 2011 (Faculty of Architecture, Silpakorn University, 2011, pp. 7-102), which further complicated--if not jeopardized--the entire Black May Memorial project.<sup>136</sup>

Such uncertainty appeared to reflect the country's political situations during the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as well.<sup>137</sup> Since 2004, Thailand had plunged into prolong and bitter political conflicts. Thai people saw the military coups supported by ultra-royalists, conservative elements, and urban *bourgeoisie* in the capital city deposing elected civilian administrations in 2009 and 2014, culminating in an oppressive rule of the current junta regime, led by temperamental General Prayut Chan-o-cha, a former chief of staff of the Royal Thai Army. Prior to the 2014 *coup d'état*, series of street rallies, mass protests, violent civil unrests, and crises in the Bangkok nearly brought the country to a verge of a civil war. Amidst those upheavals and bloodsheds, the design and utilitarian components of the Black May Memorial--as well as the exact dimensions and location of its site--had been altered so many times, resulting in countless revisions of the winning proposal.

In sum, the ongoing politics of destruction at the Department of Public Relations Headquarters that gave rise to the creation, or perhaps lack thereof, of the Black May Memorial was still evolving and unsettled. Whether and how this monumental compound could live up to its expectations in the so-called age of "hyper-royalism" in present Thailand remained to be seen.<sup>138</sup>

### **The Demolition of the Supreme Court Compound**

Similar to many public structures commissioned by the People's Party, the Supreme Court complex was turned into a discourse for hegemonic contention by royal protagonists since the second Phibun administration. In 1955, the beleaguered premier acquiescently yielded to a demand for an installation of Prince Rapi Phatthanasak (1874-1920)'s statue in front of the Court of Justice.<sup>139</sup>

The placement of the princely image not only indicated an oblivion of Khana Ratsadon, but also Phibun's precarious position in the political landscape of the country during the 1950s. The statue

---

<sup>136</sup> Accordingly, the winning design proposal had to be rewritten almost from scratch, making the schedule for the completion of the entire monumental complex, which included a 1,000-seat amphitheater and public park, inconclusive. Hence, the politics of destruction of the Department of Public Relations Headquarters had persisted.

<sup>137</sup> During the past fifteen years, various administrations repeatedly failed to provide a clear answer with regard to a payment for the construction cost, which was estimated at twenty-five million baht. As a matter of fact, the actual Black May Monument unveiled to the public in 2015 also diverted considerably from the original design.

<sup>138</sup> Hyper-royalism denoted the politico-cultural condition in which royalism was exaggerated in public and everyday life. Sanctioned by the *lèse-majesté* law that controlled public expressions about the monarchy, it promoted the belief that royalist democracy was best for Thailand. Even though conceived in the mid-1970s as a measure to combat communist expansions, hyper-royalism persisted and was strengthened to support royalist democracy, which had dominated Thailand's political impasse and parliamentary system in the past three decades. Being a hegemonic concept, hyper-royalism fashioned the ideology of modern monarchy as well. It indoctrinated Thai citizens that the monarchical institution was indispensable for existence of the nationhood. Through visual performances and objects, especially television and majestic pageantry, hyper-royalism also generated the impressions that the monarchy was sacred, righteous, and benevolent (Winichakul, 2013).

<sup>139</sup> During the Fifth reign, this Oxford-graduated son of Chulalongkorn played a pivotal role in the kingdom's legal reforms.

further disclosed that the original significations of the edifice were reinterpreted under the authoritative umbrella of the royal-nation historiography, portraying members of the royal families as benevolent ruling elites who were both servants and saviors of the Thai nation. Through the said discursive re-inscription, the monarchy was then restored to its former position according to King Rama V's concept of Thai nationhood as one of the three cardinal institutions.

The politics of destruction at the Supreme Court took a long and treacherous course. In 1973, owing to a growing body of the judicial branch of government exacerbated by a limited ability of the existing courthouses to accommodate additional functions, the Ministry of Justice sought to erect a new supreme court building.<sup>140</sup> In 1987, the cabinet approved a demolition of the existing structures to make room for a construction of the new Supreme Court. This project, the cabinet later instructed, would be carried out in consultation with the Committee on Rattanakosin Island and the Old City,<sup>141</sup> and in compliance with the building codes and construction laws regulated by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) (Court of Justice, 2009b, pp. 11-13).<sup>142</sup>

Within the same year, the Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University received a commission to undertake a preliminary design, proposing an elongated building covered by a high-pitched roof. Subsequently, the cabinet exercised an executive order, exempting the new Supreme Court building from the BMA's 16 m.-height limitation applying to a new structure to be erected in Historic Bangkok, which had been declared a conservation zone.<sup>143</sup> The mandate also gave a provision for the new courthouse to have a maximum height of 32 m., which was still lower than the average height of regal buildings in the Grand Palace (Ibid.).<sup>144</sup>

Following the aftermaths of the Black May Incident, however, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court declared a moratorium on the project in 1994, citing the country's economic downturn, and

---

<sup>140</sup> In 1985, a search for a new location took place, but failed to find a suitable site. Two years later, the Civil and Criminal courthouses moved out, followed by the Ministry of Justice in 1993 (Office of the Court of Justice, 2009b, pp. 11-13).

<sup>141</sup> The Committee on Rattanakosin Island and the Old City was established in 2003. It comprised thirty persons and was chaired by a deputy prime minister. Most of these people were appointed from various organizations and departments located on Rattanakosin Island, e.g., the under-secretary of the Ministry of Defense, director of the Highways Department, head of the Budget Bureau, secretary-general of the Royal Household, director of the Crown Property Bureau, minister of education, governor of Bangkok, etc. (Rattanakosin Information Center, n.d.).

<sup>142</sup> The new facilities would also serve as a setting to enhance the majestic splendor of the nearby Grand Palace.

<sup>143</sup> The major agencies dealing with Rattanakosin Island encompassed the FAD, Committee on Rattanakosin Island and the Old City, ICOMOS Thai, the Society for the Conservation of National Treasure and Environment (SCONTE), and the Subcommittee on Conservation of Art and Architecture within ASA. Although in principle they should be independent of each other, these organizations did not counterbalance one another in reality, due to the practice of cross-memberships among their executive boards. For example, the director of FAD was appointed *ex officio* as the chairperson of ICOMOS Thai. In fact, the same names appeared repeatedly, as some individuals sat on three or more of those boards. As a result, all these agencies were actually directed by the thinking of a small group of people.

<sup>144</sup> Between 1988 and 1991, the terms of references (TOR) for the construction project were prepared, whereas the Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University was officially awarded an architectural commission. In 1992, the cabinet allocated a budget of 2,286 million baht to build the courthouse, which contained 46,000 sq.m. of working space and 15,000 sq.m. of parking area (Office of the Court of Justice, 2009b, pp. 11-13).

requested a budget to renovate the existing facilities instead.<sup>145</sup> It was not until after a military *coup d'état* in 2006--deposing a popularly-elected but highly corrupted and controversial Thaksin Shinawatra administration (2001-2006)--when a push for erecting the new Supreme Court resumed.<sup>146</sup>

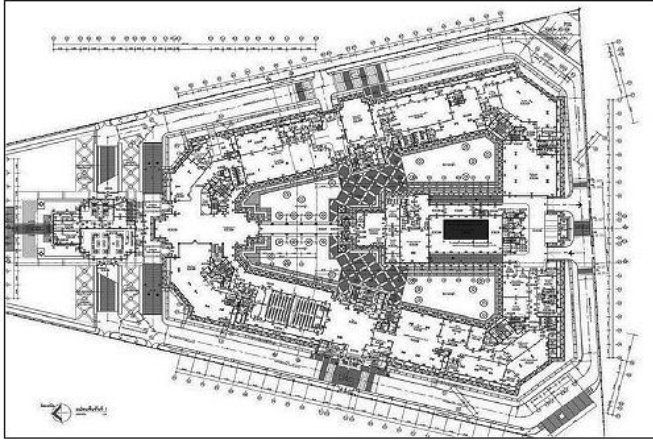


Figure 9: Plan Drawing of the New Supreme Court.  
Source: Robrouasanyutitham. Vol. 2, No. 16 (2009).

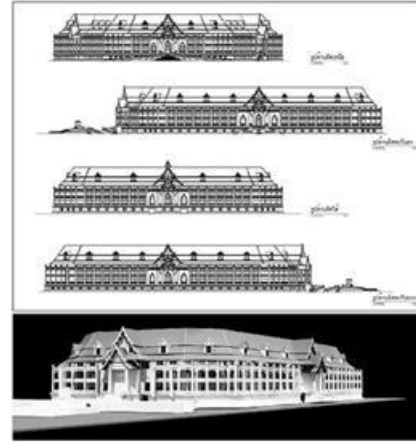


Figure 10: Elevation Drawings and  
Three-dimensional Visualization of the New  
Supreme Court. Source: Robrouasanyutitham.  
Vol. 2, No. 16 (2009).

A close examination revealed that the new facilities virtually dwelled on the same footprints of the old buildings [Figure 9]. Whereas the existing courthouses were 22 m.-tall in general--with an exception of a 31 m.-tall entry hall at the middle portion--their replacement was entirely 31.70 m.-tall. Aesthetically, the new Supreme Court bore a mixture of stylistic elements from both traditional Thai and modern architecture to represent the modern Thai identity. Its most recognized characteristics was a series of protruding sheer gable roofs--organized into three vertical ties and furnished with dormers--running along the whole 170 m.-length of the edifice [Figure 10].

As soon as a plan to tear down the existing courthouses in conjunction with the design of the new Supreme Court were publicized in 2007, the Office of the Judiciary of the Court of Justice--which was responsible to manage the project--met with harsh criticisms and strong opposition from several academics, professional organizations, conservation agencies, concerned citizens, and even other departments in the bureaucratic body, namely the FAD.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>145</sup> Before 2000, the Ministry of Justice was responsible for the administrative works of all courts. Following a constitutional reform in 1997, the administrative tasks were entrusted to the newly established Office of the Judiciary, an independent organization and a juristic person, to guarantee independence of the Thai Judiciary from political interference. The adjudicative duties remained with the Court of Justice, which was sub-divided into three main components: The Court of First Instance (which also included specialized judiciary bodies, such as the Labor, Juvenile and family, and Tax Courts), the Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court (Office of the Judiciary, 2016).

<sup>146</sup> In a subsequent year, a junta-installed Surayud Chulanont administration (2008-2009) authorized a sum of 3,700 million bath for the project as requested by the Court of Justice. Shortly after, the agency hired the Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University to work as a principle consultant to oversee the construction process. (Office of the Court of Justice, 2009b, pp. 11-13).

<sup>147</sup> Many major agencies dealing with Rattanakosin Island--e.g., the FAD, ICOMOS Thai, and the Subcommittee on Conservation of Art and Architecture within ASA--organized a sequences of lectures, public hearings, and discussion *fora* to convince the people that the Khana Ratsadon-commissioned Supreme Court buildings were

With exception of the Committee on Rattanakosin Island and the Old City, various groups voiced objections to the demolition in terms of social sanctions. To cite some examples, in 2007, the Faculty of Architecture, Silpakorn University, in collaboration with the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Thai, as well as concerned groups of urban planners and architects, held a seminar and called for more citizen participations in a preservation of the Supreme Court complex (See: Sawatdirak, 2011). Likewise, the Subcommittee on Conservation of Art and Architecture within ASA incorporated the courthouses into its conservation lists in 2007, before bestowing an Architectural Conservation Award on the Supreme Court compound two years later (ASA, 2007); (ASA, 2009).

Legal measures were taken as well. In 2009, twenty-two civil organizations lodged a complaint with the Office of the Ombudsman, asking the legislative branch of the government to intervene on the matter. Within the same year, the Director General of the FAD sent an official letter to the Office of the Judiciary, clearly stated that the former Court of Justice and Court of Appeals buildings in the Supreme Court complex were being registered as preserved buildings, and therefore entitled for a protection because of their legal statue<sup>148</sup> (Fine Arts Department, 2009). Because of these collective endeavors that instigated mounting social pressures from multiple groups, the Office of the Judiciary decided to defer a schedule to destruct the courthouses.<sup>149</sup>

Amidst Thailand's political crisis to impeach the Yingluck Shinawatra administration (2011-2013), the Court of Justice restarted a destruction of the Supreme Court complex in 2012, citing the buildings' dilapidated conditions coupled with structural degenerations that could result in physical injuries of the judicial personnel as the major causes.<sup>150</sup> As for the new facilities, an official from the Office of

---

valuable as a national treasure and should not be demolished but instead be preserved. A number of scholars, Thais and foreigners alike, published academic literature that could benefit the same purpose as well (For instance, see: Chua, 2010; Prakitnondhakarn, 2015).

<sup>148</sup> The Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museums (amendment 1992), empowered the FAD to register nationally significant structures. In 1999, the Decentralization Act was enacted to delegate authority to local administrations, resulting in four classifications of building preservations: National Treasure, Important Cultural Heritage, Cultural Heritage, and Preserved Building. Structures in the first three categories were registered and protected by the FAD, whereas those in the last one were placed under the safeguard of local governing bodies, such as the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) (Noobanjong, 2017, pp. 180-181).

<sup>149</sup> In any case, the Committee on Rattanakosin Island and the Old City, suspiciously silent and distanced itself from those efforts to save the Supreme Court. At a cabinet meeting in late 2009, its representative objected neither the demolition nor construction, and expressed a confidence in the integrity and sounded judgment of the Court of Justice officials in complying with the laws. On the contrary, the chairman of its Subcommittee for the Conservation and Development of Rattanakosin Island offered a supportive view for razing the old and building a new courthouse compound, but and paid no attention to its height which would certainly impact the neighboring landscape of old buildings. Being new did not mean being without value, he proclaimed (Thai Post, 2011). Yet, a couple of years later, the same person appealed through the press to force the BMA to have a Vishnu shrine, whose height was under 10 m., located 30 m. from Suthat Temple in Historic Bangkok urgently demolished (Office of the Courts of Justice, 2009a, pp. 5-10).

<sup>150</sup> Nevertheless, the argument on the structural problems promulgated by the Office of the Judiciary seemed to contradict recommendations from an analytical research on the physical integrity of the buildings. In 2003, the Court of Justice hired Chulalongkorn University Research Center to conduct detailed investigations on the structural integrity of buildings in the Supreme Court compound. The studies took two years to complete, culminating in a report presented to the Office of the Judiciary of the Court of Justice. Its analytical results indicated that though experiencing various degrees of physical deteriorations, all the buildings did not possess

the Judiciary explained, the new 32.m.-tall edifice did not violate any law, since it had already been exempted from the 15-m. limitation by the cabinet in 1987. Although the FAD was listing the former Court of Justice and Court of Appeals as preserved structures, he went on, they had yet to be protected *de jure* because their registration processes were still in progress, therefore rendering the FAD's claim on the legal status these edifices *de facto* invalid (Khaosod, 2013).<sup>151</sup>

In late-2012, the Yingluck administration also allocated a budget of 2,525 million baht for the project (Division of Public Relations, Office of the Judiciary, 2012). In early-2013, the FAD filed a lawsuit against Sino-Thai Engineering and Construction Public Company, a contractor who won a bid to build the new courthouses, demanding the demolition of the courthouses to be stopped. In response, the Office of the Judiciary vowed that the Court of Justice would fight any legal challenge aimed to impede or detail the project (Post Today, 2013).

Despite public outcry and objection from various civic groups, professional organizations, educational institutes, and concerned citizens, the destruction of the courthouses proceeded with impunity. After the military takeover in 2014, oppositions to the deconstruction of the courthouses came to be silent, as the incumbent junta regime banned any public gathering and protest to be organized. As the remaining structures were finally razed to the ground, the demise of the Supreme Court buildings appeared to mirror a grim fate of the Thai democracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In essence, the proposed design for the new Supreme Court [Figure 10] exhibited a negative reflection on the antagonistic attitude of judicial officials toward the Khana Ratsadon-commissioned Supreme Court buildings [Figure 2] as an unfitting representation of *khwampenthai*. Their sentiment seemed to imitate a prevailing view today on Thai culture and its identity as something of fixation, embodying intrinsic and unchangeable values regardless of differences in time. Correspondingly, by possessing neither reference to historical Thai architecture nor to the monarchical institution, the Modernist courthouses [Figure 2] were deemed as anything but Thai.

Nonetheless, such a critical interpretation conveniently overlooked that the proposed new Supreme Court was a stylistically hybridized structure [Figure 10], consisting of several modern aspects that were foreign in origins, such as the spatial layouts of the courtrooms. In fact, the courthouse as a building type itself was also a modern, Western invention, which made it even more puzzling when realizing that the Thai legal and judicial systems were created and codified after Western models. Consequently, a fundamental yet subversive question arose. Since there was no precedent of historical buildings in Siam that could be properly adapted to the design of a modern courthouse, why should the new Supreme Court buildings [Figure 10] still employ traditional Thai architectural elements? In retrospect, the People's Party-built Supreme Court structures [Figure 2] arguably became a more apposite representation of the modern Thai identity after all.<sup>152</sup>

---

a critical structural problem that could not be fixed. So, their demolitions were not necessarily recommended (Chulalongkorn University Research Center, 2005, pp. 3, 23, 30, 32).

<sup>151</sup> In contrast to earlier public relations practice, the Office of the Judiciary maintained minimal contact with the press and mass media on the matter of the Supreme Court's demolition.

<sup>152</sup> The abovementioned unfixed, syncretic, and even self-contradictory illustrations of *khwampenthai* discourse disclosed that the Thai identity was indeed inventive and artificial, continually being constructed, carved, inscribed, and in many cases manipulated to serve specific purposes. This was, perhaps, why expressions of Thainess could sometimes be quite unreasonable and inexplicable, as shown by the politics of destruction at the Supreme Court buildings as an example.

## Conclusion

The preceding critical and analytical investigations disclosed that architectural significations of the Supreme Court Buildings, Chaloemthai Theater, and Department of Public Relations Headquarters were created, manipulated, altered, and disregarded by power politics.<sup>153</sup> They were caught between the polarities of a conservative force tending to preserve the existing meanings and a revolutionary force striving for new ones. While the conservative force brought stability of meanings and institutionalization of forms, its revolutionary counterpart replaced the existing with different significations.<sup>154</sup> The forms remained the same, but the meanings were in flux (Bonta, 1979, p. 29).<sup>155</sup> In addition, as demonstrated by the commissions and demolitions of the three case studies, there was nothing intrinsic to the relationships between modern architecture and political ideologies.<sup>156</sup> In actuality, the symbolic affiliations of Modernist structures with the ideologies in Thailand were artificial, subjected to further re-appropriations that generated slippage of original meanings. Correspondingly, Chaloemthai Theater, Department of Public Relations Headquarters, and the Supreme Court contained no form of power by itself, but their creators employed them to signify certain meanings.<sup>157</sup> While all were utilized as a strategic device to mediate power and represent *khwampenthai*, these edifices sometimes served political interests for which they were not originally intended via discursive mode of architectural significations (See: Bentley, 1999, p. 16).

On the one hand, aside from mediating and legitimizing the power and legitimacy of the People's Party, Chaloemthai Theater and Supreme Court Buildings acted as a material manifestation of the 1932-coup promoters' endeavors to create public memory and shared mentality, to reflect their ideological views on the Thai nationhood, to express the Thai identity, and to symbolize democratic ideology. Following the demise of Khana Ratsadon, the very same buildings were draconically characterized by royalist advocates not only as a symbol of misguided nationalism and ill-prepared democracy, but also a relic of a discredited and defunct regime, which eventually culminated in their obliterations. On the other hand, as the Ratchadamnoen Avenue was subversively re-appropriated and turned into a contested space against junta regimes, the signification of the Department of Public Relations Headquarters was transformed by ordinary citizens from a representation of progress and the Thais' ability to negotiate with the West and modernity to a symbol of oppression

---

<sup>153</sup> As explained before, similar to governments in other countries around the globe, the post-1932 regimes in Thailand resorted to the practice of connecting modern architecture with political ideologies. As already illustrated by three case studies, modern architecture appeared to be a natural choice for the state to convey its political message, representing the technological advance and rationalist aspect of modernity, which the new ruling elites--either People's Party or the junta--aspired to attain.

<sup>154</sup> To put it differently, apart from revealing the changes in meanings that occasioned the deconstructions of the three structures, the inquiries on the politics of destruction indicated that, similar to language, architecture of the state in Thailand had been in a perpetual evolution.

<sup>155</sup> In a corollary view, it could be contended that state-commissioned edifices in Thailand therefore involved the ebbs and flows of life rather than the stabilization of identities and/or conditions (Aasen, 1998, pp. 2-3).

<sup>156</sup> Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Modernism was widely adopted for architecture of the state by governments around the world. Examples ranged from the Italian fascist, British colonialist, to American capitalist and Russian communist rules. Regardless of their ideological diversity, those regimes shared one peculiarity that served as a framework of references for Modernist structures, the notion of nationalism albeit operating under dissimilar definitions.

<sup>157</sup> In other words, there was nothing intrinsic in the relationship between architecture and ideology. The symbolic associations were merely window dressing for political maneuvers, which the ruling authorities employed to mediate, legitimize, and secure their power.

and despotic rule by military governments, leading to the demolition of the edifice.

In a nutshell, the politics of destruction further demonstrated that Thainess was constructed in terms of a discourse, which was syncretic, unfixed, and even self-contradictory, resulting in its intricate dynamism and paradoxical nature. Being a product of taxonomies, the Thai identity was often misidentified as a methodology instead of theoretical foundations. As exemplified the three case studies, Thainess was used to support an established point of view projected by the ruling authorities as a legitimate discourse about Thailand to advocate and defend certain perspectives, sentiments, constraints, taboos, alibis, possibilities and plausibilities, while repressing and negating others (Winichakul, 1994, p. 173). In bringing the inquiries to a close, this research would like to reiterate that although the present political situation in Thailand did not nourish a pluralistic society, such an awareness on the abovementioned true nature of *khwampenthai* should not be ignored.

As an ending note, in early-April 2017, the brass plaque that signposted the pivotal moment when Thailand shifted from absolute monarchy to parliamentary democracy was mysteriously taken away from its location (Charuvastra, 2017). Fit into the road surface near the King Rama V's equestrian statue at the Royal Plaza in Bangkok's Dusit district, this memorial plaque marked the site where the coup promoters read their revolutionary manifesto on June 24, 1932.<sup>158</sup> While some scholars and activists cried foul over the missing historic artifact, the incumbent junta administration insisted that it had nothing to do with its disappearance (Ibid.).<sup>159</sup> Irrespective of what the true cause might be, the removal of Khana Ratsadon's plaque signified a new turn in the politics of destructions on the arts and architecture of the People's Party during the reign of King Vajiralongkorn (Rama X, 2016-present).<sup>160</sup>

## References

- Aasen, C. (1998). *Architecture of Siam: A cultural history interpretation*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
- Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso Editions and New Left Books.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1998). *The specter of comparisons: Nationalism, southeast Asia, and the world*. London: Verso Editions and New Left Books.
- Aphornsuvan, T. (2004). Moh Bradley kub American orientalism nai Siam [Dr. Bradley and American orientalism in Siam]. *Silapawattathanatham*, 25 (9), 96-107.
- Association of Siamese Architects under Royal Patronage (ASA). (n.d.). Khongkanchatthamthabian akhankhuankhakaekaronurak [A list of proposed buildings to be registered for historic preservations]. Retrieved from <http://www.thai-heritage-building.com>.

---

<sup>158</sup> The original plaque bore an inscription reading: "Here at dawn on June 24, 1932, Khana Ratsadon brings into being the constitution for the sake of the country's prosperity." It was replaced by a new commemorative metal roundel bore an inscription reading: "May Siam be blessed with prosperity forever. May the people be happy and cheerful and become the strength of the country." Furthermore, the rim around the surface of the new plaque also bore another inscription reading: "The respect for *Phra Ratanattaya* (or The Three Jewels: *Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha*), the state, one's family, and the faithfulness towards one's king will all contribute to contribute to the prosperity of one's state" (Chetchotiros, Nanuam, and Jitcharoenkul, 2017).

<sup>159</sup> According to some historians, the memorial plaque was expected to be made about nine years after the 1932 revolution when the government at the time designated June 24 as the National Day. (Ibid.).

<sup>160</sup> In fact, one famous ultra-royalist academic earlier made a public threat to destroy the plaque for the reason that it symbolized the treason against the monarchy by the 1932 coup promoters (Charuvastra, 2017).



- \_\_\_\_\_. (2009). *List of architectural conservation awards*.  
Retrieved from <http://www.asa.or.th/en/node/99360>.
- Baker, C., & Phongpaichit, P. (2014). *A history of Thailand*. Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Bentley, I. (1999). *Urban transformations: Power, people, and urban design*. London: Routledge.
- Bonta, J.P. (1979). *Architecture and its interpretation: A study of expressive systems in architecture*. New York: Rizzoli.
- Chaiching, N. (2005). Kanruesarang 2475: Fancharingkhongnakutmokti namngoenthae [Deconstructing 1932: Genuine dreams of the true blue-blooded idealists]. *Silpawatthanatham*, 22 (2), 78-117.
- Chaloemtiarana, T. (1979). *Thailand: The politics of despotic paternalism*. Bangkok: Thammasat University Press.
- Champion, P. (2007, September 25). Professor in lèse majesté row. In *Reuter top news*.  
Retrieved from [http://www.reuters.com/video/2007/09/25/professor-in-lese-majeste\\_row?videoid=67215](http://www.reuters.com/video/2007/09/25/professor-in-lese-majeste_row?videoid=67215).
- CharuvastraT. (2017, April 15). Why was the 1932 revolution plaque so important? *Khaosod*. Retrieved from <http://www.khaosodenglish.com/politics/2017/04/15/1932-revolution-plaque-important/>.
- Chatrabhuti, T. (2004). *Tamnan roangnung [Legend of cinema]*. Bangkok: Wealadee Publishing.
- Chetchotiros, N., Nanuam, W., & Jitcharoenkul, P. (2017, April 16). You say you want a revolution plaque--well, it's gone. *Bangkok Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/politics/1232906/you-say-you-want-a-revolution-plaque-well-its-gone>.
- Chua, L. (2010, August 12). [Review of the book *The art and architecture of the People's Party: Political symbols in ideological aspect*, by C. Prakitnondhakarn]. *New Mandala*. Retrieved from <http://www.newmandala.org/book-review/review-of-art-and-architecture-of-the-people-party-tlcnm-rev-ix/>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2012). *Building Siam: Leisure, race, and nationalism in modern Thai architecture, 1910-1973*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.
- Chulalongkorn University Research Center. (2005). *Khrongkansueksawikhro saphappanha akarnsandika laeakhanboriwenropsandika [An analytical study on the problems of the supreme court building and surrounding structures]*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University.
- Department of Public Relations. (2005). Prawat krom prachasampan [History of the department of public relations]. Retrieved from [http://www.prd.go.th/ewt\\_dl\\_link.php?nid=79704&filename=ic](http://www.prd.go.th/ewt_dl_link.php?nid=79704&filename=ic).
- Division of Public Relations, Office of the Judiciary. (2012, December 20). Khosoksanyutitham chichaeng khrongkankosang akaranthithamkan sandikalangmai [Spokesperson of the court of justice explains the construction of the new supreme courthouse]. *Suesan* [Pamphlet].
- Docomomo Thailand. (2014). No. 22: The complex of the court of justice. In *Minimum documentation fiche 2003 composed by national working party of Thailand* [Data file].  
Retrieved from <http://www.docomomothailand.org/pages/no22.html>.
- Dovey, K. (1999). *Framing places: Mediating power in built forms*. London: Routledge.
- Duncan, J.S. (1989). The power of place in Kandy: 1780-1980. In J.A. Agnew & J.S. Duncan (Eds.), *The power of place: Bringing together geographical and sociological imaginations*. Winchester: Unwin Hyman.
- Faculty of Architecture, Silpakorn University. (2011). *Rainganchabapsombun khrongkanprakuatbaep lanchaloemphrakiat phrabatsomdet phrachaoyuhua Bhumibol Adulyadej. [A full report on the architectural competition for a landscape design project to honor King Rama IX]*. Bangkok: Silpakorn University.
- Fine Arts Department. (2009, August 31). Wor. Tor. 0403/3323. Nangsueduanthisut thuengprathansandika [Most urgent letter to the chief justice of the supreme court].
- Fineman, D. (1997). *A special relationship: The United States and military government in Thailand*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge*. (A. M. Sheridan Smith, Trans.). London: Tavistock Publications.
- Fusinpaiboon, C. (2014). *Modernisation of building: The transplantation of the concept of architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s-1950s*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Sheffield, South Yorkshire.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2015, January). *Beyond styles and isolation: Towards the next step of a historiography of modern architecture in Thailand as a part of southeast Asia*. Paper presented at the 1<sup>st</sup> Southeast Asia

- Architecture Research Collaborative Symposium, National University of Singapore, Singapore.
- Goodman, N. (1968). *Languages of art: An approach to a theory of symbols*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.
- Habermas, J. (1972). *Erkenntnis und Interesse [Knowledge and human interests]*. (J. Shapiro, Trans.). London: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Hershkovitz, L. (2002). Tiananmen square and the politics of place. *Political Geography*, 12 (5), 395-420.
- Horayangkura, V., Indravichit, K., Chantavilasvong, S., & Inpuntung, V. (1993). *Phatnakannaeokhwamkhit laerupbaep khongngan sathapattayakam: Adit patchuban laeanakhot [The development of concept and design in architecture: Past, present, and future]*. Bangkok: Association of Siamese Architects under Royal Patronage (ASA).
- Human Rights Watch. (1992). *Human rights development in Thailand*. Retrieved from [http://www.hrw.org/reports/1993/WR93/Asw-11.htm#P397\\_166328.html](http://www.hrw.org/reports/1993/WR93/Asw-11.htm#P397_166328.html).
- Hutasingh, O. (2005, May 16). Foundation stone to be placed for long-delayed memorial tomorrow. *Bangkok Post*. Sec. A.
- Jumbala, P. (1992). *Nation-building and democratization of Thailand: A political history*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn Social Research Institute.
- Kasetsiri, C. (1974). The first Phibun government and its involvement in world war II. *Journal of the Siam Society*, 62 (2), 25-88.
- Khana Ratsadon [The People's Party]. (1932, June 24). *Prakat khana ratsadon chabapthi nueng* [The first revolutionary manifesto of the People's Party]. Retrieved from <http://www.enlightened-jurists.org/directory/84>.
- Khaosod. (2013, January 10). Akarnsandika [The supreme court building]. Retrieved from [http://www.khaosod.co.th/view\\_news.php?newsid=TUROamlyd3hNVEV3TURFMU5nPT0=](http://www.khaosod.co.th/view_news.php?newsid=TUROamlyd3hNVEV3TURFMU5nPT0=).
- Kostof, S. (1995). *A history of architecture: Settings and rituals*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Krom Khotsanakan [Department of Public Relations]. (1942). Prime minister Plaek Phibunsongkhram's speech on the national day anniversary on June 24, 1942. *Khao Kosanakarn*, 7 (5), 982.
- Mallet, M. (1987). Causes and consequences of the October'76 coup. In A. Turton, J. Fast, & M. Caldwell (Eds.), *Roots of conflicts*. Nottingham: Spokesman.
- Matichon. (2015, May 17). Prinya puey aansornstan pruetapaprachatham khua silpasamaihmaichou toasuepuae sitti sareephap [Mr. Prinya reveal the monument of the black may incident a modern art and symbol of the people's fights for their rights and freedom]. Retrieved from [http://www.matichon.co.th/news\\_detail.php?newsid=1431838181](http://www.matichon.co.th/news_detail.php?newsid=1431838181).
- Ministry of Justice. (1992). *Nuengroipi krathoungyutitham [A hundred Year of the ministry of justice]*. Bangkok: The Ministry of Justice.
- Mokarapong, T. (1972). *History of the Thai revolution: A study in political behavior*. Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich.
- National Archives of Thailand. 0701.22.1/7. Sunthonphot khongnaikratmontri nueangnai aphilaksakhitsamai haengnganchelimchonongwanchati 24 mithunayon 2483 [The prime minister's speech to celebrate the national day on June 24, 1942].
- \_\_\_\_\_. Ministry of Education. (4) Sor. Tor. 2.3.6/11. Ruangsangsandeeka laesanuthorn [On the constructions of the supreme court and the court of appeals buildings]. January 22, 1941.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Ministry of Interior. (1) Mor. Tor. 1.1.3.3/1. Raingankarnprachum khanakammakarn damnoenkarnsang anusawari prhabahtsomdej phrapokkloachaoyouhua [Meeting report of the steering committee for the construction of King Prajadhipok's statue]. January 31, 1952, p. 56.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Ministry of Interior. (1) Mor. Tor. 1.1.3.3/1. Ruang anusawari prhabahtsomdej phrapokkloa [On the construction of King Prajadhipok's statue]. February 14, 1953, p. 1.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Office of the Prime Minister. (2) Sor. Ror. 0201.87.3.1/4. Raingan kanpoettuekthithamkankrathoungyutitham [Report on the inauguration of the ministry of justice building]. June 24, 1941, p.1.
- Noobanjong, K. (2003). *Power, identity, and the rise of modern architecture: From Siam to Thailand*. (Doctoral dissertation). University of Colorado, Denver, CO. Retrieved from <http://dissertation.com/book.php?book=1581122012&method=ISBN>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2013a). *The aesthetics of power: Architecture, modernity, and identity from Siam to Thailand*. Bangkok: White Lotus Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2013b). Ratchadamnoen avenue Thailand's transformative path towards modern polity. In N. Perera & W.S. Tang (Eds.), *Transforming Asian cities: Intellectual impasse, Asianizing space, and*

- emerging translocalities*. London: Routledge.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2017). Thailand. In U. Carughi & M. Visone (Eds.), *Time frames: Conservation policies for twentieth-century architectural heritage*. London: Routledge.
- Nuan la-or, M. (1997) *Kanmueangthai yuksanlak thai [Thai politics during the age of symbolism]*. Bangkok: Rungruangrat Printing.
- Office of the Court of Justice. (2009a). Botsampat sastrachan Dr. Adun Wichiancharoen khrongkankosang akansandikamai [Interview with professor Adul Wichiancharoen about the project to build a new supreme court building], *Robrouasanyutitham*, 2 (16), 5-10.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2009b). Khwampenma karmkolsang akansandika lungmai [The chronology of the construction of the new supreme court building]. *Robrouasanyutitham*, 2 (16), 11-13.
- Office of the Judiciary. (2016). Structure of the court of justice. In *Judicial System*. Retrieved from <http://www.coj.go.th/en/cojstructure.html>.
- Parry, B. (1995). Problems in current theories of colonial discourse. In B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths, & H. Tiffin (Eds.), *The postcolonial readers*. London: Routledge.
- Post Today*. (2013, January 5). Kromsilpakorn chaengchap phurapmao rue akansandika [The fine arts department files a complaint to arrest the contractors demolishing the supreme court building]. Retrieved from <http://www.posttoday.com/>.
- Prakitnondhakarn, C. (2004). *Kanmueanglaesangkham naisilpasathapattayakam sayamsamai thaiprayuk chatiniyom [Politics and society in architecture: Siamese era, applications in Thai design, and nationalism]*. Bangkok: Matichon.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2007). Dome thammasat lae karnmuang [The dome building at Thammasat university]. *NAJUA History of Architecture and Thai Architecture*, 5, 66-85.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2009). *Silpasathapattayakam khana ratsadon: Sanyalaksathangkanmueang naichoengutmadan [The arts and architecture of the People's Party: Political symbols in ideological aspect]*. Bangkok: Matichon.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2015). *Sathapattayakamthai lungtrattapraharn 19 kanya 49 [Thai architecture after the coup of September 19, 2006]*. Bangkok: An Printing.
- Pramoj, K. (1985). Opening speech on modern art. In *A Proceedings from a Seminar on the Post-1932 Arts*. Bangkok: Thai Khadi Research Institute, Thammasat University.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1989, January 17). Column soi suanplu [Suanplu newspaper column]. *Siamrath*. Sec. C.
- Rattanakosin Information Center. (n.d.). Khana kammakan rattanakosin [The committee on Rattanakosin island and the old city]. In *Policies and regulations*. Retrieved from <http://www.thapra.lib.su.ac.th/ratanagosin/committee.htm>.
- Rojpojchanarat, V. (1987). The conservation of monuments in Thailand. In *SPAFA final report: Workshop on community-based conservation and maintenance of historic buildings/living monuments (S-W111)*, Bangkok. Bangkok: SPAFA (The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Project in Archaeology in Fine Arts).
- Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Saussure, F.D. (1966). *Course in general linguistics*. C. Bally, A. Sechehayé & A. Reidlinger (Eds.), (W. Baskin, Trans.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Sawatdirak, P. (2011). *Yutkon...yathupthing akhansandika [Stop the demolition of the supreme court buildings]*. Retrieved from <http://www.thaingo.org/writer/view.php?id=531>.
- Setabutr, N. (2016). Saphan phan fa lilat [Phan fa lilat bridge]. In *Hetukansamkhan thangkanmueangthai samai por. sor. 2520 tueng patchuban [Important political events from 1977 to the present]*. Retrieved from <http://wiki.kpi.ac.th/index.php?title=สะพานผ่านฟ้าลีลาศ#>.
- Sirikiatikul, P. (2007). *Remaking modern Bangkok: Urban renewal on Rajadamnern boulevard, 1932-1957*. (Master's Thesis). University College, London.
- Spivak, G. (1985). Can the subaltern speak?: Speculations on widow sacrifice. *Wedge*, 7 (8), 120-130.
- Streckfuss, D. (1995). Kings in the age of nations: The paradox of lèse-majesté as political crime in Thailand. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 37 (3), 445-475.
- Terwiel, B. J. (1980). *Field marshall Plaek Phibunsongkhram*. (Master's Thesis). University of Queensland, Brisbane.
- Thai Post. (2011, February 25). *Kothomo moenroesankhang wat suthat* [BMA not interested in dismantling shrine beside Suthat Temple]. Sec. A.
- Tiptus, P. (1996). *Sathapniksayam phuenthan botbat phlangan laenaekhit por. sor. 2475 tueng 2537 [Siamese*

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

- architects: Foundation, roles, works, and concepts from 1932 to 1990*]. Bangkok: Association of Siamese Architects under Royal Patronage (ASA). *Wattanatham thangkarnsan [Judicial culture]*. (1943). Bangkok: Sophonpipatthanakorn Co.
- Winichakul, T. (1994). *Siam mapped: A history of the geo-body of a nation*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1999, July). Thai democracy in public memory: Monuments and their narratives. Keynote lecture at the 7<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Thai Studies, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2013, June). Hyper-royalism: Its spell and magic, its origin and possible end. Area Studies Seminar Lecture. Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization, Chiba. Retrieved from [http://www.ide.go.jp/English/Events/Seminar/130628\\_region.html](http://www.ide.go.jp/English/Events/Seminar/130628_region.html).
- Wong, K.F. (2006). *Visions of a nation: Public monuments in twentieth-century Thailand*. Bangkok: White Lotus Press.

## The Dynamics of Tai Vernacular Architecture in Northeast India

Oranratmanee, Rawiwan

Saicharoent, Chaowalit

Faculty of Architecture

Chiang Mai University

Thailand

---

### Abstract

This paper explores the dynamics of vernacular architecture of the Tai ethnic group in India who migrated from Northern Myanmar to Northeast India during the 13<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This study conducted a qualitative survey of Tai cultural landscape in 17 villages and 45 houses in terms of its physical, social and cultural characteristics. The findings revealed that most Tai settlements have maintained some characteristics of the Tai peasantry landscape that are deeply rooted in Southeast Asia, including the settlement patterns, spatial forms and relations among villages and houses. Some common minor adaptations have occurred, due to assimilation with Indian culture, including the adoption of house form, the use of local materials and the applied construction technology. Temporal changes are evident; the settlements from earlier periods of migration have undergone more profound changes, while later settlements have retained their traditional characteristics. This paper pinpoints the impact of cultural assimilation on vernacular architecture, thereby providing an example of resilience and change of vernacular architecture in a multicultural context.

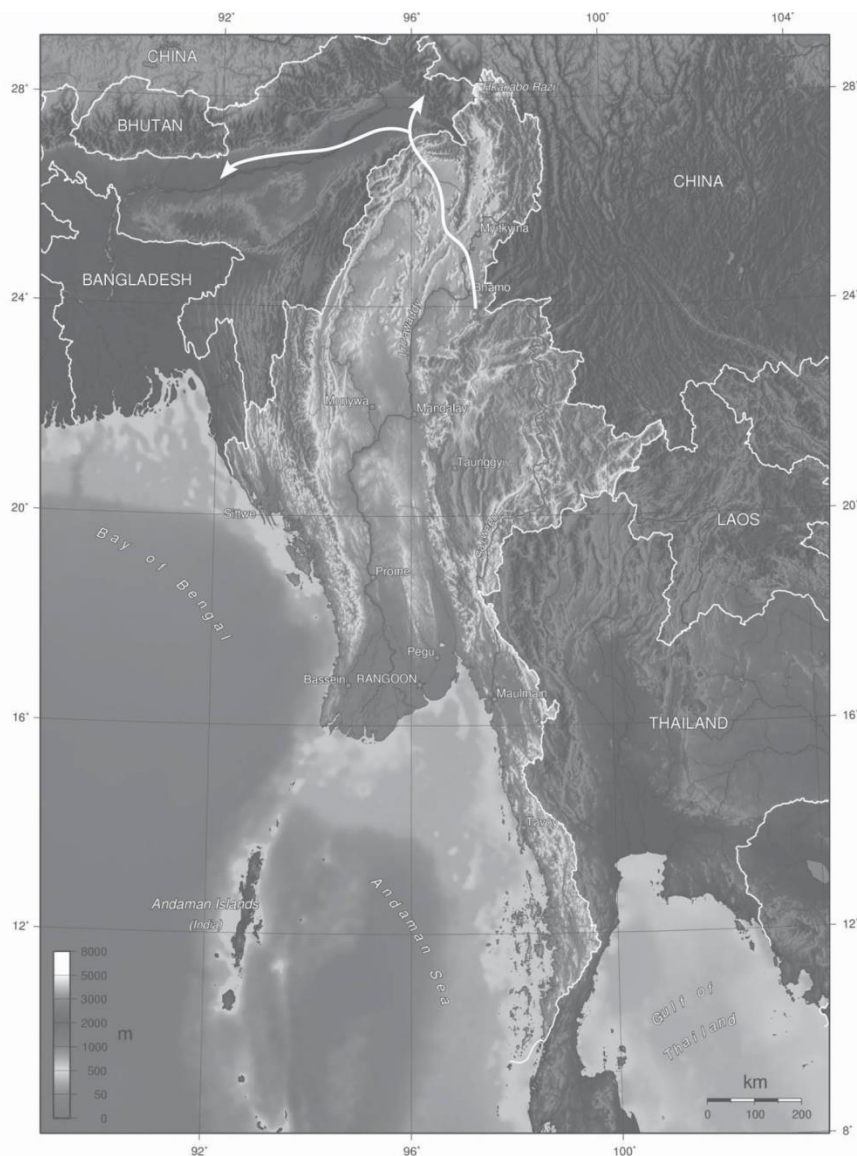
**Keywords:** dynamics, vernacular architecture, Tai, cultural assimilation, Northeast India

### Introduction

Vernacular architecture reflects the needs and socio-cultural values of a people. According to Oliver (2005: 263), studying the common knowledge shared by different building traditions of diverse societies and how these have developed, diverged and converged over time is important, but largely overlooked. Upton and Vlach (1986) similarly noted a gap in knowledge about the dialectic relationship between dynamics factors and the formation of vernacular architecture. Al Sayyad (2005: xvii) emphasized that we must come to terms with the nature of constraint in vernacular practices, and accept that gradual change occurs in vernacular architecture over long periods of time. The major challenge to studying vernacular architecture lies in the focuses, methods and approaches that reflect upon the dynamics of change.

Migration, as noted, is a global phenomenon that relates to various factors, including geographic, social, economic and political factors (Lee, 1966). Waterson (1990) stated that migration and the vernacular tradition are profoundly related – long rooted in one place and evolved in the new place of settlement. This paper explores the dynamics of vernacular architecture in relation to migration and resettlement in a new homeland. The objectives of this study are to explore the Tai cultural

landscape and discuss the dynamics of Tai vernacular architecture in the diversified context of Northeast India. Tai is one of the mongoloid groups living widely in Southeast Asia, Southern China and Northeast India. According to Gait (1992), the Tai began to expand their territory from their homeland in upper Myanmar during the 13<sup>th</sup> century, founding new settlements both in nearby areas and as far away as Northeast India. In 1228 AD, a group of 9,000 Tais migrated from their kingdom of origin in Mueng Mao, crossed the Patkai Mountain Range and settled a kingdom called Ahom in the Brahmaputra River Valley in northeast India (see migration route in Figure 1). From time to time, and continuing until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, waves of Tai migration followed the pioneering groups, expanding the Tai settlements in the Brahmaputra River Valley, resulting in different temporal settlements of Tai groups among the diversified northeastern Indian culture.



*Figure 1: Migration route of the Tai from Mueng Mao to the Brahmaputra River*

### **Overview of the Tai Cultural Landscape in Northeast India**

Vellinga et al (2007) and Waterson (1990) noted that Southeast Asian peasantry landscape derives from several determiners, including tropical climate, abundance of rainforest, peasant way of life, social system and beliefs; these determiners influence the identical form of domestic architecture that are built on stilts using timber-based technology. Likewise, Tai people customarily live their life as farmers in a peasantry cultural system. They commonly cultivate wet rice, thus preferring to live in lowlands and seasonally flooded areas with a hot and humid climate. The settlement form is a small hamlet, surrounded by rice fields; the domestic architecture is a self-built stilt house, grouped in a compound for the extended family (Hallet, 1890; Dodd, 1923; Milne, 1970; Huke and Huke, 1990; Sai Aung Tun, 2009).

As Tai moved from their homeland in upper Myanmar to northeastern India, relatively different factors influenced the domestic architecture in Northeast India. Northeastern India has different climatic zones, including a warm and humid climate in the lowlands, a cool and humid climate in the higher plains, and a cold and cloudy climate in the highlands of the Himalayan mountain range (Singh, 2009: 879-80). The Tai settlements are largely found in the warm and humid lowlands and the cool and humid higher plains that are ideal for cultivating wet rice.

Northeastern India is a multicultural region, including lowland and highland ethnic groups with different belief systems, including Hinduism, Buddhism and Animism (Kolkman and Blackburn, 2014). The Tais were valley-dwelling peasantry that cultivated muddy and marshy soil inundated by annual floods (Phukon and Phukon, 2011: 45-46). They, therefore, selected and settled in the low-lying river valleys avoided by other local ethnic groups, who were mostly highlanders, and not accustomed to living in a seasonally flooded area.

Due to different determiners, the architecture of the Tai and local northeast Indian are relatively different (see Figure 2). Some scholars of northeastern Indian architecture, including Sharma (1988), Singh (2009) and Kolkman and Blackburn (2014), similarly noted that the most common style of northeastern Indian domestic architecture is a house built on the ground and made of earthen, sun-dried, brick walls with a bamboo thatched roof. Another less common style is a wooden house built on stilts. These local styles are found largely in the rural areas. An emerging contemporary colonial style of wall-bearing cement—brick-walled houses with wood frame and bamboo reinforcement, introduced by the British during the 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial period, and later adopted by the local noblemen, is found commonly in urban and suburban areas. On the other hand, Gogoi (1996) and Phukon and Phukon (2011) similarly noted that the settlement and village patterns of Tai in northeastern India are quite similar to those found in their homeland in upper Myanmar. Houses of the Ahom group, the pioneering group who first migrated to northeastern India in the 12-13<sup>th</sup> centuries, have changed from wooden stilt houses to a local style of mixed mud-earthen-wooden houses built on the ground, while the other groups of Tai who migrated several hundred years later have retained their traditional house forms to a much larger extent.





Indian



Tai Ahom



Tai Khamti



Tai Phake



Tai Khamyang



Tai Turung



Tai Aiton

*Figure 2: Comparative characteristics between Indian and Tai domestic architecture*



### Research Site and Method of Fieldwork

The research site was the Brahmaputra River Valley in Northeast India Region. Geographically, the river valley covers a large area of 651,334 square kilometers. The Tai settlements are found along the lowland flooded plains of the river and its small tributaries. Approximately three million Tai live in the river valley, comprising six subgroups: Ahom, Khamti, Phake, Khamyang, Turung and Aiton. A pilot study and consultation with local Tai helped identify the survey routes: the first route explored the Phake and Khamti in the upper river valley and the second route surveyed the Ahom, Khamyang, Turung and Aiton in the lower river valley (see Figure 3).



Figure 3: The Survey Routes

A qualitative survey was conducted in 17 villages and 52 houses of 6 Tai subgroups in the study area. The villages were selected based on criteria, including size, pattern, age and history of villages, and subsequent consultation with local experts to confirm the cases. The houses were selected on-site based on criteria, including size, form, age, material and construction technology. The key informants included the village leaders, ritual leaders, villagers, local scholars and experts. There were two tiers of data enquiries. Architectural enquiries surveyed concepts, patterns, elements and spatial relations – from large scale (landscape and village settlements) to micro scale (domestic architecture). Anthropological enquiries explored social systems, particularly the kinship system, belief and cosmology that underline the physical form and evolution of vernacular architecture over place and time. Data analysis triangulated the two tiers of data enquiry to establish a preliminary understanding of the patterns and archetypes of Tai vernacular architecture and synthesis on the dynamics of vernacular architecture.

## Empirical Analysis of Tai Vernacular Architecture in India

### Settlement

A geographic survey of the Tai settlements along the Brahmaputra and its tributary river valleys found several elements of peasantry landscape of wet rice farmer, including a vast flooded plain, abundance of rainwater, good-quality dark soil and plentiful year-round sunshine. From informant interviews, the Tai prefer settling in the seasonally flooded areas, where they can develop the land and manage water for agriculture, especially for rice fields. In a large area along the Brahmaputra River Valley, a Tai settlements appears in a completed system that includes a central township for local administration, called *mueng*, surrounded by villages, called *baan*. Around the villages are rice fields, or *na*, and around the rice fields are forests. In the small tributary river valleys, a smaller form of settlement is found that includes a cluster of villages with some shared social space, such as a marketplace, school and other public services (see Figure 4).



Figure 4: Aerial map showing the Tai cultural landscape in the Brahmaputra River Valley

The field survey of Tai villages found that the Tai customarily live in a village system called *baan*. A *baan* is considered a domestic boundary that is interrelated by kinship system. The survey of 17 villages found that the generic size of a *baan* comprises 30 to 200 houses, with a population of 200-600; most of whom are relatives. According to the informant interviews, the kinship system is a key element sustaining the peasant economy, especially wet rice culture. As a paddy field covers a vast area, and the planting season is short, a shared and exchange labor system is needed to fulfill the demanding agricultural task.

The physical survey and interviews with the villagers found some common rules about village elements and the spatial relationship between these elements. Common village elements comprise a Buddhist temple (*kyuang*) and a village spirit house (*hor chao sue*) as the centers of belief; several house compounds (*hern*) as the living unit; a public waterway (*nam*) and a pond (*nammo*) as the water resource; rice fields (*na*) as the source of economic production; and surrounding forests (*thern*), including a usable, resourceful forest, a cemetery forest and a protective forest as natural resources and a boundary between the human and outside world. Spatial relationships in the villages share some common rules, also. Villages are usually oriented along rivers, which follow the

geography of the hilly terrain. The direction toward the head of a river is called *neu*, meaning upper, while the direction toward the end of the river is called *tai*, meaning lower<sup>161</sup>. The village usually settles along the river (see example in Figure 5). Spatially, the village is divided into three parts: a head (*ho*), center (*kaang*) and end (*haang*). The head is the entrance; the center serves a social function, and includes a temple and village spirit house; and the end is the way out from the village to the rice fields and surrounding forests. There are only one to two main roads in a village, with the houses situated alongside the roads.



Figure 5: Example of Tai village (Case: Namphake Village)

### House

The survey of 52 houses investigated the compound layout, form, space, material and structure. Tai houses or *baan* are generally arranged in a compound unit. A typical compound consists of several domestic structures, including a main house (*hern long*), a rice barn (*ye kao*), a few storages (*pham*), a few animal pens (*hong khai/hong ngo*) and a toilet (*hong nam*). These structures are connected by well-cleared grounds (*khong hern*) that are enclosed by an orchard and a garden surrounded by a bamboo fence (see Figure 6).

<sup>161</sup> As is noticed the idea of north and south is not the same as those in a western directional reference system that is based on north and south poles.

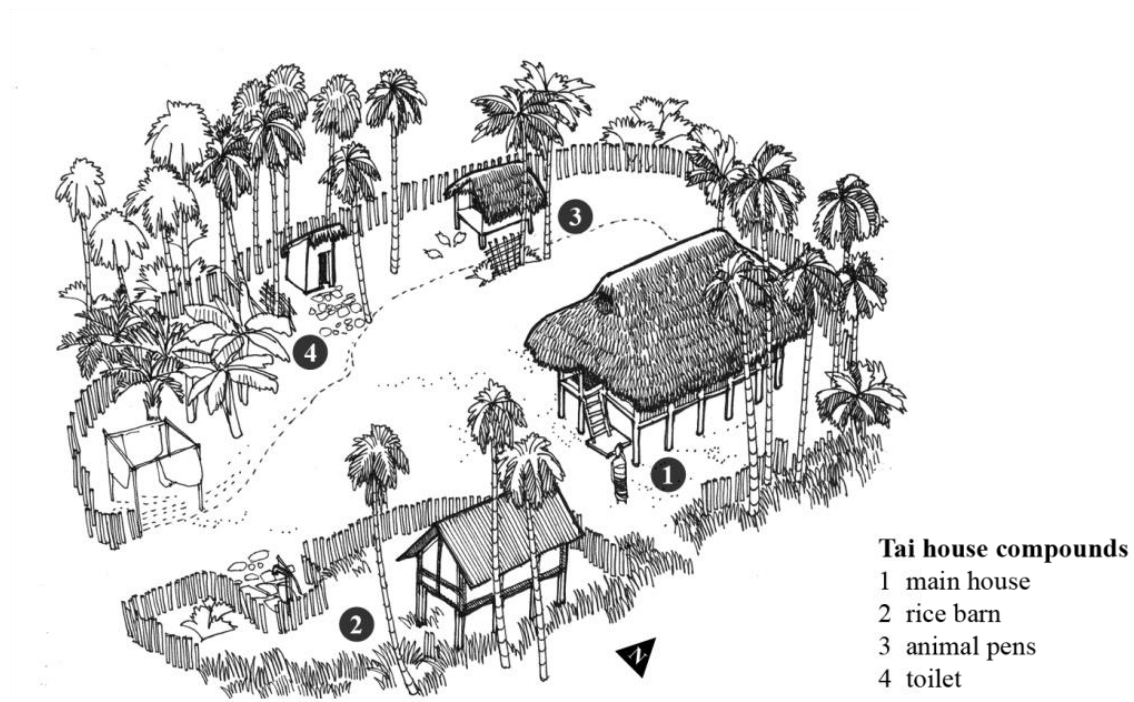


Figure 6: Analysis of house compounds

A common house form is a wooden house on stilts (*hern haang*), as shown in Figure 7. Normatively, a single rectangular house is raised above the ground on 12 to 15 poles, with a gable-hip thatched or zinc roof. The average size is approximately 10 m wide by 15 m long. The floor plan of a single house is simple; major elements of space include a front veranda (*na hern/chan*), a middle hall (*kaang hern*), some inner sleeping corners (*nai hern*) and a kitchen (*Tee phai*).

Some common beliefs govern the spatial relations of a house: 1) the front faces south, while the back faces north; 2) sleeping corners and a Buddha shrine align the east side; 3) a kitchen and service functions align west; and 4) a sacred ancestral pole is in the northeast corner.

Space underneath the house is used for daytime activities and storages. The daytime activity space is usually found underneath the front veranda and/or an inner hall as where there is good ventilation and sunlight. Storage spaces are found underneath the house including spaces for livestock, crops, wood, and machinery and tools.



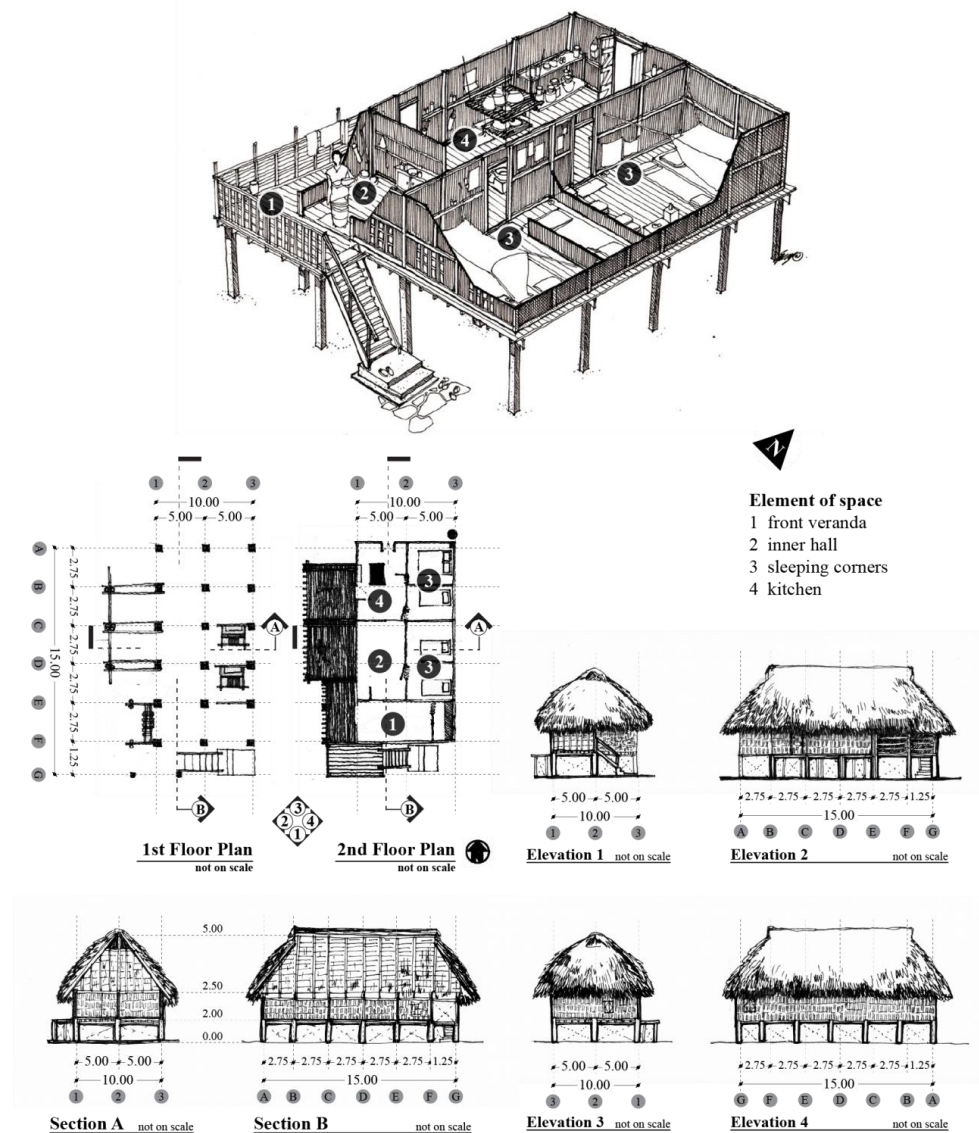


Figure 7: Detailed analysis of a house

## Synthesis

The preceding analysis exhibits the case of Tai peasantry domestic landscape in the diversified context of India. A macro analysis of settlement patterns has exhibited the concern for site selection in the river valley suitable for the peasant life of wet rice farmers. Most settlements are found in a linear pattern along the rivers, which they rely on for daily consumption. A Tai village reflects the micro social system of a kinship-based farmer society. A village size of 30-200 houses with a population of 200 to 600 is suitable for natural resource allocation and a labor control system. Rules of village spatial relations reflect the geographic concerns, common beliefs and social structure of Tai peasant society. A closer look into the interior of a house reveals the microcosmic ideas of domestic dwelling. House form and space take into account the cosmology, kinship system and daily life of a family.

Taken together at all levels of analysis, we can identify the evolution of a Tai house across time, since their initial migration to India in the 13<sup>th</sup> century until today, to see how the vernacular architecture

has gradually changed. The analysis of 52 houses has identified some patterns of development, as shown in Figure 8. Usually houses grow in size and complexity according to a family's life cycle. The first house built for a new family is typically a standard single house on 12-15 poles. This size of a house can accommodate a small family – a couple with young children. As the children grow to marriageable age, the family expands to include the sub-families of the sons, wives and children. With one sub-family, a second house is built right next to the existing one, in a parallel or perpendicular direction. With more than one sub-family, a house may grow into a complex U- or T-shaped form. The latest development is a house built on the ground, which is influenced by the local Indian house form.










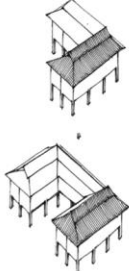

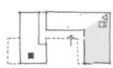









House evolution	Form	Roof plan	Floor plan
Single house			
Single house with second house in paralleled direction			
Single house with second house in perpendicular direction			
Complex U-shape house			
Complex T-shape house			
Single house with second house and other compounds			
House built on ground; influenced by Indian			

Figure 8:  
Development  
of house form

Temporal differences have resulted in different forms of change (see Figure 9). As noted by Gogoi (1996), the first group who migrated to India, namely the Ahom, retained the Tai traditional form of architecture for nearly 300 years. The house form began to change from the Tai-style house-on-stilts to the local-style house-on-the-ground during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, due to cross marriages between Tais and local Indians, which also resulted in a change from Animism to Hinduism. However, other Tai groups who migrated to India much later have continued their traditional patterns until today, due to less cultural assimilation.

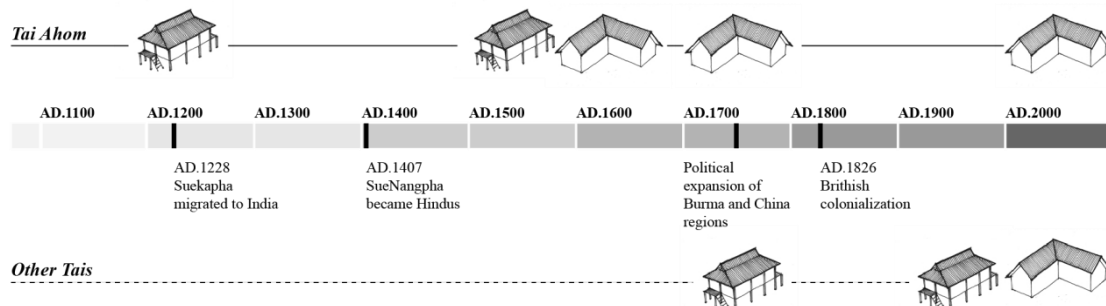


Figure 9: Comparative change of houses by different groups

#### Final Thought: Temporal Change of Vernacular Architecture

This part discusses the dynamics of change over time and interprets the summary of findings about the dynamics of Tai peasantry culture in the mainstream Indian culture. Peasant culture is widespread across the world; however, the case study of the Tai in northeastern India shows the relationship between the history of migration, cultural assimilation, and the dynamics of change due to diverse forces and factors. Eight hundred years ago, a group of 9,000 Tai migrated to India and settled in the lowlands; most locals avoided them. They reclaimed the marshy land, converting it into vast and endless rice fields and applied their ancestral knowledge to create a wet-rice-farmer cultural landscape. Over the centuries, despite continual social change and internal and external conflicts, the vernacular tradition of the Tai persisted. Today, 3 million Tai live among approximately 45 million local Indians in northeastern India, part of the larger Indian population of 1.32 billion people. Despite being a small minority, the Tai have retained their vernacular tradition at different levels, depending on the temporal period of settlement and the degree of cultural assimilation. The continuation of the Tai peasantry cultural system shows how they have been able to conserve and transfer their culture through the generations, resulting in a vernacular architecture tradition. This case study confirms the ideas that vernacular architecture is dynamics in both place and time. The change and evolution of the Tai in India has shown that continuing changes are associated with the social and economic change of the households themselves and the assimilation with mainstream Indian culture, as well as the impact from globalization and modernization.

Persistence and change are common in vernacular settlements worldwide, and the Tai in northeastern India provides an example of the persistence of vernacular architecture in a multicultural context. The exchange of vernacular wisdom across cultural geographies would be an especially interesting topic for future research.

## References

- Chappell, E. A. (2007). Viewpoint: Vernacular Architecture and Public History. *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum*, (14), 1-12.
- Dodd, W. C. (1923). *The Tai Race: Elder Brothers of the Chinese*. Bangkok: White Lotus.
- Gait, E. A. (1992). *A History of Assam*. Guwahati: Lawyers Book.
- Gogoi, P. (1996). *Tai of Northeast India*. Demaji: Chumpra Printers and Publisher.
- Hallet, H. S. (1890). *A Thousand Miles on an Elephant in Shan States*. London: Blackwood and Sons.
- Huke, R. E. and Huke, E. H. (1990a). *Human Geography of Rice in Southeast Asia*. Manila: International Rice Research Institute.
- Kolkman, R., & Blackburn, S. (2014). *Tribal Architecture in Northeast India*. Leiden: Brill.
- Lee, E. (1966). *A Theory of Migration*. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Milne, M. L. (1970). *Shans at Home*. New York: Paragon Books.
- Oliver, P. (2005). *Dwellings: The Vernacular House Worldwide*. London: Phaidon.
- Oranratmanee, R., & Saicharoen, C. (2014). *Patterns of Settlements, Villages and House of the Tai in India: Dynamics of Vernacular Architecture in Multicultural Context*. Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai University.
- Phukan, J. N., & Phukon, G. (2011). Social Dynamics of Material Culture of the Ahom. *Indian Journal of Tai Studies*, XI, 45-74. Moranhat: Institute of Tai Studies and Research.
- Raendchen, O. (2008). Tai Ancient Philosophy. *Tai Culture*, (20), 52-68.
- Rapoport, A. (1969). *House Form and Culture*. Englewood: Prentice Hall.
- Sai, A. T. (2009). *History of the Shan State from its Origin to 1962*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.
- Sharma, P. C. (1988). *Architecture of Assam*. New Delhi: Agan Kala PrakaTai.
- Singh, M. K. (2008). Bioclimatism and Vernacular Architecture of North-east India. *Building and Environment*, (11), 878-888.
- Smith, R. K. (2011). Viewpoint: Building Stories: Narrative Prospects for Vernacular Architecture Studies. *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum*, (18), 1-14.
- Tambiah, S. J. (1969). Animals are good to Think and Good to Prohibit. *Ethnology*, 8(4), 423-459.
- Thapar, B. (2004). *Introduction to Indian Architecture*. Singapore: Periplus Editions.
- Upton, D., & Vlach, J. M. (1986). *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*. Georgia: University of Georgia Press.
- Vellinga, M. (2011). The End of the Vernacular: Anthropology and the Architecture of the Other. *Etnofoor*, 23(1), 171-192.
- Vellinga, M. (2007). *Atlas of Vernacular Architecture of the World*. New York: Routledge.
- Waterson, R. (1990). *The Living House: Anthropology of Architecture in Southeast Asia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.



## **Act East Policy, India's North- East and Thailand: Issues in Economic Integration**

**Panda, Bhagirathi**

North Eastern Hill University, Shillong  
India  
-----

### **Abstract**

The Act East Policy (AEP) of India is being projected as the new economic development strategy for India's North Eastern Region (NER). Such a projection is based on the identified cardinal component of economic integration with South East Asia in terms of increased trade, investment, tourism and connectivity. In South East Asia, Thailand happens to be an important economy having significant interest to NER. This paper, through a **SWOC** analysis brings out a number of strengths and opportunities of the NER that can facilitate this economic integration. These include, continuum of cultural capital, abundant complementing and supplementing natural resources, low labor cost, young consumption society, strong community base to reduce information asymmetry, high opportunity for investment in agro processing, hydropower, petrochemicals, IT etc., geographical proximity to Bangladesh, Myanmar and China , upcoming India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway, presence of world class educational institutions, FTA with Thailand and ASEAN and increase in labor cost in China.

Some of the significant weaknesses and challenges to this envisaged economic integration on the NER side includes, high transactions costs because of relatively undefined property rights, sub-optimal intra-regional , inter-regional and inter country integration in terms of physical and digital connectivity, information asymmetry with respect to the people and economy of Thailand and institutional rigidities. From the Thai side, some of the manifested weaknesses and challenges are: low awareness about NER and sub-optimal connectivity with it. The paper concludes that there is adequate scope for economic integration between NER and Thailand under the AEP framework based on economic and cultural capital rationales.

**Key Words:** Act East Policy, Regional Economic Integration, North East India and Thailand.

### **Introduction**

Twenty first century is believed to be an Asian Century. According to one projection undertaken by Asian Development Bank (ADB, 2011), Asia's share of global gross domestic product (GDP) may increase to 52 percent by 2050. Its per capita income could rise six fold in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms to reach Europe's levels today. However, ADB also warns of the possibility of a pessimistic scenario for Asia in 2050, if the fast-growing converging economies of Asia fall into the Middle Income Trap scenario in the next 5–10 years, without any of the slow- or modest-growth aspiring economies improving their record. In such an eventuality, Asia's GDP in 2050 would reach

only \$65 trillion and its GDP per capita would be only \$20,600 (PPP). The publication, therefore, cautions that the economic and social costs of missing the Asian Century are staggering.

The possibility of Asian century to be a reality (the second possibility of the fast-growing converging economies of Asia falling into the Middle Income Trap not happening), requires in addition to others, regional integration and cooperation. This regional integration is critical to (i) expand the size of the market through finding out the complementariness and supplementarity in the production and supply of goods and services, (ii) reduce transaction costs by bringing better uniformity and convergence in institutions and benchmarking standards, (iii) to effectively negotiate with the complexities of globalization and reduce vulnerabilities to global economic and cultural shocks and (iv) to lessen cross country disparities in the space of standard of living, income and opportunities. Therefore, emergence of an effective Asian Community and regionalism is not only an Asian requirement but also a global necessity. It is in this context, the Act East Policy (AEP) of India and the Act West Policy (AWP) of Thailand were enunciated to facilitate this process of regional and global integration. This article is presented in seven sections including the introductory section which essentially contextualizes the relevance of regional economic integration and regional cooperation. Section-2, discusses the genesis, significance and achievements of AEP of India with reference to the broad objective of realizing regional economic integration and cooperation. Section 3, makes a brief socio-economic profile of North East India. In section 4, we present the AEP of India as a strategy for economic development of North Eastern Region (NER) of India. Section 5 which is the most important section of this article, at its core, analyses economic integration of NER with Thailand with reference to AEP in the framework of a SWOC (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Challenges) analysis. And the last section concludes and provides ways forward.

## **2. The Act East Policy of India**

The present Act East Policy (AEP) of India was originally enunciated as the Look East Policy (LEP) of India. The formal pronouncement of this policy in 1992 came against the backdrop of number developments at the global, regional and national levels and was based on strong expected economic rationales having long terms impacts. It was therefore no chance that it coincided with India's efforts to liberalize its economy and end its four decades long comparative economic isolation. Globally, the cold war regime had come to an end. The collapse of the erstwhile USSR had its obvious economic and military implications for India. China was emerging as a global as well as regional economic and military power. The economies of China and South-East Asia were growing at a much faster pace compared to India. The hyped regional economic integration in South Asia under the umbrella of SAARC was going nowhere, whereas, ASEAN at India's door step as regional trade block and economic community was emerging stronger and effectual. India could not in terms of economic gains capitalize on its centuries long cultural capital developed with countries of South East Asia. At home, the Indian economy was in shambles. It is against this backdrop, prudence dawned on India to embark on this initiative of AEP, whose initial defined objective was to reach out to our South East Asian neighbors in terms of increased economic, cultural and strategic engagements.

What has happened thereafter is a story to examine. The LEP regime of India can be divided in to two phases. The first phase was from 1992 to 2002 and the second phase started from 2003 and continuing till date with ever evolving strengths, confidence and strategic and economic

achievements. On the strategic front, India through stages has become a summit level partner of ASEAN and a member of the East Asian Summit. On the trade front, the value of India's merchandise trade with ASEAN has increased from US\$ 2.9 billion in 1993 to US\$58.7 billion in the year 2015. India's exports to ASEAN increased from a humble amount of U.S. \$ 10.41 billion in 2005-06 to U.S. \$ 25.20 billion in 2015-16. Its imports from ASEAN have undergone a phenomenal rise to the level of U.S. \$ 39.84 billion from a paltry amount of U.S. \$ 10.81 billion. Expressed in terms of compound annual growth rate (CAGR), India's exports to ASEAN over this period were of 9.2 per cent and its imports from ASEAN were of 14 per cent. Foreign direct investments (FDI) from India to ASEAN have increased significantly by 98 per cent from US\$606 million in 2014 to US\$1.2 billion in 2015. Similarly, FDI flows from ASEAN to India have increased from US\$1580 million in 2010-11 to US\$5356 million in 2014-15. In terms of share in total FDI flows to India, FDI flows from ASEAN is up from 10.6% in 2010-11 to 21.6% in 2014-15. The ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA), signed on 13 August 2009 is a milestone in the history of Free trade pacts as this has become one of the world's largest free trade areas (FTA) with almost 1.8 billion people and a combined GDP of US\$4.5 trillion. Bilateral trade between India and CMLV countries has increased from a meager \$460 million in 2000 to \$ 11.85 billion in 2014. The ASEAN-India Investment and Services Agreement came into force on 1st July 2015 and it holds a promise in the expansion of trade in services between the two regions. Tourism is another area that has seen significant expansion. Total no of tourists from the ASEAN countries visiting India during 2014 was 6, 85,805. Similarly total no of tourists from India visiting ASEAN countries was 29, 83,154.

### 3. North East India

States/ Provinces	Geograph. area (Sq. Km)	Population	PCNSDP (Rs.)+	Literacy rate (PerCent) 2011	LFP Rate *	Unemployment Rate **
1	3	4	5	6	8	9
Arunachal Pradesh	83,743	1383727	79958	65.38	61.4	10.2
Assam	78,438	31205576	45692	72.19	50.7	4.3
Manipur	22,327	2570390	43348	79.21	48.9	2.2
Meghalaya	22,429	2966889	58363	74.43	57.4	3.5
Mizoram	21,081	1097206	70552	91.33	62.5	2.2
Nagaland	16,579	1978502	58998	79.55	50.4	6.2
Sikkim	7,096	610577	177441	81.42	60.6	12.2
Tripura	10,486	3673917	58888	87.22	50.3	8.4
NER	262,179 (7.9%)	45486784 (3.75%)	74155	74.48	48.98	6.15
All India	32,87,263	1,210,193,422	72889	74.04	50.9	4

*Table 1: Socio-Economic Profile of North East India; Source: Basic statistics of NER, NEC, 2015, + Per Capita Net State Domestic Product (PCNSDP) of 2014-15 at 2011-12 prices; \* (per 1000) Age 15 years & above in 2011-12; \*\* Age 15 years & above in 2011-12*

The North Eastern Region (NER) of India comprises of the eight states (provinces) of Indian Union viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. It covers a total geographical area of 262179 sq.km and it is situated between 22°57'N and 29°5'N latitudes and 89°5'E and 97°3'E longitudes. The region's geographical area and population as a share of the total geographical area and population of the Indian union comes to about 7.9 and 3.75 percent

respectively. Table 1 below shows province wise population, per capita domestic product, literacy rate and work participation rate for the region.

Table 1 shows literacy rate the region is well above the national average except for the provinces of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. Per Capita Net State Domestic Product (PCNSDP) of the region is slightly higher than that of the country. The labor force participation rate (LFPR) for the region is little less than national level. However, provinces like Tripura, Manipur, Nagaland and Assam are having higher LFPR than national average. The unemployment scenario in the region is very high compared to national level.

#### **4. AEP as a Development Strategy for the North East**

As mentioned earlier, the implementation of AEP in India was being undertaken in two phases. However, at the end of the phase-I of the policy, it was realized that NER has been bypassed in terms of tangible benefits, although this region is in the proximity of South East Asia. Further, post partition of the country in 1947, NER was experiencing a crisis in the space of development, because of undertaking of a blinkered development strategy by the central Government that was standardized on patron-client type of development practice. The region was in need of an alternative development strategy to unknot the damages caused. It is against such a setting, it was felt sensible to consider AEP as an opportunity and position it as the alternative central strategy of development of the region, whose identified cardinal component happens to be economic integration with South East Asia in terms of increased trade, investment, tourism and connectivity.

#### **5. AEP Framework, Economic integration of NER and Thailand: A SWOC Analysis.**

In South East Asia and ASEAN, Thailand happens to be one of the most important neighbors of North East India through Myanmar. The interactions between Thailand and North East India are deep rooted in history, culture, people to people contacts and commerce. However, as it stands today, neither Thailand nor India's North East has been able to explore and realize the potential benefits of economic integration. Thailand under its LWP wants to reorient its trade and investment relation with India and India's North East. The AEP of India with reference to North East too seeks to develop the NER through expanded trade in merchandise, services, investment, tourism and labor movement. However, the hiatus between the assertion and realization of intended outcome appears to be vast. Therefore, first and foremost necessity is how to reduce this hiatus. This requires a SWOC (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Challenges) analysis of the AEP with respect to the NER and Thailand. Table 2 below presents such a situation.

##### **5.1 Strengths and Opportunities**

It is evident from the above SWOC analysis that there are some inherent strengths (internal opportunities) which can build the AEP to act as a core development strategy for the NER. The belated acceptance by Government of India of the damaging role of partition of the country in its Vision Document 2020(NEC, 2007) is the turning point in this regard. Once Development has been made independent of the so called security concerns, the basis of cross boarder openness advocated by AEP gets strengthened. Further, NER has the highest share of young population in the country. The percentage of population below the age of 60 happens to be the highest in Arunachal Pradesh (95.4%) and second highest in Meghalaya (95.3%). (NCEAR, 2012). This strong supply of young

manpower makes the labor cost of economic activities comparatively low. The percentage of educated youth who speak English is also comparatively high here. Human Development Index (HDI) of this region at 0.573 is higher than the national average of 0.513. (HDR, 2011). The region is endowed with abundant natural resources and is identified as one of the world's biodiversity hotspots. The forest cover of the region is about 52 percent of its geographical area. The region is estimated to have 32 percent of the hydro power potential of the country. Ninety six percent of its borders constitutes international boundary and all the states of the region are surrounded by five neighboring countries viz China, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar and Bangladesh. The region's entry to Thailand is through Myanmar. Four NER states viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur share border with Myanmar. During the past two decades, a number of world class educational institutions have come up in the region. Prominent among them being an IIT in Guwhati, an IIM in Shilling and a number of central universities in all most all the states of the region. Further, the region for its development is hungry for investment particularly in infrastructure, technology and industrialization.

*Table 2: SWOC Analysis of Economic Integration between NER and Thailand*

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weakness</b>
Low labor Cost	High Youth Unemployment
Better HDI vis-à-vis the Country	Skewed Structural Transformation
Abundant Natural Resources	Distress diversification of employment
Considerable Young and Young English Speaking Population	High Transactions Costs
Geographical proximity to South East Asia, East Asia and Bangladesh.	High Transportation Costs
World Class Educational Institutions	Sub-Optimal Economic Integration
Wild and Elemental Nature	Rent Seeking Economy
Strong Community Base	Deficient Institutions
Good Climate for High End Services like IT, BPO etc.	
Strong Potential Domestic Demand	

<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
<p>Huge Opportunity for Investment</p> <p>Improved Bilateral and Multilateral Relations with South East Asia and Bangladesh.</p> <p>Positive Progress in the front of Connectivity.</p> <p>Huge Bilateral and Multilateral Economic Market in South East Asia, East Asia and Bangladesh</p> <p>Increasing Labor Cost in China.</p> <p>Cultural Contiguity with Thailand</p> <p>Demand for English Speaking Manpower in Thailand</p> <p>FTA with Thailand</p> <p>Increasing Explicit and Implicit Opposition to the Chinese Economic and Military Dominance.</p> <p>Expertise of Thailand in appropriate technology in food processing, road and water ways, tourism and hospitality management and rural development.</p> <p>Developed budget tourism and tourism infrastructure in Thailand</p>	<p>Aggressive Chinese Economic, Financial and Military Assistance to Countries in South East and South Asia.</p> <p>Aggressive Chinese Innovation in the Technology front to remain competitive.</p> <p>Competitiveness in Production fronts.</p> <p>Extremely low awareness about the North East India, its people, its economy in Thailand</p> <p>Thailand's fragile democracy</p>

Thailand has all the required capital and intent to invest and transfer technology to this region. The region is nature's paradise and nature is wild and elemental here. This creates a huge potential for quality tourism in the state. The climate for most part of NER is conducive for high end services like IT. The young population in the region and the ever increasing rest of India demand also provide potential market for consumption and investment. Along with these strengths, dovetailing of AEP as a broad development policy is being pursued at the backdrop of certain cardinal external opportunities too. Ever since, the Look East Policy was enunciated in 1990s, bilateral and multilateral relations in economic and strategic spheres have significantly improved between India and Thailand. India has been accorded the status of a summit level partner of ASEAN and a member of the East Asian Summit. Sub-regional economic engagements through initiatives such as Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Bangladesh–China–India–Myanmar Forum for Regional Cooperation (BCIM), Mekong– Ganga Cooperation (MGC), etc. have become reality. All these initiatives have accepted the NER as a gateway to Thailand. As a result, issue of regional connectivity has got the highest priority. A number of connectivity projects- completed, under progress and planned, are going to reduce transport and travel time, thereby significantly helping in transportation of men and materials. One such project linking Manipur with Myanmar through the Moreh-Tamu-Kalewa-Kalemyo road has been completed and is operational. The 2,800-km K (Kolkata)-2-K (Kunming) corridor is approaching completion. Under the Kaladan multi-modal transit transport project, Mizoram would be connected with Myanmar's port of Sittwe through the Kaladan River. This will provide a means of access to all the landlocked north-eastern states to have access to the sea. ASEAN has become one of the world's fastest growing investment destinations, accounting for 11% of total global foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows in 2014 as compared with just 5% in 2007. Another external opportunity for AEP is the gradual manifestation of increase in labor cost in Chinese economy.( The New York Times, August 2, 2015). In China, hourly wages increased on average by 12% annually over the last decade.(The Economist, March 2015). NER being situated on the cultural continuum of South – South East-East

Asia, represents cultural capital continuity in terms of physical features, food habits, traditions etc. that could be used for economic integration. Besides, South-East and East Asia have an unmet demand for English speaking manpower and the NER just have it in abundance. Finally, Thailand and South –East Asia realize the increasing Chinese economic and military dominance in the region and therefore wants to balance it out by cultivating better strategic relations with India and therefore with India's North East. AEP and its NER orientation has all these visible external opportunities to take off in right earnest.

## **5.2 Weaknesses and Threats**

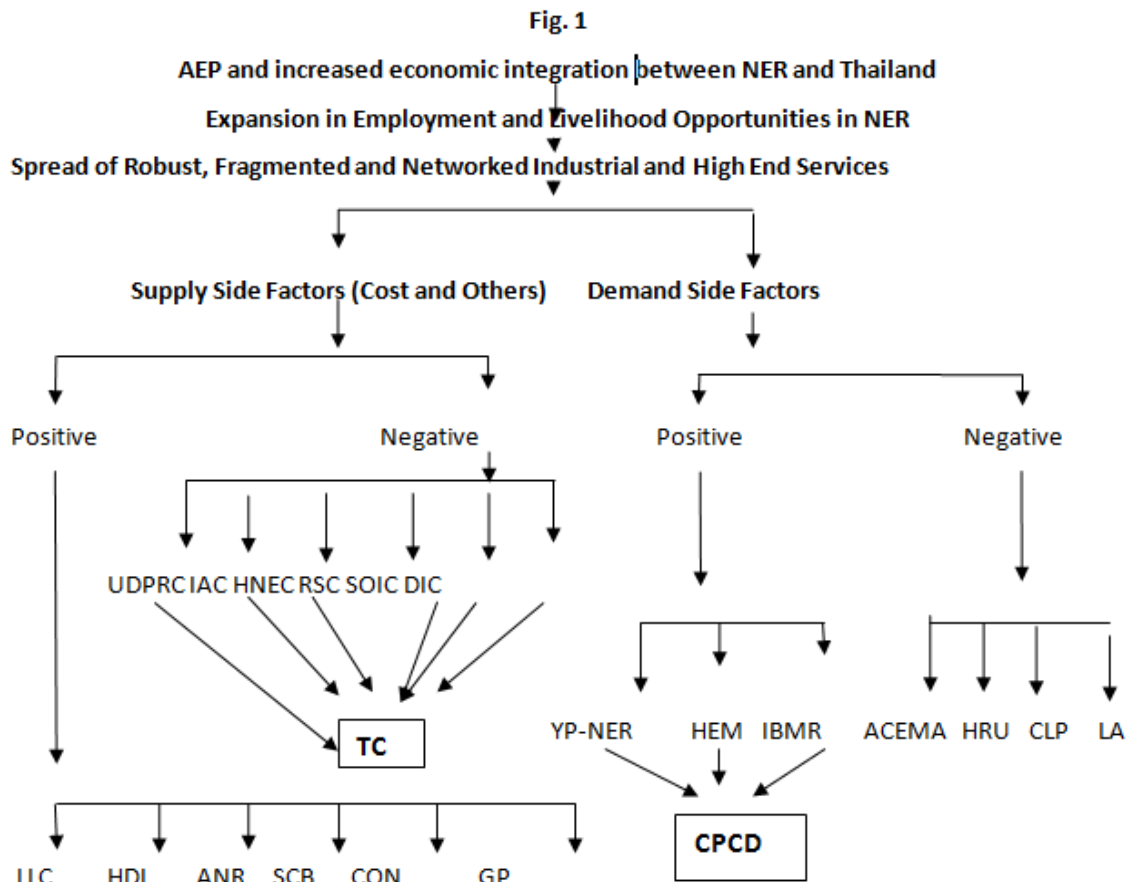
The AEP in its North Eastern dimension is also being propelled against some structural internal weaknesses and external threats. The economy of the region experiences a skewed structural transformation. The share of the secondary sector, has remained stagnant at about 23-25 percent over the period 1982-83 to 2011-12. Analysis of the rural employment situation shows significant employment diversification from farm to non-farm because of distress factors (Panda, 2012). Further, casual employment for women in the non-farm sector in the NER during the period 1993–94 to 2009–10 has undergone a huge 133.4 percentage point increase, whereas, self-employment in the non-farm sector during the same period has experienced a significant 32.8 percentage point fall (Lahoti and Swaminathan, 2013). During 2009-10, unemployment for the youth in the age group of 15-35 in the region has remained at a high level of 10.24 percent as against the national average of 4.9 percent. Economic growth during the eighties and nineties remained much below the national average. Post 2004-05, when economic growth started picking up, the overall employment growth in NER has almost remained stagnant at 0.13 per cent during the period 2005 to 2012. (D'souza, 2014). In addition, there is the perceived presence of high magnitude of rent seeking as well as sub-optimal economic integration in the region. This skewed structural transformation; high unemployment and distress diversification are basically because of the meager growth of the economy based on limited and constrained investment. At the root of this constrained and limited investment lies the high proportion of transactions costs embedded in the economy of NER (Panda, 2016). In our subsequent analysis in section 3, we specifically deal with transactions costs and identify its reduction to be crucial for the success of the AEP in the NER and economic integration with Thailand.

The AEP in the region is also being pushed against some very serious external challenges, foremost of them being the Chinese aggressive injection of financial, economic and military bilateral as well as multilateral assistance called as 'cheque-book diplomacy'. China exceeded the United States in goods trade with ASEAN countries in 2007. In 2014, China's total goods trade of \$480 billion was more than twice the U.S. total goods trade of \$220 billion. Chinese per capita assistance to Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia stood at \$8,954, \$920 and \$61 billion respectively during 2013-14. China is resorting to increased automation to improve productivity in manufacturing and remain competitive in the face of secular rise in labor costs. Besides these external factors, low awareness about the North East India, its people, its economy in Thailand and the fragile democracy of Thailand also remain as two relevant challenges.

## **5.3. Analysis of AEP in a Demand and Supply Framework:**

The above SWOC analysis can further be refined to help us meaningfully conceptualize and contextualize the AEP as a strategy of increased economic integration between NER and Thailand in

terms of a supply and demand framework. This would further facilitate in making the required abstraction and deduction on decisive factors that need to be taken care of in terms of policy action



Note: UDPRC= undefined property rights costs, IAC=Information asymmetry cost, HNEC=High Negotiation and enforcement cost, RSC=Rent Seeking Cost, SOIC=Sub-Optimal Integration cost, DIC= Deficient Infrastructure cost, TC=Transactions Costs, LLC=Low labor cost, HDI=Human Development Index, ANR=Abundant Natural Resources, SCB= Strong Community Base, CON= Connectivity, GP=Geographical Proximity, YP-NER=Young Population NER, HEM=Huge External Market, IBMR= Improved Bilateral and Multilateral Relationship, ACEMA=Aggressive Chinese Economic and Military Assistance, HRU=High Rate of Unemployment, CLP=Competitive Lines of Production, LA: Low Awareness, FD: Fragile Democracy, CPCD=Combined Potential Consumption Demand.

Construction in fig.1 starts with the much felt out proclamation that the success of the AEP depends on the magnitude and quality of the employment opportunities that it is going to be created for the people of NER in general and the youth in particular. It is being argued by the policy makers that, the economic integration of the NER with Thailand and ASEAN would happen primarily through trade, investment, tourism and movement of labor. Hence, trade, investment, tourism and labor movement are matters of critical importance to economic integration between NER and Thailand under the AEP framework. However, trade, investment and tourism to happen and bring employment and growth to the NER, requires the region to have comparative advantage in the production of commodities and services. In other words, expansion in livelihood opportunities and creation of quality jobs, depends on the capacity of the region to provide for creation of a robust, fragmented and networked industrial and high end services production environment. As it stands



today, the NER does not have such a production environment. Such an envisaged environment to emerge requires a thorough understanding of the supply and demand situations affecting this production. The supply and demand side factors basically can be found to fundamentally affect the comprehensive cost of supply of and demand for goods and services. On the supply side, the factors that positively influence the comprehensive cost of production and its supply are low labor cost (LLC), better human development index (HDI), abundant natural resources (ANR), strong community base (SCB), connectivity (CON) and geographical proximity (GP). Comparatively, low labor cost arises because of the prevailing high rate of youth unemployment. Relatively, higher rate of HDI means better educated and healthy manpower. This has a positive impact on their work efficiency, thereby helping to increase productivity. Abundant availability of natural resources and other raw materials like crude petroleum, coal, forests, lime, tea, water, medicinal plants, rubber etc. in the region, significantly ensures critical certainty in their supply and thereby reduces the cost of future uncertainty. NER is basically, a region having huge presence of the traditional community at the grassroots level having a role in allocation of resources like land, labor and capital. This community arrangement can be leveraged to reduce/eliminate problems of information asymmetry and moral hazards, thereby reducing transaction costs. The emerging cross country connectivity (CON) in the forms of roads like the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway, Asia Highway Network under UNESCAP, BTILS under BIMSTEC framework are going to reduce transport costs of movements of inputs, outputs and humans significantly between the NER and Thailand. Finally the North East of India is in the geographical proximity (GP) of five countries viz. Myanmar, Bangladesh, China, Nepal and Bhutan. Such geographical proximity also opens up huge market to the potential large scale production of goods and services in the region and thereby can reduce costs of production through economies of scale.

Likewise, there are also a number of factors on the supply side that can increase the cost of production and negatively affect the production and supply of goods and services. Some such identified factors in fig.1 are, (a) undefined property rights (UDPR), presence of information asymmetry (IA), high negotiation and enforcement cost (HNEC), habit of rent seeking (RS), sub-optimal integration (SOI) and deficient infrastructure (DI). The property rights regime in the region is not well defined. The ownership of land, which happens to be the most important property in the region, is owned by the community in many places under the customary arrangement in tribal societies. This creates a problem with respect to sales and purchases of land for entrepreneurial proposes. Further, such land cannot be used as collateral against bank/financial sector loans. In the NER, information flow with respect to market situations of inputs, outputs, technology, credit, socio-economic institutions is relatively imperfect. In the absence of appropriate legal and market supporting business and industrial organizations, the costs of enforcement of contracts and costs of negotiations are perceived to be high. Because of lack of proper physical connectivity through all-weather pucca roads/rail links with in the states and between states, transportation costs in NER is generally higher vis-à-vis other parts of the country. Post partition, implementation of a skewed developmental model in the region has brought in the habit of rent seeking. This has also increased the cost of doing business and undertaking investment in the region. Further the presence of physical and institutional infrastructures in the region (roads, rails, banks, insurance etc.) still remain below the national average. This certainly increases the transportation costs of goods, animals and humans in the region. All these costs added together give us the **transaction cost (TC)**, which

remains high in the NER. It is this transaction cost which is crucial to the success of the AEP. The ultimate success of the AEP in its NE edition depends on our ability to reduce this transactions cost. More on this issue is discussed in the concluding section of this essay.

Analysis of the demand side reflects three positive factors on the visualized emergence of a robust, fragmented and networked Industrial and high end services arrangement in the region. These are: presence of young population, huge external market that in addition to Thailand includes the ASEAN common market (ACM), Bangladesh and individual countries in South East Asia, and improved bilateral and multilateral relationship with a number of neighboring ASEAN countries such as Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam and countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. All these three factors taken together present a **combined potential consumption demand (CPCD)** of high magnitude. Along with the positive factors, the demand side is also subjected to some negative factors and challenges, prominent of them being, aggressive Chinese economic and military assistance (ACEMA), high rate of unemployment (HRU, and competitive lines of production (CLP). When it comes to production of primary products and some agro- based processing items, the NER competes with Thailand. This to some extent reduces the scope of regional trade in primary and agro-based processed products.

## 6. Way Forward

Our essay is all about realizing increased economic integration between NER and Thailand through dovetailing the AEP as the core development strategy for the NER. However, this proclamation and intent to be actualized need serious examination of the factors that come on its way. Our SWOC analysis, followed by a demand and supply framework examination clearly brings out the openings and obstacles in this context. There are strengths and opportunities both in the supply and demand side. The strengths are in the changing socio- economic and demographic characteristics of its people, improving infrastructure and its embedded socio-cultural capital. The opportunities are basically because of the (i) improved strategic relationship of India with Thailand , other individual countries in South East Asia and neighboring countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal, (ii) relatively improved connectivity situation under arrangements of AEP with Thailand through Myanmar and Bangladesh and (iii) the economic and strategic weaknesses of the Chinese economy and statecraft.

There are also weaknesses and threats both in the supply and demand sides. The weaknesses are primarily embedded in the socio-cultural –economic institutions of the region and the evolving distortions in its economy and political economy. The challenges are fundamentally in the aggressive perusal of the economic, military and strategic might of the Chinese nation.

For the success of the AEP in its NER edition and realization of increased economic integration with Thailand, we need to seamlessly lessen and wherever possible eliminate these weaknesses and Challenges. Challenges are external and need to be dealt with strategically and diplomatically. However, the weaknesses are internal. Most of them are structural and institutional and some of them are acquired because of lopsidedness and short-sightedness in national development policy towards the region. Again, these internal weaknesses mostly lie in the supply side. The net effect of all these weaknesses gets manifested in **'high transactions costs'**. Therefore, reduction of this TC is fundamental to success of the AEP in bringing expanded economic integration with Thailand and to use AEP as development strategy for the NER. How do we do it? There may be several ways.

However, here, we suggest three important means. Firstly, social entrepreneurship should be encouraged to have innovations through which the property rights arrangement can be made definite and negotiation and enforcement of contracts can be made efficient. Secondly, a calibrated convergence in the establishment space in development needs to be achieved. In the NER, the four important establishments in the development space happen to be the Government, Community, Market and Civil Society. This establishment space presently is very disconnected and shows disproportionate parallelism when it comes to matters of development. This parallelism creates unwarranted frictions and in the process makes conceptualization, formulation and implementation of developmental programs uncertain and costly. Thirdly, convergence is also required between two of its regional development institutions i.e. DONER and NEC so as to avoid conflicts and make the region an integrated economy. Finally there is enough of scope for economic integration between India's North East and Thailand under the AEP framework of India and the Look West Policy framework of Thailand based on economic and ethnic-cultural capital rationales.

## References

- ASSOCHAM. (2016). *India-ASEAN Trade and Investment Relations: Opportunities and Challenges*. New Delhi: Author.
- ADB. (2011). *ASIA 2050: Realizing the Asian Century*. Manila: Author.
- Coase, R. (1937). On The Nature of the Firm. *Economica*. 4: 386-405.
- D'souza, A. & Ray, A.S. (2014). *Structural Transformation in the North-Eastern Region of India: Charting out an Agriculture-based Development Policy*, Discussion Paper, 14-04. New Delhi: JNU.
- Lahoti, R. & Swaminathan, H.(2013). *Economic Growth and Female Labour Force Participation in India*, IIM Bangalore Working Paper No 414. Bangalore: IIM Bangalore.
- NCAER. (2012). *Youth of North-East India: Demographics and Readership*, NBT. New Delhi: Author
- NEC. (2007). *Northeastern Region: Vision 2020*. North Eastern Council (NEC), Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region. Shillong: Author.
- Panda, B. (2012). *Growth, Composition and Determinants of Rural Non-Farm Employment in North East India*. NLI Research Studies Series, No 097. NOIDA. India: NLI.
- Panda, B.(2016). Act East Policy, Transactions Costs and Development of the North East. In Thomas, J. & Sarada, K. (eds.). *Act East and India's North East* (1st ed., pp.37-56). New Delhi: Pentagon.
- UNDP. (2011). *Human Development Report 2011*. New York: Author.

## The Values of Fon Phi Ceremonies to Socio-Culture Chiang Mai Province

Phakdee, Niran

Lampang Rajabhat University  
Thailand

---

### Abstract

Although science and technology have moved forward quickly nowadays, the belief in spirits and the spiritual activities, especially, the *Fon Phi* performance still exist. This belief also appeared an important role in Chiang Mai province socio-cultural ways of living. This research aimed to study values of the *Fon Phi* ceremony towards people's belief and their ways of living. The Ethnomusicological Methodology focusing on the field study method was made during the *Fon Phi* ceremony by studying the facts about the music band used in *Fon Phi* ceremony, doing the context study and studying the relationship of *Fon Phi* ceremony, and analyzing the data evolved in the value of *Fon Phi* to socio-cultural Chiang Mai province. The data collecting in this qualitative research was made by observation, participatory observation, and informal interview and checked the data by the triangular method. The data was analyzed under the theory of tree of values. The finding indicated that the values of *Fon Phi* ceremonies to community were: the community strength, the local wisdom transmission, the ethics cultivation through the community socialization, the community stability, the family culture-root awareness, and the community development in community economy.

The study revealed that the *Fon Phi* ceremony helped promoting the community to be aware of their belief and the values of *Fon Phi* ceremony which should be reserved in socio-cultural Chiang Mai province.

**Keywords:** The Values of *Fon Phi* Ceremonies, socio-cultural Chiang Mai province, the values of *Fon Phi* ceremonies to community

### 1. Introduction

The innovative progressions of modern sciences have roles to make people living in the social comfortably more than in the past but they also decline socio-cultural ways of living and awareness of their cultural heritages. In the past, socio-cultural ways have been affected vital roles toward people in the communities but in the present day, they are still as performing arts that support tourism industries. The government and private sectors have emphasized on higher reward investment's economic system. These situations caused people to move forward their motivation for the current of economic systems.

Therefore, socio-cultural ways of living has thrown away from the people in communities. Collecting data from the field studied in Chiang Mai area were indicated that the people in community have

still believed in the spirits, the villagers give precedence the relationship within their family. Correspondingly, Eakasit Chaipin (2003: 36) claimed that “*Phi*” affects the way of belief ideology of the individual in Thai society for long time. Then, it becomes the way of life of people in the communities and creates the relationship in the societies. The individuals’ beliefs of “*Phi*” in Chiang Mai socio-culture have been composed of *Phi Mod*, *Phi Meng*, and *Phi Jao Nai*. Although some group of people of the new generation in society don’t believe of *Phi* as they can’t prove by science methodology, but *Fon Phi* ceremonies has still performed till now day.

*Fon Phi* is performed in Chiang Mai socio-culture by group of local people who conduct beliefs from their culture and way of life. Oblations are provided by the people in community by emphasized on steps performing of ceremony’s regulations correctly. The ultimate objective is to support a unity of people in the community. Correspondingly, Manop Manasam (1998: 61) claimed that “The vital characteristic of *Lanna* society is related respective spirits closely because spiritual activities are not only their custom or their tradition but are also folk wisdom which are developed from diversity and complexity of community.” From the research, socialization, human relationship, and folk wisdom were included during *Fon Phi* ceremonies for their next generation. Although the perceptions of next generation conflict with *Fon Phi* ceremonies among modernize of science and technology but they don’t have significant offence toward *Fon Phi* ceremonies and are not have conflicts with the development of community base approach. *Fon Phi* ceremonies are from the perception of powered spirits such as *Phi Puya*, *Phi Mod*, *Phi Meng*, and *Phi Jao Nai* to preserve *Lanna* custom as relationship of family and community by sections of the ceremonies.

Therefore, the researcher moved forward to study of the value of *Fon Phi* ceremonies in socio-cultural Chiang Mai province. The study was emphasized on the value of their culture dimensions than prove their belief. The researcher hope that *Fon Phi* ceremonies in socio-cultural Chiang Mai province will have influence to preserve the valuable culture to be in *Lanna* society. Moreover, the research has evident record of *Fon Phi* ceremonies which compose steps of the ceremony in their custom to preserve *Lanna* culture.

## 2. Research Objectives

To study the values of *Fon Phi* ceremonies towards people’s belief and their ways of living in socio-cultural Chiang Mai province

## 3. Research Methodology

The research was conducted by qualitative research using Ethno-musicological Methodology and focusing on the field study method was made during the *Fon Phi* ceremonies by studying the facts about the music band used in *Fon Phi* ceremony, doing the context study and studying the relationship of *Fon Phi* ceremonies, and analyzing the data evolved in the value of *Fon Phi* to socio-cultural Chiang Mai province. The data collecting was made by observation, participatory observation, and informal interview. At the beginning, to explore the data was made by reaching the researches area for contact with the informant such as a musician of *Theng Ting* music band who participate *Fon Phi* ceremony, villagers who have their wisdom in the communities, and medium senior. The data collecting in the research was emphasized on field study by participate in 3 periods; pre-ceremony, while-ceremony, and post-ceremony. Informal interview, observation and

participatory observation were conducted by emphasize on general interview to the dimensions of values for *Fon Phi* ceremony toward socio-cultural Chiang Mai province.

The researcher participated in the ceremony by asking the details of providing steps' events, providing places for events, and involving *Theng Ting* music band as rhythmic producer. During the ceremony, the researcher recorded the details of ceremony, took video and photographs for analyzing in the next steps. If the data was omitted, it was checked by the triangular method; informant, data collecting, and times of *Fon Phi* ceremonies. Repetitive interview was conducted by the same interviewee or the new interviewee from the same points or new points that interfere during the time in field study. The "values tree" Of Kanjana Kaewthep was applied to be research methodology as analyzing the values of *Fon Phi ceremonies* in socio-cultural Chiang Mai province and Ethnomusicological Methodology was emphasized by field study; real data from communities.

#### **4. Research Results**

The values *Fon Phi* ceremony in socio-cultural Chiang Mai province were community strength, the local wisdom transmission, the ethics-cultivation through the community socialization, the community stability, the family culture-root awareness, and the community development in community economy following.

##### **4.1 The Values Community Strength Dimensions**

In the communities, family units are tiny division of the social but they are the most significant structure of the communities. The performing of *Phi Mod*, *Phi Meng* dancing are indicated the relationship of family roots; they have both roots from lineage relation and wedding relation. The ceremonies have influence to make decedents absorbs and learn their custom which can follow steps of performing ceremony to pass on, inherit, and follow their family's custom for the ultimate objective of the local wisdom transmission. The spiritual ceremonial dances is procedure of socialization used by senior spirits and senior relatives to give their advices follows the custom; dressing and behavior appropriate in social contexts for local wisdom transmission. The learning of spirits ceremonial dances are still happens during performing the ceremony; the people must participate in every step of the ceremony, making them to practice and absorb their customs that are from belief of spiritual ancestor.

*Fon Phi* ceremonies are chances for learning of descendants. Moreover; the ceremony open chances for the relatives who believe in the same spirits to increase their relationship between relatives within family for the community strength, the local wisdom transmission, the ethics-cultivation through the community socialization, the community stability, the family culture-root awareness. *Fon Phi* ceremonies is great work in the community; unless the family's members conduct the ceremony, senior spirits are also invite villagers in the community come to work as preparation of the events by preparing the places, and the oblations. The events indicated community strength, showing cooperative communities, increasing relationship between people in the community. Therefore, *Fon Phi* ceremonies enhance family relationships and unity in communities as armor to protect social problems in communities that encourage community strength. The two ways that revealed from the research finding are visible and invisible outcomes. The first, visible outcome is cooperation of the villages. The second, invisible outcome is relationship between the relatives when compare with the heartwood which has preserved culture in communities until now day.

#### 4.2 The Values Local Wisdom Transmission's Dimensions

*Fon Phi* ceremonies appear *Lanna* wisdoms that take important elements for performing ceremony such as knowledge to arrange bowl offering worships (*Khankru*), *Bay Sri* (cooked rice topped with a boiled egg use as offering), rice offering, and step performing ceremony's regulations. The processes of preparing elements for performing ceremony need omniscient expert because of every step must be correct and beautiful following the custom. If they have some preparing mistake, then they will be punished by the spirits (*Phi Puya*). Thus, doing preparing ceremony, elders who have wisdom arrange the people who participate in preparing times to work following the elders wisdom that have been taught by ancestors to recommend the people who still have no the experience can run the task follow the custom correctly.

Thus, *Fon Phi* ceremonies are worthy wisdom of *Lanna* to preserve culture socio-cultural Chiang Mai province. When the values tree approach is analyzed, they have both visible and invisible of events. The visible elements that we can see as the branch are offerings and food, the invisible elements that we can't see as roots of tree are folk wisdoms which are accumulated for long time to preserve in the communities.

#### 4.3 The Values Culture Root Awareness' Dimensions

*Fon Phi* ceremonies help members in a family, especially descendants to realize their merit's approach through the spiritual activities that work as community socialization for being as good citizens. During the performing the activities, senior relatives and senior spirits instruct their descendants about how to control their behavior while the ceremony are performing, including personality development, mode, belief, and culture. As a result, descendants can perform themselves correctly in the ways of their custom. Furthermore, the practical performing activities help people in communities to preserve their custom and wisdom such as gratefulness and elder-respect. The values *Phi Mod* and *Phi Meng* ceremonies help people in the communities to realize their gratefulness for *Phi Puya* (spiritual ancestor) who passed away. The objectives of *Phi Mod* and *Phi Meng* ceremonies are gratefulness toward their ancestors who gave their lives.

*Phi Puya* is invited to the altar in the providing rooms for performing *Fon Phi Puya* by dedicate food and beverages that the spirits prefer to have. *Fon Phi Puya* is the center of the ceremony that let the participants enjoyably of their activities. Although; the ancestors passed away, descendants are still gratefulness to their elder. The implied meaning of *Fon Phi Puya* ceremonies are gratefulness toward the people who gave their lives to be applied in the real life. In now day, our societies have many problems that are from lacking of merit. They don't practice following their elder. Moreover; people in communities respect themselves to believe they are right; they don't following the rules that have been set by their ancestors. Respective elder is the desirable merit that is from *Fon Phi* ceremonies. The merit enhances the people in communities who can survive in the peaceful ways.

*Fon Phi Mod* and *Phi Meng* ceremonies are ceremony that believes in the authority of spirits (*Phi Puya*) who can prevent descendants from undesirable events and can give peacefulness among believers. During performing, elder and spirits teach their descendants to believe and respect *Phi Puya*. The implied meanings of activities change perceptions of participants to the desirable ways. If descendants perform following the ways of custom, they will be peaceful. In contrast, if descendants not perform following the ways of custom, they will have a trouble such as sickness. The gratefulness

is one of vital merits that have influences toward descendants for performing that compare as roots of tree which can't see by your eyes but they are beginner and looser of tree. Socio-cultural Chiang Mai province has been performing *Fon Phi* ceremonies lively in their communities.

#### **4.4 The Values of Merit Toward Mindset of People in Communities' Dimensions**

*Fon Phi* ceremonies have values toward mindset of people who perform the events and encourage people to have stability in communities. The performing activities make good chances for rejoining of relatives to meet each other. Normally, *Fon Phi* ceremonies not perform each year, the events just only perform between 2-6 years. The conditions of performing ceremony are readiness of family and special offering of members who need to make votive offerings. When *Fon Phi* ceremonies performing, participants need self-control and have to practice follow the condition's *Fon Phi* ceremonies. Every member in communities who participates the ceremonial dance together by song of *Theng Ting* music band, they enjoy of the events. From the analyzing of researcher was found that the feeling of descendants toward *Fon Phi* ceremonies indicated that their ancestors are lively; the relationship between ancestors and descendants appeared on hanging cloth of relatives or people who live in communities.

During the ceremony and the music band were performing; *Phi Puya* who was spirits came to possess their relatives who hang the cloth, caused approaching unconscious condition. The result caused they loosed control oneself. The senior relatives were watering the holy water "*Kamin Sompoi*" (curcuma and acacia mixed water) to their face. After that, they became mediums who could smoke, drink, and dance. The mediums could speak to descendants as they are alive; they asked for life, health, economic etc. When the time was up, the spirits came out of mediums' body and they continued dancing as music playing band. The participants felt happily during the activities performing. Mostly; the mediums were woman, there were not appeared that the mediums were men or transgender. Indicated that the spirits needed body of woman, they didn't want men or transgender as a medium. *Fon Phi Mod* and *Phi Meng* affect toward the values mind's descendants because during the ceremony, the spirits taught how to control mind, work, and live with happiness. Encouraging the people in communities has abilities to spend their lives in socio-culture with happiness. The conditions are made the social strength and survived in the communities as well.

#### **4.5 The Values Culture-root Awareness Dimensions**

Normally; *Fon Phi* ceremonies will be held each 2-6 years, the ceremony indicate that descendants realize gratefulness for their ancestors. While the ceremony be held, relatives come to arrange what should be or what shouldn't be in the ceremonies; the people participate ceremonies cause them to have more unity in their family. The events enhance the communities have more stable, they preserve culture-root of the communities among the cross culture situation in the globalization age. The values tree approach, as wisdom of people in communities like roots of tree "*Fon Phi* ceremonies" are still have vital roles in socio-cultural Chiang Mai province.

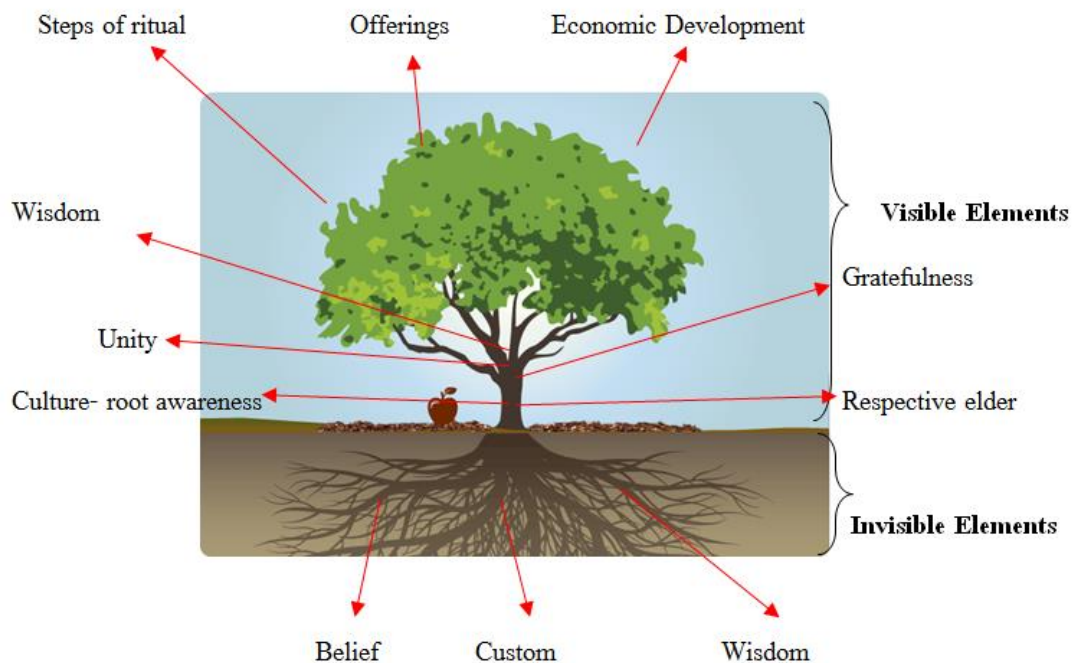
#### **4.6 The Values Economic Activities in the Communities' Contexts Dimensions**

Normally; *Fon Phi Mod*, *Phi Meng* and *Kaow Phi* (ancestor's spirits) activities will be held each 2-6 years, the cost of activities approximately 30,000 – 50,000 baht. The hosts are from two causes, normal offering hosts and making votive offerings hosts. The host needs to prepare the cost of ceremony; they have to pay for flowers, offerings, food and drink, worship house, and *Theng Ting* music band. *Fon Phi Jao Nai* ceremonies have to spend more cost because they need more people as



a medium than *Fon Phi Mod* and *Phi Meng* ceremonies. The cost of *Fon Phi Jaow Nai* approximates 50,000 – 100,000 baht. Each year, *Theng Ting* music band have approximated 300 jobs, the margin of *Fon Phi* ceremonies around 15,000,000 – 20,000,000 bath. *Fon Phi Mod* and *Phi Meng* have been distributed the income into communities such as flower shop, food and beverage, *Theng Ting* music band etc. The ceremonies have been motivated and encouraged the strength of communities' economic in socio-cultural Chiang Mai province.

If we compare with the values tree; the activities are similar root of tree that can alive. In nowadays, the ceremony has changed to smaller scales cause of decreasing economic in the country and around the world.



Picture 1: "Values of Tree" Values of *Fon Phi* ceremonies  
Reference: <https://leanarch.eu>, 9 October 2016, Time: 3.50 pm

## 5. Research Discussion

The outcomes of research revealed following:

### 5.1 The Values *Fon Phi* Ceremonies toward Community Strength Dimensions:

The strength of communities is from cooperative of the people that have a unity especially in their family unit. *Fon Phi* ceremony initial from family unit that expand to bigger unit as communities; when the ceremony hold, all relatives and people in the communities are invited to participate the events, the ultimate objectives are successful ceremony. Intarat Moonchailangka (2015: interviewed) claimed that "*Fon Phi* ceremonies are similar relatives joining program" they come and participate activities together, as a result creating relationship between people in community to become unity. Corresponding, Manop Manasam (2011: 24) claimed "The authority of spirits in dimensions of social dancing are from the unity of people who live in the same socio-culture to participate activity which encourage to have more power of unity through social order." Although, the social has been changed rapidly, *Fon Phi Mod*, *Phi Meng*, and *Phi Jao Nai* are indicated

conservative people who preserve their custom to alive in their community. Pornpilai Lertwicha (2009: 195) claimed "The people who live in Jomthong district, Chiang Mai province, have preserved their custom until nowadays, although social be penetrated by modern science and technology."

*Fon Phi* ceremonies have preserved values *Phi Puya* as symbol of family culture root awareness including people who live in the community have chances to perform and to preserve their culture among globalization interferences outside of the communities and countries.

### **5.2 The Values *Fon Phi* toward Inheritable *Lanna* Wisdom Dimensions:**

The experts of preparation and performing *Fon Phi* ceremonies; especially *Fon Phi Jao Nai* ceremonies be employed to prepare the ceremony for the villages, they don't prepare the performing ceremony by themselves. Every step of *Fon Phi* ceremonies are from the experts who be employed by the host; such as offering, flowers, bowl offering worships etc. If the people in community can't prepare the ceremony by themselves, the risk of culture and wisdom in community will appear. The results of the situation might cause losing their culture and wisdom in the future.

In the present, *Fon Phi* ceremonies such as *Phi Mod* and *Phi Meng* ceremonies confront lacking of inheritors who need to preserve community's wisdom, especially *Kaow Phi*. The reason is the family culture-root awareness declined. Transgender has begun to have important roles to arrange the ceremony more than the past because they derived the wisdom from their ancestors. Transgender has abilities to prepare and perform the ceremony correctly until the end of events. *Tung Khaow* is the expert that be invited from other communities to perform *Fon Phi* ceremonies. Mostly; *Tung Khaow* is elderly, so if the family or community lack of inheritors, then *Fon Phi* ceremonies will be decreased in amount and quality of ceremony in the future. It means that *Fon Phi* ceremonies will be interfered by other cultures that are from around the world in the globalization age.

Nattapong Pandorntong (2010: p.124) claimed "*Fon Phi* ceremonies in socio-cultural *Lanna* will be faded from *Lanna* community because of situations in family that is the smallest unit in community to confront with economic crisis. They have to work in other regions, leave the elders who are expert to stay in their house. The elders are faded from their family slowly because they pass away, so the wisdoms of community are also faded from society slowly until it lost forever from *Lanna* community."

### **5.3 The Values *Fon Phi* toward Merit Cultivation Dimensions**

Merit cultivations are needed to practice in the present time, because they enhance the people in communities to live peacefully. *Fon Phi Mod*, *Phi Meng*, and *Phi Jaow Nai* ceremonies are the parts of promoting merit cultivations through performing ceremony as respect their ancestors by grateful actions. Suriya Samutkup claimed (1996: 187) "*Fon Phi* ceremonies have been provided for gratefulness toward their ancestors and have been promoted prestige of the host. The mediums from other lines or other communities have chance to join each other by performing traditional dances that support the strength of communities." The elders and ancestors are respected by *Fon Phi Mod*, and *Fon Phi Meng* ceremonies.

Manop Manasam (2001: 24) claimed "*Fon Phi* ceremonies are manifest function that express the gratefulness toward their ancestors. Wherever descendants be, they have to practice follow the rules of wisdoms from their community." Manop Manasam (2001: 24) mentioned "*Fon Phi* ceremonies enhance the people in communities have more unity by cooperative performing task. The ceremonies have been alive into nowadays."

Therefore, *Fon Phi* ceremonies reveal the values gratefulness through the details of performing in each step of the traditional ceremony.

#### **5.4 The Values *Fon Phi* toward Villages' Mind Dimension**

In the past; the relatives in the same sprits' line, are the host of *Fon Phi* ceremonies. But in the present, *Fon Phi* ceremonies will be held by the needed of some people in community. Having some people was sick in the hospital; if they can't leave it out of their body, they will try to ask for pledge of *Phi Puya* to cure them from symptom. After the health are better, they will make votive offerings ask for performing of *Phi Puya* ceremonies. Manop Manasam (2011: 24) claimed "*Fon Phi* ceremonies are the social interaction of relatives to make positive reinforcement involving sickness, problems, and treats. The descendants pledge for asking involving successful life of doing their business, studying, working and etc.

When *Fon Phi* ceremonies begin the ceremony; the host who has pledged to their ancestors to make votive offerings, they feel reliable in their lives and confidential mind to do any things more confidential mind. So, If the next *Fon Phi* ceremonies be held, descendants will participate the events same as before."

#### **5.5 The Values *Fon Phi* Ceremonies toward Family Culture-root Awareness Dimensions**

*Fon Phi* ceremonies affect the values the family culture-root awareness. They have more confidential for living in the communities because they believe that ancestors help them to do anything in their lives successfully. During the ceremony, every step indicate that the holy spirits come to their lives cause them doing their task more successfully. Corresponding, Pranee Wongthet (2003: 63-64) studied the ceremony of offering Morn spirits dances, Phra Pradeang district, Samut Prakarn province claimed "The values *Fon Phi* ceremonies reflect the unity of people in community, reflect the manifest function or gratefulness to their ancestors, and motivate the family culture-root awareness. The values culture is the meaningful life."

In now a day, *Fon Phi* ceremonies are still meaningful for descendants. The manifest function or gratefulness is the values family culture-root awareness.

#### **5.6 The Values *Fon Phi* Ceremonies for Community Economic Development Dimensions**

Pornpilai Lertwicha (2009: 3) claimed that *Fon Phi* ceremonies relate the economic in community. They have to spend the money in the local shops, to buy flowers, food and beverage, etc. For each time of the ceremony, the hosts have to spend approximately 30,000 – 100,000 baht. Every year has about 300 ceremonies, total spending 9,000,000 – 30,000,000 baht for each year. So, the total spending enhances people in socio-cultural Chiang Mai province to have more income from the events.

Therefore, *Fon Phi* ceremonies enhance the increasing of economic growth in Chiang Mai province.

### **6. Conclusion**

The wisdom knowledge of *Fon Phi Mod*, *Phi Meng*, and *Phi Jao Nai* ceremonies has the values for socio-cultural community. They have roles to enhance people in the community survive as well and they have also encourage the people in community to preserve their family culture-root. Although; scientist's perceptions, the ceremonies is nonsensical, but the researcher found that the ceremony were made participants to reduce their anxiety and encourage their happiness. Siraphon Na Talang

(2012: 65) claimed that “Among science and technology have been developed rapidly, the life of people who live in society is more difficult. They want the stability of their mentality, so the ceremonies help them to have more steady mentality.”

Therefore, *Fon Phi* ceremonies enhance villagers can coexist in the community happily. The activities have the values in many dimensions such as socio-culture, family, community, and economic. So, should we preserve the values ceremony to coexist in socio-cultural Chiang Mai province and *Lanna* region.

## 7. Recommendation

1. Researchers should to perform the research in others northern regions, provinces in Thailand, and ASEAN countries. They should study the relationship between ritual and belief.
2. Health science should be applied to study the health of mediums that play the big roles in the ceremony and the musician of *Theng Ting* music band because they smoke and drink during performing activities.
3. Local Administration should play a role to preserve the values ceremonies by recording as database. The administration should support funds for performing and preserving ceremonies.

## References

- ปราณี วงษ์เทศ. (2546). พิธีรำผีฟ้าเจ้าพ่อเจ้าแม่ของชาวมอญที่บ้านเว้งขาว อ.พระประแดง จ.สมุทรปราการ. ค่ำรงควิชาการ ปีที่ 2 ฉบับที่ 4 (ก.ค.-ธ.ค.) หน้า 63-64.
- พรพิไล เลิศวิชา สุพชัย เมธิน และนนชชัย นามเทพ. (2552). เชียงใหม่ – ลำพูน เขตเศรษฐกิจวัฒนธรรม พลวัตและพัฒนากการ. โครงการวิจัยเขตเศรษฐกิจวัฒนธรรมภาคเหนือตอนบน ทุนวิจัยเมธีอาวโส และฝ่ายชุมชนและสังคม สำนักงานกองทุนสนับสนุนการวิจัย (สกว.). เชียงใหม่: ชารปัญญา.
- มานพ มานะแซม. (2541). การศึกษาเชิงปรัชญาเรื่อง คติความเชื่อเรื่องการฟ้อนผีในภาคเหนือ. วิทยานิพนธ์ศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาปรัชญา, บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่.
- ศิวพร ณ ถลาง. (2555). อารักษ์บ้าน – อารักษ์เมือง การดำรงอยู่ของความเชื่อและพิธีกรรมเกี่ยวกับผีอารักษ์ในวิถีชีวิตไทย-ไทในปัจจุบัน. ไทยศึกษา ปีที่ 8 ฉบับที่ 1 (กุมภาพันธ์ 2555 – กรกฎาคม 2555), หน้า 41 – 68.
- อินทรัตน์ มูลชัยลังการ, สัมภาษณ์, 21 ตุลาคม 2558.
- เอกสิทธิ์ ไชยปิ่น. (2546). พลวัตลัทธิพิธีกรรมการลงผี: กรณีศึกษาปฏิสัมพันธ์ทางสังคมระหว่างมั่วจี ลูกเลี้ยง และผีเจ้านายในจังหวัดเชียงใหม่. วิทยานิพนธ์ศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาการพัฒนาสังคม, บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่.
- Heinze, R. (1997). *Trance and Healing in Southeast Asia Today*. Bangkok: White Lotus.
- Rouget, G. (1985). *Music and Trance: A Theory of the Relations between Music and Possession*. Chicago: University Press.

## **Study on Ethnic Socio-Cultural Identity Projection Through Traditional Textiles Among Tais of Assam, India**

**Phukon, Rajashree**

Dibrugarh University, Assam  
India

---

### **Abstract**

Tais are the people of Mongoloid origin from South East Asia who settled on the Bank of Brahmaputra valley of NE India. They have been grouped as Tai Ahom, Tai Phake, Tai Khampti, Tai Khamying, Tai Aiton, Tai Nora and Tai Turung.

Aims of this paper are: (1) current studies on historical back ground of Tais (2) issues of cultural assimilation among Tais (3) specific aim to focus on Textiles tradition of Tai Phake in the light of ethnic socio cultural identity projection.

Descriptive method has been adopted with simple random sampling along with structured questionnaire for primary data collection from 75 respondents from the Namphake village of Dibrugarh District, Assam, India and supported by secondary data.

Hand loom textiles woven by Tai-Phake women of NE India for their traditional attire which has vast similarity with Thai culture of Thailand. The 'Chin' a female garment use to cover the lower part of the body from waist down to ankles. 'Nangwat' a cloth for married women to wrap over chin for covering the breast; Pha-fek-hang, same as 'Nangwat', is used for grown up girls. Pha-fek mai or Pha-mai is used as a wrapper by men and women while entering the Vihar (Buddhist temple), and has important significance in socio-religious occasions. 'Pha-nung' a men's apparel used to cover the lower part of the body from waist down to the ankles. 'Thung', a shoulder bag, is an indispensable part of Phake men's dress etc. The textiles of Tai-Phake have distinctive ethnic characteristics. where checked and stripes are arranged in a harmonious pattern to produce conspicuous designs with their indigenous loom. Traditionally they use both cotton and silk yarns in their textiles production. Wearing traditional dress during ceremony and function as well as in village is compulsory to maintain their cultural identity.

**Keywords:** Ethnicity, Sociocultural identity, Traditional Textiles, Tais

### **Introduction**

Throughout Asian history, ethnic politics inevitably calls forth images of conflicts between indigenous peoples and the larger migrant groups. One such dominant migrant ethnic group, which is found across South, Southeast Asia and China, is the Tais.

All Tais in Assam refer to themselves simply as "Tai". The names; Ahom, Khamti, Phake, Aiton, and Khamyang - are used by other people to distinguish those Tai groups from one another. The names,

however, are accepted by each and every group of the Tai themselves. The Tai is a generic name denoting a great branch of the Mongoloid population of Asia. The Tai people are now mainly concentrated in the Indo-Chinese peninsula. The present habitat of the Tai people extends from Assam in the west to Kwangsi and Hainan in the east and from the interior of Yunnan in the north to the southern-most extremity of Thailand (Siam) in the south.

The Tai-Phakes entered Assam in 1775 A.D during the reign of the Ahom king Lakshmi Sinha (1769-1780 A.D) and settled at Nangtao of present Arunachal Pradesh. They belong to the great Tai race. Ethnically they belong to the Mongoloid tribe, and linguistically they belong to the Tibeto- Chinese families. They settled in Arunachal Pradesh for a few years and during the British rule they gradually entered Assam and started living in small groups in Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts, where they are still found now. Presently they live in nine villages of Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts which are as follows:- Namphake and Tipamphake on the bank of the river Buridihing of Naharkatiya area of Dibrugarh district, and Mounglang, Man Mou, Bor Phake, Man Long or Long Phake, Ningam Phake or Ningam, Nonglai and Phaneng in Ledo-Margherita area in Tinsukia district. Throughout history it has been the concern of all the ethnic groups to maintain their ethnicity irrespective of the globalization which has affected each and every community. Irrespective of modernization peeping in each and every household, it has been observed that the Tai Phake community has been able to preserve its ethnicity. This paper aims to explore how ethnicity has been preserved by the Tai Phakes of this village with respect to through their attire.

## **Objectives**

Aims of this paper are:

1. Current studies on historical back ground of Tais
2. Issues of cultural assimilation among Tais
3. Specific aim to focus on Textiles tradition of Tai Phake in the light of ethnic socio cultural identity projection.

## **Methodology**

The present study has been conducted on the Tai Phake people living in Namphake village, situated at a distance of about 3 km from the Naharkatiya town of Dibrugarh district, Assam, India.

Considering the nature of the data collected, descriptive method has been adopted in the present study. The population of this study comprised of 75 respondents from the Namphake village have been selected as sample for the study. Simple random sampling has been adopted for selecting the sample.

For the purpose of this study, a well-organized structured questionnaire schedule has been used for the collection of the data from the sample respondents.

In order to collect the data, an interview schedule was prepared. Respondents were interviewed carefully on a number of questions and supplementary questions through face to face interactions and their replies were noted down for the composition of the literature of the paper.

## Results and Discussions

At present, the Tais in India (living in the States of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh in the Northeast) may be divided into two groups - those who use Tai language in their daily lives and those who do not. The first group (those who are still speaking Tai) live in remote rural areas - making their living as rice farmers. They are known by various names, such as Phake Tai, Khamti Tai, Aiton Tai, Khamyang Tai or simply one of the preceding names without the word "Tai." These Tais are Buddhists. They share many traditions, customs, and aspects of culture. They live in the same Tai style houses and they dress alike - especially the women. Minor differences of pattern and color of clothing material are used to differentiate the groups however. They also have their own writing system. Their spoken languages, though somewhat different, are mutually intelligible. They all share the same writing system. A Phake person who reads and writes Phake Tai writing can read Khamyang Tai texts without difficulty. An Aiton person described the difference between Phake and Aiton writings in terms of the place where the text was found. If a text was from a Phake village, it was called "Phake writing." The same text would be called "Aiton writing" if it was from an Aiton village.

The second group no longer speaks Tai. The best known of this group is the "Ahom." They are said to be the descendants of the Ahom people who were the rulers of the Ahom kingdom (now Assam), for about 600 years. According to Sir Edward Gait, the Ahom people came to the Brahmaputra valley in the year 1228 AD about 400 years before the other groups. The Ahom were said to be Non—Buddhists at this time. Despite the large amount of shared vocabulary, their writing is different from that of the other groups and other Tais simply cannot read the Ahom writing.

There are historical records (and other evidence) which prove that the Khamti, Aiton, Phake, and Khamyang Tais were from Burma. They crossed the Patkai mountain range, from the Burmese side, into Assam. This is the same mountain range that the Ahom had used to enter Assam about 400 years earlier.

Cultural change is inevitable with changing ways of life and language shift. Formerly, being Tai meant being rice farmers and Buddhists. Now Tais are living in cities and working as doctors, government officers, engineers, etc. Some marry Hindus and are no longer Buddhists. The 'bamboo culture' is changing fast. The culture of the Tais in Assam may be considered a 'bamboo culture' in the sense that they use a great deal of bamboo in their daily life. Unlike other Tais, most of the houses in Assam are built with bamboo - whole and split. Most receptacles used for storing rice, food and clothes are made from bamboo. The well-known 'khaw-lam' is sticky rice cooked in bamboo tubes. Pickled bamboo shoots are an essential part of marriage rituals and ceremonies. Other materials are now starting to replace bamboo. The younger generations no longer know all the different terms for different types of bamboo. Similarly, the words for different sizes and shapes for storage and measurement (especially of rice) are disappearing - despite the fact that Tai rice has been selling well amongst other ethnic groups.

The textiles of Tai-Phakes (one of the small Buddhist groups of Tai linguistic stock) have distinctive ethnic characteristics. Tai-Phake textiles are not decorated with elaborate designs. The checks and stripes are arranged in a harmonious pattern to produce conspicuous designs. The checks and stripes which make up the designs in Tai-Phake textiles are very similar to tribal textiles prevalent in Upper Burma, the original homeland of the people. They still use their indigenous loom for

weaving different textile items. As found among other communities, textiles are produced only for home consumption and not for sale. In the olden day, both cotton and muga yarns, used in their textile production, were produced at home. Those were also dyed with indigenous dyes. These days, home spun cotton yarn is mostly replaced by mill-made yarns. Muga yarn, used rarely at present, is also bought from local shops and dyed partly with indigenous dyes. The major traditional textile items produced by the Tai-Phakes are summarized below:

*Table: Major textile items produced by the Tai-Phakes*

<i>Sl.No.</i>	<b>Name of textile item</b>	<b>Approx. size (in meter)</b>	<b>Use</b>
1	<b>Chin</b> (Female garment for the lower part of the body, akin to mekhela)	1.25 x 0.75	<i>To cover the lower part of the body from waist down to ankles</i>
2	<b>Nangwat</b> (Breast cloth for married women)	2.70 x 1.00	<i>To wrap over chin covering the breast</i>
3	<b>Pha-fek-hang</b> (Breast cloth for grown up girls)	2.70x1.00	<i>Same as nangwat</i>
4	<b>Pha-fek-mai or Pha -mai (Wrapper)</b>	2.75 x1.40	<i>As wrapper by men and women while entering the Vihar (Buddhist temple). Has important significance in socio-religious occasions</i>
5	<b>Pha-nung</b> (Lungi, an item of men's apparel)	1.20x1.00	<i>To cover the lower part of the body from waist down to the ankles</i>
6	<b>Thung</b> (Shoulder bag)	0.30 x0.25 to 0,35 x0.30	<i>As an indispensable part of Phake men's dress</i>
7	<b>Gamocha</b> (Towel type cloth)	1.50 x0.70	<i>As towel</i>
8	<b>Tong-khwan</b> (Sacred hanging)	0.50 x0.15 to 1.50 x0.40*	<i>As an important textile item to be offered in the Buddhist temples (Vihar).</i>
9	<b>Changkanfra</b> (Symbolic sacred cloth)	Small symbolic cloth having seven squares	<i>As symbolic sacred cloth. Has important significance as most valuable item to be offered at Vihar</i>
10	<b>Phachanglong</b> (Sacred shoulder cloth)	2.70 x0.70	<i>As decorative, sacred shoulder cloth at the time of converting oneself to a Buddhist Monk</i>
11	<b>Pha-chet</b> (Sacred handkerchief)	0.70 x0.30	<i>As handkerchief at the time of converting oneself to a Buddhist Monk</i>

#### **1. Chin:**

Chin is the major item of Phake women's dress. It is worn to cover the lower part of the body from the waist extending down to the ankles. It is woven out of 2/80s cotton and occasionally with muga as weft. Three equal pieces of the size 0.75 x 0.50 meters with characteristic stripes are joined lengthwise. On top of this a striped or chequered piece of 1.50 x 0.50 meters size is attached to get



the chin of the size 1.25 x 0.75 meters green, white or yellow; violet, blue and black or muga (golden brown) color; maroon, white, black or blue; are the color schemes used popularly in chin. No separate ornamentation is used in this, but the harmonious arrangement of different colors in the stripes themselves produces a rich and pleasing effect.

## **2. Nangwat:**

It is a chequered cloth of the size 2.70 x 1.00 meters. Nangwatis used by Phake women to wrap over Chin, covering the breast and leaving both ends hanging in front. It is generally used by the women after marriage, but strictly not before attainment of puberty. These days, it is woven out of dyed cotton yarns of mostly 2/80s counts. But in the earlier days, it was also woven out of muga yarns, dyed in indigenous colors. Such nangwat is called nangwat-puchung. Using nangwat-puchung as a part of the wedding attire is still considered as a mark of prosperity and high status. Two equal pieces of the size 2.70 x 0.50 meters are woven separately and stitched lengthwise for nangwat. It is woven in checks and stripes of different colors with sparingly placed tiny flowers (called maklu) as butis. Nangwat with cross borders having creepers and floral motifs at both ends, followed by fringes, are also being woven these days.



*Plate: Nangwat*

## **3. Pha-fek-hang:**

It is an important item of dress for grown up girls and akin to nangwat in size and manner of use. Only the color is traditionally white. Pha-fek-hang is woven out of 2/80s cotton. Floral design in any color is woven as cross borders at two ends.

## **4. Pha-fek-mai or Pha-mai:**

It is a shoulder cloth used by adults, irrespective of sex, in addition to their respective attires. It has an important cultural significance since it is invariably required to be put on when people go to Vihar (temple) or participate in social gatherings. It is woven out of 2/80s cotton in white. The designs at two ends are woven mostly with muga yarn. The size of Pha-fek-mai or Pha-mai is 2.75 x 1.40 meters. For this, two equal pieces are woven separately and stitched lengthwise.

## **5. Pha-nung:**

It is a typical item of men's apparel among Tai-Phakes. It is tucked around the waist covering the lower part of the body like lungi. Pha-nung is made up of two pieces of chequered cloth of the size 2.00 x 0.60 meters. Pha-nung (Lungi) these two pieces are woven separately and stitched lengthwise. Further, a side seam is made to make the garment cylindrical.

Generally 2/80s dyed cotton yarns of violet, blue, yellow, maroon, green, black, etc., are used to make this colorful cloth. No separate motifs or designs are found in Pha-nung. The main feature lies

in the clever arrangement of colors with checks, and stripes. However, very tiny flowers of geometrical shapes (called maklu) are woven sparingly as butis in the body of the cloth.

Muga silk yarns, dyed in indigenous colors were also used in the past in weaving Pha-nung. This was named Pha-puchung. These days, it has become a rare specimen and the few pieces available in the villages are being preserved only to be used on socio-religious occasions.



*Plate: Pha-nung*

#### **6. Thung:**

The indigenous shoulder bag widely used by Tai-Phake men, is in sizes ranging from 0.30 x 0.25 meters to 0.35 x 0.30 meters with a strap. It has increasingly acquired a distinct cultural connotation among the people. The shoulder bag is considered as a representative item of Tai-Phake culture.

The thung, as shown in is woven out of 2/20s or 2/40s cotton preferably in black, blue or maroon color. Motifs representing creepers, trees, butterflies, birds, flowers and fruits are woven in varieties of colors covering the body of the bag. The weaver's names and addresses are also woven along with the designs these days.



*Plate: Thung*

#### **7. Pha Kong Kho: (Towel type cloth):**

Although gamocha seems to be a new adoption by the Phakes, it is an important element of their textile production. It is woven out of 2/80s cotton generally in 1.50 x 0.70 meters size. Gamocha is woven white with side and cross borders in red. Floral designs are woven as cross border, generally at one end. The other end is finished with a plain cross border of the same color.



*Plate: Pha Kong Kho*

#### **8. Tong-khwan:**

Tong-khwan, the decorated sacred hanging, is offered to Vihar by Phake women on sacred days of the Buddhist calendar and at various other occasions. It is woven out of 2/40s or 2/80s cotton in different shades. The size of the tong-khwan vary is from 0.50 x 0.15 meter to 1.50 x 0.40 meters. It is divided into 3, 5, or 7 divisions with fine bamboo sticks woven into the fabric. Colorful fringes are suspended from each of these bamboo sticks as an additional ornamentation. Various designs with motifs of flowers, trees, birds, butterflies and animals along with the weaver's name and address are woven in tong-khwan. The two cross ends of the hanging are finished with fringes to which beads are also interlaced. Offering cloth at the Vihar is regarded by the people as a pious act. One earns religious virtues from such acts.

#### **9. Chankanfra:**

Chankanfra, a small symbolic cloth having seven squares is essentially of religious significance. It is prepared during the annual festival called Poi-kithing observed on the full moon day of Kartika (October-November). It is the tradition that on the day before the festival, the womenfolk of the village assemble either in the Vihar compound or in the village headman's house and weave this symbolic cloth in the course of a single night. This cloth is offered at the Vihar in the early morning of the festival day. The Tai-Phakes have a strong conviction that chankanfra is the greatest of all gifts the villagers can offer at the Vihar, in the name of Lord Buddha, for the well-being of the village and its inhabitants.



*Plate: Chankanfra*

#### **10. Phachanglong:**

It is a decorative cloth of the size 2.70 x 0.70 meters. It is usually woven out of 2/80s dyed cotton with elaborate arrangements of floral and geometrical designs as cross borders at both ends. The extreme ends are finished with colorful fringes. Phachanglong, with its socio-religious significance, is a much valued item. It is never used as an element of casual dress. Only when a person adopts the life of a Buddhist monk, this decorative cloth is used at the initiation ceremony. After this ceremony, called Charman, he has to use only the specified saffron dress of the monk.



*Plate: Phachanglong*

### **11. Pha-chet:**

Pha-chet, a richly decorated sacred cloth of the size 0.70 x 0.30 meter approximately, used as sacred handkerchief is also considered essential in the Charman ceremony of Phakes.

All the Tai Phake women are specialist in weaving. Every day, after completing their daily activities, they start weaving. The handloom is mostly on the platform of chaan ghar or below it. One of the important characteristic of Tai Phake culture is the color of clothing and age relation. Ladies above the age of 50 are seen wearing deep green and deep purple. Men of the age group of above 50 wear Pure white phaa and saa. The design and colors vary according to the age. The younger the age, more the use of bright colors. The married women wear colored naang wat and sidd till about the age of 45. Usually the Nang wats are yellow, purple, green and red in color. Newly married women wear even more colorful dresses. Tai Phake people wear their traditional clothes at home as well as in social gatherings. Their traditional attire speaks about their pride and culture.

### **Conclusion**

The Tai-Phakes of Upper Assam, also known as Phakials, are one of the ethnic groups of the Tai family. The Tai is a general name denoting a great branch of the Mongoloid population of Asia. The history of their origin and migration to Assam is still shrouded in obscurity. However writers and researchers have attempted to construct a historical narrative of the early periods of this race out of the available data in fragments and fables. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century one of the Tai or Shan, the *Ahom* overran and conquered Assam itself, giving their name to the country. The *Ahom* were followed by some other Shan tribes like the Khamtis, Phakials, *Aitons*, Turungs, and Khamyangs. These tribes were sparsely distributed in certain parts of Dibrugarh, Sivasagar and Jorhat districts of Assam and Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh. The Phake or Phakials call themselves Tai-Phake.

The river Burhidihing, the banks of which are the abode of the Tai-Phakes, originates in the Patkai Hills. After leaving the hills it flows along the southern border of Dibrugarh district and passes through Margherita, Jaipur, Naharkatia and Khowang. Accordingly, on reaching Assam, the Phakes started living on the banks of the river Burhidihing.

Agriculture is the major occupation of the Tai-Phake people and they concentrate all their attention upon this economic activity. The Phakes are bilingual. Amongst them they speak the Tai language, but they use Assamese language with Assamese people among whom their villages are located. The Tai-Phakes although a lesser known Buddhist population with its microcosmic existence, is still preserving the traditional traits of their socio-cultural life to a considerable extent.

They practice their own religion which is Buddhism. Each Tai-Phake village has a Buddha Vihar

(temple) constructed in a central place. All the religious beliefs and practices of the Phakes center round the Buddha Vihar. Poi Chang Ken i.e. festival of bathing the images of Lord Buddha and Poi-Kitting, the festival of offering a symbolic dress to the image of Lord Buddha are the major festivals of Tai-Phakes. The textiles of Tai-Phakes have also distinctive ethnic characteristics which are produced at home.

Tai Phake is a very less known tribe from Assam with a handful population. They have a glorious culture and tradition. Being such a small in number, the tribe is trying hard to keep their legacy and rich culture alive. They reside in small villages in Dibrugarh district with a major population staying in Namphake village in Dibrugarh. The village has 100 percent literacy ,with keeping alive their glorious tradition by still living in their traditional houses, dressing in their traditional attire and also by the food they eat every day. So, It is important to know the tradition and culture of such a culturally rich tribe and also how this small community of people are struggling to preserve their culture in present day modern global culture context.

## References

- Gogoi, P. (1996). *Tai of North East India*. Assam , Vol.3,No.9:45-87  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narratology>  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morphing>

**Social Healing Factors and Process  
that Lead to Reconciliation and Forgiveness: The Studies of Thailand  
Socio-political Violence Conflict over a Decade**

**Pindavanija, Eakpant  
Ouaprachanon, Ratawit**

**Saisaeng, Bordin**  
Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies  
Mahidol University  
Thailand

---

**Abstract**

Since 2006, Thailand has been entrapped in political conflict and political violence which have not only resulted in different episodes of loss of lives, injuries, damages and prosecutions, but it has also led deep mistrust and polarization in the society. This paper is written from an ongoing research project "Social Healing Factors and Process the Lead to Reconciliation and Forgiveness" with an aim on exploring one of the most important elements of the peacebuilding and conflict transformation process which is "Social Healing". This article proposes that social healing is a key to reconciliation of society; however, it has been limited and overlooked by the state authorities who repeatedly promoted the discourse of "Thailand: Moving Forward". We argue that without making it clear of how to heal the past, it might be difficult to have mutual understanding of the present, and seeing the shared value for the future is almost impossible. By using the frameworks of Lederach & Lederach (2010) on social healing and reconciliation, this paper is an attempt to look at certain issues such as experiences of individual and collective trauma; and identifying victims and perpetrators in conflict in order to analyze with this concept. We categorize trauma or wounds into primary wounds of political violence such as violation of victims' human rights, harms to victims' person, lack of acknowledgement of victims' suffering, culture of impunity and harm to the person of wrongdoer, and secondary wounds such as memories, emotions, judgments and actions. Also, it is complicated to clearly identify victims and perpetrators in such situation of protracted political conflict. Lastly, we propose the ideas and functions of social healing and reconciliation as a process of healing the past, making the understanding of present, and looking for the opportunity to share the value to the other people.

**Keywords:** Political Conflict, Wound and Trauma, Social Healing, Reconciliation

**Introduction**

Since late 2006 up to present (2017), the political conflict in Thailand has been increasingly expanded its scope and degree of violence. A large number of people have been affected by the consequences of the violence conflict situations. Even when the military leaders staged the coup

d'état in May 2014, they claimed that utilizing of force to stop the confrontation among the conflicted parties was needed. However, it does not mean that the political conflict has been eased. It might not have been portrayed in the public, but the results of devastation from the violence situations remain the wounds for so many people who have been affected by the violence incidents. In addition, the excessive utilizing of military and security forces in order to maintain peace and stability by the military government has made the situation worsen. The political conflict still remains and reverses to the stage of the latent conflict, and is nurtured by anger, hatred, hostility, and fear, and it is ready to explode when the situation is allowed. The attempt of making the reconciliation by National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) which was formed after May 22, 2014 coup d'état seems not to be clear as far as the conflicted parties have not been promptly identified before making its strategy. Apart from Thailand political conflict, this paper also relates the issues of social healing from the violence in the southernmost provinces of Thailand. The violence conflict in the southernmost provinces of Thailand over the past thirteen years has been going on, while the numbers of casualties have been increasing over the time, while the situation is not improving. With the high numbers of casualties and the protracted violence conflict is going on, the numbers of people who have been affected by the situation is rising. The researchers found that the process of social healing is still needed, and many of the victims from the violence are still waiting for the proper healing mechanism. Thus, the lessons learned from the situations in the southernmost provinces of Thailand are incorporated in analyzing the overall of social healing mechanisms and process.

This paper is written from the midterm analytical part of a research project "Social Healing Factors and Process the Lead to Reconciliation and Forgiveness". It aims on exploring one of the most important elements of the peacebuilding and conflict transformation process which is "Social Healing". According to John Paul Lederach (2005), to make a conflict transformation it requires a great attempt to deal with what had happened in the past, because in the violence conflict situation there are numbers of people who get affected from the incidents, and mostly have wounds physically, and psychologically. This kind of wound pulls people back from their capability to move forward. That means the capability to move forward is one of the major paths towards the reconciliation. To pursue the reconciliation, we need to overcome the pain from these wounds, and encourage people to move forward. However, to overcome the pain is certainly not forgetting, but it has to pass through the proper healing process, thus the victims could heal themselves and willingly forgive.

Looking back into several violence incidents since 2006, the number of casualty is enormous, hundreds of people have been killed, and thousands have been injured. It creates a widespread trauma in both individual levels as well as in the society level. Trauma that might be considered as the consequences to the victims does not limit itself to the personal level, because in most of the incidents that people have lost their loved ones, it ignites the pain to the family as well as to the others who share the pain collectively. This could be counted for individual and collective trauma. It is very important to address that understanding the factors that prevails the pain from the trauma could lead us to know how to make a proper social healing mechanism.

This paper also emphasizes the relationships between the trauma and social healing by trying to identify the elements that make the trauma become collective, and how the social healing functions in easing the pain from such trauma. The mentioned trauma from the casualty is significantly the

evidence of the cause of creating the wound, however the trauma is not limited only from the consequences that caused by the casualty, but also from the non-physical pain from the abuse of all forms, including the abuse of power and misconduct of the authorities. Several people who perceive that they have been treated badly during the time of conflict have been inflicted the pain from their feeling of injustice.

Pain and trauma that are inflicted for victims, their relatives and friends came from the wound that is called "primary wound". While the studies of social healing also focuses on the "secondary wound" that creates the shared feelings of anger, hatred, hostility, and fear among the sympathizers as well as the enemies (opponents) and vis-à-vis. This secondary wound seems to play a greater role in spreading anger, hatred, hostility, and fear as the collective value that brings about protracted conflict. Furthermore, such collective value is used to justify rights, and wrongs in the perception of people that leads to sustaining the polarization among the conflicted parties. Fact finding by an independent and acceptable truth commission is recommended as a tool to ease such polarizing collective value, but it has been denied by some groups that it could lead to retraumatizing. Many people prefer to let it go, and encourage people to forget the past.

As it is mentioned earlier, another concerned is that the research or attempt to deal with trauma has always been questioned, whether it is for the sake of healing or it is mindless retraumatizing the victims. The researchers take this consideration into account and try to look for the justification of the social trauma healings from the success and failure in the other places, and try to minimize the effects from retraumatization. Priscilla B. Hayner (2011) quoted Horacio Verbisky "Why reopen the wound that have closed? [...] Because they were badly closed. First you have to cure the infection, or they will be reopened themselves."

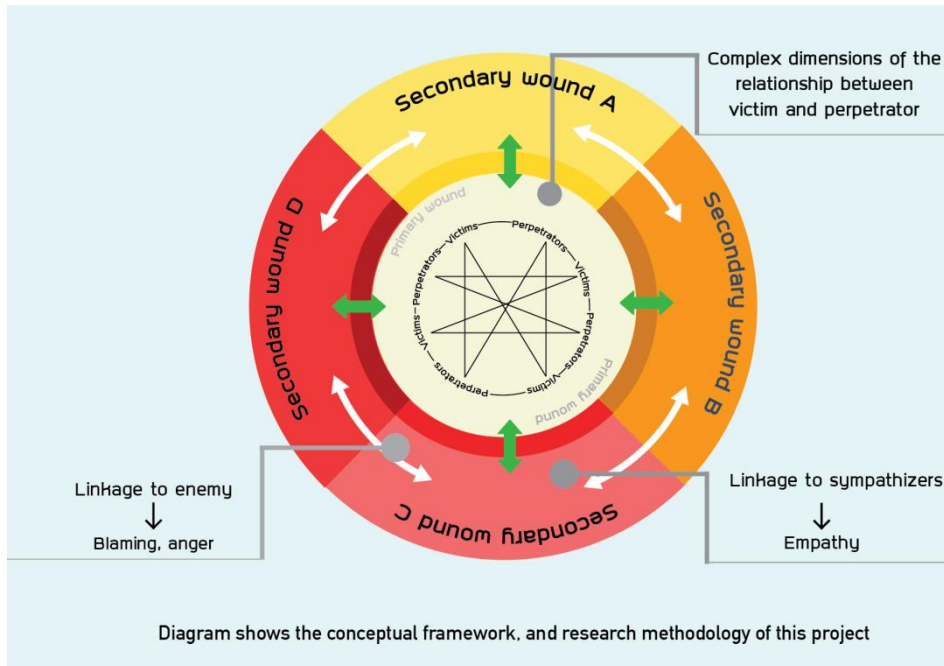
In a protracted social conflict as same as the political violence situation in Thailand in the past decade, it needs to consider that identifying the victims and perpetrators is very difficult but very important, because there are sequences and consequences of several incidents that make people identify themselves as the victims, while pointing out to the opponents as the perpetrators. The process on identifying the victims and perpetrators might be involving the process on fact finding mechanism that makes truth for justice. However, the mentioned process is not an easy process, because the consciousness and the reality for the perception of truth could be varied. Thus, understanding the epistemological ground of violence conflict is an essence of understanding the truth of trauma.

The sense of justice is not relevance to revenge. It might be an obsessive thinking for a victim to see clearly the perpetrators, and knowing the stories of how their loved ones who have been killed or injured, but not necessarily condemn the perpetrators' death in revenge. However, it is too difficult to generalizing people perceptions and feelings, thus the social healing process is needed in order to ensure that the justice is prevailed but does not convey the hatred through revenge. The most important thing for this process may encourage people to get over their anger, hatred, hostility, and fear. Even though, under the current circumstances that Thailand is under junta government, the truth is unspeakable, and people remain or forced to be silence, but it is needed that our society is prepared for the systematic truth and reconciliation process.

Leading to the reconciliation, the current junta government has been repeatedly promoted the idea of "Thailand: Moving Forward". It has been initially addressed by the nationwide obligatory broadcasting television show called "*Dern Nar Prated Thai*", calling for the united Thais, and moving



forward a more prosperity Thailand in the future. Several victims and people who have been affected by the results began to question of their existence, and how the past wounds could be concerned. Without making it clear of how to heal the past, it might be difficult to have mutual understanding of the present, and seeing the shared value for the future is almost impossible. Thus, social healing is a key to reconcile.



### Individual Trauma and Collective Trauma: Their Functions and Elements

Beginning of a journey through several regions of Thailand approaching for people who have been affected by the violence political conflict in Thailand reminds me of the past experience during the time of working as a mediator during several occasions in the past ten years. The inflicted wounds have ruined lives of people, the stories that have been told revealed anger and the perceptions of what are rights, wrongs, and retaliations. The images of the past experience are still crystal clear in my mind when I was listening to those of their stories.

A sister who lost her younger brother in an incident in 2010 told a story of how she reacted to the news of her brother's death. Her brother and the whole family support the movement of red-shirt movement group called United Front of Democracy against Dictatorships (UDD) and frequently participating in the demonstrations in their hometown of a northeastern province of Thailand and in Bangkok including the demonstration in 2010. The story shows how she is proud of her brother who sacrifices his life in order to fight for the rights of people under the democratic measure. The anger, hatred, and hostility were not shown in the body language, but reading between lines, such feelings have been passed through into a young boy who is the son of her brother. The young boy who lost his father when he was eight years old is now a teenager has been repeatedly conveyed the idea of keeping up fighting in the name of his father. The fighting in the path following his hero father seems to be alloyed with perception of violence. It was not clear that it comes because of the anger or just he perceive it as a means to fulfill his self-awareness, but it is interesting that some of the son behaviors are the result of losing his father in the violence incident.

The same situation could happen to any of the other families disregarding the conflicted parties that they belong to, for instance, the families of the military personals who have lost their family members in the same incident could develop the same consequences of the result of losing their loved ones indifferently to the others. The tragedy turns into the trauma. It has been carried on by the people who are directly affected. According to the previous case, it persists over the lives of the family members. One of the questions that have been asked by the victims is “what had happened to their loved ones? Who killed them? Their thoughts are turning around the question that is not answerable. Most of the victims who have such wound to put themselves back to normalcy in order to continue their lives, some of them could, but many of them could not.

Here comes the doubt of the level of resilience that the victims with the trauma from the primary wound from the violence conflict situation could be measured. How we make sure that the naturally healing process in the relation to period of time could really help to heal the victim. Aaron T. Beck (1999) addresses the importance of understanding the interrelations of the feelings of hurt, anger, hatred, and fear as the human mechanism in protection of oneself and as well as the ability to put oneself in the relationships with the others.

The primary wound that could cause the trauma for the victims, and their relative came from the experience with tragedy that implant anger, hatred, hostility, and fear. For the case of the victims from the political violence conflict in Thailand it is not just the experience of casualties that brings about their trauma, the political ideology is also a drive to make the feeling worse. This could be called the trauma from political injustice, in which most of the informants concern. The ladies who have been seriously ill from the result of the use of the tear gas during the time of demonstration suppression on the April 10, 2010 incident reveals her experience in participating in the demonstration with the hope that the country could return to democratic means of election, thus they could proceed to elect the government that they prefer. The injury from the incident causes her physically pain and sickness, but the thing that hurts her more than physical injury is the fact that their rights have been violated, their political will has not been fulfilled, the people who for them considered the wrongdoers have not been responsible for the actions that they made, and the continuous abuse of power especially after the 2014 coup that they have been accused of violating peace and national security. The continuous obsessive use of force by the junta government over the activists hammered down on the point where it hurts the most. Wound could not be healed, while the trauma could be inflicted over and over again.

Even though, this paper tries to clarify primary wound, and the secondary wound that creates trauma in separation, however they are not separate from each other, because the connectivity of both types of wound are inseparable especially in the political and social contexts. The example of the two ladies who were once affected by the suppression during the time of demonstration, and later on experience direct and indirect treat from the authorities. It stressed the phenomena of mistrust and unreliable of the authorities, that once used to be a part of the suppression in the earlier years, and now taking control of the government.

Traumatic status is attributed to real or imagined phenomena, not because of their actual harmfulness or their objective abruptness, but these phenomena are believed to have abruptly, and harmfully, affected collective identity. Individual security is anchored in structures of emotional and cultural expectations that provide a sense of security is anchored in structures of emotional and cultural expectations that provide a sense of

security and capability. These expectations and capabilities, in turn, are rooted in the sturdiness of the collectivities of which individuals are apart. At the issue is the stability of a collectivity in the material or behavioral sense, although this certainly plays a part. What is at stake, rather, is the collectivity's identity, its stability in term of meanings, not action. (Alexander, 2012: 14 – 15)

According to the pain that is mentioned earlier is not limited itself to the people who have primary wound. The secondary wound seems to produce more collective pain among the victims, parties involved, and the sympathizers. The collective trauma or cultural trauma is the result that the large numbers of people have passed a horrible experience and share the same feelings, and such feelings continuously have the effects to their lives, and the way that they perceive and react to the world. "Cultural trauma occurs when member of a collectively feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable way". (Alexander, 2012: 6)

From the notion of John Mbity, African Religious and Philosophy quoted in Lederach (2005), he mentions of how the past is portrayed in front of us. The wounds that occurred to people in the past for hundreds of years could travel through time and space and drive people in several generations.

When the last person who knew the departed also dies, when the former passes out the horizon of the Sasa (the President) period; and in effect he now become completely dead as far as the family ties are concerned. He has sunk into the Zamani (the Past) period. But while the departed person is remembered by name, he is not really dead: he is alive, and such a person I would call the living-dead. The living-dead is a person who is physically dead but alive in the memory of those who knew him in his life as well as being alive in the world of spirits. So long as the living-dead is thus remembered, he is in the state of personal immortality...Paradoxically, death lies "in front" of the individual, it is still a "future" event; but when one dies, one enters the state of personal immortality which lies not in the future but in the Zamani. (John Mbity quoted in Lederach, 2005: 131)

Thus, the memories of people who died in the violence situations are kept by the storytelling, and the communication among the people in the society, it is in the sense of living-dead. The stimulation of these memories from the primary wound that might be hidden beneath the shelter of comfort zone and belonging to the group of affiliations emerge under certain circumstances as follows: 1) continuous violation of human rights, 2) harm to the victim's persons, 3) victim's ignorance of source and circumstances of political injustices. 4) lack of acknowledgement of the suffering of the victims, 5) the standing victory of the wrongdoer's political justice – culture of impunity, and 6) harm to the persons of wrongdoer (Philpott, 2012: 33 – 41). However, the mentioned conditions of those stimulate the primary wound, is also functioned with collective wound that brings about cultural trauma as well as it functions on the primary victimized people. It functions through the memories; "it is through a chain of memories, emotions, judgments, and, finally, actions that primary wounds leads to secondary wounds. When this sequence occurred among a group, the memories, emotions, judgments, and actions take a collective form that can result in further [...] violence" (Philpott, 2012: 42).

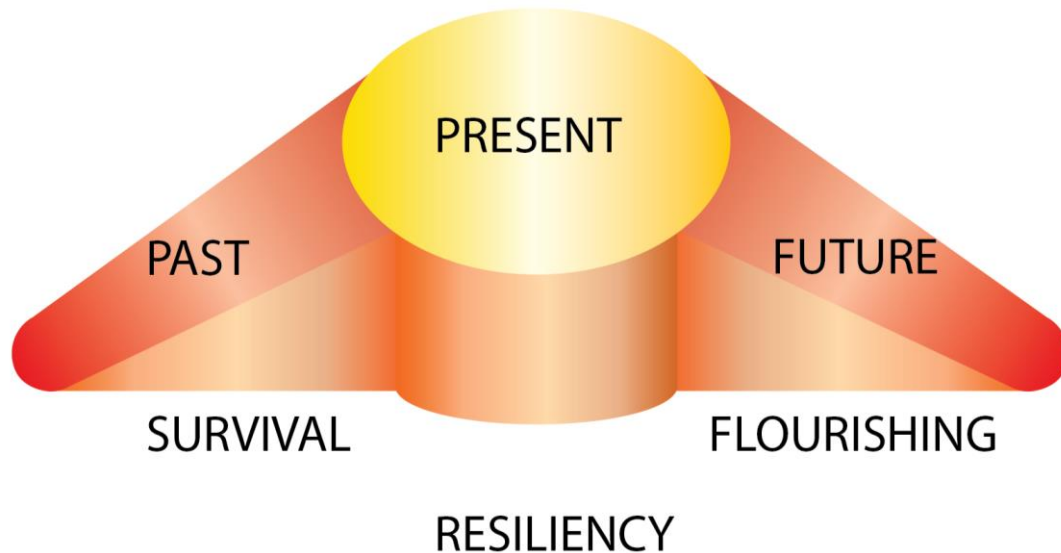
The memories carry the pain of the wounds forward in time. However, the memories do not contain only fact, but it incorporate the sense of understandings and the positions of those who carry the memories. "Memories are not just brute fact; they involve meaning and interpretation" (Philpott, 2012: 42). The interpretation of certain fact is varied but holds certain values. From the experience of being a member of a Fact Finding Subcommittee of National Human Rights Commission of Thailand after the 2010 incident, it was obvious that most of the witnesses perceive the fact accordingly to the collective perceptions of the groups that they have affiliations to. The same incident is interpreted differently with the different angles of the memories carriers. "Collective memory is memory shared among people and formed through social process" (Philpott, 2012: 43). Thus, sharing the memories of pain and trauma from the primary wounded people is carried with the fact and its interpretation and circulated in particular affiliated groups that might bring about anger, hatred, hostility, and fear. In a deeply divided society such as the current situation in Thailand, it is obviously seen that the victims and their sympathizers carries from what Philpott (2012) calls it the emotion which is the translation if memories into postures toward present politics. Memories and emotion could lead to another combination of judgments, that is "deeper, more active, and more deliberative level of reflection" [...] "In matter of political morality, judgment involves a determination about the justice of past events, present regimes, and previous efforts to remedy injustice and what sort of actions are to be pursued in response. It involves both principled and prudential considerations" (Philpott, 2012: 45).

The incident that a number of red-shirt activists opposed the proposal of the amnesty act some months before the 2014 coup implies that, the memories that are carried on and the emotions towards the judgment for justice make them deny the attempt to set things zero. The judgment takes place with the collective value; that it is needed to bring the wrongdoers to justice, and there is no forgiveness to the people who killed (ordered to kill) the demonstrators in 2010. However, the draft of amnesty act was also opposed by the former yellow-shirt, People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), and latterly formed People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) that emerged after the strong opposition of passing the amnesty act. The judgment plays a significant role in the circumstances of demanding the wrongdoers to justice; Arron T. Beck (1999) explains that it might have related to the attempt in balancing of power, once people who belong to different conflicted parties try to struggle to identify who is right and who is wrong to a violence conflict the justification is varied from the past experience of each group.

[...] he or she must strike back, even though retaliation is self-defeating in the long run and may lead to even further attacks and pain as the conflict grows. A number of related factors contribute to this. First, there is a primitive, almost reflexive, reaction to pain, whether physical or psychological: to remove its source. Another important factor is that criticism, even when justifies, often produces and upset in the balance of power. (Beck, 1999: 90)

The mentioned circumstances of opposing the amnesty act could be call the action, according to Philpott (2012) this demand of punishment to the wrongdoers is the reaction and consequence of the vengeful retaliation from the feeling of anger, hatred, hostility, and fear that could leave the woundedness in people over generations. This example is to be explored in the political injustice, and the perceptions of victims and perpetrators later in the article.

Thus, the trauma that inflicted to the victims of the political violence conflict over a decade still persists both from the primary wound, and the secondary wound. It creates trauma for the individuals as well as collective trauma. There is always connectivity between the primary and secondary wound, the context of the pain of the individual could create the chain with collective memories, emotions, judgment, and actions. Vis-à-vis, the social phenomena could reignite the pain of the individual and making the prolongation traumatic effects.



The simultaneity of temporal experience (Lederach & Lederach, 2010: 138)

### **Identifying Victims and Perpetrators: For Truth and Justice**

From the diagram on page 3, showing the complex relationships between the victims and perpetrators in the innermost circle of primary wound, there are numbers of victims and perpetrators with several linear connectivities; some lines link victims to victims, some lines link perpetrators with the perpetrators, and some of those lines link victims and perpetrators. That refers to the complex dimensions of the relationship between victims and perpetrators. The reason that these relationships are complex is the way that people identify their status of victim, and perpetrator. The relationship is not always a single linear, because with a protracted social conflict and with intense dynamic of the violence situations the status of victim and perpetrator could be shifted. For the primary wound the relationship could be clearer of who the victims and who the perpetrators are, but looking back into the diagram there are arrows linking the internal circle of primary wound to the secondary wound A, B, C, and D. Those arrows make more complexity to the relationship and identification of victim – perpetrator relations. In this process it requires framework for identifying people – how to name the names, especially for the perpetrators.

There are several political demonstrations between 2005 – 2014; beginning from the Yellow-shirt movement of People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) in 2005, up to the demonstrations of People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) with slightly confrontation (in a great degree of distance) of United Front of Democracy against Dictatorships (UDD) in 2014 before the military leaders staged the coup d'état on May 22, 2014. Thus, the fact reveals that there have been numbers of casualties

in all of those demonstrations disregarding the political preferences or conflicted parties. The most numbers of casualties occurred during the demonstration of United Front of Democracy against Dictatorships (UDD) in 2010. Looking into the pictures of those demonstrations, it is obvious that there are victims with the primary wound from all the conflicted parties. Most of the victims who have been giving the information to the research team clarify that they all know that there are numbers of people with the different political polar have been suffering from the violence incidents. Surprisingly, most of them told us that they are willingly to exchange some discussions with the other victims even though they have opposite political ideology. Although, most of the victims (our key informants) accept to have an open discussion with their opponents, but all of them concern of the process, and sense of trust for the process. For many of them who have been abused in the post violence conflict leave very little space of trust to the authorities.

Thus, the mechanisms that could be important in identifying the stakeholders in victim-perpetrators relations are trust building – by providing space for the exchange in the form of secured platforms, truth – by fact finding and understanding the truth epistemologically, and the recognition of their political points of view and the conditions that they have been victimized by the violence acts is also essential. To transform this deeply divided society into resilience society, it is needed to make clear of how we recognize the victims under the equal basis.

Most of the information obtained from the informers showing that victims especially of those who were affected by the consequences of the political movements have been left without any recognition or supports neither from the groups' leaders or governments. A middle aged man who frequently participated in the several of the demonstration said "[...] not being recognized as a victim is one thing, being abused with the authorities, and the society is another thing – that might be a lot worse [...]." His story tells us how the victims could be continuously victimized aftermath.

A villager who claims himself as a member of red-shirt movement group called United Front of Democracy against Dictatorships (UDD) told a story of how he was charged in the case of participating in the burning down of a security guard checkpoint in front of a telecommunication building in a northern province on the day that government suppressed the demonstration in May 2010. The only evidence shown to him was his picture standing right in front of the crime scene carrying a lighter. More than six months of imprisonment during fighting the case in court ruins his life completely.

He was not physically injured in the several violence incidents, but has been treated with the charge that he believes that he does not deserved to. His strong feeling of mistrust in the justice process was clearly perceived during the time of conversation. He admitted that he had been actively participated in several demonstrations both in his home town and in Bangkok, with the strong political wills. He believes that his expression of political wills through participation in the demonstration is deserved by his basic rights, and those actions were purely innocent and transparent. Thus, later on when he was arrested with the charge of the criminal case, he could barely accept that it is a fair treat of the justice system. He considers himself as a victim. He had to sell his property to get some money for fighting his case. Currently, he has lost his jobs, property, and insufficient for himself and his family in term of living.

Furthermore, the worst thing is that the rumor has gone around the community that he were one of those who "burn down the mother's land". The meaning of "burning down the mother's land" came from Thai word "Pheo bān pheo meūxng", which is significant for the hate-building discourse that,

the people who joined red-shirt movement were the betrayer of the nation. That discourse has been repeatedly addressed in several occasions throughout these years. But for a villager, who needs to struggle for his living; it makes the life more struggled. It is how a victim is revictimized with the discourse. Vis-à-vis a young man – a university student questioned strongly in a class, addressing of how I could explain to him of those who burnt down the mother's land. For his perception as a Bangkokian by birth, seeing the scenes of several buildings in the capital city were under fire, the motive pictures have been televised nationwide. He is also another sympathizer for those of the people in the capital city that has been gradually absorbed the feelings of anger, hatred, hostility, and fear by the influence of hate speech that is conveyed by the discourses. A life of a young man who the place where he was born was set into fire by an assumed group of demonstrators, the social discourse nurtured his anger, and hatred. On another hand in the wider scope of society the same discourse is functioned, and as same as it works with the heart of the young man it works in the hearts of several many other thousands people, and it turns into collective trauma as the secondary wound. The secondary wounds, that finally transformed into social collective perceptions lead to certain actions; and such actions returns to revictimize a man in a remote village in a northern province. Getting out of this dramatic circle is not that easy, because the spiral of victim-perpetrators relations is complicated. To reconstruct social trust, and building up a resilience community is a long challenge ahead.

The recognition could be gained from the mutual understanding of people in the society of what the truth is and how the truth is interpreted. Several countries have established truth commission as a process of reconciliation. There are pros and cons of such commission.

The truth commissions are typically tasked with some or all of the following goals: to discover, clarify, and formally acknowledge past abuses; to address the needs of the victims; to “counter impunity” and advance individual accountability; to outline institutional responsibility and recommend reforms; and to promote reconciliation and reduce conflict over the past. [...] (Hayner, 2011: 20)

The tasks of the truth commission require a level of trust from the people, and the outcome of the tasks could make people get to have certain knowledge, that might make the interpretation truth more clear in many more angles. Such knowledge might not be supporting the perceived ideas of the valuable beliefs that people used to hold, but it could readdress a new dimension of perceptions of truth. Philosophical ground of such mission lays on the notion that how to make the distinction between appearance and reality. “[...] Intense philosophical investigation has been directed toward resolving the human dilemma expressed in the often voice statement ‘things are not what they seem.’ Attempt to explain the differences between what the world ‘look like’ and what it ‘is’ have evoked thoughtful responses [...] (Honer et.al, 2006: 48). Applying this notion to the fact finding in addressing the truth by the truth commission, it is important to consider that truth contains the substantive proportion of fact, and that fact has been initially clarified with some meanings, and the meaning derives from some level of the interpretation, which is called the interpreted truth. In practice the tasks of the truth commission in building acknowledgement is significantly important Juan Méndez a prominent rights lawyer is quoted in Heyner (2011: 21) “[...] Knowledge that is officially sanctioned, and thereby made ‘part of the public cognitive scene’ [...] acquires a mysterious quality that is not there when it is merely ‘truth.’ Official acknowledgement at least begins to heal

the wound.” In some extends the obligation in providing truth is the duty of the state in the United Nation Human Rights Report quoted in Hayner (2011)

[...] every people has the inalienable right to know the truth about past events concerning the perpetration of heinous crime and specially that victims and their families have the imprescriptible right to know the truth about the circumstances in which violations took place and, in the event of death or disappearance, the victims’ fate. (Hayner, 2011: 24)

Unfortunately, the past fact-finding reports from the appointed Truth Commission of Thailand, and several other fact-finding commissions, especially on the event of 2010 violence incident have not been accepted by conflicted parties. That causes from mistrust, and unreliability of the process and the organization bodies of the commissioners that bring about doubt and high degree of disagreement to the reports. There are several approaches that we could learn from the experience of the other countries. Many other countries that have utilized the truth commission as a mechanism of post violence conflict transformation, and reconciliation address some of the important elements that could be considered.

Many different factors may shape a country’s transitional possibilities and constraints, and thus its post-transition reality. These include the strength of those groups or individuals who were responsible for the abuses and their ability to control transitional policy choices; how vocal and organized is a country’s civil society, including victims’ and rights groups; and the interest, role, and involvement of the international community. In addition, the transitional choices will be affected by the type and intensity of the past violence or repression and the nature of the political transition. [...] The term “truth commission” is uncomfortable for some. But it has now become a term of generally understood meaning: and official investigation into a past pattern of abuses. [...] In virtually every state that has recently emerged from authoritarian rule of civil war, and in many still suffering repression or violence but where there is hope for a transition soon, there has been interest in creating a truth commission – proposed either by officials of state or by human rights activists or other civil society. (Hayner, 2011: 17 – 18)

Apart from trust building, truth commission and building up the recognition, there is another important mechanism that is the justice system and the perception of justice. The sense of justice is varied from the individual level to the social collective level. The struggle for justice is also involved with the struggle of power and equality. The sense of fairness is somehow lays beneath the lack of power and equal recognition as a citizen and a member of the whole society. The trauma of victims plays the cognitive roles in shaping sense of justice in the similar manner.

Identity involves a cultural reference. Only if the patterned meanings of collectivity are abruptly dislodged is traumatic status attributed to an event. It is the challenge to meaning that provides the sense of shock and fear, not the event themselves. Whether or not the structures of meaning are destabilized and shocked is not the result of an event but the effect of a sociocultural process.

It is the result of an exercise of human agency, of the successful imposition of a new system of culture classification. This cultural process is deeply affected by power



structures and by the contingent skills of reflexive social agent. (Alexander, 2012: 15)

Looking for truth for the justice could aim on many difference approaches namely: to demand punishment to the perpetrators, to demand the apology both individually and collectively, and to look for the other means of justice, for instance, transitional justice. The past political violence conflict created two major kinds of injustice first the criminal injustice, victims see that their perpetrators have not been responsible of their actions that caused them and their family the casualties. Another kind is that the political injustice which could be claimed as the root cause of all the political violence incidents.

[...] To see why, consider the definition of political injustice – an injustice committed in the name of political regimes, program, or ideal. Consider further that any political injustice has two dimensions, an individual dimension and a collective dimension. All political injustices are committed by individual perpetrators, people who acted deliberately, freely, for a reason. To be sure, agents at different levels of command, from a private up to the head of state, will bear varying degrees of responsibility and culpability for the injustice depending on to what degree they initiated or planned the injustices and what level of duress they were under. Still, every individual who commits or helps to commit a political crime bears responsibility and guilt for his/her actions. (Philpott, 2012: 201)

In the relationships between identifying the victim-perpetrator, truth finding, and structuring of justice, there are questions of “Whose justice that we are talking about?, and what does the justice do in these relationships?” Truth and justice could lead to the certain level of forgiveness, which could be a path towards social reconciliation. As it was mentioned earlier that “revealing the truth is said to be necessary for reconciliation because it exerts a transformative power over all stakeholders: the public at large, the victims, and even the perpetrators.” (Daly & Sarkin, 2007: 141) In discussing about the justice especially with the post violence conflict, it seems to be complex and elusive. Daly & Sarkin (2007:168) mentions about laying down the basic questions in order to proceed of clarifying the elements of justice; “1) what conceptions of justice even apply in most transitional situations, 2) whether as a practical matter justice (as so conceived) can be achieved, and 3) what the relationship is between justice) as so implemented) and reconciliation is or ought to be.” The wider scope of justice implies different conception of justice depending on the position that a particular society has respect on the provision of justice (2007).

In stable, liberal cultures, justice is taken to be the norm; if an injustice occurs, it is aberrational. The justice system will correct it, thereby returning the society to the status quo. In other cultures-and this is particularly true in divided societies – it is understood that justice is an aspiration continually to be striven for, a process to be committed to, but not status that has been achieved. (Daly & Sarkin, 2007; 169)

The situation in Thailand both the earlier mentioned of the double standard of the injustice circumstances, and the continuity if abuses, and human rights violations stress that the perception of the right wing authoritarians who currently possess the power value the justice differently. The current junta government who might be identified as an organizational perpetrator in the past has

dominated many of the justice system, and process, thus the sense of justice is barely respected. There are common characteristic of the injustice circumstances between the incidents with the violence political conflict, and the violence conflict situation in the southern most provinces of Thailand. Even though, the cause of the violence conflicts are varied but the abuse of power and utilizing of force, especially military force that violate human rights and create more victims of political injustice are going on. Many of the relatives of the victims have reportedly disappeared by assumed enforce disappearance. Some of them have been mysteriously murdered, and many other means of protracted abuse. Thus, there are two barriers confronting the proceeding of justice for the reconciliation, first the process to deal with the past, and the process to deal with current political injustice in the form of individual, and collectively. "Political injustices are unjust deeds that people commit or unjust regimes, law, or constitutions that people build or sustain, in both cases in the name of a political organization, program, or ideal." (Philpott, 2012: 24) Pursuing justice as one of the principle roots towards reconciliation in a deeply divided society; "the goal of justice can be retribution, correction, redistribution, or restoration, among other things. "Justice can apply to an individual or to a community. It can be material or psychological. Sometimes these various conceptions of justice can be mutually reinforce [...]" (Phillpott, 2012: 169)

Even though, currently the time and situation is not suitable for proceeding with forgiveness, but under the assumption that Thai society could make the transition period that the process for making truth and justice prevailed, that means it might require the further challenge on proceeding to reconciliation, that requires the process of forgiving. In order to forgive one needs to know who to forgive, and who to forgive to. The forgiveness maintains its value only when it worth to forgive. "In this view, forgiveness should be withheld or at least bartered only for a high price." (Daly& Sarkin, 2007: 153) The consequences of forgiveness should stimulate the social awareness and recognition. The lesson learned from the forgiveness could be the tools for healing individually and collectively. Moreover, it would lead to shape the social cognitive process and remind people in the society not to repeat the same mistakes. However, there are critics over the relationships between truth, justice, and forgiveness. It has to be further analyzed the sequences and the principle of all forms in order to proceed to the mechanism that is most suitable for the particular purposes.

In their extreme forms, forgiveness and justice continue two opposite reactions to the promulgation of truth. With forgiveness, the common humanity of perpetrator and victim entails embracing the perpetrator back into society's fold. With justice the perpetrator is punished, isolated, ostracized, and alienated – his different from the victim and from society is confirmed by sentence: incarceration or even death. In forgiveness, the perpetrator is separated from deed, while in justice he is defined by it. And yet, reconciliation – as a practical policy – is not comfortable at either extreme [...] (Daly& Sarkin, 2007: 152)

Thus, the so call forgiveness, and justice require equilibrium proportion of each in order to pursue reconciliation. In addition to the process of the forgiveness "apology" is one of the most important steps. "The apology could be done both in the individual level, and the collective level. "An apology requires the perpetrator to admit that he performed the deed, recognizing that it was wrong, display regret for having done it, communicate this regret to the victim, accept responsibility for it, and pledge not to repeat it." (Philpott, 2012: 198) The apology mentioned earlier, could be in the form of

collective apology, "Collective apologies and as well as we shall see, some performances of political forgiveness give rise to a problem of vicariousness or representation in a way that the other practices do not." (Phulpott, 2012: 201) That is also important for relieving the pain from trauma, and shape up social perception that could eliminate the hate-building discourses, and restore the value and recognitions to victims, and could even for the individual perpetrators who conducted the crime without deed, including those of the secondary wounds.

Identifying the relationships between victim-perpetrator and pursuing the truth finding mechanism in order to regain the recognition of those who have been affected by the political violence incidents requires several mechanisms. It incorporates several social factors and mechanism to work together. In the situation of deeply divided society that is added on by the fully control of the totalitarian regime such as Thailand, to begin the process is very doubtful, but still very challenging. However, it is the requirement for the dream of proper social healing, and reconciliation.

### **Social Healing and Reconciliation: Definitions, and Functioning**

According to the assumption from the previous part of this article, the individual trauma and the collective trauma are interconnected, thus the further discussion over the healing would be incorporate the ideas of healing as a person (Micro level), and as a society (Macro level) altogether. Therefore, there are differences of healings in the micro and macro level. Even though a person is a part of the collective society, but a journey towards his/her challenges to overcome the pain from the trauma sometimes is personal. "People may, and often do, join with others in a similar process that enhances and encourages this journey but each person still faces their own challenging journey. [...] Healing is not the journey for the faith of the heart. It takes courage, a process accurately characterized as heroic" (Lederach & Lederach, 2010: 203). According to Lederach & Lederach (2010)

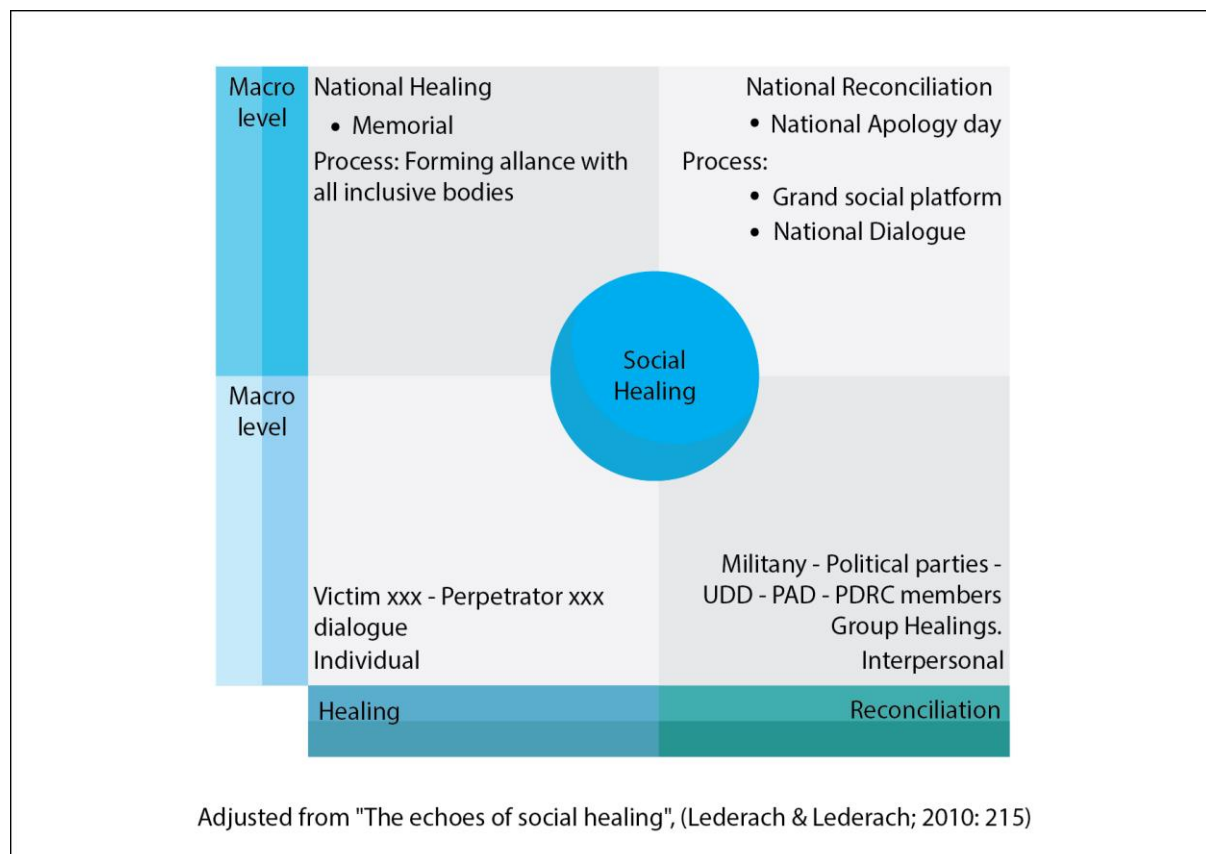
Social healing is an emerging field that seeks to deal with wounds created by conflict, collective trauma, and large-scale oppression. It seeks to identify areas of collective experience that remain unresolved, neglected, and repressed within the psyche of groups and even nations. Its domain is centrally within consciousness rather than politics per se; it is psycho-spiritual in nature yet activist in its consequences. Its primary modalities are truth, reconciliation, forgiveness, and restorative justice. It requires individuals to assume the responsibility to become healing agents themselves and as such, it is experiential rather than ideological. (James O'Dea, 2005)

The earlier parts of this article addressed several factors that are required for the process of social healing. The aim of the healing is not limited itself into the people with the primary wound, but it also aims on the expanding the healing in the societal scope. The important discourse in Thai society that has been produced in to the famous phrases of healing such as "forgive and forget", "let go of the past", and the current "moving forward" are not considered the prescription for the remedy to heal the pain of people in the society. The contexts of healing, and social healing would refer to Lederach & Lederach (2010), that the substantial transformation which is the way for healing disregard the attempt of those famous phrases, because the principle of those phrases are the political discourses that aim on repressing people, and they do not aim on the substantive transformation. The substantive transformation requires soundscape of people – victim needs to

voice their stories, relative needs to address their sufferings. These voices would lead to touch the pain, and let them see the combination of those pains and wishfully people would transform their pain creatively in order to heal both individual and society.

Social healing represents the capacity of communities and their respective individuals to survive, locate voice and resiliently innovate spaces of interaction that nurture meaningful conversation and purposeful action in the midst and aftermath of escalated and structural violence. Social healing sparks collective voice and creates social echo that simultaneously moves inward and out, fostering a sense of belonging and purposeful action. (Lederach & Lederach, 2010: 208)

According to Lederach & Lederach (2010), the major five principle to consider for social healings are namely; 1) a preferential option for the local community, 2) focuses on collective resiliency, 3) the search for voice by proactively engaging memory and hope, 4) emergence in the discovery of naming, the claiming of new belonging and the framing of purpose-driven action that create socio echo, and 5) the power to touch and impact in both the micro individual healing and the macro wider context of reconciliation (see the following diagram).

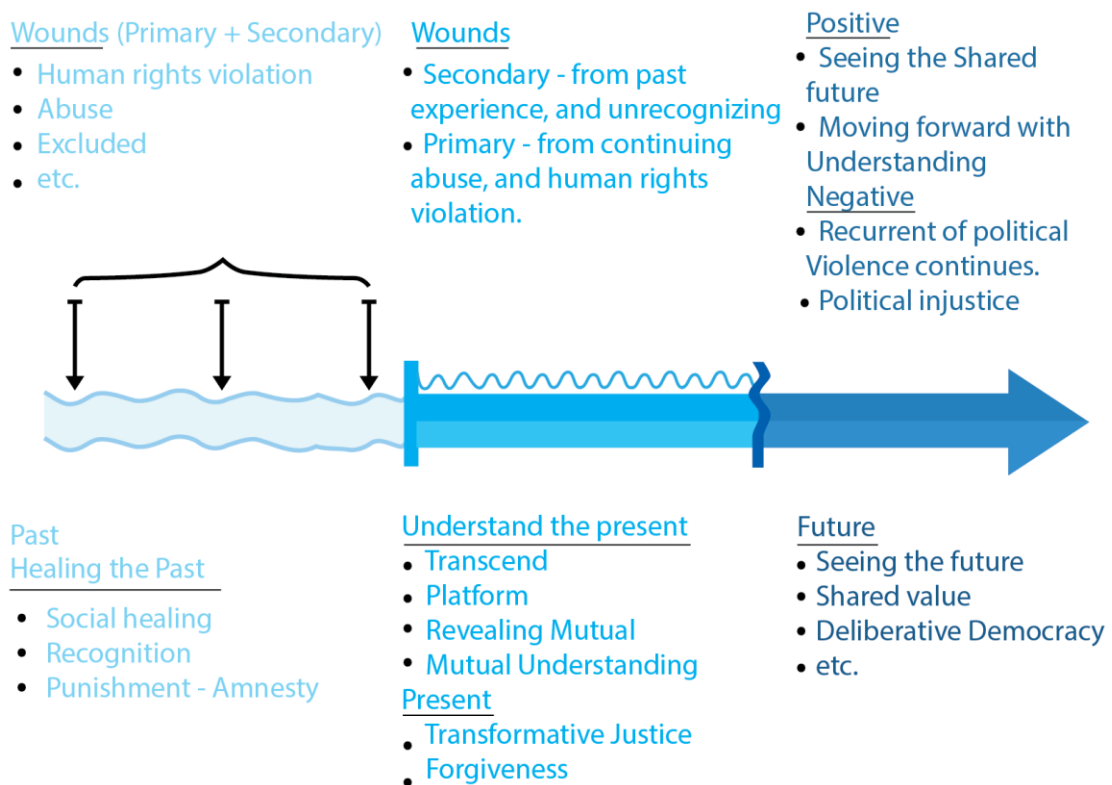


It is possible to address that reconciliation is not only the ultimate goal of but it is by itself a process, knowing that the reconciliation could be the end and means at the same time. In the certain condition we pursue the stage of normalcy, and return to the condition of safety, acknowledgement, and reconnection. "Reconciliation encompasses peace settlements, human rights, democracy, and other key goals of negative and positive peace." (Philpott, 2012: 48) Even though there are critics

over the reconciliation process of its diverse ideology, it is very important to note those critics for a further discussion, those critics are as follows; 1) reconciliation sacrifices justice, 2) reconciliation is unjustly paternalistic, 3) reconciliation is a second best alternative to justice, 4) reconciliation complement justice, 5) reconciliation equals the justice of positive peace, 6) reconciliation encompasses justice, and 7) reconciliation equals justice that entails a comprehensive restoration of relationship (Philpott, 2012: 49 – 53).

Learning from the previous critique encourages us to explore on whether the reconciliation is needed, who are to reconcile, and who are the expectations out of the reconciliation. Exploring on the characteristics and the experience of reconciliation in various countries, the fundamental lays on the creation of catalyst for reconciliation and then sustain it in divided societies according to the following principles; 1) on the notion of relationship – not to disengage the conflicted parties, but engage the sides of conflict with each other as humans-in-relationship, 2) finding the way to unlock the encounter – to engage conflicted parties there are opportunities that they will end up confronting the others – to provide a space to see the different phenomenon of the past, and envision of sharing the future to each other, and 3) Finding the innovation and creativity – getting out of the old paradigms and frames. (Lederach, 2013: 24 – 29)

The core value of the reconciliation is that we try to heal the past, making the understanding of present, and looking for the opportunity to share the value to the other people. Regarding that in all the process it always is the coexistence of victims, and perpetrators. The relationships between them is no longer linear but with the complexity that leave the space for recreating of relationship. (See the following diagram)



## Conclusion

The political violence conflicts in the past decades have left hundreds of victims and their families in the tragedy. It is more than a decade that such the conflict has been circularly repeated itself; shifting roles between the conflict counterparts, the results from the violence are still not much different in the degree of destructions. On the top of the casualties, the political injustice has been prolonged. The prolongation of the political injustice from the coup d'état expands the scope of the trauma from the individual in to the collective level, furthermore, the increasing of human rights violation, and abuse of power make the prolongation of individual and collective wound become more severe. The consequences of the trauma derive from the interpersonal relationship that is under the influence of anger, hatred, hostility, and fear is now expanded its scope into the collective relationship, fueled by the hate-building discourse Thai society is now in the situation of a deeply divided society.

There are mechanisms that suggested by several scholars and practitioners namely: trust building, fact-finding and truth commission, making use of the truth as a tool to make the recognition, the process of building truth and justice matter, pursuing the justice, looking for the several justice processes or mechanisms, apology and forgiveness, and finally the social healing. The proposed mechanisms aim on creating an alternative path towards the reconciliation, it is the path that considers the inclusiveness, deliberative democracy, and building up resilience society for the purpose of capability for living in the equity with coexistence. The paper tries to look for the process of how to heal the past, make contemporary mutual understanding of the present, and providing some space for the shared values for the future.

## References

- Alexander, J. C. (2012). *Trauma: A social theory* (reprinted). John Wiley & Sons.
- Baumeister, R.F. (2001). *Evil: Inside Human Violence and Cruelty*. Owl Books.
- Beck, A. T. (1999). *Prisoners of hate: The cognitive basis of anger, hostility, and violence*. HarperCollins Publishers.
- Cozolino, L. (2010). *The neuroscience of psychotherapy: Healing the social brain* (2nd Edition). WW Norton & Company.
- Daly, E., & Sarkin, J. (2007). *Reconciliation in divided societies: Finding common ground*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Dozier, R. W. (2003). *Why we hate: Understanding, curbing, and eliminating hate in ourselves and our world*. McGrawHill Professional.
- Galtung, J. (2012). *Peace by peaceful means: Peace and conflict, development and civilization*. Sage.
- Hayner, P. (2011). *Unspeakable Truths: Transitional Justice and the Challenges of Truth Commissions*. Auflage, New York, NY und Abington: Routledge.
- Honer, Stanley M., et al (2006). *Invitation to Philosophy: Issues and Options* (10th Edition). Wadsworth, Thomson Learning Inc.
- Lederach, J. P. (2005). *The moral imagination: The art and soul of building peace*. Oxford University Press.
- Lederach, J. P. (2013). *Building peace: Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies* (10th printing). Washington DC, 4.
- Lederach, J. P., & Lederach, A. J. (2010). *When blood and bones cry out. Journeys through the Soundscape of Healing & Reconciliation*.
- Miall, H., et al. (2015). *The Contemporary Conflict Resolution Reader*. Polity Press.
- O'Dea, J. (2005). Social healing: Herald of a shift in human consciousness. *Consciousness and Healing: Integral*

- Approaches to Body-Mind Medicine*, Missouri: Elsevier Churchill Livingstone.
- Philpott, D. (2012). *Just and unjust peace: An ethic of political reconciliation*. Oxford University Press.
- Ramsbotham, O., Miall, H., & Woodhouse, T. (2015). *Contemporary conflict resolution* (reprinted). Polity.
- Sen, A. (2007). *Identity and violence: The illusion of destiny*. Penguin Books India.
- Stutzman Amstutz, L. (2009). *The Little book of Victim offender conferencing. Bringing victims and offender together in dialogue*. Estados Unidos: GoodBooks.
- Tipping, C. (2010). *Radical Forgiveness: A Revolutionary Five-Stage Process to:-Heal Relationships-Let Go of Anger and Blame-Find Peace in Any Situation*. Sounds True.
- Yoder, C. (2005). *The little book of trauma healing. When violence strikes and community security is threatened*. Pennsylvania: Good Books.

## **Study and Development of Grand Social Platform: Exploring Discourses on National Reform and 20-year National Strategy**

**Pindavanija, Eakpant**

**Saisaeng, Bordin**

**Ouaprachanon, Ratawit**

Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies

Mahidol University

Thailand

---

### **Abstract**

Thai society has faced series of vicious cycles of political conflicts and coup d'états over the past four decades since October 1973. The core of such political conflicts reflects the "Win-Lose" nature. The key question is how we can cut off these protracted cycles in the society. In other words, how can we establish stability and continuity for democratic government? The political contentions and polarization deeply reflect the legacies of Thai political society such as patron-client culture, centralization in government, economic disparity and diverse historical backgrounds of different regions in the country. The political conflicts are not only in the short-term political interest or concrete level but also at structural and cultural level. In the aspect of political culture, the focus would be the conflict over values between conservative/traditionalist values and modern/democratic values. This paper is, therefore, proposing the "Grand Social Platform" which is the opened process or platform convening all inclusive stakeholders who have different views to discuss and deliberate on issues that could lead to a discursive shift towards shared values and create the new social contract which contributes to transcendence and transformation of conflict to reconciliation. It will present the findings from deliberative platforms on ongoing national strategic plan and reform process in different regions and reflection of "Grand Social Platform" approach as a part of "Deliberative Democracy".

### **Introduction**

Thai society has experienced with series of vicious cycles of political conflicts and coup d'états over the past four to five decades. The core of such political conflicts reflects as "Win-Lose" nature with the contention between so-called progressive camp and traditionalist camp along the democratization process. This nature can exemplify through several major political events throughout political history such as (1) People uprising in October 1973 deposing military regime; (2) Return to military rules after coups in 1976 and 1977; (3) Process of elections and gradual democratization in 1980s; (4) Military coup by NPKC in 1991; (5) Bloody May in 1992; (6) Deepening democratization in 1990s and early 2000s; (7) Anti-Taksin demonstration in 2005-06 and 2006 Coup;



and (8) 2014 Coup ousting elected government.

Though political conflict and polarization has become more evident over the past decade branded as “Yellow” vs. “Red” politics, such contentions and divides deeply reflect the historical legacies of Thai political society such as patron-client culture, centralization in government, economic disparity and diverse historical backgrounds of different regions in the country. With this aspect, the focus would be on values or discourses across the social divide especially between conservative/traditionalist values and modern/democratic values rather than mere political interests. Therefore, there is a need for an opened process or platform convening all inclusive stakeholders who have different views to discuss and deliberate on issues that could lead to a discursive shift towards shared values and create the new social contract which contributes to transcendence and transformation of conflict to reconciliation.

This paper is an attempt to propose the idea of “Grand Social Platform” which is the process mentioned above with its experiment in our action research. In this article, we will present the findings from deliberative platforms on ongoing national strategic plan and reform process in different regions and reflection of Grand Social Platform approach as a part of Deliberative Democracy. There are five parts in this article. Firstly we will explore the idea of Grand Social Platform and its key components. The second part will be about deliberative democracy as a main process and methodology of this research. Thirdly, we will explain the rationale behind choosing National Reform and 20-year National Strategy as a key topic for the deliberative platform. The fourth part will present some key findings from five platforms across the country. The last section is concluding part with proposals for core principles of “Grand Social Platform”.

### **Unpacking the Idea of Grand Social Platform**

The “win-lose” nature of political conflicts in Thai society has manifested clearly in the past decade of political contention and political divide with so-called “Yellow” vs. “Red”. However, to consider the political conflict carefully, we should not be misled by such a colored politics label. This political contention and polarization is not only the short-term political interest or concrete level between two key political camps, but it is also structural and cultural conflict which deeply reflects the legacies of Thai political society such as patron-client culture, centralization in government, economic disparity and diverse historical background of different regions in the country. This nature of conflict could be coined as “transformation crisis” or “transformation conflict” (Saxer, 2011; 2014). Saxer (2014) identifies different layers and facets of this transformation conflict. At its core, the conflict represents a political struggle over political order as it is a conflict between those who seek to conserve the status quo and those who want change. At the deeper level, this political conflict and struggle is a value conflict between those who hold their belief in different discourses. While moralist discourse championed by the traditional elites promotes the agenda of “good people/ruler” and demonize “moral corruption” to maintain status quo, democratic discourses upheld by the progressive or liberal camp try to promote electoral democracy, greater public participation, and change from the old system. He also proposes that the struggle between ‘red’ and ‘yellow’ shirts could be overcome by building a broad societal change coalition which can mobilize enough political muscle to bring about a democratic order (Saxer, 2012).

To bring forth the proposition of Saxer on societal change coalition, our research team is proposing the idea of “Grand Social Platform” in this research to explore possibility and practicality of building

such coalition. **“Grand Social Platform,”** a term coined by Gotham Arya (2015), is an open or dialogue space convening all inclusive stakeholders who have different views to discuss and deliberate on issues that could lead to “discursive shift” towards shared values and create the new social contract which contribute to transcendence and transformation of conflict to reconciliation. The notion of “platform” is also a key concept in peacebuilding field. John Paul Lederach (2003; 2005), one of the pioneers in this field, has proposed the concept of platform for peacebuilding as an ongoing social and relational spaces that could generate responsive initiatives for constructive change in the conflict settings. This platform includes an understanding of the various levels of the conflict, processes for addressing immediate problems and conflicts, a vision for the future, and a plan for change processes which will move in that direction. From such space, it could generate processes that create solutions to short-term needs and work on long-term constructive change in systems and relationships at the same time.

Initially, Lederach (1997) conceptualized the idea of platform within the notion of ‘infrastructures for peace’ in his book *Building Peace* to challenge to the narrow project-based mentality in international peacebuilding interventions and to propose long-term and strategic thinking in peacebuilding. However, due to concerns about misunderstanding such ‘infrastructure for peace’ as merely institutional building, he has shifted his language and promoted the notion of ‘platform’ instead. He strongly emphasizes that platforms focus more on the dynamic and evolving context that requires an adaptive and relationship-centric approach to change. Therefore, it focuses on inclusive and interactive relationships and networks that foster spaces for collective action and concern for systemic engagement (Lederach, 2012).

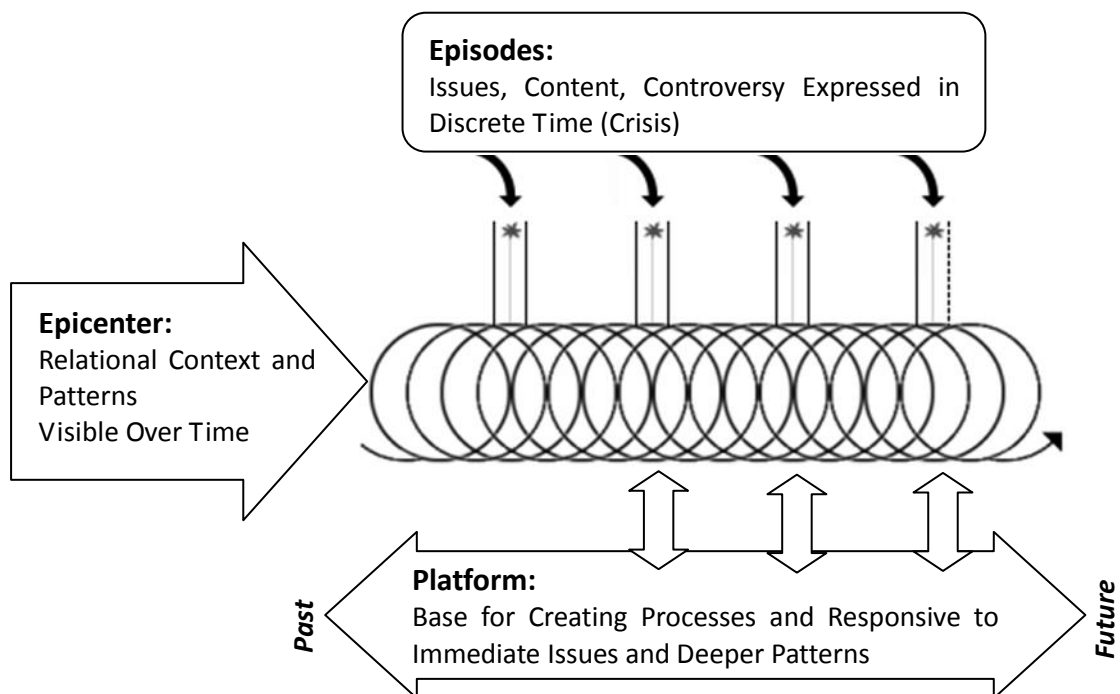


Figure1: Transformational Platform (Lederach, 2003, p. 46)

The figure above illustrates the concept of ‘Transformational Platform’. Lederach (2003) differentiates characteristics of conflict into two parts: episode of conflict and epicenter of conflict.

The episode of conflict is the visible expression of conflict rising within the relationship or system in a distinct timeframe. In other words, it can be called a content of conflict which is about immediate situation, presenting issues/problems or controversy expressed in a certain period of time. Meanwhile, the epicenter of conflict is the web of relational context and patterns, often providing a history of lived episodes. In contrast to linear thinking, conflict transformation sees change as process-structures constituting of dynamic cycles of change which create an overall momentum and direction. Within these process-structures, he proposes the idea of platform as a framework or mechanism to respond to both immediate needs or content of conflict (episodes) and deeper patterns or context of the conflict (epicenter).

To integrate both concepts by Saxer and Lederach above, we propose three key characteristics as a consideration for developing a 'Grand Social Platform.' Firstly, the grand social platform is a space for holding diverse discourses and opinions in order to co-create '**shared values**' and '**discursive shift**' among people from different backgrounds. This element is related to Saxer's proposal on a broad societal change coalition to explore and identify the common grounds among people who hold different discourses and are from different colored political camps. The second characteristic of the grand social platform is **process-oriented**. Lederach (2003) proposed transformational platform as a process-structure where it can respond or adapt to changes in conflict and maintain the purpose of constructive conflict transformation at the same time. To be able to identify conflict epicenter or its patterns, the notion of process and time-taking is essential. Lastly, the grand social platform also needs to focus on **relationship building** among people from different sectors who hold different views. As suggested by Lederach, the platform is a space for building and rebuilding the broken relationships among conflict fractions. It is a space for us to look at in the deeper level of conflict and identify patterns and relational context as the epicenter of conflict. In order to create such common space in a divided and polarized society, trust and relationship building is a key.

### **Deliberative Democracy and Experiment of Grand Social Platform**

Not only in Thailand, democracies around the world are now in crisis as labeled by some scholars as 'Democracy in Danger', 'Democracy in Retreat' or 'Democratic Recession' (Kurlantzick, 2010; 2013; Diamond, 2015). There is some evidence indicating that democratic process has become destructive forces to democratic legitimacy by itself or led to deep-rooted conflict in the society. This does not include the democratically elected government which becomes later authoritarian with human rights violation and lack of rule of law and good governance. It could be argued that since proposition on "the Third Wave of Democratization" by Samuel P. Huntington (1991) and New World Order by Francis Fukuyama (1992), the victory of western liberal democracy over other political ideologies, this is the time when democracy has been seriously challenged and questioned.

Amidst this trend of democratic recession and political crises emerging in many developing countries, many scholars have reviewed and revised on theories of democratization and "Deliberative Democracy" is also one of the alternatives to the predominant representative democratic model. The deliberative democratic model is a political theory which has been developed more than three decades as a complementary approach to representative democracy and participatory democracy. As defined by Gutmann and Thompson (2004), deliberative democracy is "a form of government in which free and equal citizens (and their representatives) justify decisions in a process in which they give one another reasons that are mutually acceptable and generally

accessible, with the aim of reaching decisions that are binding on all at present but open to challenge in the future." The basic assumption of deliberative democracy is that political decision should be the product of fair and reasonable discussion and debate among citizens as deliberation is a necessary precondition for legitimacy of democratic political decisions (Eagen, 2016).

Nonetheless, deliberative democracy has its own prospects and limitations at the same time. Curato et al. (2017) describe characteristics of deliberative democracy in Twelve Key Findings in Deliberative Democracy including (1) deliberative democracy is realistic; (2) deliberation is essential to democracy; (3) deliberation is more than discussion; (4) deliberative democracy involves multiple sorts of communication; (5) deliberation is for all; (6) deliberative democracy has a nuanced view of power; (7) productive deliberation is plural, not consensual; (8) participation and deliberation go together; (9) deliberative transformation takes time; (10) deliberation is the solution to group polarization; (11) deliberative democracy applies to deeply divided societies; and (12) deliberative research productively deploys diverse methods.

What helpful from the study of Curato et al. (2017) is their finding on the application of deliberative democracy to deeply divided societies. They comment that the deeply divided society is one of the key challenges in democracy and deliberative democracy. Though political conflict could be resolved through power-sharing among elites, it is undeniable that there are several cases where building of public sphere which leads to mixed-identity discussion groups located in civil society and structured citizen forums with participants from different sides can bring mutual respects and understanding across discursive enclaves – processes of discursive reinforcement typically dominate.

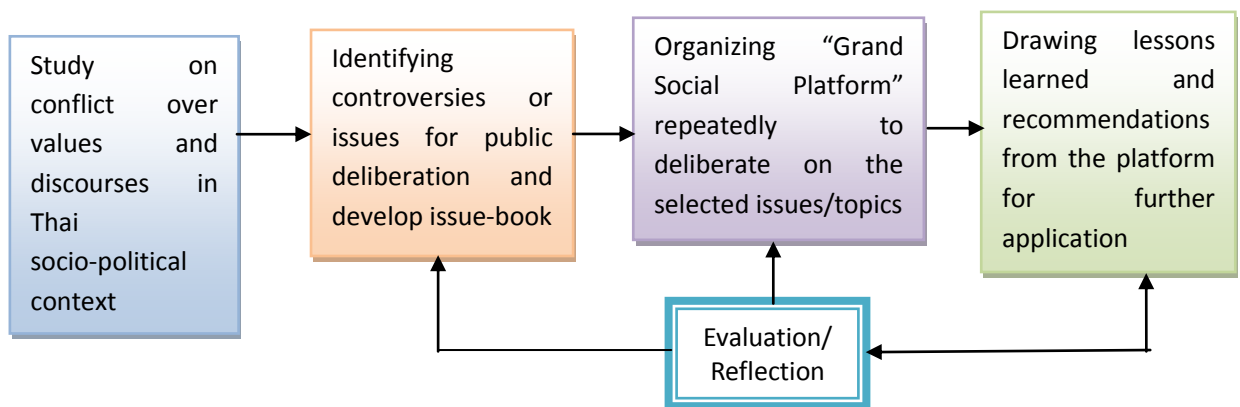
Democracy is open to all. If democracy is opening space for every sector in the society, political institution and democratic process will be the process of locating a space for all sectors in the society to raise their voices of identity and play their roles appropriately. With the space opened to all, it could be argues that quality of public participation will be increased as people are involved in the decision-making process through public deliberation and public reasoning equally which will lead to agreement and consensus building (Surangrat Jamnianpol, 2009). Therefore, deliberative democracy is necessary in this process.

Even though the initial development of deliberative model of democracy was at a normative philosophical level as it derives from Aristotle's deliberative argument and Habermas' public discourse and public sphere, there has been growing trend of empirical research and experiments of deliberative democratic practices to test and falsify assumptions of deliberative theories (Beste, 2013). Jürg Steiner (2012) and his colleagues conducted experiments on the deliberative process in both stable democratic countries and deeply divided society including Colombia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Belgium, European Union and Finland.

In Thailand, the concept of deliberative democracy has drawn attention among scholars and practitioners in politics and democratization over a decade. There are also growing literature for empirical research and study on deliberative democracy and growing trend on the practical experiment itself. Surangrat Jamnianpol (2009) studied deliberative democracy and public deliberation process in the case of water management in Rayong province and argues that there are several challenges in the deliberative democratic process in resolving interest conflict with the unequal relationship as the case in Rayong. Stithorn Thananithichot et al. (2015) also draw out lessons learned and practical processes from deliberative forums on the development of the area surrounding Phayao Lake and the revision of the Statute on the National Health System.

There has also been an increase in practices and experiments on deliberative democracy in the past decade. King Prajadhipok Institute (KPI) developed the public deliberation and deliberative dialogue process and used it for research on “Thailand’s Desired Future and Ideal Politics” in 12 provinces around the country (Tawinwadee Burikun, 2015). The Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies also conducted series of public deliberation forums in its “Peace and Democracy” project and Public Deliberation on Constitution. Deliberative democracy also experimented in Deep South issue through a project on “Voices from Kampong: Various Deliberation for Peace in the South” (Network of Public Deliberation for Southern Peace, 2014) and research on Administrative Models for Southern Provinces through citizens’ jury approach (Srisompob Jitpiromsri, 2011).

By applying participatory action research approach, we tried to experiment the idea of “Grand Social Platform” in connection with the process of public deliberation and deliberative dialogue in this research. The process comprises 4 steps including 1) studying on conflict over values and discourses in Thai- socio-political context; 2) identifying controversies or issues for public deliberation and developing issue book; 3) organizing “grand social platform” repeatedly to deliberate on the selected issues; and 4) drawing lessons learned and recommendations from the platform for further application or improvement of the process. This process can be illustrated in the figure below:



*Figure 2: Research Process on Grand Social Platform*

We conducted 5 forums for grand social platform across different regions in the country, including Bangkok, Ayutthaya (central region), Maharakam (northeastern region), Songkhla (southern region) and Chiang Mai (northern region) with 112 participants from different backgrounds as appeared in the table below.

*Figure 3: Table on Participation in Grand Social Platform process*

Background	Venue of Platforms				
	Bangkok	Ayutthaya	Maharakam	Songkhla	Chiang Mai
Politician	2	4	-	1	4
Govt. official	2	-	-	-	-
Academic	12	9	8	8	10
Civil Society/NGO	5	2	7	11	13
Social Activist	3	-	3	-	-
Others/ Interested people	2	1	-	3	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>29</b>

### **Controversies over National Reform and 20-year National Strategy**

One of main discourses between conservative and progressive camps before the 2014 coup is around reform process. The discourses between “reform before election” promoted by conservative camp, including People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC), and “reform after election” argued by progressive camp and the red shirt were prominent during the demonstration of PDRC in 2013 – 2014. After the coup, the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) and its government has championed and driven national reform process along with its roadmap since the National Reform Council was included as one of the political institutions in the 2014 Interim Constitution. Since then reform has become key public agenda and political discourse mesmerized by the NCPO government together with other discourses such as Thailand 4.0 and national reconciliation.

National reform process and long-term national strategy have become another political industry in Thailand. NCPO government has issued several policies and established different institutional mechanisms to deal with the reform issues over the past 3 years. Worse, these policies and mechanisms by NCPO have been overlapped, redundant, complicated and lack of concrete result so far.

After taking over the power, NPCO established the National Reform Council (NRC) to spearhead reform process of the country. In October 2014, 250 members of NRC were appointed which consisted mostly of academics, former politicians, business people, activists and officials who are NCPO sympathizers or opponents of the previous government (Bangkok Post, 2014, September 30). Apart from taking part in drafting of the new constitution at that time, NRC's main task is to study and make recommendation on reform issue in 11 areas as designated by NCPO including: local administration, national administration, politics, education, the economy, energy, social affairs, mass media, public health and the environment, and justice and law and other issues.

NRC was criticized for both the make-up of its members and its effectiveness. While the list of members was acceptable among conservative camp, the red shirts and Pheu Thai Party raised their concerns due to its lack of inclusive representation from cross-section groups in society (Saksith Saiyasombath, 2014). In terms of effectiveness, it was criticized for lacking clear direction, no priorities in reform issues, no initiatives, proposing for more centralized bodies instead of decentralization, and excessive budget spending in the process. NRC set up altogether 34 committees with 88 sub-committees and identified 37 reform agendas which produced 62 reform policy reports with 505 recommendations. There was also no prioritization for concrete action in

reform agenda rather than proposing for law amendment and lawmaking without any consultation. Within one year, this process cost around 716.5 million Baht but it bears no fruit (iLaw, 2015).

NRC was brought to an end within only one year because the disagreement between the junta and some members of NRC in constitutional drafting and lawmaking in the reform process, and the junta found that they could not control the agenda in reform process as they wished. Therefore, the NCPO amended the interim Constitution in order to establish National Reform Steering Assembly (NRSA) to replace NRC and limited its role only to continue the reform process. With the new assembly, NCPO could pick those they could control and exclude those who had strong opinions (Isara News, 2015, June 9). NRSA has reframed the reform agendas into 12 areas to continue with NCPO's initial 11 agendas and add the agenda on sports, arts, culture, religion, ethics and morality as another separate reform area. The main focus of NRSA is to study further on reform agenda and facilitate lawmaking process for reform.

While reform process continued on the hand of NRSA, the NCPO government has also initiated another discourse on "20-year national strategic plan" as a long-term strategy for the country which is related to the establishment of the national strategic commission. Though the idea of having such a long-term strategy for the nation might be appealing to many people, it is also subjected to many criticisms widely in the society especially among politicians and academics due to its controlling structure, strict law enforcement towards future elected government if not following the strategy, and lack of participatory process. Although the process of drafting national strategy would allow some level of public participation after the law has been enacted in mid-2017, in reality, the draft version of the strategic plan has been developed and circulated among governmental agencies to comply earlier since 2016.

Another turn of national reform process has come in January 2017 when the NCPO announce to set up the "Committee on National Reform, National Strategy and Reconciliation" as another structure to supervise all reform and reconciliation process. This super-structure on reform and reconciliation comprises all key top brasses in NCPO and senior bureaucrats with a handful of academics being in the advisory committee. This recent super-structure committee has again identified 27 reform agendas which include the development of large-scale infrastructural projects in the urgent reform process. The proclaimed 2016 Constitution also includes sections on the national reform process and national strategic planning which would bring NRSA to an end and create two new bodies including National Strategy Commission and National Reform Commission (Audjarint, 2017, January 5; iLaw, 2017).

Over the course of three years under NCPO, Thailand has experienced several kinds of policies on the reform process and it seems to be far complicated than anybody could imagine. Despite the claims on progress in reform by the government and those involved, the process has attracted criticisms throughout the time.

Due to such complexity and controversies over national reform and the 20-year national strategic planning mentioned above, this agenda is selected as the main topic for deliberation process in the proposed grand social platform. We identify three key issues to be discussed and deliberated in the social platform process which includes 1) overview and process on national reform and national strategy, 2) public participation and active citizenship, and 3) decentralization and devolution of power.

## **Mapping Voices from Deliberative Platforms on National Reform and National Strategy**

In the deliberative platforms organized in 5 different areas, the inputs of participants across the regions are resourceful as a food for thoughts in national reform process and agendas. As appeared in figure 4, we list and present the issues which were discussed in different regions on three above-mentioned issues (details on page 11-12). From these inputs, we identify some patterns, commonalities and differences, reflecting on national reform and national strategy and some comments on the deliberative platform process as follows:

- *Dilemma on Macro Focus vs. Micro Concerns*

Even though the main focus of deliberation process is around national reform and national strategy, we found a distinct pattern between people from Bangkok and people from different regions. Participants from the platform organized in different regions tend to have their focus in discussion and deliberation on issues or concerns specific to their local or regional context while participants in Bangkok forum tend to focus on the structural aspect of reform and its process. We could see comments from Bangkok platform around consideration of global and social trend in reform, structural inequality as a challenge in reform, proposal for creating Think Tank to be a space for public knowledge and dialogue. Meanwhile, participants from the regions started their issues with concerns embedded in local contexts such as contesting relations between the central-regional administration and local administration (Ayutthaya), and concerns over land and natural resources exploitation influenced by big businesses (Mahasarakham and Songkhla). With the tendency of focusing macro view on the reform process, this dilemma poses us to be more thoughtful about reform on how to have macro view and care about micro concerns at the same time.

- *Dilemma on Hopes vs. Skepticisms*

Another dilemma we found during the process is around hopes and skepticisms over national reform. As described on the figure 3, sense of skepticisms and criticisms on NCPO-led reform has surrounded our deliberative process – ranging from concern on lack of participation in the process, concern on reform as NCPO's political discourse to hold power, concern on centralized and controlling nature of NCPO's reform to concern on practicality of national reform and strategy and concern on inflexible obligation of the long-term strategy. Nevertheless, many across the regions have agreed in principle to the idea of reform and have no objection to it. Some also expressed hope around how the reform process could be brought forwards by adhering to the key principle of good governance and sustainable development. A participant from Bangkok platform also commented that though reform process appeared to be stagnant, there some small step of progress in policy change of reform agenda such as human trafficking and social security policy towards homeless people due to collaboration with government agencies. This dilemma is posing the question to us on how can we, as all citizens of this nation, have space to authentically exchange and co-create the definition and shared a vision of "reform" together without such domination of certain groups of people.



13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

*Figure 4: Summary on Issues and Suggestions on National Reform and National Strategy in Deliberative Platforms from different regions*

Province/ Region	National Reform and National Strategy	Public Participation and Active Citizenship	Decentralization and Devolution of Power
Bangkok	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limitations in national reform process due to different mindsets among those involved.</li> <li>• Lack of continuity in reform process</li> <li>• Necessity of creating a space for exchange and co-create a shared vision among people in society</li> <li>• Design of strategic plan needs to consider social trends (e.g. climate change, aging society)</li> <li>• Good governance and sustainable development to be leverage point and key focus for reform agenda</li> <li>• Progress in some reform agendas due to collaboration with government agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centralization of bureaucratic system could restrict the reform process</li> <li>• Structural inequality, political conflict, corruption and monopoly are obstacles to reform and public participation process.</li> <li>• Participation across all sectors to create mutual understanding on “reform” with existing mechanisms (e.g. Health Assembly)</li> <li>• Creating public think tank as a space to disseminate knowledge from different views and promote literacy on public agendas for greater participation</li> <li>• Lack of understanding among educators to support civic education in order to promote political participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying leverage and creating discourse for decentralization e.g. “Agenda on self-organization for provincial governance”</li> </ul>
Ayutthaya (Central region)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National strategic plan and reform seen as another scheme designed and decided by the central government.</li> <li>• Concern on practicality and implementation of reform agendas and national strategic plan</li> <li>• Concern on the time-frame of 20 years in strategic plan – not flexible and adaptive for changing context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public participation seen as a discourse by centralized bureaucracy</li> <li>• Participation process should be at all level to create a sense of ownership for people.</li> <li>• Concerns about lack of participation in reform – questioning on legitimacy of reform process</li> <li>• Election before the reform process for its legitimacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern on overlapping of authority and responsibility among central, regional/provincial and local administrative bodies</li> <li>• No strong commitment from government and bureaucratic administration to devolve their power to local administration</li> <li>• Lack of continuity in policy implementation at provincial level due to bureaucratic reshuffle of governors</li> <li>• Propose for “self-organization” at provincial level</li> </ul>
Maharakham (Northeastern region)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No objection to reform but there is still discrepancy of understanding on reform between government and civil society</li> <li>• Concern on law enforcement in reform and national strategic plan</li> <li>• Concern on influence of big business in “Pracha-Rat” Public-Private Partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns on lack of consultation as well as practical and context-relevant information in policy formulation/design in reform process</li> <li>• Reform seen as a process for strengthening civil society and building active citizenship</li> <li>• Civil society and people sector need to use knowledge and information to build more</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on self-organization at local level, e.g. provincial and district level, to create leverage and balance of power to the state</li> </ul>

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

Province/ Region	National Reform and National Strategy	Public Participation and Active Citizenship	Decentralization and Devolution of Power
	<p>scheme leading to resource exploitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern on discourses and rhetoric of government – contrasting to practices</li> </ul>	<p>leverage with govt. and business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thematic network building as key for strengthening civil society and participation</li> </ul>	
Songkhla (Southern region)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paradox in government's strategic plan and concerns on strict law enforcement toward officials and politicians</li> <li>Several policies and strategies issued during military regime might limit policy process of future elected govt.</li> <li>Reform agendas should not be discourse or excuse of military regime to maintain their power</li> <li>Concern on land and agricultural reform – to be influenced by big business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern on understanding of government on "participation" limited to hearing process, not participatory decision-making</li> <li>Propose for greater public participation on anti-corruption mechanisms and suggestion for improvement of witness protection system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need for creating mechanisms to prevent corruption while decentralizing more power to local administration and people</li> <li>Propose for strong provincial administration having control over budget allocation and opening for public participation</li> </ul>
Chiang Mai (Northern region)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defining "reform" as to make things appropriate and to consider global and national trends (e.g. capitalization, technology)</li> <li>National strategy needs to be a broad and long-term vision but the tendency of strategic plan is imposing and control</li> <li>Concern on independent agencies being influenced by bureaucratic polity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public participation needs to begin with willingness of people to cooperate and participate rather than being told to do</li> <li>People as a core of political reform – people participation in political party need to consider the sense of ownership and participation in party policy rather than the membership fee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decentralization and devolution of power as a driving force for national progress</li> <li>Two competing forces in public administration reform – government and bureaucratic polity trying to centralize and consolidate power while civil society demanding for decentralization of power (e.g. local administration, citizen's council, self-administrative province, election of provincial governor)</li> <li>Propose for idea of community and alternative justice as decentralization process for justice system</li> </ul>

- *Decentralization and Public Participation: Aspirations from All Regions*

One of common threads we found along the process in all regions is a call for greater decentralization, devolution of power to local governance and public participation. At this point, there seem two social forces competing on governance and political arena in Thailand. While the military government and bureaucratic polity have tried to centralize and consolidate state power, civil society and local politicians are demanding for greater decentralization of power and public participation. The notion of self-organization or “*Chat-Karn-Ton-Eng*” has become public discourse widely accepted in all platforms across regions. Even one participant who is from a government agency in the Bangkok platform also admitted that the discourse of “provincial self-organization” (Changwat Chat-Karn-Ton-Eng) proposed by civil society has been recognized among bureaucrats and it could be possible to move forward if the coup did not happen. Particularly in the regional platforms, there are proposals and ideas generated around this issue such as greater devolution for local administration, citizen’s council, self-organized/administrative provincial governance, the election for provincial governors, local and participatory budgeting, community and alternative justice, and people’s participation in accountability and anti-corruption. However, from the platform in the southern region, a stronghold of the yellow shirts and PDRC, while proposing for an increase of public participation and decentralization, participants acknowledged concerns on corruption coming with the devolution of power to local governance. Therefore, the idea of establishing mechanisms to prevent corruption at local governance was proposed to address this issue as a systemic solution instead of calling for good people.

- *Discovering Deeper Voices of Identity for Relational Context*

According to Lederach’s concept of conflict transformation in the earlier part, the previous three issues we have discussed can be considered as the content of conflict or conflict episode. So we still need to touch on context or epicenter of the conflict. We must admit that addressing relational context might be too early at this stage. With only one forum in each region and limited timeframe, it is still far from creating a relational-based platform. In addition, within the repressive atmosphere by the junta, it seems like the political divides and polarization between red shirts and yellow shirts have been suppressed and more or less attention have turned to NCPO itself as another conflict party. Nonetheless, we could find some glimpses for exploring the relational context and the possibility of relationship building across divides from an example and story of a participant in Songkla platform, who is civil society leader. In his exchange during deliberation process, this civil society leader confessed his mistake of joining PDRC’s demonstration which later called for military coup d’état. He explained that he took part in PDRC because they promoted reform agenda on the election of provincial governors and establishment of people council though he has never supported Democrat party. As being a Southerner and joining PDRC, he openly admitted that he and his colleagues must be responsible for the previous action.

### **Conclusion: 3-D Principle for Developing Grand Social Platform**

In this concluding part, we would argue that the idea of “Grand Social Platform” is still relevant and necessary in the context of Thailand’s political and social divides in spite of its limitations to bridge the gap between the ideal conceptual framework and practical experiment in this research. Therefore, we should propose for further development of this concept and improvement of its practical application with **three core principles** as we draw lessons learned from this experiment.

The first principle for grand social platform is **“Diversity and Inclusiveness”**. The platform is an inclusive space where diverse people could learn and build their relationships that would lead to respect for oneself and others. Some of participants reflect that this process of grand social platform is a space where they can meet other people from diverse groups but having a common interest. With such diversity in the process, it helps us to realize that people can have different viewpoints and opinions on the same issue, meanwhile, the participants can also learn information from different areas. It is, however, noted that there should be participants who are experts on the issue and those who are in decision-making position participating in this process in order to make this platform be more effective. Moreover, it is suggested to organize participatory process on agenda setting with interested participants prior to conducting public deliberation process in the platform, such as social lab approach, or for facilitator to have proper agenda in order to have more effective and concrete outcome in deliberation.

The second principle is **“Dialogue and Deep Listening.”** In the condition of social fragmentation in the post-modern society, experiences of individuals have become increasingly heterogeneous in spite of living in the same society. The process of deliberative dialogue and deep listening helps to create communication process that could gradually transform old values or social contract towards co-creating new shared values or social contract. Participants commented that the process of deliberatively exchanging of opinion and listening to others’ views could help to expand and shift their thoughts on the issue. Not only discursive shift, dialogue and deep listening also play their role for bridging relationships across the divides. Nonetheless, some participants noted that the size of platform and number of participants is a significant factor. If the number of participants is larger, deliberative process in a small group discussion or inter-group process might help them to listen to people who are from different groups and have different opinions than them better. The timing for dialogue and exchange is also another important factor in the process as there is a suggestion not to let time too long or too short in deliberation process for each person. This would seriously be a key challenge for the research process.

The third and last principle is **“Deliberation and Do.”** It is irrefutable that this grand social deliberative platform is primarily the process for public policy and it is a consultative process to reach common decision or agreement. Therefore, in order to facilitate an effective deliberative platform, there must be a process to bring the result of deliberation into action. This would include advocating the agendas, publicizing result of deliberation through different channels of communication, or mobilizing civil society for action. Yet, there is also some limitation as participants in this research process come from different organizations and have different professional backgrounds despite sharing same interest on reform issues. Many commented that the deliberative process in this platform still limit to exchanging of

opinions, but there was no commitment to further collaboration or action from what has been agreed upon. Anyhow, this process could hopefully inspire the participants to carry on their actions within their own responsibility.

In summary, despite its early development, the results and reflection from our action-research experiment on “Grand Social Platform” have shown that this platform could provide space for people from different sectors and discourses to bring their voices in the process. Amidst the dominant discourse of national reform and national strategy by the government and limited space for freedom of expression, the platform with 3-D principles above namely, ‘diversity and inclusiveness’, ‘dialogue and deep listening’, and ‘deliberation and do’ is essentially needed in order to build broader societal consensus among people in Thai society. Without consensus and voices of people around the country, the national reform and strategy would be meaningless.

## References

- Arya, G. (2015). Grand social platform (เวทีทางสังคมที่เปิดกว้าง) *On the journey of conflict transformation* (บนเส้นทางการแปลงเปลี่ยนความขัดแย้ง) (pp. 49 - 52). Nakorn Pathom: Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University.
- Audjarint, W. (2017, January 5). Prayuth spells out new structure for reform. *The Nation*. Retrieved from <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/national/30303445>
- Beste, S. (2013). Contemporary trends of deliberative research: Synthesizing a new study agenda. *Journal of Public Deliberation*, 9(2), Article 1. doi: <http://www.publicdeliberation.net/jpd/vol9/iss2/art1>
- Burikun, T. (2015). *Thailand's future and ideal politics* (อนาคตประเทศไทยและการเมืองที่พึงปรารถนา). Bangkok: King Prajadipok Institute.
- Curato, N., Dryzek, J. S., Ercan, S. A., Hendriks, C. M., & Niemeyer, S. (2017). Twelve key findings in deliberative democracy research. *Daedalus*, 146(3), 28 - 38. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED\\_a\\_00444](https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED_a_00444)
- Diamond, L. (2015). Facing up to the democratic recession. *Journal of Democracy*, 26(1), 141 - 155.
- Eagen, J. L. (2016, May 17). Deliberative democracy. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/deliberative-democracy>
- Fukuyama, F. (1992). *The end of history and the last man*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Gutmann, A., & Thompson, D. (2004). *Why deliberative democracy?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Huntington, S. P. (1991). Democracy's third wave. *Journal of Democracy*, 2(2), 12 - 34.
- iLaw. (2015). Summary of NRC Performance: 505 "universal" proposals without innovation, details, effectiveness (สรุปการทำงานสปช.: ข้อเสนอ “ครอบจักรวาล” 505 ข้อ ... ไม่ใหม่ ไม่มีรายละเอียด ไม่เสร็จในเร็ววัน). from <https://ilaw.or.th/node/3839>
- iLaw. (2017, March 18). Knowing "Committee on National Reform, National Strategy, and Reconciliation" (รู้จัก ป.ช.ป. ทำหน้าที่ปฏิรูป ยุทธศาสตร์ชาติ และปรองดอง). from <https://ilaw.or.th/node/94452>
- Isaranews. (2015, June 5). Constitutional amendment with 7 hidden agendas: Dissolving NRC and CDA, establishing NRSA instead (แก้รธน.ใหม่ 7 ประเด็น ซ่อนปม ขูบทั้งทันที สปช.-กมธ.ร่างฯ ตั้งสภาขับเคลื่อนแทน) *Isara News*. Retrieved from [https://www.isranews.org/isranews-scoop/39148-report02\\_39148.html](https://www.isranews.org/isranews-scoop/39148-report02_39148.html)
- Jamnianpol, S. (2009). *Politics of deliberative democracy in development process: A case study of water management in Rayong province*. (Doctor of Philosophy), Chulalongkorn University.
- Jitpiromsri, S. (2011). Research project on development of models on public administration and special governance in Southern border provinces (โครงการวิจัยศึกษาพัฒนาต้นแบบการบริหารรัฐกิจและการปกครองแบบพิเศษจังหวัดชายแดนภาคใต้): Prince Songkhla University.
- Kurlantzick, J. (2010). Democracy in danger. *Prospect*, (171). <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/democracy-in-danger>

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

- Kurlantzick, J. (2013). *Democracy in retreat: The revolt of the middle class and the worldwide decline of representative government*. New Heaven: Yale University Press.
- Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building peace: Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace.
- Lederach, J. P. (2003). *The little book of conflict transformation*. Intercourse: GOOD BOOKS.
- Lederach, J. P. (2005). *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Lederach, J. P. (2012). Origin and evolution of infrastructures for peace: A personal reflection. *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, 7(3), 8 - 13. doi: 10.1080/15423166.2013.767604
- Network of Public Deliberation for Southern Peace. (2014). Voices from Kampong: Diverse proposals and arguments for peace (เสียงที่มาจากกำปง: รวมข้อเสนอและข้อถกเถียงอันหลากหลาย เพื่อปูทางสู่สันติภาพ): Network of Public Deliberation for Southern Peace.
- Post Reporter. (2014, 30 September). NRC picks stir barrage of criticism. *Bangkok Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.bangkokpost.com/print/435025/>
- Saiyasombut, S. (2014, 30 October). Thailand's post-coup 'reform' process: Only a few 'good' men at the helm. *Asian Correspondent*. Retrieved from <https://asiancorrespondent.com/2014/10/thailands-reform-process-a-few-good-men/>
- Saxer, M. (2011). Thailand caught in a vertigo of change: How to resolve the political crisis: Friedrich Elbert Stiftung.
- Saxer, M. (2012). How Thailand overcome its transformation crisis?: A strategy for democratic change: Friedrich Elbert Stiftung.
- Saxer, M. (2014). Building the Good Society in Thailand: Resolving transformation conflict through inclusive compromise Friedrich Elbert Stiftung.
- Steiner, J. (2012). *The foundation of deliberative democracy: Empirical research and normative implications*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Thananithichot, S., Pohnok, N., Pratuengrattana, C., & Sathitporn, W. (2015). Application of public deliberation process in Thailand: Lessons learned from area development of Payao Lake and revision of Constitution on National Health System (การประยุกต์ใช้กระบวนการปรึกษาหารือสาธารณะในประเทศไทย : บทเรียนจากเวทีประชาเสวนาหาทางออกกรณีการพัฒนาพื้นที่ชุมชน รอบกว๊านพะเยาและการทบทวนธรรมนูญว่าด้วยระบบสุขภาพแห่งชาติ) *Journal of Social Science, Naresuan University*, 11(2), 167 - 199. doi: 10.14456/jssnu.2015.14

## **Naga and the Tai: Global Influences and Local Dynamics in Cultural Production and Reproduction in Architecture and Textiles.**

**Polakit, Kasama**  
University of Idaho  
USA

---

### **Abstract**

Through material culture study regarding the beliefs of Naga and the Tai, this paper describes the interactions between global influences or exogenous factors, and local dynamics, or endogenous aspects, in the process of cultural production and reproduction in architecture and textiles. Based on Buddhism influenced by Hindu mythology, Naga (Sanskrit: serpent), is a member of a class of mythical semidivine beings, half human and half snake, often beneficial to humans. In cosmological model the naga are water symbol and also associated with natural sources of water such as rain, oceans, rivers, lakes, streams, and wells. The beliefs of Naga in their spiritual power to protect ones from evils and to create fertility and prosperity have been manifested in everyday cultural practices through rituals and various forms of material culture such as literature, artifacts, textiles and architecture, thus expressing a unique cultural identity of the Tai.

Historically, due to trade, wars, and political conflicts, various ethnic sub-groups of the Tai, such as Tai Lu, Tai Dam, Tai Daeng, Phu Tai, and Shan or Tai Yai etc., some voluntarily and others involuntarily, migrated from their home origins to seek new homes throughout the northern part of Southeast Asia, including Thailand. Since the imposition of national borders in 1820s, the ties with family members and relatives back in their old homes had been weakened, and in many cases, ceased to exist. At present, the process of deterritorialization of nations influenced by the global economy through trade, capital flows, and communications gives rise to the emergence of regional entities, i.e. ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). With the increasingly borderless region, the global cultural economy factors influence local dynamics in the need to emphasize their local autonomy with a sense of ethnic solidarity through cultural reinterpretation and the reconstruction of their cultural identity.

**Keywords:** Tai, Textiles, Global cultural economy, Material culture, Architecture

### **Introduction**

Through material culture study regarding the *Tai* and the beliefs in *naga*, this paper describes the interactions between global influences or exogenous factors, and local dynamics, or endogenous aspects, in the process of cultural production and reproduction in Architecture and Textiles. One of the

common worldviews shared among the *Tai* ethnic group is the belief in “*Naga*”. *Naga*, Sanskrit word for serpent, or *Nak* or *Phaya Nak* (the lord of *naga*) in Thai, refers to mythical serpents known from Hindu and Buddhist mythology and animism. The beliefs in *naga* and its spiritual power to protect one from evils and to create auspiciousness, fertility and prosperity have been manifested in everyday cultural practices through rituals and various forms of material culture such as literature, arts, artifacts, sculptures, textiles and architecture, thus expressing a unique cultural identity of the *Tai*. *Tai* or *Dai* are *Tai-Kadai*-speaking people, one of several ethnic groups living in Southeast Asia such as Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, and Myanmar, North East India and the southern Yunnan of China including the area of Xishuangbanna, Dai Autonomous Prefecture, or *Sipsongpanna* (Liangwen, 1992).

Throughout the region, the beliefs in “*Naga*” has been recognized as one of *Tai*’s cultural identity embodied in various forms of tangible and intangible cultural expressions.

Historically, due to trade, wars, and political conflicts, various ethnic sub-groups of the *Tai*, such as *Tai Lue*, *Tai Dam*, *Tai Daeng*, *Phu Tai*, and *Shan* or *Tai Yai* and many other *Tai*, some voluntarily and others forcibly, migrated from their home origins to seek new homes throughout the northern part of Mainland Southeast Asia, including Thailand. Since the imposition of national borders in 1820s, the ties with families and relatives back in their old homes had been weakened, and in many cases, ceased to exist. However, the process of deterritorialization of nations influenced by the present day global economy through trade, capital flows, and communications gives rise to the emergence of regional entities, i.e. ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) ([www.asean.org](http://www.asean.org), accessed 05/12/2017). With the increasingly borderless region, the global economy factors influence local dynamics in the need to emphasize their local autonomy with a sense of ethnic solidarity through the reinterpretation and reconstruction of their cultural identity.

This paper is organized into four sections. Global-local nexus is the first section, outlining the geographical and demographical context of the *Tai* ethnic group from the past to the present day by looking at the interactions between exogenous influences and endogenous factors. The second part sets cultural production and reproduction as a frame to understand the process how cultural identity has been materialized, perpetual, and transmitted from generation to generation. Material culture studies used as methodological tools will be discussed in the third part, followed by the embodiment of the beliefs in “*naga*” as manifested in Architecture and Textiles. Then the conclusions are drawn in the final part.

### **Global-Local Nexus**

The term global-local nexus is used here to consider the interconnections between broader scales of actions at the national, regional, and global levels, and the small scale of local responses. To understand the current geographical and cultural settings of the *Tai*, a brief outline of the historical context of socio-political process of Southeast Asian is relevant. By looking at the relationships between exogenous influences, external forces such as politics, military, trade, etc., and endogenous factors, specifically, internal reactions to external drives, I identify four major chronological incidents of exogenous processes impacting on demographic changes and migrations of the *Tai* ethnic group, which are urban origins,



Western colonialization, nation-state modernization, and globalization.

To begin with urban origins, the complexity of geographical circumstances and the variety of cultural and political processes contributed enormously to the development of the local context. It cannot be said that the *Tai*-speaking people are the first inhabitants in the present-day Mainland Southeast Asia (Aasen, 1998). Historically, due to trade, wars, and political conflicts, various ethnic sub-groups of the *Tai*, such as *Tai Lue*, *Tai Dam*, *Tai Daeng*, *Phu Tai*, and *Shan* or *Tai Yai* etc., some voluntarily and others forcibly, migrated from their home origins, to settle in new homes spreading across the northern part of Mainland Southeast Asia and some parts of China and India. For example, some *Tai Lue* who lived along both sides of Makong River in Xishuangbanna migrated to other areas located in the present-day Myanmar, Laos and Thailand.

The urban origins of Southeast Asia as delineated by Wheatley (1983), is based on hierarchical patterns of societal relationships, which can be seen from material expression in a localized nexus of built forms. At the simpler level, small villages are kin-based societies, which are, in a broad ecological sense, reciprocally integrated and developed village-farming efficiency. Another more complex levels are politically structured and territorially defined societies, functioning as an administrative and ceremonial center that is distinguished from other settlements. More permanent and institutionalized, the latter had a relatively sophisticated town, architecture, art, and customs forming a traditional city-state with a chiefdom as their practice of hierarchical political organization. The *Tai*, at that time, lived in a small, relatively homogenous communities with no centralized class system (Aasen, 1998, p.58). One *Tai* ethnic group usually dwelled in the same village based largely on agrarian economies with rice as the main crop. Each locality promotes a characteristic style of life, of production, and of thoughts, hence, contributing to the construction of distinctive character of each settlement and its culture. The societal structure of these two levels are core-periphery relationships in which the cores are seats of the ruler and their kinship, exercising their powers over the ruled in their dependent villages and territories. These polynucleated principalities referred as "galactic polities", based on Aasen (1998) after Tambiah (1976, p.113), allow us to see the bio-diversity of the region reflecting ethnic, physical and cultural heterogeneity.

One of key exogenous factors forcing demographical changes and migrations of many *Tai* ethnic groups were wars and political conflicts. To operate organized society required concentration of resources at all levels. Warfare was one way in which the kingdoms with stronger military power expanded their territories in order to acquire and exploit these local resources. Some incidents occurred, including during the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, for example, the reconstruction of *Krungthep*, the new capital of Siam after the fall of Ayutthaya, led to expansion of its military power to forcibly fetch population for labors from other weaker city-states and their villagers to resettle in the areas of the present-day North, Northeast and Central Thailand. Other incidents included many migrations of villagers who experienced political conflicts in their home origins migrated or escaped as refugees to relocate in the areas that are more stabilized and peaceful. Back then the restrictions on the border lines were relatively loose, thus making geographical body of each state and kingdom as being non-bounded. Boundaries depended largely on the power and strength of the lords to acquire more land, resources, taxes, and labors through the expansion of their territories.

Second, as mentioned above, no fix boundaries between different city-states on Mainland Southeast Asia existed before the Western colonization in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Winichakul (1994) argues that these boundaries were created from new geographical concept of space through modern cartographical methods introduced by the Western spatial conceptions. Western colonial power asserted the border lines to acquire local lands and natural resources. For example, the mapping and map-making was a long process, full of conflicts, disputes and negotiations regarding the demarcation of boundaries of the Siam-British Burma to the west and northwest and Siam-British Malay to the south. The imposition of political borders in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, King Rama the fifth of Siam, increased restriction of national borders on geographical locations in the Mainland Southeast Asia. At that point, the geo-body of each nations started to take shape. These spatial boundaries impacted to the organic patterns of the kin-based lifestyles villages of the *Tai* in a sense that the *Tai* who still lived in their home origin and the ones that migrated across these arbitrary lines then, eventually, lived in different countries.

Third, nation-state referred to a system of organization in which people share a common identity live inside a country with a single government and fixed borders. Nation-state modernization, in part, was stemmed from a process by which the Western influences on map making technologies in shaping geographical figure of the countries. In case of Siam, at the end of 1930s, the social construction of nationhood was based largely on nationalism ideology, a result of the creation of we-self and others (Winichakul, 1998, p. 164). The notion of “*Thainess*” created from this we-self ideology combining three key elements, nation, religion, and kinship, strongly emphasizing hierarchical social structure (Sattayanurak, 2002). “*Thainess*” or *Kwam Pen Thai* was first constructed by the absolute monarchy and later followed by constitutional monarchy and military regime to strengthen a unity of the nation. Since 1940s, Thailand, previously known as Siam, became a modern nation-state with a strong centralized political structure officially endorsed “*Thainess*” as the national cultural identity. This cultural imperialism contributed to the process of cultural homogenization suppressing cultural heterogeneity of diverse *Tai* ethnic sub-groups. For the *Tai*, at the everyday level, the stronger the national borders physically, politically, and mentally the weaker their ties with their families and relatives back in their home origins, and in many cases, these connections ceased to exist.

Fourth, globalization, a process of international interaction and integration, leads to the need for global economic restructuring of Southeast Asian region. The process of deterritorialization influenced by the present day global economy through trade, capital flows, and advanced communications and information technologies gives rise to the increase in regional collaborations and consolidation. Recently, ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) promotes “one vision one identity one community” operation with economic, geopolitical and socio-cultural integration among 10 member nations to be a single market and a production base ([www.asean.org](http://www.asean.org), accessed 05/12/2017). The more open of national borders the more connections and interactions among the population of the members. In terms of global cultural economy, Appadurai (1990) pointed out that global interactions create the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization. Global cultural flows, through people, media, technologies, finance, and ideas, make changes to scala dynamics (Appadurai, 1996), in the sense that, the global now connects directly to the local by passing the regional and national levels. In case of Thailand, the notion of “*Thainess*”, to a certain degree, now extends to recognize cultural heterogeneity

comprises diverse ethnic groups with their cultural differences including that Thai, in fact, is a part of the *Tai*. For the *Tai*, with the increasingly borderless world, the global cultural economy influences local dynamics in the need to emphasize their local autonomy with a sense of ethnic solidarity through the reinterpretation and reconstruction of their cultural identity.

### **Cultural Production and Reproduction: “*Naga*” as *Tai*’s Cultural Identity**

Culture is a dynamic process in which the cultural formations, both tangible and intangible, are produced, reproduced and transformed through time. Cultural production carries two meanings. First, it is concerned with how person are produced as cultural beings, and second, with how this production of persons results in the (re)production of cultural formations (O’Connor, 2003). Cultural reproduction is the process of existing culture and values has been transmitted from generation to generation to sustain cultural experience across time. Cultural production and reproduction here refers to a process that create artifacts. Bourdieu (1993) explicates a theory of the cultural field which situates these artifacts within the social conditions of their production, circulation, and consumption. He states that the structure of cultural field has its position within the broader social structure of power in which the individuals and institutions involved in making cultural products.

By looking at the Thai context through Bourdieu’s lens, monarchy and religions have contributed a great deal to the process of institutionalization of the cultural reproduction of the materiality of *Naga* or *Nak* in some forms of architectural elements and patterns in textiles. In regards to textiles, Queen Sirikit, the Royal Thai Monarch, is a key figure in support of cultural reproduction of Thai textiles. The Queen plays a major role as a Royal patronage of the products including knowledge, production process, marketing, and branding through many Royal projects or *Silapacheep*. Her majesty has always presented herself as a cultural being, promoting Thai cultural identity by using these local products in her daily life as well as special occasions. In such cases, key cultural producers are the local or *chaoban* including the *Tai*, who are now recognized as local artisans, some of whom have gained their reputation as national artists or *Silapin hang Chat*. In this sense, cultural products that once used in daily life of the *Tai*, are now become commodities for market consumption, linking closely to the reproduction of cultural identity with a sense of authenticity that relies greatly on the celebration of localism and reinterpretation of local knowledge.

From the religious aspects, in Thai context, the beliefs in “*Naga*” or “*Nak*”, are intermixed between Hinduism, Buddhism and animistic doctrines. Based on Hindu mythology, *Naga* is a member of a class of mythical semi divine beings, half human and half snake, often beneficial to humans. In cosmological model, the *Naga* is equated to aquatic symbol and associated with natural sources of water such as rain, oceans, rivers, lakes, streams, and wells (Jumsai, 1988). Figure 1 shows the appearance of *Naga* in Hinduism mythology portraying a significant ritual called “Churning of the ocean of milk”, showing Vishnu in the center on his turtle Avatar Kurma, asura or giants to the left, and devas or angles to the right.

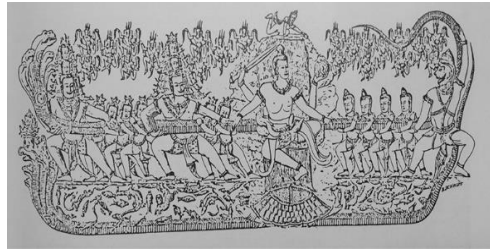


Figure 1: Vishnu churning the ocean of milk (Jumsai, 1988, p.19)



Figure 2: Vishnu churning the ocean of milk at Suvarnabhumi Airport, Bangkok, Photo by author

In Buddhist mythology, *Naga* represents the Serpent King *Muchlinda*, who protects the enlightened Buddha. *Prang Nak Prok* in Thai is called for the theme naga-protecting Buddha, which depicts the Buddha seated on top of the serpent coils (Phan, 2011), see for example Figure 3. Based on Buddhist doctrine, as an animal, the Serpent King was not allowed to become a monkhood. To recognize his good deed in protecting the Lord Buddha, a man who is about to be ordained as a Buddhist priest is also called “*nak*”. And *Naga* patterns and images have always been used in many Buddhist artifacts for daily used by Buddhist monks such as talipot fans.



Figure 3 shows Nak Prok , Naga Muchlinda protecting enlightened Buddha, photo by Wayuree Arunnate

As portrayed in animistic and folk tales, *Naga* is an aquatic snake-like creature perceived as animate and alive. Some locals believe that *Naga* live in the Mekong river or estuaries, others believe that *Naga* live in a zone of terrestrial moisture under the human world called *Muang Badan* (Phan, 2011). Some believe

that the entrance to the subterranean and the watery regions, *Wang Nakhin* (Naga Palace) is located at Kumchanod, Udonthani, see Figure 4a. and 4b. A mythical *Naga* is believed to be a giant serpent, based on folktale, breathed fireballs into the sky to form stairways for Lord Buddha to descend from heaven. As a serpent cult, *Naga* carries the supernatural and spiritual power to protect one from evils and create auspiciousness, fertility and prosperity serving well with agrarian lifestyles have been manifested in everyday cultural practices through rituals and various forms of material culture such as literature, artifacts, textiles and architecture, thus expressing a unique cultural identity of the *Tai*.



Figure 4a to the left and Figure 4b to the right: *Naga* in animistic doctrine at Kumchanod, Udonthani  
photo by Phirat ([www.thaisabai.org](http://www.thaisabai.org), accessed 5/12/2017)

An example of a hybrid version intermixing between Hinduism, Buddhism and animism of the myth of *Naga* can be found in many Buddhist temples in Thailand, including *Wat Tha Mai*, *Krathumban*, *Samutsakhorn*, and *Wat Chao Am*, Bang Khun Non, Thonburi.

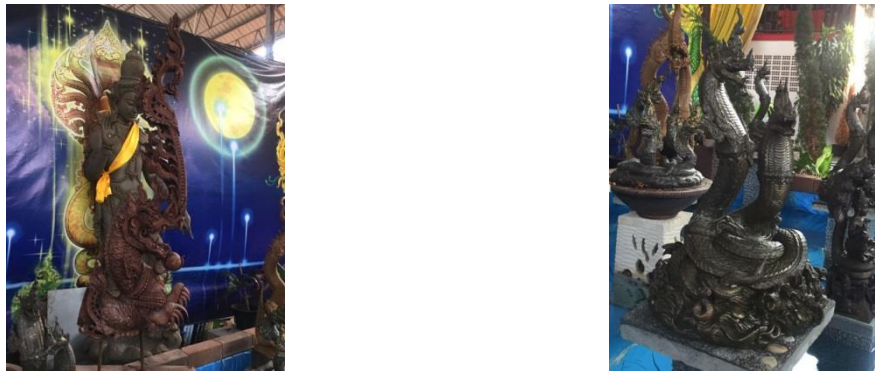


Figure 5 a and 5b show a setting of *Naga* from Hinduism and animism in Thai Buddhist temple,  
Photo by author

### Seeing “*Naga*” from the Material Culture Studies: the Embodiment of the Beliefs in “*Naga*”

Culture consists of both tangible and intangible formations. Intangible realizations are non-material culture including ideas, beliefs, values, and norms. Tangible configurations are material culture, a physical evidence of a culture in various forms of objects, artifacts, and architecture. As my background is based in architecture, material culture studies are deemed appropriate to be used as my

methodological tools to understand materiality and material objects. Material culture studies, representing the relationship we have with the objects, place the everyday artifacts to be investigated as the center part of my method. Reading material culture (Tilly, 1990), concerning non-verbally engaging in the world, allows me to overcome limitations of word based qualitative methods to understand the non-verbalized and the embodied. The embodiment of the beliefs of “*Naga*” are found in various physical forms, both sacred objects and mundane objects. In this paper, I look into the materialization of “*Naga*” as manifested in many forms of architectural elements and patterns in textiles.

### ***Naga in Architecture***

In architecture, the appearance of *Naga* are often found in a form of symbolic elements in *Tai* (and Thai) architecture including temples, serving as decorative elements and/or functional structures. In Buddhist cosmography assimilated with Hinduism, *naga* decorated along the tiers of the temple roofs represent the cosmic river of life source, which springs from Mount Meru, the sacred mountain, streaming down to human world (Phan, 2011). This architectural element is called “*Nak Sadung*” in Thai.



Figure 5: Three-tiered roof of Wat Phra That Chae-Haeng, Phu Phiang, Nan, Photo by author



Figure 6a to the left and 6b to the right show Nak Sadung, a naga structure on gable.  
Wat Phumin, Nan, Photo by author

Other architectural elements include fences, stair balustrades, doorways, arch or *sum khong* (an elaborate decorative arch over the framing the doorway), kun-thuey or nakkhatan (a corbel, serving for structural supports as well as architectural ornaments).



## Fence



*Figure 7a: Wat Hua Wiang Tai, Nai Wiang, Nan,  
Photo by author*



*Figure 7b: Wat Phai Tone, Rong Gwang,  
Phrae, Photo by author*



*Figure 8a.to the left and 8b. to the right: Wat Bang Kradan, Bang Pid, Trat, Photo by author*



*Figure 9: Wat Sirithornwararam Phuprao, Ubonrachathani, Thailand,  
a replica of Wat Chiangthong, Luang Phrabang, Lao,  
Photo by author*

### Stair Balustrades



*Figure 10 a. and 10b: Wat Phra That Ha Duang, LI, Lampoon, Photo by author*



*Figure 11a: Wat Phra That Beng Sakat,  
Pua, Nan Photo by author*



*Figure 11b: Wat Phra That Chae-Haeng,  
Phu Phiang, Nan, Photo by author*



## Arch or Sum

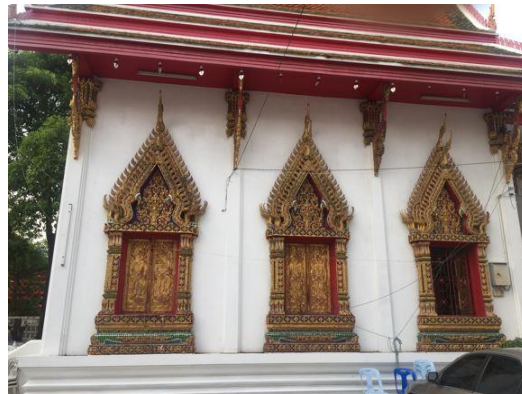


*Figure 12a: Wat Rong Ngae, Wora Naknon, Pua, Nan, Photo by author*



*Figure 12b: Wat Ming Muang, Nan, Photo by author*

## Windows and Doors



*Figure 13: Window frames at Wat Chao Am, Bang Khun Non, Thonburi photo by author*



*Figure 14a and 14b: Wat Phra That Chae-Haeng, Phu Phiang, Nan, Photo by author*

### **Nakkhatan or Kunthuey in Central Thai**



*Figure 15a: Wat Chao Am, Bang Khun Non, Thonburi,  
Photo by author*



*Figure 15b: King Rama I's residence, Wat Rakhungkositaram, Bangkok, Photo by author*

As architectural elements, apart from being decorative ornaments and structures, *Naga* features are often placed at the edges, boundaries, thresholds, transitional spaces, serving spiritual functions to secure and protect the place from evils. The next section is the appearance of *Naga* in the patterns of textiles.

### ***Naga* in Textiles**

Traditionally, genders played a significant part in divisions of labor in household productions. Males were able to go the schools and ordained to be monks while females mainly stayed home. In the household productions, for example, males were in charge of basketwork for tools and equipment while females weaved and made all textiles for bedding, blankets, and clothing for the whole family. Based on Buddhist doctrines, females were not allowed to be ordained as Buddhist monks. Therefore, ways in which females paid tributes to the Lord Buddha was through textiles weaving for their sons' ordinations and for other purposes in Buddhist rites such as manuscript wrapping cloths, sazigyo, and tungs (Thongcheu, 2014). *Naga* patterns have been mostly used in such events and products, expressing the spiritual believes for auspiciousness as well as protection from evil powers.

For example, in *Tai Yuan* ethnic group, as well as other *Tai*, in one female's life time, traditionally, three major events required significant textile pieces. The first piece was when she was nine-year old as the rite of passage, transitioning from a girl to become a woman. This piece was to learn, practiced and got prepared for her wedding. She learned how to weave, grow cotton, raise silkworms, and weave silk thread. Weaving was used as an indicator whether or not a girl was ready to get married and set up a family. Apart from the key pieces, females were in charge of weavings for their own personal uses, then made clothes for family members, and before they got married they had to weave sinh (tubular skirts), blankets, cushion covers and shawls as presents for their in-laws. The second key event was, if she had a daughter she would teach her nine-year old daughter/daughters how to weave. And if she had a son she

would weave a piece of fabric called “*pha prok hua nak*” to cover her 20-years old son’s head for his ordination ceremony to become a Buddhist monk. The final piece would be the one that she weaved for herself but never had a chance to use it. With the beliefs that every female needed to prepare beautiful clothes to wear in her afterlife and her next life, this final piece would be put on top of her chest for her cremation ceremony.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=an7eRXHq-PQ&t=44s>, accessed 05/12/2017). Below are examples of *naga* patterns in *Tai* textiles.



Figure 16a and 16b: Khmer influences on textile making called *Pidan* or *Bitan*, usually made of silk and used for many Buddhist rituals including partitioning the ceiling of the temple.



Figure 17a: *Lai Nak Song Hua* (two headed Naga)

Figure 17b: *Lai Nak Chu Son*

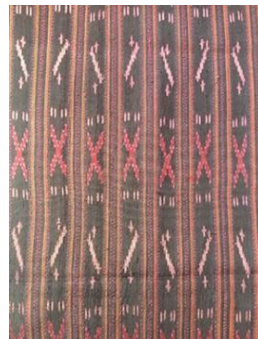


Figure 18a: Naga Patterns in Lao Krung tubular skirt

Figure 18b: *Lai Nak Khor*





Figure 19a: Tai Lue textiles



Figure 19b: Lao Krung textiles

Apart from Architecture and Textiles, as mentioned before, the uses of *Naga* images can be found in many daily objects and artifacts such as gateways, institutional emblems, decorative streetlights etc. see Figure 20s below for examples.



Figure 20 show examples of Naga images in everyday life, Google images.

## Conclusions

Exogenous factors including socio-political forces from, chronologically, city-states, Western colonization, nation-state modernization, and recently global economic re-structuring in Southeast Asia influenced changes in local dynamics and communities of the *Tai*. As a result, the *Tai* ethnic group have now been residing in many different countries including China (Yunnan), Assam (North East of India), Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. Regardless where they live, the beliefs in “*Naga*” have been persisted among the *Tai* all over the Southeast Asian region, expressing one of their unique cultural identity as manifested in various forms of material culture including architectural elements and textiles. Cultural production and re-production of these artifacts have now been transformed from household based productions that profoundly relate to their belief systems to serve as commodities for market based productions and consumptions. The increasingly borderless situation of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and advanced technologies in transportation and communication make possible the re-connection among the *Tai*, allowing the ethnic solidarity to be re-constructed through existing shared cultural identities. This can promote and enhance a strong cultural identity of the region that is based on the richness of bio-diversity and cultural heterogeneity.

## References

- Appadurai, A. (1990). Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy, *Theory Culture Society*, 7, 295-310.
- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1993). *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Columbia: University Press
- Clearance, A. (1998). *Architecture of Siam: A Cultural History Interpretation*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Jumsai, S. (1988). *Naga: Cultural Origins in Siam and the West Pacific*. Bangkok: Chalermnit Press and DD Books.
- Liangwen, Z. (1992). *The Dai Or the Tai and Their Architecture & Custom in South China*. Bangkok: DD Books.
- O'Connor, K. (2003). Communicative PRACTICE, Cultural Production, and Situated Learning. In S. Wortham & B. Rymes (Eds.), *Linguistic Anthropology of Education*. London: Praeger.
- Phan Anh Tu (2011). The Significant of Naga in Thai Architecture and Sculptural Ornaments in *DIALOGUE*, V.17, No.4, pp. 154-175.
- Sattayanurak, S. (2002). *Changes in the Construction of "Thai nation" and "Thainess" by Luang Wichitwathakan*. Bangkok: Matichon Press.
- Tambiah, S. (1976). *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Thongchua, P. (2014). *Naga Textiles: A Unique Cultural Identity in Asia*. Bangkok: Nopburee Press.
- Tilley, C. (1990). *Reading Material Culture: Structuralism, Hermeneutics and Post-Structuralism*. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell.
- Wheatley, P. (1983) *Nagara and Commandery Origins of the Southeast Asian Urban Traditions*. Chicago: University of Chicago
- Winichakul, T. (1994). *Siam Mapped: A History of Geo-Body of a Nation*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- <http://www.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/images/2015/November/aec-page/AEC-Blueprint-2025-FINAL.pdf>
- <http://www.thaisabai.org/2012/08/things-to-do-in-udon-thani-kamchanot-temple-and-forest-reserve/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=an7eRXHq-PQ&t=44s>

## **‘Lua’ or ‘L'vuea’: Their History within the Context of Lanna History**

**Pongpandecha, Akarin**  
Independent Researcher

**Krajaejun, Pipad**  
Thammasart University  
Thailand

---

### **Abstract**

The history and archaeology of Lanna emphasized on ‘Khon Maung’ (Tai) people, but the hilltribe people in particular ‘L’wa’ and ‘Lavue’, speaking Palaungic language, have not been investigated enough, mostly they have been studied in the way of anthropology. It is possible that in the past, these two ethnic groups were a same group, even though recently there are some cultural differences, they have still believed a same hero whom is ‘Khun Laung Wilangkha.’ Thus, it means that they have a collective memory. This research is based on the project: Preliminary History and Archaeology of L’wa and Lavue in Mae Hong Son and Chiang Mai; and a private interesting of Dr. Akarin Pongpandecha.

The result of this research shows that firstly, around 8<sup>th</sup> century AD, ‘Lau’ and ‘Lavue’ have possibly bonded together in the reign of Khun Luang Wilangkha, appearing in Lanna chronicles. He has been called ‘*samang*’ (*khun*) in the oral history of ‘Lau’ and ‘Lavue’ at such as Ban Papae in Mae Hong Son, Ban Bo Luang, and Huahai in Chiang Mai etc. However, at the present, the history of Khun Luang Wilangkha has been also written by ‘L’wa’ and ‘Lavue’ by with the historical and ethnic consciousness. This point is very important for understanding the movement of the insider history and send the signal that they want to have their own history and hero, not Lanna history. Moreover, from the previous works, the history of them often cease at after Khun Luang Wilangkha’s death and appearing as a small people in Lanna history, despite their history has continued in the form of oral history in which shows the connection of them and with Chiang Mai.

Another point, the ring-ditches or circular burial were discovered on the top of the mountains in northern Thailand, dated between 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century AD because inside the burial found precious ceramics. It is perceived as the ‘Lau’ tomb by many hilltribes such as Karen and Lahu. Thus, it was interpreted that it was made by ‘Lau’. However, the previous works have no oral history to support those hypotheses. This article found that ‘Lavue’ at Ban Papae shows the continuity of the sacred mountain belief and there is a story of worship at the mountain top. Thus, it is possible that this people is the heritage of this culture. The discovery is important because it shows that the ‘Lua’ was a great trade partner with lowland people.

**Keywords:** L’wa / Lavue, Oral history, Archaeology, Mae Hong Son, Chiang Mai

## Introduction

Generally referred to as the oldest race in the "Lan Na" region (northern region of Thailand where it was once known as "Lan Na" Kingdom), the "Lua" (L'Vuea, L'Wa, Wa) is thereby, an aboriginal race in the present day Thailand. Unfortunately, the existing available researches and studies of the Lua are relatively scarce and not generally acknowledged by majority of Thai people. Information about the Lua tends to be confined within those scholars in the particular fields of anthropology and (Lan Na) history. To the people of Lan Na region who define themselves as "Kon Muang" or "the City People" which is a rather a vague term, Lua are classed as probably at the bottom level of Lan Na society as the Kon Muang often associate Lua with either animistic people and ghosts worshippers with least hygienic life style. As appeared in an idiom in Lan Na society, those who habitually live in the low clinical condition would be described as those who *"eat and live untidily like the 'Lua' and 'Yang' ('Yang' represents the ethnic 'Karen' people in both Lua and Lan Na term)"*.

Eventually, provided they assimilated into the Buddhist based Lan Na/Tai/Thai culture, the resisting aboriginal Lua became, merely, one of minority ethnic hill tribe groups in the diverse society of the present day contemporary Lan Na region and even least mentioned in the context of Thai society as a whole.

Nevertheless, to the Lua, they usually claim themselves as the original dweller and the true founder of "Chuang Ma" (in Lua term) where at present is the city of "Chiang Mai", the former capital city of Lan Na Kingdom. However, they were driven out of their homeland by the new settlers and subsequently escaped to the mountainous terrain, which they believe the time after the defeat of their last king "Lord Wilangkha" to the enemy.

"Cammadevi Vamsa" (Phra Bodhirangsi, 1477) was initially written in Pali and translated to Thai by Phraya Pariyadtharmathada and Phra Yanavichitra (1920) as "Jam Thewi Wong" - the Chronicle of "Hariphunchai" (the city of Lamphun in the present day), which was a "Mon" Kingdom, depicts the story in which the Lua King, Lord Wilangkha was defeated by the Mon queen "Jam Thewi" in a wisdom competition which bet was placed on kingdoms of the two.

The Lua believe that this defeat also marked the fall of their Lua kingdom and ended the long period of Lua inhabitant in "Chiang Mai - Lamphun" basin.

Nevertheless, Cammadevi Vamsa continues to describe the subsequent events that the Lua and the Mon, were eventually united and lived together peacefully (Phraya Pariyadtharmathada et al., 1920).

However, as the Cammadevi Vamsa was written in 15th Century within the Lan Na and Buddhist social context which was approximately seven centuries after the time that the actual event, it is nevertheless, controversial whether or not both races indeed lived in harmony as the legend stated. Because if it was so, it leads to the question about what was the cause of the Lua's abandoning of their homes in the low land and migrated to the high terrain then shut down themselves from the outside world for centuries until recently? Could there be any hidden history elsewhere outside the mainstream historically documented legends?

Local legends such as the legend told by the Lua of "Muang Ga" (The Town of Fish) in the present day Mae Rim district and the tale of "Hin Lai Lua" (Lua Killing Rocks) which is generally believed by the Lua of Mae Cham, Hod, Mae Sarieng and Mae Lan Noi districts, hint darker versions of the faith of Lua people after the tragic death of their mythical/historic king Wilangkha. This tale leaves some historical trails that are not usually exposed to outsiders and encourage some explanation about their bitter history of their migration.

With combinations of legends from various sources and locals tales from several Lua communities, this article is an attempt to assemble a clearer picture of Lua hidden history by basing on both mythical and historical sources, documents and oral history/tales in the light that it may lead to better explanation of the migration of the Lua to the highland (in the case of authentic highland Lua) as well as their adaptation to the Tai/Thai society (assimilated low land Lua).

### **The Lua in Legendary and Prehistoric Era**

Germerng Ngamjarukriangkrai, a local Lua scholar of the Lua village of La Oob in Mae La Noi district of Mae Hong Sorn province, mentioned a Lua tale of how Lua people scattered all over the world.

Lua people believe that people of this world were all once Lua and spoke the same language. But after their attempt to build a ladder to climb up into the sky, it caused the heavenly ghost's furious. The ghost subsequently destroyed the ladder by lightning which caused many Lua to have fallen back to earth. Those who survived the fall then scattered all over the world and started to speak different languages (A. Pongpandecha, personal communication, September 7, 2014).

Coincidentally, the story shares the similar plot to other ancient tales amongst across the world. Interestingly, a version of them also appears in a chapter of the Old Testament known as Genesis 11: the story of "Babel Tower" (Bible Gateway, Genesis 11 - Babel Tower).

Therefore, this Lua ancient tale indicates long period of their existence through the possession of this worldly common ancient memory although the Lua had shut down themselves from the outside world for over a millennium.

The recent findings of a Thai archaeologist, "Rasmi Shoocongdej", of the oldest human remains in Thailand, discovered so far, from the "Late Pleistocene" age at "Tham Lod" rock shelter in "Pang Ma Pa" district of "Mae Hong Sorn" province, led to a reconstructed image drawn by "Suzanne Hayes" from the University of Wollongong in Australia (Lorenzi, 2017), and another head sculpture created by "Vajara Prayulakham" from Rasmi's team (Krajaejun, 2017), reveal a suggested appearances of an ancient woman. And although the picture sketched by Hayes and the sculpture produced by Vajara appear to be different, they do share significant similar features that resemble present day people of Thailand.

After both images were shown to five villagers of "Muedlong" aboriginal Lua village in Mae Cham district of Chiang Mai by the researcher on 21st May 2017, they were firmly concurred by those villagers that both images do significantly resemble their fellow Lua people.

Therefore, although it is impossible to conclude that Prehistoric habitants of Indochina were the aboriginal Lua or related to Lua, Lua belief systems and culture are significantly similar to the ancient habitants. And let us not forget that the Lua are acknowledged as the oldest dwellers in the present day



Thailand as mentioned in numbers of historical literatures in Thailand.

### **Pre Buddhist Era**

Tin Ratikanok claimed that villagers of Lua Community of Bor Luang believe that Lua people formerly dwelled in the City of "Lawo" or "Lawapura" where it is today historic city of "Lopburi" in the central Thailand on the Chao Phraya river plain (Prachuabmor et al., 2012, p.59) before evacuating to the northern region for some reason.

This statement is also supported by Noppakhun Tantikul, a local scholar in Lan Na history who conducted his own research over the biography of the Mon Queen "Jam Thewi" that the City of "Lawo" (then Lopburi) was also known as "Lawapura" in Sanskrit which virtually means "City of Lawa people"(Akarin). He claims that Lawa (Lua) people are aboriginal people who used to live across Suvarnabhumi (the golden land in Sanskrit - present day Indochina) region but somehow assimilated into the later arrival races (Tantikul, 2009, p.8).

Noppakhun also cited two other significant sources. First of all, he referred to Kitti Worakulkitti from the book "Mon Sia Muang" (The Fall of Mon Kingdom) that Burmese scholars believe that Lua people originally dwelled in the desert area beyond Mount Everest but gradually migrated southward through present day Myanmar into Indochina region due to the serious draught.

Secondly, Noppakhun cited the theory of one of the most revered historians and earliest archaeologists of Thailand, Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, which was mentioned in the book "80th Anniversary of Emeritus Professor Dr. Suez Gajasen in the year 2005", published by the Thai-Raman (Mon) Association as:

*"...Predominantly, there was a race known as Lawa who migrated into the land where it became Lopburi in the present days. Then, approximately from the year BC 193 to AD 657, the Mon race rose over the Irrawaddy plain and drove away Lawa from Lopburi..."* (Tantikul, 2009, p.8).

On a separated note, Hans Penth, a philologist-historian who is specialized in Lan Na and northern Thai history also suggested that the Lua (Lawa in his term), the oldest race appeared in chronicles, had inhabited in the Lan Na region as far back as 300 B.C. to 100 A.D. by referring to iron and unglazed pottery artifacts found from human burial site in the area in his book "A Brief History of Lan Na" (Penth, 2004, p.13).

In addition, numbers of scholars and historians seem to also suggest that the Lua could indeed have been an origin of Mon people in the sense that Lua were aboriginal people of this region.

It was possible when the Lua mingled with Indian settlers from the Indian Region of "Kalinga" (which term also became the origin of the term "Talaing" people as the Mon claimed themselves to be) through cross ethnic marriage and/or conversion to Hindu and/or Buddhist that provided the dawn of the Mon race. The above statement about the union between the Indian Kalinga people and native people of Suvarnabhumi region which became the origin of the Mon is shown in the work of Robert Halliday (1864-1933), a Scottish missionary based in the present day Mon state in Myanmar in the early 20th century, "The Mons of Burma and Thailand Volume.1 The Talaings" where he cited the research of

Colonel Gerini on "Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia" which points into this direction (Halliday, 2000. p.11).

Additionally, this hypothesis was also supported by Benudhar Patra, the author of "Kalinga and Burma - A Study in Ancient Relations" which article appeared in the November 2005 issue of the journal "Orissa Review" that the Kalinga people arrived to the Suvarnabhumi region before the dawn of Buddhism found by the "Gothama" Buddha approximately 600 years before Christian Era.

Eventually, the Mon gradually became superior race over the aboriginal people (Lua).

And Since the word "Mon", as explained by Ong Banjoon, a Thai national Mon expert in Mon study, simply means "Human Being" (A.Pongpandecha, personal communication, 2014), the Lua, on the other hand, still hold on to their strong belief in animism and rely their lives on ghosts and spirits beyond the human realm.

Notably, in "the Story of the Founding of Pegu" (Halliday, 2000. p.153), the cross ethnic marriage between a human and a "Naga" (mythical giant snake) in Suvarnabhumi region is very much similar with that occurred on the Khmer side. The mythical history explains that the Khmer race originated from a union between an Indian Brahmin and the princess daughter of the local Naga King (Wikipedia, Early History of Cambodia, 2013).

Nevertheless, the Lua, the Mon and the Khmer are regarded as people in the same Austroasiatic language family which relationship also significantly reflects the consecutive phenomenon of the rise and fall of ancient civilizations in the region, hence, from the Lua, to the Mon and from the Mon to the Khmer Empire prior to arrival of Thai people.

### **(Mythical?) Buddhist Era**

The legend of "Phrachao Liab Loke" (Termsirikiat, 2010) or "The Journey of the Lord Buddha in the World" describes stories of the Lord Buddha and his major disciples' journey to Suvarnabhumi Region (present day region of Indochina) which is evidently backed up by footprints he imprinted in various places as well as his prophecy of the installations of his relics in different locations after his journey to "Nirvana" (death).

However, due to the fact that the story is significantly based in Lan Na Kingdom, numbers of scholars disbelieve that the Lord Buddha actually travelled to the region himself and the story should only symbolize the arrival of Buddhism into this region.

As the period referred in the legend was much before arrival of the Thai, the story mostly refers to the event when the Lord Buddha's encounter with the Lua people. Similarly, in Cammadevi Vamsa (Phra Bodhirangsri, 1477) and "Jinakalamalini" (Phra Rattanapanya, 1517), it is mentioned in the beginning part that approximately in 600 BC the Buddha visited the "Milakhu" people (Lua as mentioned in Cammadevi Vamsa) and the "Meng" people (Mon in Lan Na term) in the same occasion.

As mentioned by Sarassawadee Ongsakul (2005), a Lan Na historian, the legend of the Buddha's journey in the World also describes the Lord Buddha's visit to various Lua habitats. For example, the legend of the founding of "Lagon" City (present day Lampang City) explains that the name "Lagon" derived from the name of a Lua man whose name was "Lua Ai Gon" (a Lua brother whose name is "Gon"). The story

has it that Lua man presented betel nuts to the Lord Buddha during the Lord's visit to his community (P.30).

This particular legend of Lua Gon/ La Gon/ Lampang, apart from being part of the legend of Buddha's journey to Lan Na region, was also acknowledged by the present day aboriginal Lua people who live on the mountains as described by Narong Pongpandecha and Ken Taylors' chapter on "Lua People, Traditions, Beliefs and Sacred Natural Sites in Northern Thailand" in the book "Asian Sacred Natural Sites", which Narong claimed that his interview with Germerng Ngamjarukriangkrai, a local scholar of the Lua village of "La Oob" in Mae Hong Sorn province indicated the same information (Pongpandecha & Taylor, 2016, p.250).

Another significant legend of the Lord Buddha's encounter with the Lua is the legend of "Phratat Doi Kham" temple which depicts the story of Lord Buddha's success in forbidding a cannibalistic ogre couple known as the ogre "Pu Saeh" and the ogress "Ya Saeh" (Grandfather Saeh and Grandmother Saeh), who dwelled by the foot of Doi Kham (the Golden Mount), from devouring humans fresh.

In the legend, the couple is believed to be the aboriginal Lua ancestors and also parents of one of the most revered figures in Lan Na mythology, "Vasudev".

Having been preached by the Buddha and with support of his parents, Vasudev, along with another 4 (Lua) friends ordained as Buddhist monks but later resigned from monkhood due to difficulties in maintaining the status in non Buddhist environment. However, they all subsequently ordained themselves as Buddhist hermits (Phraya Pariyatdharmathada et al., 2011, pp.23-25).

Vasudev was also responsible for the founding of Hariphunchai City where he invited the Mon Queen Jam Thewi from the city of "Lawo" (Lawapura/ Lopburi in the present day) to rule after being advised by "Sukkhadhanta", one of his three colleague hermit who dwelled on "Samorkon" hill in Lawo kingdom, approximately in 13th Century (Nimmanhaemindra, 1981, p.69).

However, as the time gap between circa 500 B.C. to 13th century is quite vast, numbers of Lan Na historians such as Pensupa Sukhata, a renowned Hariphunchai - Lan Na historians and the former chief of Hariphunchai National Museum, suggests that the names Vasudev and Sukkhadhanta could have only been titles for shamans or royal hermits that had been passed on through generations in Hariphunchai rather than names since it is scientifically impossible for a person to have lived for over a millennium (A.Pongpandecha, personal communication, 2014).

Until the present days, the Lua descendants who live in "Mae Heah" sub district of the "Mueang" district of Chiang Mai still conduct an annual water buffalo sacrificial rite to their ancestral ogre spirits by claiming that even though they were not permitted to consume human fresh, the two ogres assumed that they can eat a water buffalo per one year.

Not only the Lua people who believe in the legend, shy away from their usual strict Buddhist belief, the "Kon Mueang" Chiang Mai people also generally believe that the rite will create prosperity to them and it could happen in the opposite way if the ogres are not well fed.

Additionally, the legend of Doi Kham also relates to another legend which is known as the legend of "Phrabat Si Roi", the four Buddha footprints. Phrabat Si Roi legend depicts the story that all of the four Buddhas of this world, during each of their Buddhist eras, travelled to the top of a mountain, which was known as Doi Rang Roong or the Mountain of Eagle and subsequently known as Doi Phrabat Si Roi, and

imprinted one of their footprints over the formers' to mark their arrivals to this area. The fourth and latest footprint was imprinted by Gothama Buddha which was witnessed by Pu Sae and Ya Sae and frightened the ogre couple (Termsirikiat, 2010).

On the other hand, the Legend of "Phratat Doi Phra Kird" or the Mountain of Stupa where the Buddha raised his hand in halting position (Phra Tewin Chanta Passhoto, 1992) in "Chom Tong" District of Chiang Mai also relates the aboriginal Lua people who were citizens of a kingdom ruled by an ogre king known as "Arawaka Yaksha".

The story of Arawaka Yaksha is widely known to Buddhists as one of significant figures whose arrogance was defeated by the Lord Buddha (Siriisranandha, 2014).

In brief, the legend claims that the kingdom of Arawaka Yaksha once situated in the area around Doi Lor and "Chom Tong" district in the present days. The Buddha and his disciples came to the Ogre King's kingdom and defeated him with his wisdom. The legend explains that the Buddha raised one of his hands into halting position to stop Arawaka Yaksha from consuming human.

It is noticeable that the story of the Ogre king leaves a link to the local legend of the ogres "Pu Saeh" and "Ya Saeh" which has been mentioned earlier as ancestors of the Lua themselves. Moreover, the name "A- Rawa -Ka", somehow phonetically relates to the terms "Lawa" and "Milakha" ("Yaksha" means ogre in Sanskrit, hence, Arawaka Yaksha means an ogre whose name is Arawaka).

The legend of Phratat Doi Phra Kird also explains that due to the Lua's stubbornness, it took four Buddhas to encourage them to convert to Buddhist or to say the least, acknowledge Buddhist principles, which also refers back to the legend of the four Buddhas' footprints.

### **The Lua City of Chuangh Mal - Chiang Mai**

From the interview with Germerng Ngamjarukriengkrai, local scholar of the Lua village of La Oob (A. Pongpandecha, personal communication, 2014), the elderly man told the researcher that the Lua clans around mountainous area of Thong chai mountain range believe that once their ancestors lived in the area of present day Chiang Mai when it was still known as the city of "Chuangh Mal" in Lua language which simply named after the round shape of the city that resembled the shape of ring shape woven bamboo stand for round bottom terracotta pot.

Due to the fact that the Lua share the same Austroasiatic language family of the Mon, the name "Chuangh Mal", as confirmed by Atcharaporn Kongraman, a local ethnic Mon activist of Potharam district in Ratchaburi province and Utisa Noikhum, an ethnic Mon scholar of "Pak Lad" Town (Present day Phrapadaeng district of Sumutprakarn province, that the Mon people also call both the name of Chiang Mai city and the same kind of kitchenware as "Chuangh Mile" which is slightly different from "Chuangh Mal" as the Lua do. (A. Pongpandecha, personal communication, 2015).

The City of Chuangh Mal therefore could have been the major capital of the Lua race where it was known in local Lan Na legend as "Raming Nagara" or "Lua - Meng Nagara" (the City of Lua and Mon), as suggested by Vithoon Buadaeng and Pensupa Sukhata (A.Pongpandecha, personal communication, 2014).

### **Legend of the Lua King, Lord Wilangkha and the Mon Queen, Cammadevi**

It is perhaps not over exaggerate to state that the story between the Lua King Lord Wilangkha and the Mon Queen Jam Thewi is possibly the most mentioned mythical history that is related to the aboriginal Lua peoples in Thai mythical history and Thai Study.

As Jam Thewi is regarded as the first ruler of Hariphunchai kingdom (the present day City of Lamphun), according to the Cammadevi Vamsa, the Chronicle of Hariphunchai (Phra Bodhirangsri, 1477), it is impossible to not to mention about her Lua opponent, Lord Wilangkha whose defeat had significantly assisted to glorify the grace of the Queen.

And vice versa, while studying about the Lua, it is almost impossible to not to mention about the Mon. The story of Jam Thewi mentioned the story of her victory over the Lua troops of "Raming" City (Chiang Mai) led by Lord Wilangkha, the Lua King who tried to win the queen's heart but ended up with his own defeats in a wisdom competition which was bet on both sides' kingdoms. The Lua King attempted another invasion with his mighty military force but was again subsequently defeated by the twin sons of the Mon Queen.

He then decided to call for a truce by proposing a royal marriage between his two twin daughters with the Mon Queen's twin sons which brought peace to the region and pacifism between the two races.

However, as mentioned in the introduction, Cammadevi Vamsa was written in 1477 by the Buddhist monk, Bodhirangsi, within the Lan Na and Buddhist social context, which was approximately seven centuries after the period mentioned in the chronicle, Lan Na historians are therefore still skeptical about authenticity of the legend.

Along with Cammadevi Vamsa, "Jinagalamalini" (Phra Rattanapanya, 1528) and "Tamnan Mula Sassana" (Na Nagara, 1994) are the other two accompanying historic documents that largely support each other's contents.

On the other hand, a different version of the legend as told by the Lua of Muang Ga town in Mae Rim district portrays a darker and tragic consequence of the Lua king (Na Nagara, 1994).

After his defeat by the black magic trick in a wisdom competition in which the bet was his entire kingdom, the king and his Lua loyal subjects eventually retreated from his kingdom in the basin, where some historians believe it to have been the vicinity by the foot of Doi Suthep (Mount Suthep), to the higher terrain on the top of the historic Doi Rung (the Mountain of Eagle) behind Mount Suthep where the Lua community of Mueang Ga locates at present.

The lord succumbed his sorrow but could not overcome his grief of losing both the kingdom and the woman he was deeply in love with. He decided to kill himself by throwing his famous throwing spear into the air then had it landed on his chest.

According to the Lua folklore, his death inevitably brought about the end of Lua kingdom in the region and major migration from Chuangh Mal (Chiang Mai) onto the mountain.

This tragic folklore may lead to a clue on the Lua's subsequent attacks on Hariphunchai and successfully seized and ruled this Mon kingdom for a period of time before it was passed back to Mon kings and eventually fell into the hand of King Mangrai of Yonok kingdom in the reign of King Yiba, the last king of Hariphunchai (Phra Bodhirangsri, 1477).

### **Lua Killing Rock, the Cause of Lua' Migration and Changes in Cultural Identity?**

Although, in the present day, Lua people do pass on their memory of their last king and Chuangh Mal through local tale, in general, they neither possess any vivid story of the king and Cammadevi, the Mon queen of Hariphunchai kingdom nor their defeat by the Mon.

Hans Penth, the late famous Lan Na epigraphist suggested in his book "the Brief History of Lan Na" that the Mon became the ruling class in Hariphunchai period whereas the Lua could become second class citizens, therefore, when the Tai race started to assimilate into Hariphunchai, they were welcome by the Lua and supported by the Lua as opposed to the supreme Mon race that they despised (Penth, 2004).

Pensupa Sukhata concurs to this hypothesis as she pointed out that it was the reason that King Mangrai of the Yonok/ Lan Na kingdom, who could have been half Lua King, sent his Lua generals to sabotage Hariphunchai six centuries later and finally laid a seize on the Mon city. His action could have been a revenge for his Lua ancestors (A.Pongpandecha, personal communication, 2016).

Germerng, the local scholar of La Oob Lua village also provided information that after their migration from Chuangh Mal to the mountainous region on Thong chai mountain range, there were nine subsequent kings after Lord Wilangkha. During this period, Tai people had migrated into this area and seek patronage of the Lua Kings throughout the period (A.Pongpandecha, personal communication, 2014).

Therefore, this piece of information supports the peaceful co-existence of the Lua and the Tai as Hans Penth and Pensupa suggested. Mala Khamchandra, the national artist in literature art, also pointed out to the researcher that in the "Tamnan Chiang Mai Pang Derm" (The Previous Version of Chiang Mai Legend) demonstrates more of the Lua's involvement and the patronage the Lua provided to the Tai. The Phrase "Lua pen Ai, Tai pen Nong" (Lua is the elder brother and Tai is the younger brother) was explained in this older version of Chiang Mai legend which represents the bond between the two races outstandingly. (A.Pongpandecha, personal communication, 2014).

Nevertheless, the controversy about this dramatic Lua-Tai bond comes to the surface through series of information of how much fear Lua people have towards Tai/Thai people.

Numbers of Lan Na folklores portrait the Lua as unintelligent people who could be easily deceived and consequently lose their lives from their own stupidity that Kon Muang (Tai people) laid for them.

The Lua also acknowledge content of these folklores and became skeptic about associating with the Tais/Thais.

The statement: "A single stupid Tai-Thai is equivalent to the smartest Lua", acclaimed by Germerng, reflects very much about the Lua pessimistic view over the Tai/Thai and became very protective whenever they have to communicate with the Tai/Thai (A.Pongpandecha, personal communication, 2014)

In Lua language, Lua address Thai/Tai people in regardless of their origins and city they come from as "Sam". With this mean, people from either Chiang Mai or Bangkok are generalized as Sam people. The ethnic Mon in Thailand also address Tai/Thai people with a similar term as "Sem". Therefore, both Sam and Sem obviously represent "Siam" in central Thai definition. In this case, it is quite difficult to understand why in several legends, Tai or Thai people were loved by the Lua whereas in some other

legends they were also feared.

It would make more senses should we leave out "Sam/Sem/Siam" as a Tai race and instead, depict them as people from the region of Chao Phraya river plain in regardless of their original races given them were Mon, Tai, and even the Lua themselves. Additionally, should we emphasize more that these people were Buddhists, it would even produce clearer picture of who these Sam people were to the Lua.

Probably, fractions of the answer is also faintly portrayed in several legends, particularly, the legend of "Hin Lai Lua" (Lua Killing Rocks) which demonstrated a darker and tragic side of Lua history in form of legend.

The legend of "Hin Lai Lua" (Lua Killing Rock) as mentioned briefly earlier has been told from generation to generation by the Lua that the Lua fled from Chuangh Mal due to their attempted revolution against two large rocks, the wife and the husband rocks, that they used to worship. Their decision to revoke offerings to the rock caused the rocks' furious and started to pursue then run over the Lua whenever they came across any Lua who startlingly evacuated from the city mainly to the south through Hod town then continued westward around the Thong chai mountain range and rushed up the mountains as high as they could.

The story has it that the rocks continued to roll over and kill Lua people until they reached Mae La stream in the present day Mae La Noi district where the wife rock felled from the hilly road onto the bank of Mae La stream and could not climb up the mountainous terrain. At this point, they decided to stop their pursue due to they could no longer find anymore Lua people.

The legend claims that the rocks asked a woodpecker had it not seen the Lua. To help the Lua, the bird insisted that it had been there for so long since until the black feather on its head had turned grey but had never seen even a single Lua in the area which ended the pursuit.

Another variation of legend has it that the rocks questioned a fresh water clams in the Mae La stream it had seen any Lua. The clam denied and added that the Lua were so unintelligent, even not clever enough to the extent that they unsuccessfully tried to eat the clams from the bottom shell, therefore, harmless and not worth the pursuit.

Having learnt that, the two rocks seized their mission and turned lifeless by the Mae La stream since that time.

Until present days, Lua people in the regions still strictly believe that, if there are by no mean to travel by these two rocks, they will refrain from passing by the area. But should they have to, they are strictly forbidden to speak Lua and converse in either Karen or Tai/Thai language instead.

It is noticeable that even in the present day most of the Lua are trilingual and capable of speaking Lua, Karen and both the Lan Na "Kum Muang" (Tai) dialect and official Thai language fluently.

Apparently, the legend does not provide explanation in depth of the true reason the Lua were pursued, hunted and executed. Presumably, it could have been caused by various reasons such as refusal to convert to Buddhism, tyranny that caused mistreatment from the new ruler for examples; high taxation, forced labor or slavery enforced by the mightier party etc.

Nevertheless, as stated by Professor M.R.W. Suriyawutthi Sukhasawatti of the Faculty of Archaeology, Silpakorn University, every legend contains some factual historical elements (A.Pongpandecha, personal communication, 2010), the two rocks may have represented the ruling figures of Chuangh Mal or Chiang

Mai when the city was no longer ruled by Lua Kings. Therefore, when the Lua decided to stop paying the tribute, it could have been the cause of suppressing the Lua in brutal way that forced them to flee the kingdom in gravely fear.

Alternatively, the rocks could have also represented Buddhism that the Lua refused to convert to and to them, Buddha image could have worth merely a rock, and not a sacred object.

On the other hand, we learnt for certain that there were two rocks, female and male rock that formed a couple, hence, the wife rock and the husband rock. The researcher's curiosity resulted in an actual site survey along Mae La stream.

The site of the two rocks is not accessible by any motor vehicles as both rocks situate on the either bank of the stream. There were not any signposts and the direction to the location had to be acquired from local villagers who were happened to be the ethnic Karen people.

Singha Wongte, friend of the researcher and a local scholar of La Oob village explained that, since the No.108 Chiang Mai - Hod highway had been built, Lua people in Mae La Noi district had also stopped using this walking path by Mae La steam for travelling to either Mae Sarieng district of Hod district to purchase their supplies.

Geographically, Mae La stream in the area where the Lua killing rocks situate terrain could have been ideal for an army camping site, which would have provided sufficient water supply for troops, and war animals such as horses, elephants and so on.

The wife rock situates in the upstream position whereas the husband rock situates in the downstream area. In this way cleaner water could be obtained at the female rock area before flowing down to the husband rock area.

Therefore, it produces a sensible assumption to assume that the female rock may have represented the main regiment whose commander, being a member of royal family or not, would have had privilege in consuming cleaner water whereas the male rock could have represented the forward or the vanguard battalion or platoon with lower rank officers and soldiers along with war animals who would have camped downstream, hence, consumed secondary water from that of the principle regiment.

The reason that these rocks, pursuing troops stopped their pursuit by the stream in low land was very much possible that the mountainous terrain where the Lua had fled to would have been very difficult for them to mobilize a large number of troops and war animals upward. Additionally, troops would have been forced to march in rather single file fashion due to narrow paths on the mountains and risked ambushes.

Regarding the grey head woodpecker and the fresh water calm, from the legend, it is obvious that the Lua were flat land dwellers prior to their migration. They must have already been knowledgeable in lowland rice farming and lifestyle, but since they have fled to the mountainous region, how had they obtained highland survival and agricultural skills on the terrain that they were not acquainted to before? Evidently, in both tangible and intangible ways, the Lua has a very close and special relationship with the Karen people. Coming from totally different language family group and genetic background, it is quite interesting to notice that they share numbers of similarity in everyday life and culture that range from gastronomy to traditional costumes. In addition, they also possess the same knowledge in swidden field or rotating rice-farming technic on the mountain slopes.



By basing on the Lua legend, it is obvious that it was the Lua who moved onto the mountainous terrain after their evacuation. The Karen, on the other hand, must have presumably lived on mountain ranges long before the Lua.

In this case, the Karen may have been the people who engulfed the Lua into their care, nurtured and taught the Lua to live the highlanders' way of life, hence, the bird and the clam who saved Lua from the killing rocks in the myth could have possibly been representatives of Karen people whereas the rocks themselves represent the army of enemies as previously stated.

As mentioned earlier, until the present day, Lua people still strongly believe in the legend of the killing rocks that made them to disguise themselves as people from other races while passing the rocks. The fear of pursuers could have also triggered the change of their traditional costume.

As cited by Paisarn Thaimai, in *Saranukrom Thai* (Thai encyclopedia), it is mentioned that both Lua men and women dressed up in black. Lua men adorn black open-chest long sleeves shirt and loincloth wrapped in shorts style whereas Lua women adorn long sleeve shirt with silver threads embroidered around the round neck, down along front plackets and around the shirt hem (Thaimai, 2014).

Backed by information given to the researcher from Phra Palad Niphon Rakhitasilo, the abbot of Khun Kong temple of the Lua village of Khun Kong in Hang Dong district of Chiang Maim, the abbot mentioned that the his temple had once possessed a paper script written by Krue ba Apichai Khao Pi, a famous monk in Lan Na region, that apart from acclaiming himself as a Lua descendant, Krue ba Khao Pi specifically mentioned that Lua are favored by ghosts. Therefore, should a Lua man wish for something, he should dress up in black, carry a walking stick and bring with along with them a "Buya" (traditional Lua smoking pipe or "Mokh" in Lua term) then walk into any haunted sites and ask ghosts to help him.

However, at present, Lua men are now wearing white open-chest long sleeve shirt and white Tai/Chinese style trousers whereas Lua women are now wearing white short butterfly sleeve shirt with black short tube skirt.

It is noticeable that the current traditional Lua men costume could be closely identified to the Tai traditional costume. Meanwhile, Lua women are now adorning a very similar costumes to that of the Karen women.

This observation reflects the strict rule for the Lua while passing by the killing rock that they should only speak either "Tai" or "Karen" and justifies Lua children ability in growing up with dual or multiple languages.

At this stage, it is somehow persuasive to reimagine that the Lua's legend of the Killing Rocks may have triggered the initiation of present day Lua traditional costumes, particularly, for those Lua of Chiang Mai - Lamphun basin whose majority dwell along the Thong chai Mountain Range in the west of the basin.

### **The Retaliation of the Lua: the Mysterious Lua Origin of King Mangrai, the Founder and Lan Na Kingdom and the Mythical Round Shape of Chiang Mai**

There is neither concrete evidence about true origin of King "Mangrai", the first king of Chiang Mai nor his royal lineage. Lan Na scholars seem to have split beliefs over the king ancestral route.

Scholars debate over King Mangrai's true origin as his mother was clearly recorded as an ethnic "Tai Lue"

princess from "Chiang Rung" ("Jin Hong" in Chinese) City, a major city of the Eastern Tai Lue territory where in the present day is in the self-autonomous state of "Xixhuangbanna" (Sipsongpanna in Thai/Tai) under the PRC Chinese administration. However, the controversy is laid upon his father's lineage over the term "Lawa" whether it represent "Lua" or "Lao".

Nevertheless, the explanation from those who support the hypothesis that the king was a half Lua/ Tai Lue is rather interesting.

First of all, as it is claimed, King Mangrai was a descendant of the first King of "Lawa Chakkaraja" Dynasty found by "Puchao (Lord) Laojok" who, according to the Yonok Chronicle, descended from the sky through silver ladders to the top of "Doi Tung" (the Mountain of Hanging Standard/Flag) to rule the Lua people who dwelled around the base of the mountain.

Numbers of Lan Na scholars believe that "Lawa Chakkaraja" simply means "Kings of Lua Clan" whereas some debate that it rather means the "Clan of Laotian King" which represents that the Lawa Chakkaraja was also closely related to a Tai Lue clan in the present day Laos.

Second of all, the deliberately employment of Lua generals and ministers under King Mangrai's administration provides hints that the king must have had wholeheartedly trusted Lua people. Some of the most outstanding figures were "Lua Ai Fa" (Lua brother whose name was Fa) who was sent by King Mangrai to Hariphunchai City on an espionage mission which eventually led to successful mission in Seizing the Mon city and "Mang Khum" and "Mang Kien", the two Lua generals who were appointed to rule the City of Lampang some years later.

In order to be able to command all these Lua men, it is very much possible that the king could have been able to speak and communicate in Lua language, hence, it could have been the language of his father's tongue.

An observation from Pensupa Sukhata is that King Mangrai did not spare any tolerance in seizing Hariphunchai and completely burnt this prosperous Mon city to the ground in the process possibly because of his wrath over the Mon people from his ancestral history of Lord Wilangkha.

However, after Hariphunchai was sacked, King Mangrai was stunned by the miracle of the crystal Buddha image (Phrakaew Khao Setangkamani) whose sanctuary survived the fire.

Krik Akkarachinorate, a renowned Lan Na scholar, strongly suggests in a seminar that this incident strongly suggests that King Mangrai was an animist Lua king and possibly took in Buddhism only after he had sacked Hariphunchai and could have been impressed by the miracle of the crystal Buddha image that he later took the image to Chiang Mai believing the image will protect Chiang Mai from fire and partially converted to Buddhist (A Pongpandecha, personal communication, 2016).

Thirdly, it was the Lua's involvement with the founding of Chiang Mai City. When King Mangrai founded Chiang Mai, there were two specific events involved much of the Lua influence. The first evidence was one of the three main reasons that King Mangrai chose the site of today Chiang Mai to build the new city. The "Tamnan Puenmueang Chiang Mai" (The Local Legend of Chiang Mai) indicates that the King mentioned the area as once a former site of a kingdom where ancient kings had ruled before. The King also travelled up the Mount Suthep to seek for advice in establishing a new city from a Lua leader whose clan took refuge on the mountain.

From the interview with Germerng Ngamjarukriangkrai, we acknowledge the information that according

to the legend, the original shape of Chiang Mai when it was Chuangh Mal and ruled by the Lua was in a round shape. From the local legend of Chiang Mai, it also indicates that Chiang Mai could have been built on top of the former site of a Lua capital city.

The square shape of the present day ancient Chiang Mai city that is approximately one and a half kilometers by one and a half kilometers was obviously the new city plan introduced by King Mangrai in 14th century. The legend also specifically describes that the King initially wanted to have the city built in the size of two by two kilometers but was stopped by his friend, King Ruang (Ramkhamhaeng) of Sukhothai kingdom to reduce the size by half a kilometer on every side for more effective defensive purpose. This challenges the Lua legend in claiming their original ownership of Chiang Mai as there has not been any study to back up their claim. Nevertheless, the possible tangible evidence of this legend could be evidently witness by following the trail of the Chiang Mai outer defensive earthen wall known as "Kampaeng Din".

The remain of the earthen wall which started from the southwest of the existing square shape city creeps its way eastward in perfect round shape and runs upward towards the north separating the inner square shape city with the Ping River in the east. This earthen wall is also flanked by the Mae Kha canal which serves as the outer city moat and believed by some scholars that, as well as the wall itself, was constructed for flood control purpose rather than defensive purpose. However, this assumption can be challenged by the fact that, there is still a lone surviving citadel of " Hai Ya" left standing in almost perfect condition. And although the citadel was constructed in much later in Lan Na period, it strongly emphasize the strategic usage of the outer partially round shape city wall.

Additionally, it also solves the curiosity of those who may wondered why the center of Chiang Mai city in the present day is off center, why the Tha Phae road from outside of the walled city which continues within the wall as the present day Rachadamnern Road ends at "Phra Sing" temple and not a thorough road, and why the central north to south road of the city, the Prapokkloa Road is also off center and leans westwards.

Once the imaginary circle line has been drawn, we can clearly observe now that Prapokklao Road could have been almost the precise central north to south road whereas, the Loi Kroh - Racha Manlaka road which runs as east to west road in the south of Rachadamnern road serves the better position as the east-west central road of the old round shape city than Ta Phae - Ratchadamnern road. Moreover, the length of both central horizontal and vertical roads of the ancient round shape city can be measured approximately 2 x 2 kilometers which coincide with the original plan of King Mangrai who would have Chiang Mai built in this size.

Most importantly, the great stupa of Chedi Luang temple serves the perfect center point of the round shape city rather than the existing square shape city not to mention that the city pillar shrine "Indhakhin" column situates in this temple.

It is very much possible that the original Indhakhin column (Dong Sakang in Lua term), erected by King Mangrai himself, situated on the city navel spot where it is the site of the great stupa at present. The scared column in Lua tradition that each Lua clan has to have one erected as the communicating post to the heavenly ghost and their ancestors but when the Lua came under Buddhist influence in Lan Na period, "Dong Sakang", became "Indhakin" (the God Indra's column) in Buddhist context.

Additionally, in the legend of Indhakin column, God Indra also summoned two ogres to guard the column. It is also noticeable that God Indra could have represented King Mangrai himself, who erected the new Sakang column on the original spot of the Lua's Dong Sakang when he had Chiang Mai city built initially.

As mentioned earlier that Lua are always associated with ogres to the Lan Na people's perspective, the two ogres, on the other hand, could have represented the ancestors of Lua people and later worshipped by Chiang Mai people who settled on the former Lua land.

Finally, Kraisi Nimmanhemindra also mentioned in his article that the water buffalo sacrificial rite as same as that conducted by the Lua used to be performed for the spirit of King Mangrai in front of his shrine at the site where the king was struck by lightning and passed away which locates in the central area of old Chiang Mai city. The rite had just been revoked around half a century ago (Nimmanhaemindra 1981).

The rite does indicate that the King was also formerly worshipped in the same animistic way that the Lua ruler ghost, known as "Kum Lawu" ghosts in Lua language, was worshipped and not in the Buddhist way. Therefore, it provides the clue that the first king of Chiang Mai and Lan Na kingdom could have been a Lua ancestral king himself.

### **Aboriginal Lua Culture and Tradition in the Present Days**

As dramatic as it may sounds, not only there are minimal numbers of Lua studies and researches, those available resources have never been consolidated and put into usefulness for the sake of preservation and conservation of the aboriginal Lua heritages.

Possibly, because the Lua race is unofficially still placed at the bottom of the unseen social hierarchy in Lan Na region. Whilst the study of socio ethnography and anthropology have become widely popularized, there have not been any concrete attempt by any interest groups either from the governmental or NGOs to work on Lua heritage conservation. The problem does not only come from outside the Lua world, but also within the Lua communities themselves. However, the internal problem may have been caused by the external factors. Due to the degradation of the Lua race by "Khon Muang" on the flat land, very much like other minority ethnic races across the globe, majority of Lua people tend to abandon their cultural identities and prefer to assimilate into the low land societies. Particularly, when one of their gifts is the ability to speak multiple languages with faint accent that helps them to blend into any races comfortably. It is generally known that a Lua person can speak the central Thai accent better than Chiang Mai people who usually have strong Lan Na accent themselves.

Therefore, as well as being a gift, it also assist in deteriorating their own Lua culture. Particularly, when the Lua language has no writing system or had lost the knowledge in writing over millennium ago as so they claimed.

Their practice of animistic rites is also another factor being humiliated by Thai people in general. The sacrifice of animals is regarded by majority of Buddhist Thai as cruel rites and unacceptable by the Thai society both in Lan Na region and Thailand as a whole. The low land people despite their rites without a slight thought that due to the Lua's poor economic status and in some villages, lack of electricity supply,

they hardly consume any large animals like pigs, cows and water buffalos. The Lua live their lives on their own grown mountain rice, vegetables, chickens and small fishes. They only have chance to consume meat occasionally from those sacrificial rites only which means the number of animals they slaughter each year is nowhere near the figure city people consumed that are being supplied by mega size corporations.

## **Conclusion**

The cultural identity of aboriginal Lua in Chiang Mai and Lan Na region has faded away from the surface of Lan Na culture although it hinted a significant proportion in the building up of Lan Na culture as we see at present.

Very much likely, under the shadow of political motivation that aimed at territorial and trade expansionism, the arrival of Buddhism and clashes of belief system, particularly, objection to animal sacrificial rites that animist Lua are still strictly holding on to even in the present days, could have been responsible for the disappearance of Lua presence in on the low land.

So far, the stories of Arawaka Yaksha, the ogre couple Pu Sae - Ya Sae, their son, Vasudev, the Four Buddhas' footprints, Indhakin or Dong Sakang column and so on explain the Lua's conversion or intention in converting to Buddhists in peaceful ways.

Assimilated Lua who converted to Buddhists as well as those who cross married to people from different ethnic races and faiths were likely to have abandoned their original Lua culture and cultural identity. This phenomenon explains the reason that numerous Lua tradition and culture still exist in the disguise of Lan Na culture instead of standing out as individual authentic Lua culture.

The assimilated Lua have gradually lost their authentic Lua cultural identity and eventually including their spoken language.

However, regarding stories of those who refused to convert to Buddhists or embrace cultures of the new settlers, their tragic destiny lies much in their bitter folklores and oral history that have been passed on for generations among the animist Lua who, until recently, lived in hide out locations.

It can be casually concluded that, for the Lua, the ways to survive throughout the Lan Na history were; conversion, assimilation, migration and transformation of their cultural identities

Nevertheless, questions of what had actually happened to those who refused to convert, what was the reason of large proportion of Lua people migration from the their largest capital of Chuangh Mal (Chiang Mai) in the low land to the highland, when did they move and how have most of the highland Lua had managed to remain their own animistic cultural throughout centuries until only less than half a century ago, remain mysterious until the present day and needed to be further studied and backed up with more concrete evidences for the better understanding of this aboriginal group of people who may have originated the cultural foundation of Lan Na and her people as well as Thai people as a whole as seen today. The researcher can only hope that this article may encourage scholars in related fields who might be interested in conducting their future works on this significant aboriginal people of Thailand and Indochina region for the sake of the conservation of the Lua cultural heritages as well as benefit to the academic world, particularly, in the field of Thai Studies.

## References

- Bible Gateway. Genesis 11: Babel Tower. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+11>.
- Graduate Students Class 6 - Vocational Section. (1992). *Yon Roi Adeet Wiang Mano, Documentary paper*. Chiang Mai: Faculty of Education - Chiang Mai University.
- Halliday, R. & Cauer, C. (2000). *The Mons of Burma and Thailand*. Volumn.1. Bangkok: The Talaings, White Lotus Ltd.
- Krajaejun, P. (2017). ผลงานระดับโลก ใบหน้าจำลอง บรรพบุรุษหญิงไทย (?) ปลายยุคน้ำแข็ง 13,000 ปีมาแล้ว. Retrieved from  
<https://www.matichon.co.th/news/534920>.
- Lorenzi, R. (n.d.). Meet the Stone Age woman with a modern-looking face. Retrieved from  
<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/meet-the-stone-age-woman-with-a-modern-looking-face/>
- Nagara, P. & Tuikheew, P. (1994). *Tamnan Mula Sassana, Chiang Mai and Chiang Tung*. Bangkok: Saksopa Publishing.
- Nimmanhaeminda, K. (1981). *Cherdchukiat Nai Kraisri Nimmanhaeminda*. Bangkok: Trairong Printing.
- Patra, B. (2005). *Orissa Review, "Kalinga and Burma - A Study of Ancient Relations"*. Retrieved from  
[http://odisha.gov.in/emagazine/Orissareview/nov2005/engpdf/Kalinga\\_and\\_Burma-A\\_Study\\_%20in\\_%20Ancient\\_Relations.pdf](http://odisha.gov.in/emagazine/Orissareview/nov2005/engpdf/Kalinga_and_Burma-A_Study_%20in_%20Ancient_Relations.pdf).
- Penth, H. (2004). *A Brief History of Lan Na*. Chiang Mai: Silk Worms Book.
- Phra Bodhirangsri (2011). *Phraya Pariyatharmathda, Phra Yanavichitra (1920), Rueang Jam Thewee Wongsas - Chronicle of Hariphunchai*. Bangkok: Sophon Publishing.
- Phra Rattanapanya (2011). *Phraya Pojanabhimol Jinakalamalini*. Bangkok: Sripanya.
- Phra Passhoto, P.T.C. (1992). *Tamnan Wat Phratat Doi Phrakird*. Chiang Mai: Dao Publishing.
- Prachuabmor, C., Khammueang, S., Chaisinggananon, S., Cheerawanichkul, B., & Soontarotok, A. (2012). *Prissana Wongsakanayut Lua*. Bangkok: Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre.
- Pongpandecha, N. & Taylor, K. (2016). *Lua People - Traditions, Beliefs and Sacred Natural Sites in Northern Thailand*. In Verschuuren, B. & Furuta, N. (Eds.). *Asian Sacred Natural Sites - Philosophy and Practice in Protected Areas and Conservation*. London: Routledge. pp. 247-258.
- Sarassawadee, O. & Tanratanakul, C. (2005). *History of Lan Na*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.
- Siriisanandha, R. (2014). *Tamnan Mula Sassana*. Nonthaburi: Sripanya.
- Tantikul, N. (2009). *Phrarajaprawat Phranangchao Jammathewi*. Chiang Mai: Lan Na Computer Printing.
- Termsirikiat, N. (2010). *Phrachao Liab Loke*. Chiang Mai: Nuntapun Printing.
- Thaimai, P. (2014). *Tamnan Khunluang Wilangkha Lae Prawat Ban Mueang Ka*. Chiang Mai: Ngarmnij Rueangsorn.
- Wikipedia. (2013). *Early history of Cambodia*. Retrieved from:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early\\_history\\_of\\_Cambodia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_history_of_Cambodia).

## **A Study of Sustainable Alternative for Living Communities**

**Poomchalit, Walanrak**

**Suzuki, Katsuhiko**

Department of Science and Technology  
Kyoto Institute of Technology  
Japan

**Suzuki, Arno**

Graduate School of Science  
Kyoto University  
Japan

---

### **Abstract**

Most communities in Thailand were developed from small service communities of waterway rice trading. Their economy has been dependent on agricultural products. While urbanization and suburbanization continued especially at the fringe, the economic structures changed from a simple agricultural economy to the complex modern economy. The urban space developments also changed economic and social change. In the areas that are continually developing, however, old and new contexts tend to conflict. While new residential neighborhoods are being developed, old settlements are left behind, decaying and abandoned. The deterioration of building materials and structural components of the original houses make the old neighborhoods look unpleasant and uncomfortable, and they have been defined as slums. The inconvenience of old lifestyle also accelerates migration because the residents want access to convenient facilities.

This study aims to explore a developmental alternative to repopulate these old neighborhoods to recall old sustainable lifestyle. We also aim to use the result as a guideline for conserving the valuable historic neighborhoods that are at the risk of disappearance.

We first reviewed some newer sustainable urban developments and examined the possibility of applying the findings to the community characteristics of the target area of our study. We concluded that old communities could be revitalized by alternative developments not just as a tourist destination. Repairing houses and providing necessary facilities for the modern living will change the old and decayed houses into the quality new residence. It improves not just houses but also the community. New functions such as accessibility, open spaces, and recreation area must be added to transform a compact neighborhood into a comfortable residential environment.

**Keywords:** Community recovery, Repopulation, Reconstruction, Living Environment, Sustainability

## **Introduction**

Thailand is developing under the framework of the National Economic and Social Development Plan, and at present, it is on the 12th issue that operated from 2017 to 2021. The plan has been developed continuously since the 10th issue based on the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, which aims to Sustainable Development Goals: SDGs (NESDB, 2016). This plan is also based on the principle of the 8th issue that focused on people-centered development. The 12th issue, therefore, is focusing on sufficiency economy, sustainable development, and human resources development at the same time. It has been shown by development strategies including human potential patronizing development, equalizing development, sustainability of economic competition, utilization of natural resource and preserving the environment, and so forth (NESDB, 2017). Thus, sustainable development seemed to be the main concept of the last three National Economic and Social Development Plans that the government prioritizes. This direction of national development also affects housing policies. The Strategy Plan of Housing Development (2016-2025) emphasizes to create accessibility for social welfares and stability of housing (Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, 2015). The plan looks identical to the principle of sustainable development in such way that it combines the creation of living environment and the public participation.

When the economy declined in the old settlements, depopulation continuously occurred there. Economic improvement; local economic creation following the wisdom-based development strategy, the cultural tourism or the old market strategy; has become a tool that old communities, as well as the government, used to recreate stability and repopulation to local communities. In Thai communities, however, especially in old communities, social structure is strongly based on the traditional relationship with the residents. It makes the community a big family that personal role and responsibility have been formed upon respect and each social status. Such a “one family” tradition makes the community cohesive. Therefore, depopulation of original dwellers replaced by newcomers not just affects the sense of family or social interaction but also changes the living qualities if the old and new residents cannot recreate a sense of family.

## **Target of the Field of Study**

This study was started with a recovery project of old communities. We focused on communities with wooden houses because they tend to show issues in tangible ways.

Though wood is relatively inexpensive and approachable as a construction material, it depends on availability or the amount of supply. It also depends on builders’ skills. Its post-and-beam structure, however, can be easily applied to other materials; it is, therefore, worth the consideration. There are many types of wooden-houses in Thailand.

- 1) Thai traditional houses
- 2) Wooden houses of trading communities those have been built in the reign of King Chulalongkorn that probably were conventional residences of the era



- 3) Wooden houses with Victorian style influence
- 4) Vernacular houses
- 5) Easy-to-build wooden structure for low-income housing made of cheap local materials available

Among these five groups, we focused on 2) the group of traditional wooden houses of trading communities that have been built about 100 years ago and on 5) the low-income people's dwellings.

We chose these groups because they are similar in dwellers' characteristics, their ability of maintenance and the condition that the landowner is the government.

The target of this case study was an old community that was showing characters of an aging society, and it was located on a land possessed by the government. The daytime dwellers are mostly women and children, which was also typical of old communities. Depending on the willingness of dwellers and some other conditions, such a community may maintain and improve their wooden buildings if techniques are adjusted to their ability and taught properly.

### **Objectives of the Study**

After Thai governments operated the National Economic and Social Development Plan from the 1st issue (1961) to the end of 8th issue (2001), it resulted in the inequalities of development. The government, therefore, developed the 9th plan based on the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy to equalize the national development and create economic stability by the social capital and knowledge (NESDB, 2001). The economy was used as a development tool to improve quality of life. Especially for indignant old communities that used to be a cultural capital, it was an opportunity to reactivate their economy. Tourism would be the primary tool to promote the revitalization of old communities and repopulation by the new employment opportunities. The downside, however, is the new dwellers who may not understand the local culture may change the community's characteristics. They might gain more income, but they also lost their characteristics to new dwellers, tourist and investors.

Other than tourism, there might be another development programs that can repopulate local communities. Developing desirable residential estates would revitalize the local economy as well as satisfying a basic requirement for people's welfare.

This study, therefore, tries to explore another method of sustainable development for local communities following these steps;

- 1) To clarify necessary factors for sustainable housing and neighborhood
- 2) To study the characters of old communities that match the sustainable improvement
- 3) To explore a method to adapt the sustainable redevelopment for old communities

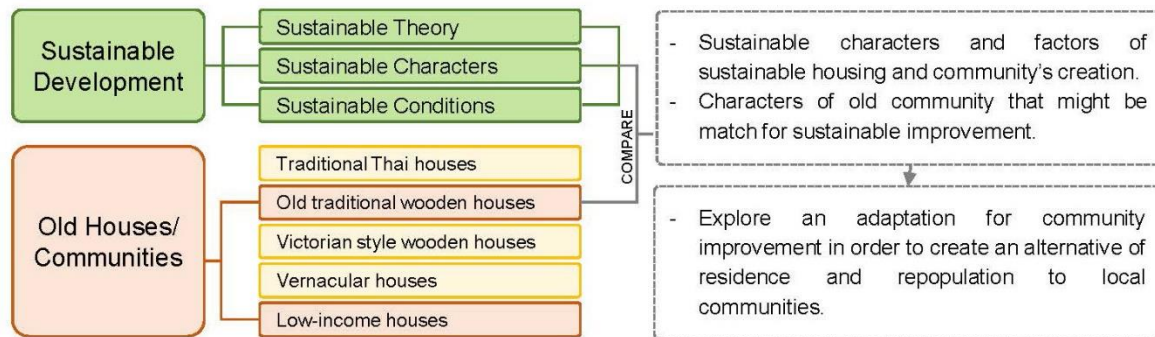
### **Framework of Study**

Housing is one of the basic requirements of human beings. The data collection on the housing sector in Thailand by JICA projects shows that the housing requirements of the whole kingdom of Thailand are approximately 9.3 million units in the year 2030. It will be separated into 3 group of income; low-income

is 3.9 million units, medium-income is 4.2 million units, and high income is 1.2 million units (Saito, Yoshimura, & Nagase, 2013).

There are large numbers of housing requirements for the group of low and medium income people while some old communities contained the same groups, which are at risk of being replaced by a new development and disappear. Is there not an alternative development for old communities?

To answer that question, the framework of this study combines literature research and participatory research to understand the characters of old and sustainable communities as shown in Figure 1.



*Figure 1: Research Framework*

### Condition of the Case Study

The old community chosen for this case study was settled around 1895 in the reign of King Chulalongkorn a hundred years ago (Asawai, 2002). It is a Chinese community that almost completely remains in this area. Their economy was based on the boat sailing for rice other trades (Saetie, 2016). Some conditions may affect the study.

- 1) Most people are half Chinese, the third generation of the original pioneer. Their ages are around 60 to 80 years old.
- 2) Their culture is based on the Chinese tradition, which is noticeable in the settlement.
- 3) Their layout of the settlement is not altered since a hundred years ago except some houses were removed because of the land ownership.
- 4) Many houses were developed keeping their original form and materials except some parts such as roof; the material has been changed from thatched roof to metal sheets.
- 5) The land including this settlement is managed by the Royal Irrigation Department that gives some ambiguity and incomprehension of the stability of their housing; at present, some part of the land is under construction of local roads.

The research has started with a little old community. The research in this section is a comparative study by deduction method. The data collecting is based on participatory observation method through community activities for five years.

## **Principles of Sustainable Housing Communities**

Creating Sustainable communities provides a stable habitat with the suitable environment (Armstrong, 2000). The words “decent environment” not only refers to the design and form of a house or an open space but also considers the social interaction. “Sustainable housing should ensure a better quality of life, not just now but for future generations as well. It should combine protection of the environment, sensible use of natural resources, economic growth and social progress” (Armstrong, 2000). The relationship of neighbors, social interaction and participation are required for the quality life.

Participation is always useful for community empowerment. It is one of the people factors that are important for the social accountability. The sense of living together, community ownership, feeling of being a part of, and contribution to decision making will make a community sustainable (Armstrong, 2000). Along with the participation as a key to strengthening and building sustainable housing communities, energy consumption efficiency, a transportation system that impacts on carbon emission, health and safety should also be on notice. According to the Joseph Rountree Foundation’s report, sustainability problems depend upon social factors, especially social security. Factors include fears for crime (25%), disturbance by dogs (16%), poor leisure facilities (15%), vandalism (14%) and litter (13%) (Edwards, 2000). Obviously, some of these conditions are results from cultural factors or personal behaviors. The chance of crime and poor leisure facilities, however, could be reduced by physical factors such as community’s layout planning.

## **Characters of Sustainable Housing Community**

Sustainable community concerns not just buildings but also the whole environment including site design, road layout, landscape design, density, housing types and social mix, employment opportunities and so forth (Edwards, 2000). For a sustainable building design, consideration must be given to energy efficiency, health and comfort, and design for flexible usage and longevity (Edwards, 2000). Method of construction must be chosen for health, efficient use of resources and ecology. For a reference, the Dutch government has emphasized three key elements for sustainable housing creation since 1990 (Rudlin & Falk, 1999). They are;

- 1) lifecycle impacts of construction on energy, materials, water and land
- 2) improvement to indoor air conditions, especially where health and comfort are concerned
- 3) ecological infrastructure by preservation and creation of habitats to sustain the building

According to the work of David Lock, residential area grows in such manners as urban infill, peripheral expansion, expansion of selected villages, expansion of all villages, and creation of new settlement. A suitable method depends on the economy, the social and environmental condition of each location. There are three levels for sustainable settlements, therefore (Rudlin & Falk, 1999);

- 1) For 750-1000 houses, the location would support a primary school, public transport, and amenities. No workplace is necessary at this level.
- 2) For 3,000-5,000 houses, the location must support a secondary school. Workplace and amenities must support some community populations.
- 3) For 10,000 houses, the location must support 25,000-30,000 populations. There must be sufficient jobs, service, and amenities for all populations. Good public transportation is requested to reduce the number of vehicles and CO<sub>2</sub> emission.

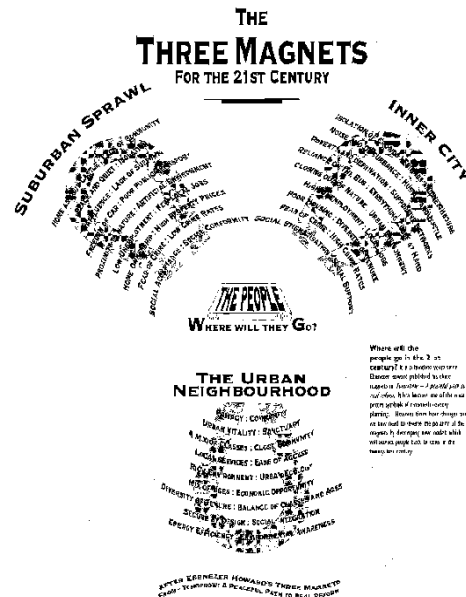
Generally speaking, the following elements would help to create a sustainable housing community (Rudlin & Falk, 1999);

- 1) High density, mix use and diversity of residents
- 2) Integration of land use and transport planning
- 3) Renewable energy supplies such as wind or sun
- 4) Capture of rainfall for water uses
- 5) Use of open space to facilitate social interaction and ecological well-being
- 6) Pollution and waste control policies
- 7) Creation of natural habitats integrated with housing

Also, the linkage of the local workplace, residences, and recreation facilities must be worth consideration.

### **Repopulation and Sustainable Community Creation**

Safety concerns are urging factors to drive people away from a city. The crime rate is the critical indicator of the safety. The existence of crime pushes the people out to suburban areas where the living environment seems safe. Living far away from a city, however, transportation to workplaces and recreational facilities thus increases the numbers of personal vehicles (Rudlin & Falk, 1999). It is recommended to create a sustainable compact city in a more convenient location. Houses, therefore, must be built in an existing city or urban area to reduce the distance of transport. It may also encourage less energy consuming means of transportation such as walking or cycling (Rudlin & Falk, 1999). Transportation is critical as well as other infrastructures such as electric power and water supply, but it is relatively controllable. Investigations suggest that the urban sprawl increases energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emission, which interferes the sustainable developments (Rudlin & Falk, 1999).



Three Magnets for the 21st Century (Rudlin & Falk, 1999).

Figure 2: Three Magnets by Ebenezer Howard and adaptation for the 21st Century

Rudlin and Falk's "Three magnets" principle for the 21st Century seems the same as the original model by Ebenezer Howard. The only difference is that the three magnets of Rudlin and Falk consist of Suburban Sprawl, Inner-city, and the Urban Neighborhood while Ebenezer's consists of County, Town, and Town-Country.

They also described an urban depopulation in the Will Hutton's description. People who live in cities feel struggling and insecure. The study estimated that 30% of them feel insecure, 40% of them feel secure, and the other 30% are exclusions. The higher crime rate in the inner city compared to that in the suburban area seems to create the fear of crime, which encourages people to move to suburbs even though it lacks convenient facilities. Convenient facilities, however, will eventually take people back into the city (Rudlin & Falk, 1999). The urban neighborhood, therefore, would be a good option to create a sustainable community if both convenience and safety can be secured.

### Depopulation in Local Thai Communities

Depopulation in Thailand is entirely different from that in European countries. Even though the government tried the decentralization policy; migration to big cities like Bangkok has not mitigated. The population of urban areas of Bangkok continued to grow. This migration decreased the population in rural communities at the same time.

Depopulation of suburban or rural areas continues since the mode of transportation has changed. Old local communities gradually lost their population as a result of the loss of the waterfront-related industries. The change of transportation damaged their local economy and eventually moved the

location of their settlements.

The distance from transportation causes depopulation and decadence in communities. When the first kingdom was established, people started to settle near water resources. Many of such settlements grew into a community or a town as the water trade prospered. Some towns located near a trade route continued to grow into a city even after the trade route changed from water to road. The old settlements in this case study, however, are located far away from any land transportation routes. Trading centers moved to more convenient locations, and people followed. Some initial communities, therefore, became left behind (Poomchalit, Suzuki, & Suzuki, 2017). The area of this case study, however, somehow remained as it was because its distance from trade routes required anchoring (Saetie, 2016).

The modern industry and economy are additional changing factors. New types of occupations bring in more income than old ones do, and such well-paid jobs only exist in big cities like Bangkok; far away from the original settlements. It caused depopulation in the rural settlements.

A clear example of depopulation and its result has shown in a community located on the Rangsit canal side, located at the edge between Rangsit and Buengyeetho Municipals. By interviewing of oldest people in the village, the settlement had approximately of 100-150 households of traders and their laborers 50 years ago (Saetie, 2016). Moreover, the area of settlement was three times bigger than what it is at present. In 2008, there are approximately 50 houses with 30-35 households. In 2011, only 25 houses remained with 24 households were living. In 2017, the community remains with 25 houses, but only 21 households with 64 dwellers are living. It became almost one-tenth of its original size. Moreover, the community now contains more aging people (26%) and children under 20 years old (22%) than before. The elderly, women, and children tend to stay in their houses during the day while men of working age have gone to work outside the community.

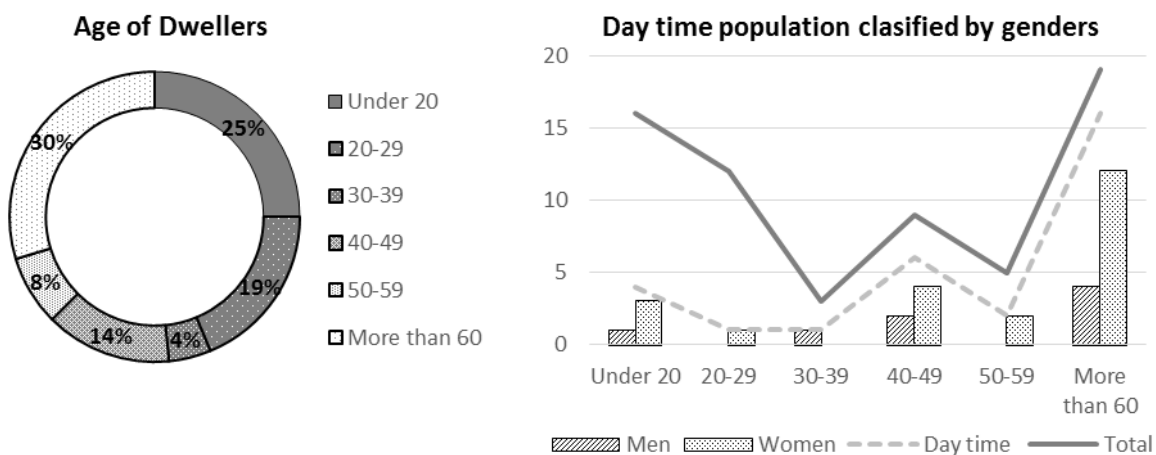


Figure 3: Community's population and Daytime population (diagram by the author, 2017)

The population shown by age groups indicates the depopulation and aging of the community. The overall proportion ratio is 38:37:25 for elderly, working age, and children. During the daytime, however, the

majority of the population becomes elderly people (53.33%) and women (73.33%).

The reasons why so many people moved out from this community were the accessibility to work, insufficient living space for increasing of household members, demand for convenience, and stability of living. These reasons relate to the physical factors such as the location of the village and facilities inside the community. Social factors do not seem to have affected the decision as much.

## **Analysis and Discussion**

In European countries, people have moved out of the cities because of the social factors such as safety. The people have moved to a suburban area that seems to offer a better living environment (Rudlin & Falk, 1999). Migration in Thailand, however, is mainly because of the economy. It drives the people away from local communities and pours them into big cities like Bangkok. Available housing in rural and suburban areas are abandoned even though the overall housing demand is still increasing (Saito, Yoshimura, & Nagase, 2013). Some houses seemed to require maintenance and repair to become usable again, and it may be wasteful to scrap the existing housing resource and build new housing. The old housing may even show valuable models of sustainable living.

## **Social Characters in the Studied Area**

The Public-Sector Effectiveness Index in 2016 described what Thai citizens regard as social security. They require life and properties safety (81.6%), aging people and inability welfare improvement (59.8%), social impartiality (58%), medical treatment cost in private hospital (40.6%) and others (Chareonwongsak, 2016). The safety of their life and properties is the most important issue in Thai society at present. It associates with crime in the community. As the Anomie theory by Robert Merton says, the crime happens when people lack the normal ethical or social standard, which any society may demand. Some sociologists have argued that social change had an impact on crime and that urban societies have a crime-inducing nature (Chantorn, 2015).

The security in Thai communities has been dependent on the close interaction of neighbors. Social changes, urbanization, and migration of people, however, are making it more and more difficult. Even though they have fewer residents in their settlement than before, closely acquainted neighbors can watch each other in their cluster. However, people commute far away from home and spend most of their time for transportation and traffic on top of their working hours away from the neighborhood. They do not have time to get to know their neighbors. In a neighborhood where the residents do not know each other's lifestyle or even the faces, it would be so easy to commit a crime.

What is happening in Thai communities may be typical in any urban areas nowadays. However, rural Thai communities still have flexibility and interaction. Thai society has a mixed culture, and it supports a diversity of living. It, therefore, may be possible to bring the close relationship seen in rural communities into urban ones to enhance the neighborhood safety.

*Table 1: The different character of the urban and rural community (Thavinpipatkul, 1996).*

Character of urban community	Character of rural or local community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anonymity or high individualism</li> <li>- division of labor</li>   <li>- heterogeneity of population</li> <li>- multi of organization and associations</li> <li>- formal interaction</li>   <li>- social status through people appearance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- low individualism</li> <li>- social integration based on similarity</li> <li>- more social interaction</li> <li>- obligingness</li> <li>- closing relationship</li> <li>- flexible or informal rule and norm of coexistence</li> <li>- Social status depends on the respect of the person.</li> </ul>

Most rural communities in Thailand have a participatory character like a big family. The social status of each person helps organization and leadership, and the close relationship among residents in a local community encourages the sense of affiliation. All of these factors were making rural communities sustainable. Humans tend to focus on their group's and intend to protect them (Armstrong, 2000). The sense of affiliation or ownership will motivate people to participate in the community's everyday life (Armstrong, 2000). Then, how can this character of rural communities be transferred to urban or suburban areas to encourage a sustainable development?

We participated in community activities and interviewed residents and other users, and observed the following;

If a group is formed by similar interest and close relationship, it motivates participation and community interaction. Relationships based on biological kinships and beliefs in Chinese and Thai traditions to respect their ancestry can be one motivation to get together. The residents also need to collaborate in their trading activities, on which they rely their life. These shared interests, especially their beliefs, consolidate their bind. Once in a year, the descendants of the community reunite for a ritual, even if some of them have moved away. Some people still have a strong influence on community's decision making as if they are remaining inside. Hope to make their life convenient encourages participation as well. In the study area, they; men, women, children and elderly gathered to repair public facilities such as regardless the conditions like the budget constraint. When it comes to the repairmen of individual houses, however, the budget becomes the first consideration.

Social accountability is another factor to encourage the involvement, which enhances the safety of their life and property. In rural communities, residents have a sense of responsibility and obligation to their community instead of being individualistic. Moreover, the close relationships, respect for each other, and the norm for co-existence help a community to work well with only flexible, informal and unspoken rules without enforcing strict laws. In summary, the characters of this community are;

low individualism	When outsiders visit this community for the first time, even just only walking along the community's walkway, residents always greet them with a smile. Tenants always stay outside their
-------------------	---



houses, talk each other and do activities together such as cleaning common walkway and watering common gardens. They come outside and talk whatever some incident happens because they think they will affect others' lives. Besides looking for the joy to talk, but they are doing so for the responsibility to take care of the community. This interaction occurs among several small groups such as families, age groups or neighbors. Their low individualism gives them chances for participation; they do not miss any occasions to share news, stories of life and opinions about their community and about what is happening outside.

Close relationship	Everybody knows each other and can identify insiders from outsiders, which reduces the risk of crime. Residents often leave without locking their house or covering their property.
Flexible or informal rules and norm of coexistence	People respect unwritten community rules like within a family or relatives. Residents naturally listen to the elders' suggestions or comments even though they are not official leaders.
Obligation or willingness	People are generous and helpful to everyone who walks or rides through this community especially to children. Residents take care of each other; e.g., they can leave their children with a neighbor. The elders protect and take care of younger people.

These characters make this community becomes an intimate place for both the residents and the people who always walk through this community. This sense of community provides safety.

### **Physical Characters of a Sustainable Community**

Physical aspects to create a sustainable community consist of two parts; site and buildings.

#### **Site Factors: Size, Location, Layout, and Accessibility**

Our survey found that the remaining communities' size ranges from tens to about 200 households. Few communities have more than 200 houses. They are much smaller than 750 households, which David Lock referred in his theory (Lock, 2000).

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

*Table 2: The survey of the size of the household of remaining an old community*

Size of Household	Name of communities	Location	Remark
Less than 30	Khlong 3	Rangsit canal, Pathumthani	
	Khlong 13	Rangsit canal, Pathumthani	
30-50	Khlong 7	Khlong hok wa canal, Patumthani	
50-80	Nongchork	Sansaab canal, Bangkok	
	Khlong Suan	Prawetburirom, Chachoengsao	
	Khlong Preng	Prawetburirom, Bangkok	50% living
80-100	Lamsai	Khlong 12, Patumthani	50% living
	Bangplee	Samrong canal, Samutprakarn	Tourist destination
	Hua-take	Prawetburirom, Bangkok	
150-200	Samchuk	Supanburi river, Supanburi	Tourist destination

Location seems to be the key to attract people to a community because the convenient access is one of the most significant decision-makers when they select a home. In Thailand, the transition of the transportation from the waterway to land route affected some communities significantly (Poomchalit, Suzuki, & Suzuki, 2017). Persistence of remaining communities depends on their location. Many existing communities are within a certain distance from the economic or industrial center. Some remaining ones are within 100 meters from a new development, though they do not seem to have much interaction. Persistent communities have common characteristics as follows:

- Having their specific social norms to keep their social security in the community
- Having interaction between old and a new residents' groups
- Being located near the current regional center
- Having good accessibility within the community
- Having businesses and services such as grocery stores and barbershops for everyday needs
- Having open spaces within their community

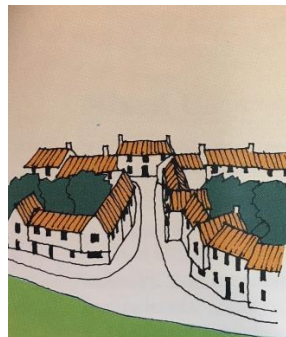
*Table 3: Community characters analysis (By Author)*

	Checklist	K3	K7	LS	HT	BP	SC
Activities	There are abandon less than 20%.	y	y	n	y	y	n/a
	Grocery/ convenient store	Y	y	n	Y	Y	Y
	Food shop/ restaurant	Y	y	y	Y	Y	Y
	Store	n	n	n	y	y	y
	Market within or nearby	n	y	y	y	y	y
	Others	n	y	n	y	y	y
Location	Convenient accessibility	n/a	y	n	Y	Y	Y
	Enough parking lots for dwellers	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n	n/a
	Community pathway promotes walking and biking.	Y	y	n/a	Y	Y	Y
	Location is not far from current community or center.	n/a	y	y	Y	Y	Y
	Open space/ park/ garden within community	Y	n	n	na	na	Y

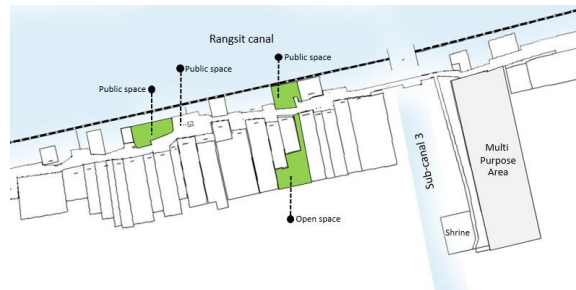
Old communities used to be planned in linear patterns in accordance to the geography that provided transportation and supported the local economy. Different orientations of internal pathway and buildings add spatial interests there (Essex Planning Officer Association, 1997). Suburban examples with cookie-cutter houses lined up on straight streets usually seem unsatisfactory. In the studied community, however, buildings are different in size, shape, height and orientation because of the freedom of each owner, which is adding a non-linear character to streets.



Unsatisfactory Suburbia  
 (Essex Planning Officer Association, 1997)



Urban Pattern (Essex Planning Officer Association, 1997)



Community pattern (Poomchalit, Sanguansap, & Mukasirisuk, 2013).

Figure 4: Character of community layout

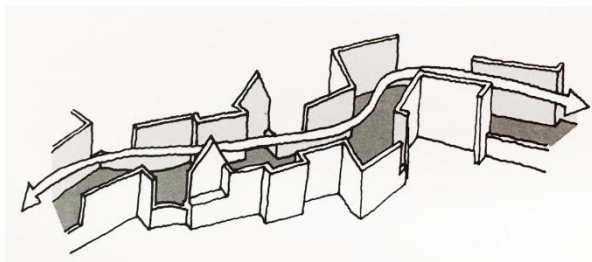


Open space characters (Essex Planning Officer Association, 1997).



Open space in community [photo by the author]

Figure 5: Open space created by shifted orientation of buildings



Suggested pattern for pedestrians' interest  
 (Essex Planning Officer Association, 1997)



A path in the studied community  
 [diagram by the author]

Figure 6: Irregular path orientations

Narrow human-scale pathways are ideal for walking, and they reduce the speed of vehicles driving into the community courtyard. This enables everyone in the community to relax and interact with each other in open spaces. Nowadays, however, various vehicles still go through the 2.00-2.50 meters wide community pathways and endangering residents. This problem must be addressed.

#### Building Factors: Houses and Public Facilities

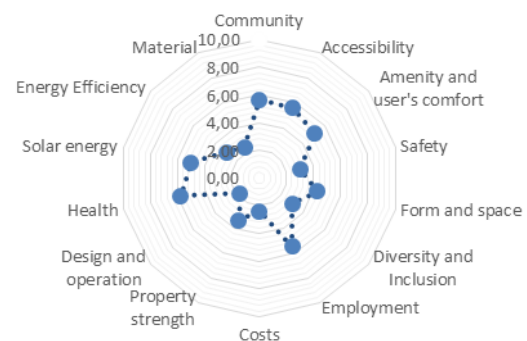
Most residents in this community use their long and narrow houses for their business and occupation. The front area of the houses was originally designed as an entrance hall, but it serves multipurpose, mainly commercial usage. Some original houses retain a small step next to the entrance area. Behind that step is the private space containing a living room, bedrooms, and kitchen. Some houses have many small steps at several positions to separate and identify different functions of the private area at different levels. Bathroom and toilet are added as a part of the house. Such houses with so many steps, however, may not be suitable for elderly people.

We surveyed each house was surveyed and analyzed their characters in different criteria including social, economic, environmental, and natural resources-related (Baez, 2012). The score was scaled from 1 to 10, and the average score of each criterion was described as follow.

Table 4: Character of houses by sustainability criteria

Society (4.72)	Community	5.67
	Accessibility	5.60
	Amenity and user's comfort	5.09
	Safety	3.00
	Form and space	4.27
Economy (3.57)	Diversity and Inclusion	3.00
	Employment	5.47
	Costs	2.40
	Property strength	3.40
Environment (3.78)	Design and operation	1.77
	Health	5.80
Natural Resources (3.49)	Solar energy	5.00
	Energy Efficiency	3.00
	Material	2.47

THE CHARACTERS OF HOUSES  
 THAT SUPPOT SUSTAINABLE.



Adapted from: Adaptive Reuse and Sustainable Community Activation to Increase Urban Green Area (Baez, 2012)

The scores were specific to the opinion of the residents in this community. The result indicates that the people are not satisfied with their built environment, but they are relatively happy about their community, accessibility, employment, and amenity and user's comfort. Another data shows that the dwellers want to improve their houses and community facilities. The most urgent need of people is to reduce the cost of the energy usage. Using natural light and ventilation may reduce it.

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

*Table 5: Checklist for living requirement further.*

Functions	Description	+09	+95	+97	+99	+03	+05	+07	+13	+15	+19	+21	+23	+27	+31	+33
Entrance and Entrance hall	Remove step or level.								●							
	Add more height of level.	●														
	Add more lighting.			●			●		●				●			●
	Easier maintenance materials.					●			●				●			
	Heat reducing	●		●		●	●		●			●	●		●	●
	More ventilation			●					●			●	●		●	●
	Remove step or level.					●			●							
	Add more height of level.															
	Add more lighting.			●	●	●	●		●		●					●
	Easier maintenance materials.								●							
Hall or living area	Heat reducing		●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●		●	●
	More ventilation		●	●	●	●	●		●			●	●		●	●
	Remove step or level.															
	Add more height of level.															
Bedroom	Add more lighting.	●	●	●	●	●			●				●			●
	Easier maintenance materials.				●											
	Adjust for more convenient size			●	●	●	●				●				●	●
	Make room or more privacy			●			●								●	●
	Heat reducing	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●		●	●
	More ventilation	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●		●	●
	Air condition		●												●	
	Toilet/ bathroom				●											
	Remove step or level.												●			
	Add more height of level.					●	●						●			
Kitchen	Add more lighting.												●			
	Easier maintenance materials.			●							●		●		●	
	Adjust for more convenient size			●					●		●		●		●	
	More ventilation			●		●	●		●		●		●			
	Adjust for more convenient size	●	●	●	●	●			●		●		●			●
Toilet/ bathroom	More convenient usage	●		●	●	●			●		●	●	●		●	●
	More ventilation	●		●	●	●	●		●		●		●		●	●
	Air condition	●	●										●		●	●
Facilities	Water supply		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●
	Water drainage system	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Community lighting	●	●	●	●	●		●			●		●	●	●	●
	Others				●			●					●	●	●	●

Furihata Hironobu has proposed that his renovation plan to remove unnecessary functions and make the house smaller would improve old houses. Modern functions of toilet and kitchen with water supply as well as good ventilation should be added to guarantee a comfortable and convenient life, however. This kind of renovation would be useful for present and future living while keeping the feeling and atmosphere of old living (Furihata, 2014).

Most people indeed request the modern water supply and drainage to continue living in an old house. The drainage especially is critical for the well-being of the residents.

Room layout may be rearranged. In case a house does not have enough space to cover the increasing number of family, someone must go out and rent a room nearby. Carefully planned room layout may help this situation without increasing the area of the house.

### ***Materials for Houses***

Houses in this community are made of wood. We observed the community during the day and found that residents are more often doing their daily activities inside the house than outside. Although there is heat transmission from the heated up metal sheets on the roof, the temperature inside the house is still lower than outside because wooden material absorbs the heat.

Wood is one of renewable raw material. Many researchers proved that the air quality inside the room covered with wooden materials is better than that of other materials because wood is hygroscopic. It can significantly increase the effective rate of ventilation. That is why the feeling temperature inside the house is lower than outside (Salovaara & Simonson, 2017). The house redecoration with wood or wood-based materials may create a better environment for living, as well as reducing the cost of energy cost, which is one the residents' biggest concerns.

### **Conclusion**

A sustainable community is not just made by the tangible elements but also by the social system. The close relationship within the community develops common understandings by residents about their everyday life, which was easier in old communities than nowadays. A sustainable community requires both safety and quality of living environment. A livable neighborhood and facilities to bring comfort are keys for the improvement. People who respect the community there will make a livable neighborhood. The community, therefore, must provide convenient facilities to provide the basic but enough utility to retain people in the neighborhood. The appearance of buildings and surrounding areas are also important to attract people. In the small community in this case study, a strong social system within a community seemed to help the reform the community. The requirements are;

- The pathway is an important element to create a safe and enjoyable environment for living. It must be designed considering the convenience of public usage and the visual characteristics of the neighborhood.
- The shifted position and orientation of houses, as well as the diversity of building design, may be kept to create a variety of public open spaces for diverse usage.
- Houses must equip with basic necessary facilities; water supply and drainage are the most

important elements.

- The design of the facilities must match the spatial character of the community, and their function must be determined according to the habits of its residents.
- Housing plan should take the natural light and ventilation into consideration especially for the long and narrow layout of old waterfront houses. It will save the energy cost, which many residents are concerned about. In case old houses are not strong enough to bear the load of additional facilities; their structure must be reinforced. Such structural design and supporting materials should be studied further.

## References

- Armstrong, H. (2000). Sustainable and housing: the government view. In *Sustainable Housing Principle & Practice* (1st ed., pp. 1–6). New Fetter Lane, London: E & FN Spon.
- Asawai, S. (2002). Thanyaburi City. In *100 Years of Thanyaburi City. Thanyaburi* (1st ed.). Thanyaburi District Administration.
- Baez, M. P. (2012, February). *Adaptive Reuse and Sustainable Community Activation to Increase Urban Green Area*. Kyoto Institute of Technology, Kyoto, Japan.
- Chantorn, P. (2015). *The practice of The Prevention and Suppression of Crime in The Responsible Area of Bangpongpan Police Station*. Rangsit University.
- Chareonwongsak, K. (2016, August 27). "Safety in life and property" ... The most requirement for people to the government. | Bangkok today [News]. Retrieved April 27, 2017, from <http://bangkok-today.com/web/%e0%b8%84%e0%b8%a7%e0%b8%b2%e0%b8%a1%e0%b8%9b%e0%b8%a5%e0%b8%ad%e0%b8%94%e0%b8%a0%e0%b8%b1%e0%b8%a2%e0%b9%83%e0%b8%99%e0%b8%a%e0%b8%b5%e0%b8%a7%e0%b8%b4%e0%b8%95%e0%b9%81%e0%b8%a5%e0%b8%b0/>
- Edwards, B. (2000). Sustainable housing: architecture, society, and professionalism. In *Sustainable Housing Principle & Practice* (1st ed., pp. 12–35). New Fetter Lane, London: E & FN Spon.
- Essex Planning Officer Association. (1997). *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed-Use Areas*. England: Essex County Council and Essex Planning Officer Association.
- Furihata, H. (2014). *Reconstruction of Private houses* (7th ed.). Tokyo: Toppan Printing Co. Ltd.
- Howard, E. (n.d.) *Garden Cities of tomorrow*. Retrieved May 15, 2017, from <http://urbanplanning.library.cornell.edu/DOCS/howard.htm>
- Lock, D. (2000). Housing and transport. In *Sustainable Housing Principle & Practice* (1st ed., pp. 1–6). New Fetter Lane, London: E & FN Spon.
- Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. (2015, December). *Housing Development Strategies*. Office of Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.
- National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB). (2001). *The National Economic and Social Development issue 9th*. Office of National Economic and Social Development, Kingdom of Thailand. Retrieved from [http://www.nesdb.go.th/ewt\\_dl\\_link.php?nid=378](http://www.nesdb.go.th/ewt_dl_link.php?nid=378)
- National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB). (2016). *The National Economic and Social Development issue 12th*. Office of National Economic and Social Development, Kingdom of Thailand. Retrieved from [http://www.nesdb.go.th/ewt\\_dl\\_link.php?nid=6422](http://www.nesdb.go.th/ewt_dl_link.php?nid=6422)
- Poomchalit, W., Sanguansap, P., & Mukasirisuk, P. (2013). *Design Guidelines to Minimize Conflicts between the Royal Irrigation Department and Nueng Satawas Community: A Case Study of Flood Barrier Construction along Rangsit Canal (Research)*. Patumthani: Faculty of Architecture, Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi.

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

- Poomchalit, W., Suzuki, K., & Suzuki, A. (2017). *The Relationship Between the Spatial Developments and the Change of Wooden-Houses in Original Settlements in the Expansion Suburban Area of Bangkok*. Presented at the 2017 Workshop on Urban Planning and Management, Sophia University, Tokyo.
- Rudlin, D., & Falk, N. (1999). *Building the 21st Century Home* (1st ed.). Oxford, England: A division of Reed Educational and Professional Publishing Ltd.
- Saetie, H. (2016, September). *History of Khlong Sam Community*
- Saito, A., Yoshimura, H., & Nahase, Y. (2013). *The Data Collection Survey on Housing sector in Thailand, 2013* (Final Report) (p. 164). Bangkok, Thailand: National Housing Authority, Kingdom of Thailand. Retrieved from [http://open\\_jicareport.jica.go.jp/pdf/1000013801.pdf](http://open_jicareport.jica.go.jp/pdf/1000013801.pdf)
- Salonvaara, M., & Simonson, C. (2017). *Indoor Air Quality in A Wooden House*.
- Thavinpipatkul, D. (1996). *Urbanization and social change in developing countries* (1st ed.). Bangkok, Thailand: Chulalongkorn University Publishing.



## **Architecturally Analyzing Thai Concept of 'Home' Under Mid-19th Century Modernization By The Royal Regime: Hybridization And Architecture Of New Road In Bangkok**

**Prapapuyenyong, Teerapatt**

**Marcello, Flavia**

**QuocPhuong Dinh**

Swinburne University of Technology

Faculty of Health, Art and Design

Interior Architecture

Australia

---

### **Abstract**

In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Western colonization expanded through Southeast Asia. Many cities in the region were largely influenced by the Western colonialism. However, for Bangkok, it was not under any colonial powers. This was due to the 'flexible strategy', which was modernization by the royal regime led by Rama IV (1851-1868). The king intended to preserve the independence of Siam (Thailand) and the Thai identity. Thus, Bangkok began to transform from a 'sacred-aquatic' to 'modern-terrestrial' city under the dominance of Thai monarchy.

Conceptually, this paper examines the origins and change to Thai idea of 'Home' within the geo-cultural space of Bangkok in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. It looks at the existential space (geo-cultural space) of Bangkok via mean of architecture and urban morphology, to see how changes to building design contributed to shifts in the Thai concept of 'Home'. This paper adapts some aspects of 'Home'/'Place' theory as a framework to first analyses how the Thais (*phrai*) understood 'Home'. Then, the paper looks at how *phrai* began to hybridize their concept of 'Home' under the process of modernization in Bangkok.

This article looks at the establishment and architectural changes in New Road as a paradigmatic case study to analyses the hybridized Thai concept of 'Home'. New Road is an important site for this research because it was one of the first architectural representation created by Rama IV to promote Bangkok as a modern city.

**Keywords:** Architecture, Bangkok, Geo-Cultural Space, Modernisation, New Road, Royal Regime, Thai-Self

### Thai-self: Physical Change and Hybridization

Conceptually, in the existential space of Bangkok, the process of hybridisation in the Thai concept of 'Home' (Thai-self) under modernization was different from other parts of the world. It was influenced by the process of 'internal colonization' – modernization by the royal regime, following by the Western expansion in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. This cultural phenomenon happened when the Thai monarch, Rama IV (1851-1868), wanted to preserve the independence of Siam (present-day Thailand) and Thai identity by the 'flexible strategy', which was partly the 'political resistance' to the West. However, at the same time, it also reached a compromise to the Western dominance in Southeast Asia.

Rama IV commanded to build the first modern road called *thanon charoen krung* or New Road to reimage Bangkok as a modern city in the eyes of the West, and exemplify the superiority of Bangkok as the modern capital of Siam. However, the development of road architecturally and conceptually transformed the existential space of Bangkok from being 'sacred-aquatic' to 'modern-terrestrial'. This changed the way *phrai* dwelled in Bangkok so as the Thai concept of 'Home'. What is the Thai concept of 'Home' (Thai-self) and how did it start to hybridize as a response to modernity? This paper will discuss and analyses changes in architecture and urban morphology of Bangkok by using an existential<sup>162</sup> approach. It reveals how *phrai* architecturally existed (dwelled) on the landscape and waterscape of Bangkok, and how such existence began to be architecturally hybridised as the result of the development of the first modern road in Bangkok, New Road.

### Thai-self: Architectural Language and the Existential Condition of Being

How can the Thai concept of 'Home' be discussed in architectural sense? In his book: *Concept of Dwelling*, Norberg-Schulz suggested that one of many ways in understanding human existence is looking at the architectural reflection, which is the 'language of architecture'. Furthermore, Norberg-Schulz referred the importance of language to Heidegger's statement, in which said: language contains the reality of everything, it is the "house of being"<sup>163</sup>. Thus, the meaning of language in the sense of architecture reflects the state-of-mind – concept of 'Home', which represents how human use architecture to manifest themselves in the world. As Norberg-Schulz applied the word of Heidegger that was written "discourse (language) is existentially equiprimordial (existing together equally) with state-of-mind and understanding" to claim this<sup>164</sup>. It can be architecturally read through the four modes of dwelling (settlement, urban space, public and private dwellings). This idea can be further discussed through the language of architecture, includes in the case of existential space and architecture in Bangkok. Understanding how *phrai* existed in Bangkok is looking at the language of architecture includes the change to see how it reflected the way *phrai* understood and existed (dwelled) on the landscape of Bangkok

Moreover, the language of architecture or the architectural reflection of human existence is different

---

<sup>162</sup> See glossary

<sup>163</sup> Heidegger, M. (1977). *"Letter on Humanism"* in Basic Writings, New York.

<sup>164</sup> Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and Time*. United States, HarperCollins Publishers Inc: p.203.

from the language we speak. The language of architecture does not depend on the system of 'code'<sup>165</sup>. The language in this system only serves to communicate function not revealing the human existence. It does not explain the whole of reality of everything as its nature as 'house of being'. Heidegger furthermore defined that the language of reality (the language of architecture) should express the 'words' of truth, to reveal and reflect something which is hidden<sup>166</sup>. It is the word that reflects how human dwells poetically in the world, as "poetry is what really lets us dwell"<sup>167</sup>. Therefore, in the context of this research, looking at the language of architecture (morphology, topology and typology) and change reveals the intangible aspects of built form such as the Thai concept of 'Home'.

### **Theoretical Framework: The Architectural Reflection of Being Thai-Self in the Existential Space of Bangkok**

Philosophically, being Thai-self is the metaphysic – a condition beyond the physical world, whereby *phrai* use collective buildings to interpret their being-in-the-world (Thai existence)<sup>168</sup>. It is a branch of human geography which is the study of how *phrai* connected to the landscape of Bangkok<sup>169</sup>. Furthermore, it focuses on how *phrai* consciously and unconsciously experience a place through their bodily movement, which forms the architectural system in their settlement. Hence, the philosophy of being-self is also apparent in phenomenology – the movement of *phrai* which reflects their existence<sup>170</sup>. Consequently, the appearance of being Thai-self from the collective buildings conceptually creates the existential space of Bangkok. It consists of four modes of dwelling: settlement, urban space (street level), public and private dwellings<sup>171</sup>. Thus, the relationship between being-self and existential space is dialectical because they need each other to exist<sup>172</sup>.

Furthermore, the existential space is the skeleton for Thai being-self (Thai concept of 'Home') to exist, which is reflected in the arrangement and orientation of buildings in relation to the landscape<sup>173</sup>. So, existential space in Bangkok constituted different architectural identifications according to the aquatic-terrestrial condition. The Thai concept of 'Home' has two aspects: orientation and identification. The orientation was how *phrai* architecturally locate themselves in Bangkok by the arrangement of buildings and the manipulation of landscape. It gave the architectural direction for *phrai* to exist (dwell) to express their identification. It was the reflection of being Thai-self through the medium of

---

<sup>165</sup> Broadbent, G., Bunt, R., Jencks, C. (1980). *Signs, symbols, and architecture*, Wiley.

<sup>166</sup> Norberg-Schulz, C. (1985). *The Concept of Dwelling: On the way of figurative architecture*. the United States of America, Rizzoli International Publication, INC: p.111.

<sup>167</sup> Heidegger, M. (2001). "Poetically Man Dwells," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, HarperCollins: p.218.

<sup>168</sup> Heidegger, M., & Krell, D. F. (1993). *Basic Writings*: HarperCollins, pp.93-6.

<sup>169</sup> Cresswell, T. (2004). *Place: A Short Introduction*: John Wiley and Son Ltd.

<sup>170</sup> Relph, E. (1976). *place and placeness*. 207 Brondesbury Park, London NM2 5JN: Pion Limited, chapter 2.

<sup>171</sup> Norberg-Schulz, C. (1985). *The Concept of Dwelling: On the way of figurative architecture*. the United States of America, Rizzoli International Publication, INC

<sup>172</sup> Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The Production Of Space*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishers.

<sup>173</sup> Norberg-Schulz, C. (1985). *The Concept of Dwelling: On the way of figurative architecture*. the United States of America, Rizzoli International Publication, INC.

architecture<sup>174</sup>. Obviously, architecture in the landscape of Bangkok was the medium or demonstrator that speaks out of the existence of *phrai* in the existential space. Therefore, the Thai existence in this sense interpreted the Thai-self through the language of architecture. So, how did *phrai* create the Thai concept of 'Home' (Thai-self) in the context of Bangkok and Thai culture? How did they reflect their existential space through architecture design of Bangkok?

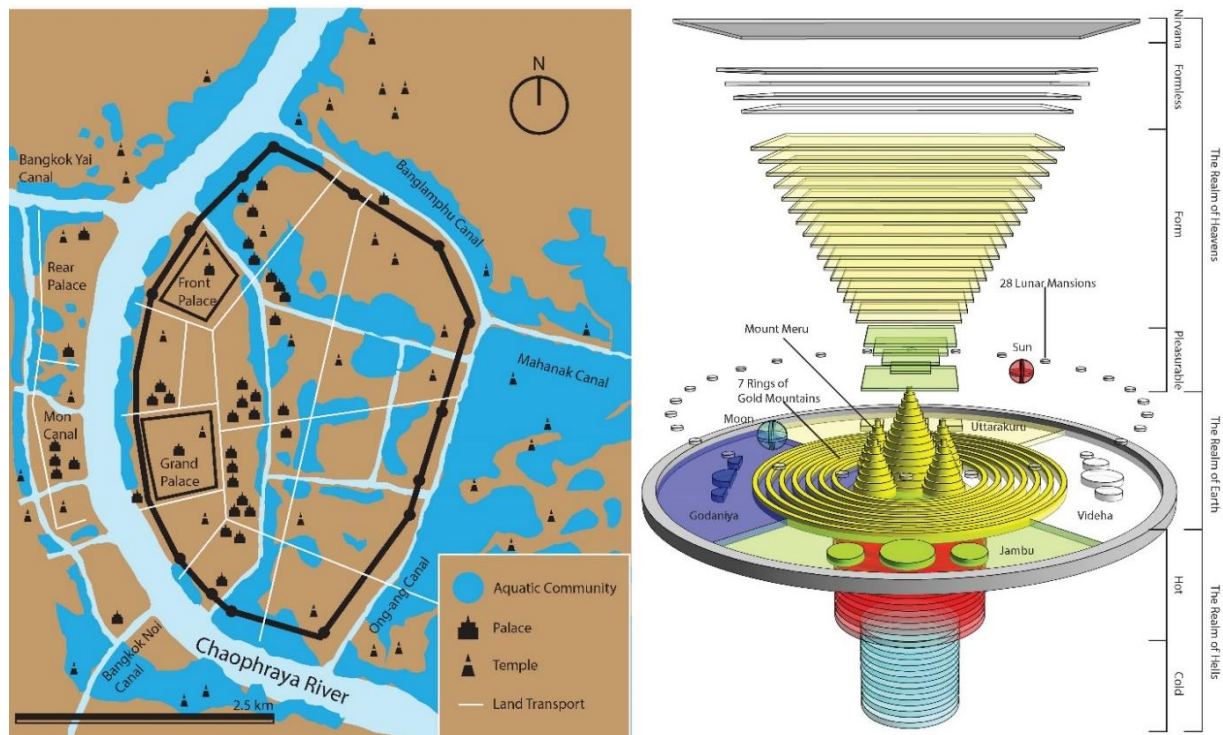


Figure 1: The Plan of 'Sacred-Aquatic' Bangkok according to the Hindu-Buddhist Cosmological Model.

Source: Produced by the Author.

Figure 1 illustrated that the city planning of Bangkok was apparently connected to Hindu-Buddhist cosmological model. From 1782 the political position of Bangkok under the traditional reigns of Rama I (1782-1809), Rama II (1809-1824) and Rama III (1824-1851), the Kings' intention was to restore the glory of Ayutthaya through strict adherence to the Hindu-Buddhist cosmology<sup>175</sup>.

As shown in figure 1, Rattanakosin Island, the walled area, conceptually represented the sacred Mount Meru and its surrounding land, where the aristocratic class lived. The network of *klong* surrounding the island stood for the infinite ocean, or for the world of water, where the *phrai* lived in the aquatic settlement such as stilt and floating houses. Culturally, the sacred island of Rattanakosin on the eastern side of Chao Phraya River was the space of divinity and celestial beings (or *phumibun*). Geographically, Rattanakosin Island existed from the construction of *klong*. It was physically outlined from the city main

<sup>174</sup> Norberg-Schulz, C. (1985). *The Concept of Dwelling: On the way of figurative architecture*. the United States of America, Rizzoli International Publication, INC: pp.23-5.

<sup>175</sup> Baker, C., & Phongpaichit, P. (2005). *A History of Thailand*. China: Cambridge University Press, pp.26-7.

*klong* (*banglamphu*). It was dredged from the north to south on the eastern side of the island when Bangkok settled. From the foundation of Bangkok throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *phrai* expanded the network of *klong* to increase the population and rice production. It constituted the image of Bangkok as 'sacred-aquatic' because Bangkok was a sacred city while it was the sprawl of aquatic communities<sup>176</sup>. Thus, *klong* was the crucial urban element of 'sacred-aquatic' Bangkok. It was the aquatic settlement for *phrai* to live, the geographical symbol that made the Rattanakosin Island existed and the main transportation route from Bangkok, which *phrai* used for trading with outside world<sup>177</sup>.

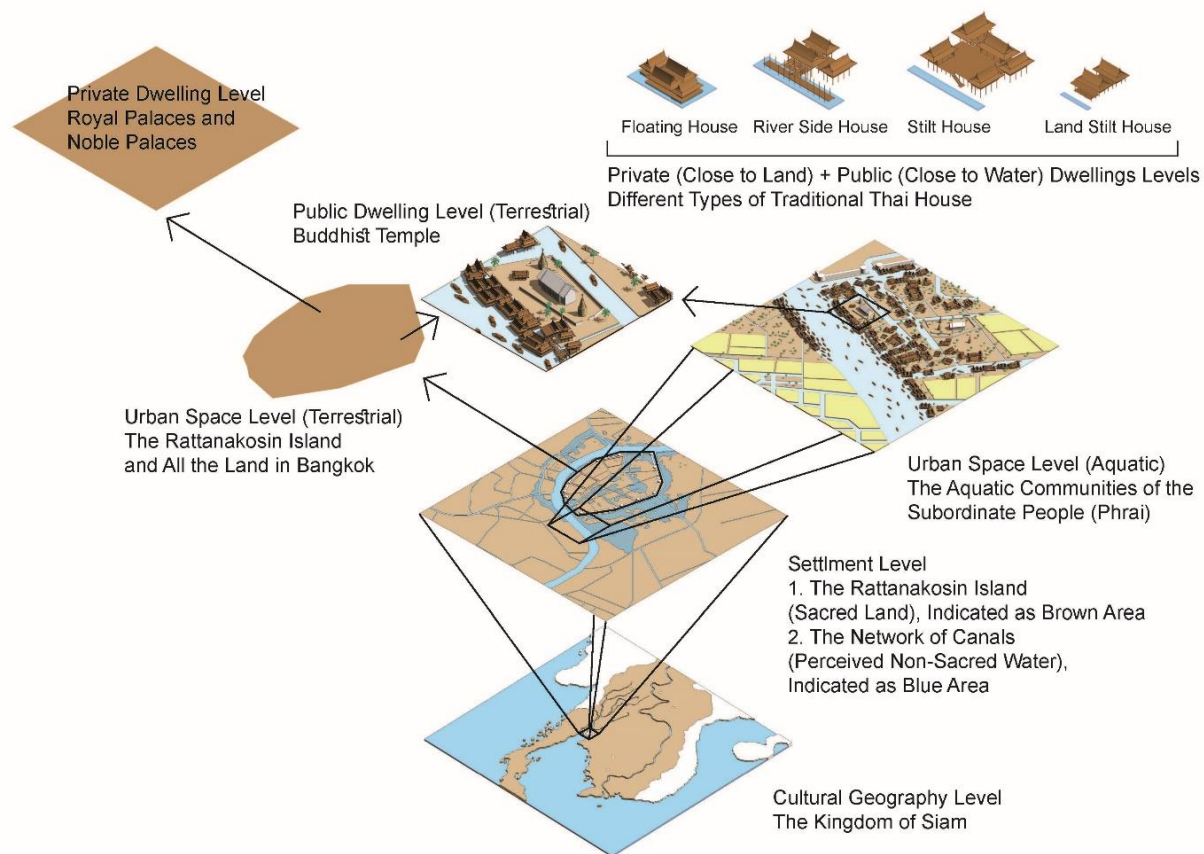


Figure 2: The Architectural Reflection of Existential Space in 'Sacred-Aquatic' Bangkok.

Source: Produced by the Author.

Culturally, the ambiguous settlements of land and water reflected a sense of uncertainty. Living the aquatic settlement consequently brought the instability to the *phrai*'s everyday life. This made them believe that the instability was created by unseen force such as those from ghost or *phi*. They suspended that the supernatural power was behind the unpredictable events and phenomenon such as flooding,

<sup>176</sup> Askew, M. (2002). *Bangkok: Place, practice and representation*. 11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE: Routledge, pp.15-22.

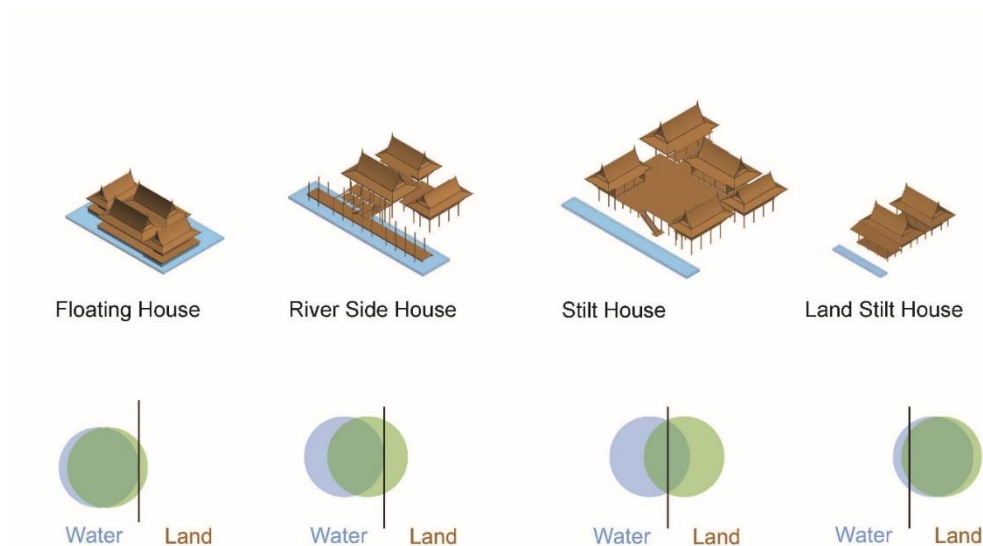
<sup>177</sup> Askew, M. (2002). *Bangkok: Place, practice and representation*. 11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE: Routledge, pp.26-9.

plague and bad luck. Thus, it made *phrai* believed that their life in the future would be better, if they conduct worshipping to gain the spiritual protection. Regarding architecture, they used the hierarchy to sanctify their place, whereby making some spaces higher than other areas. On the top space, they performed a series of ceremonies to embrace the sacredness and auspiciousness as sacred space<sup>178</sup>. Therefore, when *phrai* settled on the landscape of Bangkok, it culturally influenced them to exist (dwell) in the overlapping settlements of non-sacred water and sacred land, as architecturally visualized on figure 2. It shown a distinctive feature of the existential space in Bangkok as manifested in the dual settlement of water and land, which overlapped and shared the Buddhist temple as a meeting place. The morphology of the human settlement in Bangkok created the hierarchical topology of land and water. However, these two distinctive settlements of water and land were also overlapping, which also can be interpreted as the flexible topology. Consequently, the co-existences of hierarchy and flexibility constituted the typology of 'self-paradox' – *phrai* existed on the landscape of Bangkok with the conflict. The urban space of dual settlements in Bangkok as shown in figure 2 seemed to present more aquatic character. In fact, the aquatic and terrestrial settlements integrated via the network of *klong*. This brought human life from water and land settlements together by mean of amphibious architecture: floating and stilt houses and religious spaces. People from water-based settlement could go to the ground to attend the social and religious events in the Buddhist temple. While, in the aquatic settlement, *phrai* occasionally turned their houses to be like the religious building, where they paid homage to the household spirit (*phi reun*) – the domestic sacredness that spiritually protected them from misfortune. This reflected the morphology of overlapping spaces between earthy and sacred beings, which made the topology has two different concepts of dwelling. There was the hierarchy of water and land, but people from water could transit to land, which represented the flexibility that turns their houses to be sacred. As a result, it reflected the typology of co-existence between two contradictory beings in the settlements of non-sacred water and sacred land.

---

<sup>178</sup> Karnchanaporn, N. (2009). *Fear and Domestic Architecture: A Cultural Phenomenon with Reference to Thai Domestic Architecture*. VDM Verlag Dr. Muller Aktiengesellschaft & Co. KG, pp.96-7.

### *Semi-Private and Public in the Traditional Thai House*



Thai Houses have different degrees of public (indicated as blue) and privacy (indicated as green), and relationships to the land.

*Figure 3: The Diagram Illustrated the overlapping of private and public spaces of the traditional Thai houses.*

*Source: Produced by the Author.*

Figure 3 illustrated that the overlapping of water and land livings also happened at the building level. *Phrai* did not distinguish between private and public buildings, they understood them as the same thing. They could manipulate the space usage of their houses between being domestic and commerce or even sacred to suit different situations. As the translated texts of Tiptus and Bongsadadt in English from the book: *Houses in Bangkok* stated

“(stilt and floating) houses in the early Bangkok did not only function for the domestic purpose. They were also occupied with various and different activities. Thai people utilised them for doing the daily life activities, welcoming the foreign visitors, doing the domestic businesses; on the floating houses, doing the domestic industry, working on the administrations like the office, treating and healing people like the hospital, teaching like the school, printing books like the publisher, practicing the worshipping like the prayer room, conducting a case like the court, imprisoning the suspects like the jail, and performing the entertainments like the theatre; playing shows and instruments”<sup>179</sup>.

This description suggested the informality and flexibility in the Thai dwelling. *Phrai* were capable of

<sup>179</sup> Tiptus, P. and M. Bongsadadt (1982). *Houses in Bangkok: Characters and Changes during the last 200 years (1782 A.D.-1982 A.D.)*. Chulalongkorn University, Research Affairs Office: p.28.



adapting their houses to different contexts. However, there was a formal public building, Buddhist temple. It belonged to the terrestrial settlement. Sometimes, *phrai* occupied the Buddhist temple for the religious and social purposes<sup>180</sup>. Thus, in this sense, the Buddhist temple became a public building, which was shared by both people from the water and land.

Therefore, for *phrai*, the definitions of private and public spaces were equally the same. For them, the house or *baan* was for domestic and commercial activities. Thus, its meaning was cultivating life to make the place full of interactions of different activities<sup>181</sup>. Spiritually, they made their house alive via the construction rite and applied hierarchy for protection, whereby the house owner and specialists performing the Hindu-Buddhist ceremonies during the house construction. It was the process of visualizing the miniature image of the universe in Thai culture. It was where the Thai 'daily life' took place; it reflected the process of how *phrai* manifested their existence in the world<sup>182</sup>.

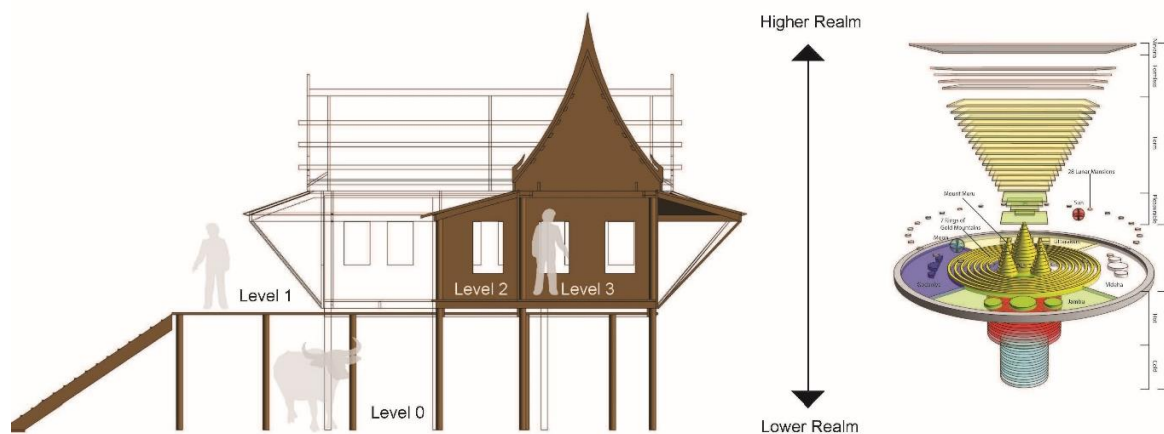


Figure 4: The Section of Traditional Thai House Shows Different Floor Levels as related to the Hindu-Buddhist Cosmological Model.

Source: Produced by the Author.

House structures reflect how *phrai* dwelled on the landscape of Bangkok inspired by the Hindu-Buddhist cosmological model (figure 4). Topologically, the house was vertically divided into three parts: the top (level 2/3) symbolizes the divine realm, the middle symbolizes the human world (level 1) and lowest symbolizes the underworld (ground). The roof symbolises heaven. They raised the house's structure higher than the ground or water level to signify that they are living higher and closer to the divine realm. The center of the house or its most inner space was located on the most top floor and was a sacred

<sup>180</sup> Jumsei, S. (1988). *Naga: Cultural Origins in Siam and the West Pacific*: OUP South East Asia, p.35.

<sup>181</sup> Karnchanaporn, N. (2009). *Fear and Domestic Architecture: A Cultural Phenomenon with Reference to Thai Domestic Architecture*. VDM Verlag Dr. Muller Aktiengesellschaft & Co. KG, p.96.

<sup>182</sup> Bachelard, G. (1994). *The poetics of Space*. Boston, Ma, United States, Beacon Press.



space for the worship of household ghost (*phi reun*). It is reserved for the small shrine (*saanphaphum*), or for placing sacred objects like the Buddha statue, the ancestor's shrines, or other magical items<sup>183</sup>. *Phrai* occupied the lower floors for daily activities such as sleeping, eating, playing, performing, meeting, etc. Thus, when compare to the existential space, the higher level symbolically stands for the sacred land or *Rattanakosin* Island, while the lower floor symbolically stands for the non-sacred water or the network of *klong*. This once again, suggests that the traditional Thai house interpreted the typology of 'self-paradox' between flexibility and hierarchy.

### **Thai Concept of 'Home' (Thai-Self): Being with the Paradox**

As suggested earlier, the Thai concept of 'Home' (Thai-self) was constructed from the paradox of flexibility and hierarchy. So, it reflected that *phrai* existed on the landscape of Bangkok with the contradiction and complexity. They created a complex boundary. The inner border of *klong*, which divided the ruling class in the land from the ordinary people from the water. The outer periphery of the limit of the network of *klong* to distinguish between being inside and outside Bangkok. Also, *phrai* performed the Hindu-Buddhist ceremonies to make the city and their houses sacred representing the historical continuity linking back to Ayutthaya, the previous capital of Thailand. On the other hand, within the compound boundary of Bangkok, *phrai* connected the terrestrial and aquatic settlements by the connectivity of *klong*, which allowed people from land and water to interact occasionally via the Buddhist temple. Ultimately, it reflected that the Thai existence was the paradox of two things but with the harmonious hierarchy. *Phrai* needed two paradoxical things to make them existed in Bangkok as being Thai-self. *Phrai* could express one character, which was very opposite from another character that they had. It made the way *phrai* architecturally existed in Bangkok interesting to discuss. So, how did *phrai* start to adapt and hybridize the Thai concept of Home (Thai-self) to modernity? Could they still preserve the ability in managing the difference between the Thai tradition and modernity?

### **The Influence of Western Colonization on Architecture of Bangkok**

During the growth of Bangkok from 1782 until the 1850s, there was a significant number of Chinese migrants who settled, worked and established businesses linking to China thus boosting the city's economy. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the primary industry of Bangkok was rice production to export to China and other parts of the world. As a result, it stimulated the expansion of the network of *klong* and the growth of Chinese descendant population or Sino-Thai; they came from the marriages between the local people (*phrai*) and Chinese migrants. Thus, the coming of Chinese immigration developed the economy, created a new population group and expanded the network of *klong*<sup>184</sup>. This change to society developed a new urban culture of the middle class, which was influenced by the influx of trading with the outside world, especially the West. Thus, the rise of Sino-Thai from the inter-marriage of *phrai* and Chinese was

---

<sup>183</sup> Waterson, R. (2010). *The Living House: An Anthropology of Architecture in South-East Asia*. Boston, United States, Tuttle Publishing: p.180.

<sup>184</sup> Askew, M. (2002). *Bangkok: Place, practice and representation*. 11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE: Routledge, pp.29-30.

one of many factors that stimulated the hybridity in the Thai concept of 'Home' in terms of demographic. The winds of change came to Bangkok in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century when colonization grew aggressively across the globe, including Southeast Asia. Many cities in the region were westernized. Although Bangkok was never under Western rule, the royal regime under Rama IV began to a kind self-Westernation by modernizing the city<sup>185</sup>. Rama IV did this to secure the independence of Siam and the Thai identity as a part of his 'flexible strategy'. The King wanted to reach a compromise with the Western colonisation, while, at the same, he wanted to politically resist to the invasion of the West<sup>186</sup>. Thus, this tension inspired Rama IV to modernize Bangkok, make it more 'western' and make the city to be a part of the new global economy. Also, the Bowring Treaty that was signed in 1855 was another threat that influenced Bangkok to open itself to the world via Britain colonial network. So, the British could come to Bangkok and freely do businesses. It indirectly brought modern technology and the idea of modern city to Bangkok. This event aided the realisation of Rama IV's vision to start transforming Bangkok from being 'sacred-aquatic' to 'modern-terrestrial'. Making a huge impact on how *phrai* dwelled between land and water and was a determining factor, along with the influence of the growing Sino-Thai middle class in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and their Thai concept of 'Home'<sup>187</sup>.



Figure 5: The Street View of New Road in the Mid-19th Century.

Source: <http://teakdoor.com/Gallery/albums/userpics/26751/1912-charoen-krung-road.jpg>

Bangkok's New Road is the architectural and urban evidence of Rama IV's first phase of modernization. It was the first modern road with the row of Chinese shop-houses located in the south-east area of Rattanakosin Island. This first modern road was named as *thanon charoen krung* or New Road. The

<sup>185</sup> King, R. (2012). *Reading Bangkok*. Singapore: Singapore University Press, pp.43-5.

<sup>186</sup> Baker, C., & Phongpaichit, P. (2005). *A History of Thailand*. China: Cambridge University Press, pp.47-52.

<sup>187</sup> Askew, M. (2002). *Bangkok: Place, practice and representation*. 11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE: Routledge, pp.27-9.

Chinese shop-houses were built to create mass housing idea and multi-purpose buildings; they contained two storeys with the approximate width of four meters and the approximate depth of fifteen metres. The plan was divided into frontages of about six metres. The function of the buildings was versatile. The ground floor was for commercial uses; shop, office, warehouse and on the upper floor was for domestic activities.

They lacked basic sanitation (toilets, fires escapes, and air ventilation). After, the construction of modern road, travelers in Bangkok moved around by the Chinese style rickshaws, which were similar to those in Singapore and Hong Kong<sup>188</sup>. The first group of people who lived in the Chinese shop-houses were the new Sino-Thai middle class. They usually used for the commercial purpose on the ground floor, while lived on the first floor. Residing in the Chinese shop-houses created a new income to Bangkok in the form of land tax. This stimulated the private property development that led to the construction of the network of roads with the row of shop-houses throughout Bangkok in the next century<sup>189</sup>.

In short, the development of new Road in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century during the dominance of European colonialism did not only represent the change to the architectural style of Bangkok. It rather represented the 'political resistance' of Rama IV's 'flexible strategy' toward the invasion of the Western power in Southeast Asia. It also exemplified the superiority of Bangkok under the royal regime regarding its independence under the critical moment of the colonial era. Rama IV was successful in using architecture in New Road as a political instrument to prevent Bangkok from being colonized. It also changed Bangkok from the inside out. Apparently, Rama IV wanted New Road to reimage Bangkok as a European city or in other words 'civilized' city. As the words of O'Neil from the book, *Bangkok: A Cultural and Literatutory History* (2008), which he wrote: "this first public road was a harbinger of the inevitable destruction of the floating city in a garden, the natural habitat of the Siamese that had been so greatly admired by countless foreign visitors"<sup>190</sup>. Our research wants to add that the modernity as represented in the development of New Road did not fully transform the Thai concept of 'Home'. Architectural development in New Road rather challenged the traditional way of life among *phrai* in response to modernity. So, how did *phrai* adapt and hybridize their Thai concept of 'Home' through architectural changes in New Road?

In the next section, the paper will discuss how the architectural design of New Road began to transform the Thai concept of 'Home'. It looks at how Sino-Thai started to adapt and hybridize the way they dwelled in Bangkok as a result of the change from being 'sacred-aquatic' to 'modern-terrestrial'. This can be interpreted via architectural morphology, topology and typology. It also further explains how the hybridisation in the Thai concept of 'Home' reflected the change in the existential space of Bangkok through the work of architecture in New Road.

---

<sup>188</sup> O'Neil, M. (2008). *Bangkok: A Cultural and Literatutory History*. India: Signal Books Limited, pp.150-2.

<sup>189</sup> Tomosugi, T., & Kenkyūjo, T. D. T. B. (1993). *Reminiscences of Old Bangkok: Memory and the Identification of a Changing Society*: Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, part 1.

<sup>190</sup> O'Neil, M. (2008). *Bangkok: A Cultural and Literatutory History*. India: Signal Books Limited, pp.151-2.

### The Existential Transition from 'Sacred-Aquatic' to 'Modern-Terrestrial'

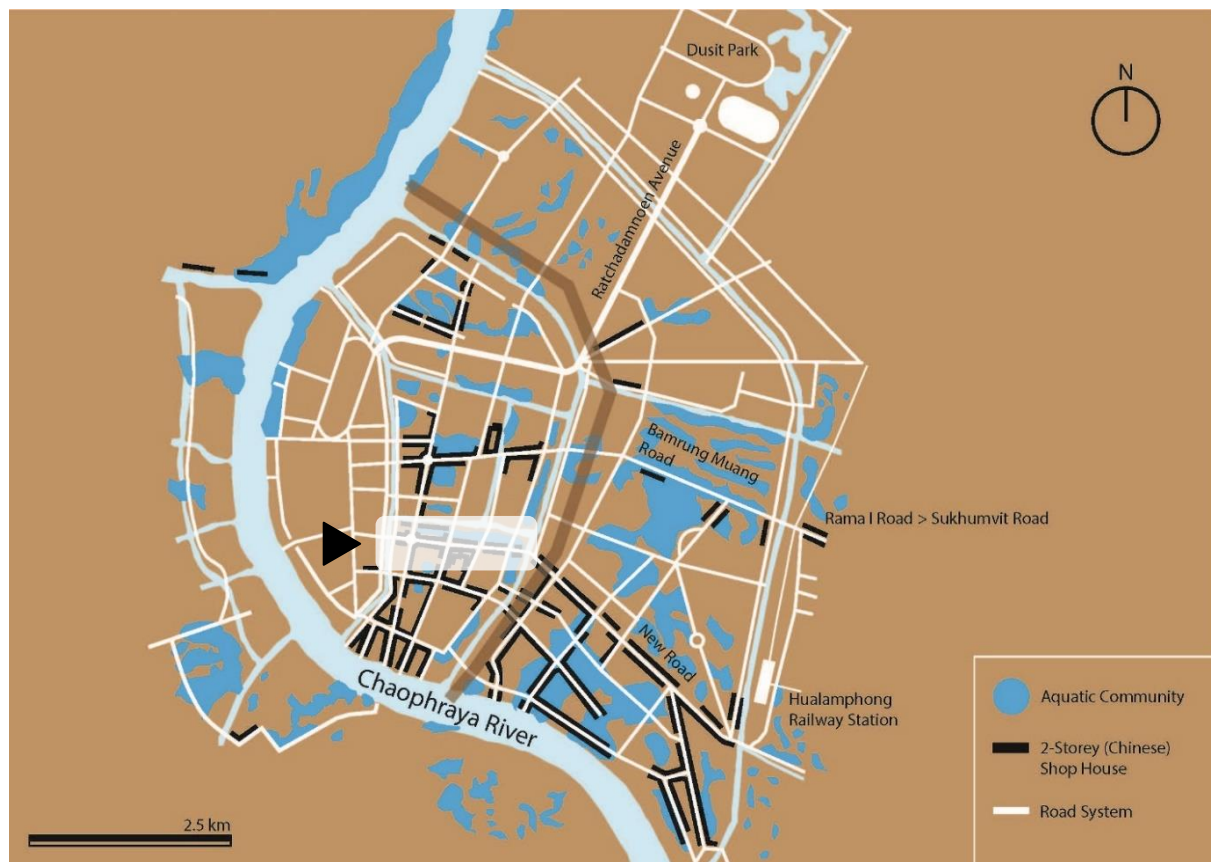


Figure 6: The Plan of 'Modern-Terrestrial' Bangkok in the 1910s, the White Area Shows New Road.

Source: Produced by the Author.

The development of New Road and Chinese shop-houses started to change the existential space of Bangkok in relation to the transition of water and land settlement. The New Road development conceptually affected the urban morphology of Bangkok with the use of Hindu-Buddhist cosmological model in the planning of modern road. It architecturally transformed the local settlement pattern from aquatic settlement to modern land, which remained in juxtaposition to the sacred land (Rattanakosin Island) (figure 6). Thus, New Road changed the urban morphology of Bangkok from the dual settlements of water and land to the only modern settlement by the network of road and mass housing of Chinese shop-houses. This development stimulated the economic growth in the city.

The urban design of Bangkok became flat and homogenous weakening the influence of Hindu-Buddhist cosmology. Rattanakosin Island, in the center of Bangkok, remained sacred. Consequently, it changed the topology of Bangkok's settlement by reorienting the aquatic settlement to land, making a new kind of space – 'modern-terrestrial'. This created the horizontal polarization in the existential space of Bangkok between the sacred area of Rattanakosin Island and the commercial area of New Road. Sino-Thai adapted their daily life to the condition of modern architecture in New Road. The Chinese shop-houses had mix function of business and residential purposes. However, they lost some aspects of

Thai identity specifically the hierarchy from the Hindu-Buddhist cosmological model to define sacredness. This reflected the change in the typology. The New Road development also reflected Rama IV's aim to turn Bangkok into a modern and commercial city. Given this shift, Bangkok's sacred area (Rattanakosin Island) still coexisted with the modern road and this keeping aspect of tradition. It reflected that modern design of New Road changed the identity of 'self-paradox' from hierarchical to less hierarchical, which making Bangkok lost some Hindu-Buddhist sense.



*Figure 7: On the Left Shows the Street View of Aquatic Communities and On the Right Shows the Street View of New Road. Source: Produced by the Author.*

The urban space of Bangkok shown that the arrangement of New Road and a row of Chinese shop-houses was similar to those in aquatic communities. Figure 7 illustrated the collective buildings from two distinctive periods built along both sides of the street. In New Road, the Chinese shop-houses were placed along the modern road on land in the row format. It architecturally reflected the modern idea of 'mass housing' as integrated with the existential space (geo-cultural space) of Bangkok. Functionally, the Chinese shop-houses were similar to the traditional Thai houses. Physically, they were different in the way that the structure changed from the stilt/floating houses to two storeys building. As same as to the change at the settlement level in New Road, the physical change in architectural orientation at the urban space scale represented the change in the hierarchical structure of Thai society. Whereby, the modern road and Chinese shop-houses of New Road relocated the settlement of *phrai* from water to land, which socially represented the change in class structure from being hierarchical to equal. Although, from the architectural interpretation of New Road suggested that the division between the ruling and subordinate classes became a blur. The aristocratic people resisted to this change by preserving the area of Rattanakosin Island as the privileged space making it as a sacred center of modern Bangkok. It therefore still retained the character of 'self-paradox' but with the juxtaposition of Thai tradition and modernity. Consequently, New Road adjusted the topology of Bangkok. It transformed the aquatic space to land by mean of modern road and architecture, which flatten the existential space and diminished the hierarchical social structure of Bangkok. However, the resistance of the upper class complicated the urban space of Bangkok by horizontally dividing between being at the center and periphery. They still called the sacred area in the middle of Bangkok 'Rattanakosin Island' and other than

that 'Bangkok'. This urban phenomenon also suggested that the existential space of Bangkok hybridized to reflect 'modern Thai-self', which said Bangkok was modern like the West but still Thai. It did not mean the Thai tradition persisted, but it represented that the new Thai-self developed to survive<sup>191</sup>.

Thus, the context for interactions to create the urban life of Bangkok shifted to modern land. Furthermore, the modern architecture of the Chinese shop-houses in New Road changed the way of Sino-Thai oriented themselves to the landscape of Bangkok. It standardized Sino-Thai to live in the repetitive boxes of shop-house with one-sided facing the road, which architecturally influenced Sino-Thai to connect their life to the modernity and homogenization. It disoriented Sino-Thai middle class in the Hindu-Buddhist existential space of Bangkok, which consequently made them lose their sense of hierarchy in the modernized built environment. So, it conceptually brought them into the new kind of fear in the homogenized existential space (geo-cultural space) in Bangkok combining with the fear of superstition. Obviously, the cultural phenomenon of fear in Thai culture during modernization developed to be more complicated. Thai people hybridized the fear of unseen force with modernity to be 'force of modernity'. It made them imagined modernity as something threatening their life like the unseen forces or ghost<sup>192</sup>. Therefore, this was one of many reasons why Sino-Thai middle class still sanctified their modern houses as same as they did in the traditional Thai houses.

Politically and culturally, the construction of New Road during the colonial era architecturally masked Bangkok by the modern road, while it started to hybridize the existential space of Bangkok with modernity via Chinese shop-houses. The result was confusion; New Road created a new modern character of Bangkok contrasting and disordering to its existing aquatic character without the rejection but with an overlapping conflict. It reflected the typology of 'self-paradox' in the juxtaposition between Thai tradition and modernity; it complicated the identification of the Thai concept of 'Home'. The modern Thai concept of 'Home' conceptually started to be formed as the result of the understanding of originally being civilized Thai without resistance to modernization imitated by the royal regime. This phenomenon can be seen clearer at the home scale because it conceptually represented the entire existential space or the way Sino-Thai architecturally in Bangkok under modernization.

---

<sup>191</sup> Karnchanaporn, N. (2009). *Fear and Domestic Architecture: A Cultural Phenomenon with Reference to Thai Domestic Architecture*. VDM Verlag Dr. Muller Aktiengesellschaft & Co. KG, pp.204-5.

<sup>192</sup> Karnchanaporn, N. (2009). *Fear and Domestic Architecture: A Cultural Phenomenon with Reference to Thai Domestic Architecture*. VDM Verlag Dr. Muller Aktiengesellschaft & Co. KG, pp.205-6.

**Before Modernisation in the 1780s - 1840s**



**After Modernisation in the 1850s**



*Figure 8: The Top Shows Living in the Water, and the Below Shows Living in New Road.*

*Source: Produced by the Author.*

Although Sino-Thai transformed their way of life on the urban scale in the modern context of Bangkok, at the level of private dwelling, they successfully adapted and hybridized the Thai concept of 'Home' with modernity. Sino-Thai still understood that their house was both private and public spaces, as they did when they lived in the water. As shown in figure 8, they occupied the Chinese shop-houses for domestic and commercial purposes. However, there was a difference. That Sino-Thai did emphasise flexibility over hierarchy due to the modern structure of Chinese shop-houses and the morphology of the New Road. So, the modernity of New Road seemed to challenge the Thai existence architecturally. On the other hand, Sino-Thai reached a compromise and architecturally hybridized the Thai concept of 'Home' with modern architecture.

This phenomenon can be seen on the morphology of the Chinese shop-house and the layout of New Road, the settlement pattern that architecturally influenced Sino-Thai to live in the two storeys building with the row house format. It diminished the hierarchical aspect of the Thai concept of 'Home' because the hierarchical floor and the stilt structure completely disappeared. Conceptually, it reflected that modernism softened the Hinduism and Buddhism of the existential space in Bangkok. On the other hand, the modernity of Chinese shop-house enhanced the flexibility of the Thai concept of 'Home'. Sino-Thai incorporated the modernity into the way they lived to improve the convenience and efficiency of living a



modern city. The row format of Chinese shop-house connected Sino-Thai to the land-based transportation mode, such as rickshaws on a modern road. The Chinese shop-house maximized the space usage in the city by having two storeys. It increased the efficiency in utilizing a small space of the Chinese shop-house. However, Sino-Thai incorporated the hierarchy of private and public spaces. They occupied the top of the shop-house for domestic purposes, such as sleeping, eating and entertaining. Culturally, they chose to sleep on the highest floor because they still believed that the head is where the sacredness existed.

It, therefore, represented the hidden sacred (and private) dimension of living in the Chinese shop-house. Sino-Thai occupied ground floor for commercial purposes, such as shop, domestic industry and small workshops. Thus, it reflected the changing topology; the Chinese shop-house presented space for Sino-Thai to live in the horizontal realm of modernity, which improved their convenience and efficiency in residing in a modern city. It homogenized the way Sino-Thai lived on land that was similar to those in many modern cities, by the mean of modern architecture and road. The hierarchy seemed to be less relevant in the contemporary environment of Bangkok. However, Sino-Thai preserved a sense of hierarchy by adapting the way they lived with the modern structure of Chinese shop-house. Thus, the topology seemed to be less hierarchical, while being more connective. Typologically, it reflected the identification of being 'self-paradox', whereby physically the way Sino-Thai lived in the Chinese shop-house appeared to be modern. However, when looked at the way they occupied the building, it told a different story.

From the existential analysis of the language of architecture in New Road, it revealed Sino-Thai did not architecturally resist to the modernity, but they embraced it to some aspects of Thai tradition. They also strengthened some Thai living aspects, such as flexibility with modernity to improve their living space. The existential space of Bangkok conceptually seemed to be flattened. Consequently, it made Sino-Thai feared of being in the modern environment because they were disconnected from the traditional landscape of Bangkok<sup>193</sup>, they lost some sense of the Hindu-Buddhist cosmology in their mind from the process of modernization Bangkok. So, how the structure of the existential space of Bangkok will be after modernization. In the case of New Road, the Thai concept of 'Home' could face the challenge of monarchical modernization through adaptability. Sino-Thai middle class hybridized the Thai identity with modernity, while Sino-Thai seamlessly integrated the traditional Thai living into modernity. Therefore, New Road seemed to reflect that Sino-Thai's living was modernised, yet the weaker Thai identity was hidden. The paradigmatic case study of New Road architecturally demonstrated that, on the one hand, modernity appeared to deteriorate the Thai identity. On the contrary, it complicated the Thai concept of 'Home'.

---

<sup>193</sup> Karnchanaporn, N. (2009). *Fear and Domestic Architecture: A Cultural Phenomenon with Reference to Thai Domestic Architecture*. VDM Verlag Dr. Muller Aktiengesellschaft & Co. KG, p.58.



### **The Distortion in the Existential Space (Geo-Cultural Space) of Bangkok and the Beginning of Architectural Hybridization**

The emergence of urban design practices in Bangkok in the 1850s as a part of modernization strategy led by royal regime distorted the existential space of Bangkok from being vertical to horizontal, whereby the hierarchical between water and land was blur out and there was an overlapping of Thai tradition and modernity. There was also the co-existence of Hindu-Buddhist cosmology and modernity, which diminished the sacredness of the city and enhanced the flexibility in the way Sino-Thai lived in the Chinese shop-houses. Regarding architecture, it made Sino-Thai became incapable of defining and expressing a clear identity. It could be seen on the work of architecture in New Road, whereby Sino-Thai adapted the way they lived to the Chinese shop-houses that, for them, represented residing in a modern city. On the one hand, it architecturally embraced the modern living perception in the mind of Sino-Thai. On the other hand, there was a change to their Thai concept of 'Home' in response to modernity, which resulted in the hybridity. Hence, the hybridized Thai concept of 'Home' represented a new Thai-being, it was not either Thai or modern, but it is new Thai-being – being modern like the West but different from them.

Therefore, the paradigmatic case study of New Road reflected the success of Rama IV's intention in modernization Bangkok to be modern like the Western but remained distinctively from the West. It can be seen in the overlapping (crashing) of Thai and modernity on the modernized existential space (geo-cultural space) of Bangkok. It suggested that the distortion in the spatiality of the existential space represented that the new existential space which was New Road dominated the existing existential space of dual settlements of water/land. However, the urban design of New Road was built on the current city planning of Bangkok. Thus, inevitably, it simultaneously merged the old and new existential spaces together to be the hybrid modern in the version of Bangkok.

The construction of New Road and the row of Chinese shop-houses provided the Sino-Thai with an architectural combat to adapt their sense of 'Home' to Western modernism. On the one hand, it was also an architectural symbol of modernization by the royal regime, which Rama IV used New Road to politically and culturally prevent Bangkok from the invasion of the West. Secondly, New Road was an architectural evidence of the internal colonization under the Thai monarchy. Thirdly, it showed the influence of Chinese migration and the new Sino-Thai middle class. Physically, New Road started to transform Bangkok from a water-based to the land-based city, which opened up a new dimension of modern living in Bangkok. It brought the convenience and development to Bangkok. However, there was an existential consequence. The architectural design of New Road distorted the structure of existential space in Bangkok, whereby there was no hierarchy of land and water. The modernity of New Road architecturally started to reshape the Thai concept of 'Home' to be less hierarchical by transforming it into a different context, the 'modern-terrestrial'. Hence, conceptually and architecturally, the Thai concept of 'Home' challenge the advent of modernity, which then created the modern Thai concept of 'Home'. Although, the Western colonization was unsuccessful in Bangkok officially. Existentially and inevitably, the modernity of New Road architecturally brought Thai existence, the Western influence and Eastern influence of Chinese migration together in one space – the space of hybridized identity. The

architectural hybridisation and complication in the Thai concept of 'Home' (Thai-self) had just began

## Glossary

The concept of 'Home' – the architectural interpretation of humans' existence in the existential space.

Existential – a condition that appears conceptually from human existence.

Existential Space (Geo-Cultural Space) – a (conceptual) living space for people to architecturally express their identity, which is constituted from locating the direction in human beings into the world between the vertical and horizontal.

Morphology – how the built form is formatted as 'formal articulation' to express its character.

Topology – the study of spatial order/existential spatiality of existential space.

Typology – the interpretation of a relationship with the four modes of dwelling (settlement, urban space, public building and private house).

## References

- Askew, M. (2002). *Bangkok: Place, practice and representation*. 11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE: Routledge, pp.29-30.
- Bachelard, G. (1994). *The poetics of Space*. Boston, Ma, United States, Beacon Press.
- Baker, C., & Phongpaichit, P. (2005). *A History of Thailand*. China: Cambridge University Press, pp.26-7.
- Broadbent, G., Bunt, R., Jencks, C. (1980). *Signs, symbols, and architecture*, Wiley.
- Cresswell, T. (2004). *Place: A Short Introduction*: John Wiley and Son Ltd.
- Heidegger, M., & Krell, D. F. (1993). *Basic Writings*: HarperCollins, pp.93-6.
- Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and Time*. United States, HarperCollins Publishers Inc: p.203.
- Heidegger, M. (1977). "Letter on Humanism" in *Basic Writings*, New York.
- Heidegger, M. (2001). "Poetically Man Dwells," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, HarperCollins: p.218.
- Jumsei, S. (1988). *Naga: Cultural Origins in Siam and the West Pacific*: OUP South East Asia, p.35.
- Karnchanaporn, N. (2009). *Fear and Domestic Architecture: A Cultural Phenomenon with Reference to Thai Domestic Architecture*. VDM Verlag Dr. Muller Aktiengesellschaft & Co. KG, pp.96-7.
- King, R. (2012). *Reading Bangkok*. Singapore: Singapore University Press, pp.43-5.
- Norberg-Schulz, C. (1985). *The Concept of Dwelling: On the way of figurative architecture*. the United States of America, Rizzoli International Publication, INC: p.111.
- O'Neil, M. (2008). *Bangkok: A Cultural and Literary History*. India: Signal Books Limited, pp.150-2.
- Relph, E. (1976). *Place and placeness*. 207 Brondesbury Park, London NM2 5JN: Pion Limited, chapter 2.
- Tiptus, P. and M. Bongsadadt (1982). *Houses in Bangkok: Characters and Changes during the last 200 years (1782 A.D.-1982 A.D.)*. Chulalongkorn University, Research Affairs Office: p.28.
- Tomosugi, T., & Kenkyūjo, T. D. T. B. (1993). *Reminiscences of Old Bangkok: Memory and the Identification of a Changing Society*: Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, part 1.
- Waterson, R. (2010). *The Living House: An Anthropology of Architecture in South-East Asia*. Boston, United States, Tuttle Publishing: p.180.

## **Discourse of Teen Mom in Thailand and Comparison Study through Films in Teen Mom Issue**

**Prapawong, Suparada**

College of Arts, Media and Technology  
Chiang Mai University  
Thailand  
-----

### **Abstract**

“Teen mom” seems to be the global problem according to World Health Organization (WHO) report of the great number of global teen mom. In Thailand, the patriarchal country was ranked as the 2<sup>nd</sup> country in Asia for giving birth of women under 20 years old (World Health Organization Report 2013). Although the governmental organizations have launched a lot of policies to decrease the number of women under 20’s pregnancy, but the statistics of teen mom in Thailand are still increasing or stable. Furthermore, the “stigmatization” to Thai teen mom caused by collective discourse and social construction of reality which has been created by the adults and persons in authority in each era is very important topic to focus on. Mitchel Foucault (Kamjohn Luiyaphong, 2010), said human identity is not permanently structured. But it is passive from the power of society and continuously changed with no unity. Then, the negative discourse of teen mom in Thailand at the present could be changed to construct the better discourse, identity and reality of teen mom. Media is one of the tools for discourse creation and social construction of reality.

The objectives of this study are to study the discourse and social construction of reality in teen mom issue in Thailand and to compare the presentation of teen mom issue through films of Republic of Korea, United States of America and Thailand in content in order to understand this issue and find the better solution for teen mom issue in Thailand through media. This study is a qualitative research by using textual analysis from documents and 3 films which are intensively focused on teen mom issue (1. Jenny, Juno (2005), Republic of Korea Film 2. Juno (2007), United States of America Film 3. Love, Not Yet (2011) Thailand Film). For the frame of this study are narrative theory, social construction of reality theory and discourse analysis as the base of analysis.

The finding indicates the discourse and social construction of reality in teen mom issue in Thailand since the age of agriculture, industry until present. For the comparison of Republic of Korea, United States of America and Thailand’s films in teen mom issue, there are similarity and difference in the frame of production and reception associated with teen mom statistics, narrative theory (plot) and discourse analysis.

**Keywords:** discourse, teen mom, Thailand, film, comparison

## Introduction

Social construction of reality theory believes that the reality is not the things that naturally happen. But the reality is constructed to be social reality. Media is one of the most effective tools for the process of reality construction (Borwornluck Mongkonchatpirak, 2013). Attribution theory is the theory that individuals try to understand themselves and others' behaviors. It's the way of inference the reasons of those behaviors. Human tries to use reasoning to balance believes and values in order to keep attribution between the things that they want to do and the things that they should do (Suraponse Sotanasathien, 2013). Attribution theory could be one of the important influences to the discourse which is social construction of reality theory. The negative reasons to the perception of teen mom have been caused the discourse of teen mom which is social construction of reality about teen mom differently in each era. For narrative theory, Walter Fisher (1985) called theory of narration as narrative paradigm which could be divided into set of assumption. Fisher supported the belief that human is storyteller indicating value, emotion and aesthetics which are the basis of audience's attitude and behavior (Suraponse Sotanasathien, 2013). Therefore, the attribution theory leads to social construction of reality which causes the discourse and many time media can cause the discourse by narrative paradigm. Then, the researcher would like to study and analyze the discourse about teen mom in Thailand in each era and compare with other countries' films in order to understand, find better solution to decrease the unplanned teen mom and to construct better perception of teen mom in Thailand through films.

In Thailand, there are a lot of problems which teen mom issue which are both cause and effect of the problems. For example, the problems that are caused by teen mom are increased number of teen mom resignation from institutes and losing of educational opportunity because of embarrassment and stigmatization in institutes and society. Another sample of the problem caused by teen mom issue is raising the children in the improper way because of unreadiness. Teen mom occurrence also is the effect from the problem of shyness to communication with children and teenagers about sexual intercourse and unplanned pregnancy protection in Thailand. But most of these problems are caused by the discourse of teen mom in Thailand which affects the feeling and reaction to teen mom. Of course, those feelings and reactions affect the attitude, behavior and identity of the majority of teen mom in Thailand who are mentioned to be the cause and effect of many problems in Thailand.

Mitchel Foucault (Kamjohn Luiyaphong, 2010), French philosopher had studies about human identity. His works indicates that human identity is not permanently structured. But it is passive from the power of society and continuously changed with no unity. Human doesn't have even individual identity. In Foucault's opinion, identity of human is only the result of discourse and human accepts that identity and essentially is the setting on other human as well.

Mitchel Foucault (Norman Fairclough, 2003) also said about discourse "I believe I have in fact added to its meanings: treating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statement, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements." Discourse study is the study of language and expression through media to demonstrate dominating power by exploring into the communication in each era (Kamjohn Luiyaphong, 2010).

Discourse study also indicates the domination in the changing politics, economy, society and technology in each period of time and each society. Moreover, it is able to seek for the discourse resolving solution to be appropriate with each age and changes as well.

Film is one of the society influencing media for the audience who selected for those films exposure. Because mostly the films are screened in the theatres and tickets buying is required. Therefore, selecting to watch the film is counted as accepting for the film to be dominating the audience to some extent. Film is not only entertainment media. It is also a potential tool for informing, educating and persuading the audience's knowledge, attitude and performance.

This study intensively concerns about communicating the discourse of teen mom in Thai society. It's the study of phenomenon about teen mom since the past until the present through communication via literature and film media. It's the analysis of perception in politics, economics, society and technology in the frame of psychology and sociology including with the frame of culture in each era to understand the discourse of teen mom in Thailand in each era.

Around the world, there is development of teen mom's discourse and communication in each era. It depends on the power and concentration of the country in each era and the discourse are represented through media especially film. According to the result of discourse effects people's perception and stigmatization, the researcher would like to study in comparison between teen mom's film in Republic of Korea, United States of America and Thailand to find the similarity and difference in both content and form including to comparing the statistics of teen mom in 3 countries to understand each country's discourse about teen mom and to evaluate if it could reduce the number of teen mom in each country or not.

### **Objectives**

1. To study the discourse and social construction of reality in teen mom issue in Thailand.
2. To compare the presentation of teen mom issue through films of Republic of Korea, United States of America and Thailand in content.

### **Methodology**

This study is qualitative research by textual analysis of communication about teen mom through literature in Thailand which are news, articles and literature including with the textual analysis of films which are Jenny, Juno (2005, Republic of Korea's film), Juno (2007, United States of America's film) and Love, Not Yet (2011, Thailand's film) by the base of narrative theory, social construction of reality theory and discourse analysis.

### **Results**

In the primitive society, genital hair is the indicator of difference between childhood and reproductive age. Before the revolution in France (1789-1799), the age of marriage for male was at 14 years old and for female was at 12 years old. Until 1792, the period of blooming democracy, the people became cleverer to decline the king and religious' power. At this period, the age of marriage were extended for male to be at 15 years old and for female to be at 13 years old. After Napoleon's code of laws in 1804, the age of marriage for male was at 18 years old and for female was at 15 years old (Chanun Yodhong,

2017). The above mentioned ages of marriage demonstrate that not only Thailand that most of the people in the past got married since they were young. The Village Life in Modern Thailand (deYoung, 1963) also mentioned the Northern part of Thailand's society in 1950s that villagers marry young which were around 16 years old. But most of the people in that society got married at 18-21 years old, due to the fact in the past that having children was generating power in labor and politics. At the present, reproductive age or the designated age to be appropriate for having children is at 20-34 years old. It indicates that sexual behavior or reproduction has been seen and valued differently in each era.

Chainarongrit Wapeesin et al. (2016) said that Thai women in the past must be at home for cooking, children treating and family members' welfare managing. For Thai men, their role was to work outside to earn money for family supporting. Therefore, housework was the role for women and political work was the role for men. It also shows the features of old time society that designated teenagers and female to be at home. At that time, there was no definition of "Teen Mom". Because teenagers was the reproductive age that the social construction of reality at that time required reproductive aged people to get married and have children.

Boonyong Gatetade (1989) referred to Thai women education in early Rattanakosin era (in 1782-1851 in the reign of King Rama I to King Rama III) that Prince Damrong Rajanupab said that the education for Thai women was not all through. The women who had opportunity to get educated were princesses and daughters of government officers in the grand palace only. For the princesses' education, his majesty presumed that the education had been constructed since King Rama I and it was managed following Ayutthaya era's model.

From the study of Thai women in literature in Rattanakosin era (in 1782-1851 in the reign of King Rama I to King Rama III) through 8 literatures, women in the palace had more opportunity to be literate than ordinary women. There were some ordinary women who were literate such as Pim and Tongprasee who were educated mostly by their families. It depended on parents, senior relatives or husband's basic knowledge. On the contrary, for men in the 8 literatures, the poet had been described their education thoroughly which indicates the educational ideology that men should be educated more than women for serving under the crown mission. Men must be educated both in knowledge and capability for flawless function. Women must only be educated in knowledge for assistance on behalf of good wives and mothers. (Boonyong Gatetade, 1989)

Boonyong Gatetade (1989) also mentioned that the social norm, value in the way of life and social acceptance, there were loads of regulations, teachings, prohibitions, obligations, ceremonies, rules and etc. for example, women must be polite in manners and must be reserved themselves. But it is noticeable that most of the women in the literatures of early Rattanakosin era lost their virginity before marriage, for instance, Pimpilalai, Seemana and etc. It could be considered that the society did not accept for getting in touch between men and women forthright, losing virginity before marriage according to the natural law was unavoidable.

However, Thai society still constructs the norm of reserving themselves to women as significant Thai tradition. Thai women are taught not to be touched by men because it will cause the flaw. For comparison with the present society, that social construction of reality still remains as a strict norm. Conversely, a great number of women misbehave out of the traditional designated frame (Boonyong

Gatetade, 1989). In consequence, Thai society at the present has constructed the frame of reality by elders who do not concern about natural law about teenagers' sexual relations which is matter of course with evidence from literatures in the past that even though, there is social construction of reality, but it is difficult for the teenagers to avoid sexual relations.

In the reign of King Rama IV, his majesty had policies to rectify economic, social and educational system in Thailand and aimed to develop the country to be equivalently progress to civilized countries. One of the civilization indicators is women status of that country. The indicator for women status is education. At that time, Thai women who were in high class, middle class, women in urban or rural were supported and had more opportunities for education (Chainarongrit Wapeesin et al., 2016). This era is the changing in point of view that teenagers are required to study.

There was another change in teen mom discourse from agricultural era to be industrial era. In the agricultural era, women were not required to have a lot of knowledge. They only had to stay at home to be in charge of all housework and family. When industrial era had come, everything had to be systematic, not only for housework and family at home. Women in industrial era must have more knowledge.

After the educational development in the reign of King Rama V (in 1874), education was prevalent to both male and female in every class. It effected the expectation for women to be educated. Sexual relations and pregnancy were inappropriate for teenagers. The official educational system is one of the influences to seeing and expecting in social role of teenagers in Thai society. The way that teenagers have to officially spend time studying in institutes causes dependency status for them to rely on their parents in economy and society longer than discourse in the past. Because they still have no jobs. It expands the marriage age and reproductive age as well. It is different from the past that there was no official education and compulsory education is one of the reasons of teenagers' dependency to their parents (Watinee Wichaiya, 2013).

Furthermore, Thailand has been influenced by Western meditation since 1952 which valued and constructed that teenager is not the appropriate age for reproduction according to medical principles which is biological logic as abovementioned. Through the point of view that teenagers are the problem in Thai society, teenagers are innocent, teenagers are immature and teenagers are the age of studying, the social construction of reality determined that teenagers should not have children in both view of biology and social norm to teenagers. This era is the change of teen mom's definition from reproductive age to studying age. And if the female teenager is pregnant, they will become "teen mom".

World Health Organization (WHO) defines "Adolescence" as person in the age of 10-19 years old. Adolescence came from Latin word "Adolescere" which was fragmented to be "Adolescens" means growing up and the word "Adultus" means completely grown. "Teenager" means person in the age of 13-19 years old. This word was originated from United States of America around 1920 and it usage of this word was widespread after World War II. Sometimes, there is confusion between "Adolescence" and "Teenager" in Thailand because of the similar meaning (Boonrit Sookrad, 2014).

"Young People" is an unofficial word which means people in the age of 10-24 years old. It covers groups of adolescence and early adulthood. However, for statistics report, the young people will be separated in to groups as follows; "Early Adolescence" means person in the age of 10-14 years old, "Late

Adolescence” means person in the age of 15-19 years old and “Young Adulthood” means person in the age of 20-24 years old to reflect the appropriate changing in each age (Boonrit Sookrad, 2014).

“Youth” is defined by United Nations Organization (UN) as person in the age of 15-24 years old. The objectives of this age are to graduate and begin the first employment. However, this word is used in annual report of United Nations Organization in the field of education, society and health (Boonrit Sookrad, 2014). There was a definition of “Child” and “Adulthood” in the journal of Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). “Child” means person in the age under 18 years old. The definition of “Child” and “Adulthood” is mainly used for the meaning of legal rights. Most of the countries including Thailand use the age of 18 years old as the boundary. Nevertheless, some countries may use the different age as the boundary. (United Nations, 1989)

Teenager is the age for transformation from child to adult. There are groups of age which is determined for social changes from family to friends, physical changes of readiness for reproduction and representation as the age of risk, exploration and trial especially about sex. The clinic gaze (medical view) sees teenager’s body changes in levels of hormone which causes lust and makes boys and girls interested in each other (Jaradporn Intawong, 2009). For “Sexual Intercourse” Jaradporn Intawong (2009) defined as insertion of penis into female’s body which is considered as female’s virginity assassination. It becomes the tool of possession which makes male gain the righteous power in female’s body and she turns to be his property. According to the assassination of female’s virginity, she is analogic to the worthless broken glass. Therefore, sexual intercourse becomes stigma to female and sexual intercourse is used for dividing between good and bad women. The social construction of reality determined that good women are women who have sexual intercourse within marriage frame and bad women are women who have sexual intercourse out of marriage frame.

In the issue of marriage, mostly it means the couples are ready to have a baby. In the context of some society or some countries, marriage when they are young is normal. Of course, it will cause the pregnancy in the younger aged women. For the context of Thailand, the reproductive report said that the first marriage age decreased from 23.1 years old (in 2006) to 22.2 years old (in 2009). The age of first child is at 24.8 years old. It indicates that the age of first marriage and first child are expanded to be after adolescence. For the people in the age under 20 years old, there are only 9.6 percent of the population who have marriage status which the people in the age between 20-24 years old have marriage status for 44.8 percent. Nevertheless, there is no report about pregnancy or giving birth of teenagers under 20 years old in Thailand. But generally, it could be deduced that under 20 years old pregnancy is the pregnancy without marriage (Boonrit Sookrad, 2014).

Watinee Wichaiya (2013) said that pregnancy and having baby in young ages (for example, between 10-20 years old) has been defined, managed and controlled by the society differently in each era. In the past, it seemed normal or common and could happen in general in some eras. At the present, it is defined as abnormal or improper and becomes one of the social problems. The phenomenon of adolescence pregnancy is connected in macro level as the reflection of destruction and dysfunction of family institute including with destruction of “Thailand’s good culture”. Furthermore, adolescence pregnancy has been defined differently from normal or mature to be stigmatized as unrestrained or irresponsible and uneducated of how to protect pregnancy.



Boonrit Sookrad (2014) claimed the puberty access at the present is quicker than the past by the studies that show the tendency of male and female nowadays to reach adolescence quicker than the former times. Male begins for sexual development since 9-10 years old. The important variable for female is average age. In the past, female had their first period at the age of 15-16 years old. At the present, it has changed to be at the age of 12-13 years old in United States of America and Europe and 12.1-12.5 years old in Thailand. It conforms to Thai health report that female reach reproductive age quicker. The age of first period has decreased, in the group of 15-29 years old female is at 13.2 years old while the group of 30-44 and 45-59 years old are at 14.1 and 14.8 years old respectively. It reflects the changes of teenagers at the present that access the reproductive age quicker than the past.

The studies before 1997 about pregnancy of teen mom in Thailand are generally in fields of medication, nursing, psychology, social work which are especially in policies and plans. They represented "image" of teen mom in negative way. The studies mostly assumed that adolescence pregnancy is social problem which is unwanted and requires help, management and control. Sometimes, this phenomenon is called "unwanted pregnancy" that reflects the variables influencing to being teen mom, effects of being teen mom, teen mom's welfare demand and development of incomplete mother role.

For economic and social effects to teen mom, there are findings that teen mom have high opportunity to suddenly stop education or not graduate. According to the shame and unacceptability in many countries, teen mom would be forced directly or indirectly to leave school. There was 30 percent of teen mom who had to resign from the schools (Boonrit Sookrad, 2014). When there is unwanted pregnancy, mostly the female teenagers would have to shoulder the responsibility solely. They also have to confront many other following problems. There was 53 percent of female teenagers who chose the solution by abortion. There was 39 percent of them chose to keep and raise the baby even though they were pressured by the society and they were violated their rights in many fields such as discharging from schools (Working Group Cadre Network Moving to Fill the Social Space, 2011).

At the present, Ministry of Education has changed the regulation by the enactment that every school has to accept the pregnant students to continue studying and the pregnancy must be confidential between only in charge teacher and the student. There are agreement and disagreement in this regulation. The accepted group believes that education would help the students for self-sufficiency in the future. But the unaccepted group believes that there would be mimetic behavior. And although the schools would give the opportunity for them to continue studying, but the environmental variables in the institute would be the problem for their returning to school. Moreover, what is the effect in behavior controlling for the male (Jaradporn Intawong, 2009).

After 1997, "teen mom" increasingly has been interested in the field of social science and other fields. There are interests in teen mom's way of life in other forms which are different from the ideology that family contains female and male beneath marriage institute, for example, the study of single mom (a part of teen mom), single women and so forth. However, there are only a few studies that are interested in life experience of teen mom and their opinions. Moreover, the abovementioned researchers often study teen mom's life experience in the form of motionless, fixed and separated such as the study of the experience while they were pregnant or after giving birth. There is a space remains in this issue for studying which is the experience if teen mom.

As mentioned above, sexual behavior, reproduction and definition of “teen mom” has been seen and valued differently in each era according to changes of politics, economy, society and technology in each era. The discourse of teen mom has been changed because of the changing time. At the present, teen mom is seen and represented in the negative way by the view of governmental authoritarians. But in fact, teen mom is not always bad. Teen mom could happen. But it should be in the context of readiness in knowledge, attitude and performance which have already been planned by teen mom. Or if it is not planned from the beginning, if it is a mistake, teen moms deserve help in adjusting their knowledge, attitude and performance to be good teen moms and continue producing effective population to the society. In order to reduce and eliminate the stigmatization to teen mom, communication through media from the view of teen mom’s real experience could be able to change the knowledge, attitude and performance to teen mom.

Film is one of the effective media that could determine the discourse. Because film is both visual and audio in the same time which is effective for audience’s attention attraction. Film is a media that give precedence in story telling or narrative theory. The different content and form cause different result to the audience including audience’s feedback. In the issue of teen mom, there are 3 films from 3 countries that are interesting to compare in both content and form to find the similarity and difference. Moreover, there should be comparison in many issues to evaluate the result of those films in order to adjust Thailand’s film to reduce the number of unplanned teen mom and eliminate the stigmatization on teen mom to give them opportunity to live equally without pressure.

There are 3 films of 3 countries which are Republic of Korea, United States of America and Thailand that intensively present about teen mom issue. The films that will be analyzed in the frame of basic detail of production and reception, narrative theory (Plot, Theme, Character, Setting, Conflict, Point of View, Symbol and Coloring) and discourse analysis are Jenny, Juno (2005, Republic of Korea’s film), Juno (2007, United States of America’s film) and Love, Not Yet (2011, Thailand’s film) which would be compared in the tables below to explore the similarity and difference in both content and form.



Figure 1: Posters of Jenny, Juno (2005) Republic of Korea’s Film, Juno (2007) United States of America’s Film and Love, Not Yet (2011) Thailand’s Film in Teen Mom Issue

For Jenny, Juno (2005), it is a Republic of Korea produced film which intensively present about teen mom issue. The rating for this film is 15+. The story is about 15 year old couple. It started from the pregnancy check by Jenny. After knowing that she is pregnant, she informed Juno. They were both in confusing and afraid condition. Shortly, they cooperated to find the information for a very important decision making about the baby. Finally, they decided to keep the baby without telling anyone. Juno took care of Jenny his best. After 5 months, Jenny's sister accidentally knew about the baby which made both Jenny and Juno's family knew and were serious about this. Juno showed his responsibility to Jenny and the baby but Jenny's family was in shame feeling. They tried to separate them and send Jenny to abroad in order to keep the pregnancy issue as secret. But at last, Juno tried his best to find Jenny and found her on the date of giving birth. At last, because of their love, Jenny, Juno had a chance to raise the baby themselves in support of their family.

For Juno (2007), it is a United States of America produced film which intensively present about teen mom issue. The rating for this film is PG-13. The story is about 16 year old couple (Juno MacGuff, Paulie Bleeker, Mark and Vanessa Loring).

For Love, Not Yet (2011), it is a Thailand produced film which intensively present about teen mom issue. The story has been divided into 3 sub stories which are 1) Samet, 2) I'm Mom, I'm Wife and 3) Tom Hanks.

For the reception of Jenny, Juno (2005), the box-office figures of Republic of Korea provided by KOFIC (The Korean Film Council) box office information system shows that there were 289,829 admissions nationwide and 55,675 admissions in Seoul to watch this film. In February 2005, there were 5 Republic of Korea films. Jenny, Juno was in the 4<sup>th</sup> ranked for nationwide and last ranked for Seoul. Jenny, Juno nationwide admissions was in around ranking number 50 out of 84 Republic of Korea film in 2005 (Korean Film Organization, 2005). The nationwide income is US\$ 1,575,871 (IMDb, 2005). There were debates about this film in Republic of Korea. First this film was given a rating of 18+. But there was no sexual scene in this film, the rating was lowered to be at 15+. There was discussion that this film is unrealistic because Jenny, Juno had the well to do and secure families who could support Jenny and Juno's mistake. In the other hand, in the real world, there are loads of not well to do and insecure families who could not support their children's mistakes. Many critics were afraid of wrong message sending via this film (Seung-Jae Lee, 2005). Nevertheless, Kim Ho-jun, this film's scriptwriter and director said that "Jenny, Juno are certainly wayward children who should have never done a thing they did for their age. But it was an accident that they made the mistake and their love is in a way innocent. What should be really criticized is not the couple but adults who only say 'no.' This film shows how they make a mistake but how we should take responsibility." (Yang Sung-jin, 2010).

For the reception of Juno (2007), after the production budget at US\$ 6,500,000 (Spines, 2008) or US\$ 7,500,000 (IMDb, 2007), Juno received domestic gross at US\$ 143,495,265 and US\$ 231,400,000 for worldwide gross (IMDb, 2007). Juno won the Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay with 3 other Oscar nominations for Best Picture, Best Director and Best Actress. This film was placed by critics to be in their top ten lists of the year. There were both criticism and praise in the issue of treatment of abortion. Juno was labeled as feminist because of her confidence and intelligence. The theme is about the triumph of feminist ideology, for example, the irrelevancy of men, especially fathers (Schlafly, 2008).

For the reception of Love, Not Yet (2011), there is a mobile game application of this film to educate teenagers about proper sexual behavior which received 4.1 out of 5 stars for users' review.

For consideration about film genre, Jenny, Juno (2005) and Love Not Yet (2011) are in romance genre. But there is combination of comedy and drama for Love Not Yet (2011). Both Juno (2007) and Love Not Yet (2011) are comedy-drama. But Juno (2007) is independent film, not main stream like Love Not Yet (2011). It shows the relation of genres for selected teen mom film for target group's expectation and interested genres including with effectiveness in communicating this sensitive topic in these genres.

Focusing on the reception of these 3 films, the researcher has 2 accessible criteria which are nationwide box office and score from IMDb. There is no information about production budget of Jenny, Juno (2005). But the nationwide box office in Republic of Korea for Jenny, Juno (2005) is US\$ 1,575,871 which is in rank no.2 out of these 3 studied films. For Juno (2007), the production budget is highest out of 3 selected films which is US\$ 6,500,000. The nationwide box office in United States of America for Juno (2007) is US\$ 143,495,265 which is about 22 times higher than the production budget that indicates the success of this film. The production budget of Love Not Yet (2011), it is about US\$ 280,000. The nationwide box office in Thailand for Love Not Yet (2011) is US\$ 230,000 which is lower than the production budget. Another credible indicator for commercial film is the score from IMDb or Internet Movie Database. The 1<sup>st</sup> rank film out of 3 selected ones is Juno (2007) which was rated 7.5/10. The 2<sup>nd</sup> rank film is Jenny, Juno (2005) with 6.6/10 score. And the 3<sup>rd</sup> rank film is Love Not Yet (2011) with 6.3/10.

Table 1: Comparison of 3 films in the frame of production and reception

Issue	Jenny, Juno (2005) Republic of Korea	Juno (2007) United States of America	Love, Not Yet (2011) Thailand
Genre	Romance	Comedy-Drama Independent	Comedy-Drama-Romance
Production Budget	Unknown	US\$ 6,500,000	US\$ 280,000
Duration	108 minutes	96 minutes	100 minutes
Scriptwriter	Kim Ho-jun	Diablo Cody	May-Thus Chaichayanon Nakorn Phopairoj Pass Patthanakumjon Anuchit Muanprom Chakorn Chaiprecha Inthira Charoenpura Thanyawan Hempanom
Director	Kim Ho-jun	Jason Reitman	May-Thus Chaichayanon Pairach Khumwan Pass Patthanakumjon Anuchit Muanprom Chakorn Chaiprecha Inthira Charoenpura

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

Issue	Jenny, Juno (2005) Republic of Korea	Juno (2007) United States of America	Love, Not Yet (2011) Thailand
Score from IMDb	6.6/10	7.5/10	6.3/10
Nationwide Box Office	US\$ 1,575,871	US\$ 143,495,265	US\$ 230,000
Teen Mom Rank (Live Births per 1,000)	1985: 12.3 (#178 out of 185) 1990: 6.5 (#181 out of 185) 2000: 3 (#184 out of 185) 2001: 3.09 (#179 out of 180) 2002: 3.16 (#182 out of 183) 2003: 3.33 (#182 out of 183) 2004: 3.49 (#179 out of 180) 2005: 2.2 (#184 out of 185) 2010: 2.1 (#184 out of 185)	1985: 51.6 (#123 out of 185) 1990: 53.3 (#113 out of 185) 2000: 51.3 (#97 out of 185) 2001: 51.61 (#86 out of 180) 2002: 51.33 (#82 out of 183) 2003: 50.83 (#81 out of 183) 2004: 50.33 (#81 out of 180) 2005: 43.2 (#98 out of 185) 2010: 39.7 (#100 out of 185)	1985: 57.7 (#113 out of 185) 1990: 53.2 (#114 out of 185) 2000: 45.7 (#111 out of 185) 2001: 49.15 (#89 out of 180) 2002: 48.86 (#89 out of 183) 2003: 48.36 (#87 out of 183) 2004: 47.87 (#85 out of 180) 2005: 41.9 (#99 out of 185) 2010: 40.6 (#98 out of 185)
Teen Mom Statistics (Births per 1,000)	1985: 3.965 2001: 1.020 1986: 3.567 2002: 0.964 1987: 3.169 2003: 0.899 1988: 2.886 2004: 0.835 1989: 2.603 2005: 0.770 1990: 2.321 2006: 0.706 1991: 2.038 2007: 0.641 1992: 1.755 2008: 0.640 1993: 1.653 2009: 0.640 1994: 1.551 2010: 0.639 1995: 1.450 2011: 0.639 1996: 1.348 2012: 0.638 1997: 1.246 2013: 0.599 1998: 1.190 2014: 0.561 1999: 1.133 2015: 0.522 2000: 1.077	1985: 52.598 2001: 44.827 1986: 52.939 2002: 43.201 1987: 53.279 2003: 42.495 1988: 54.546 2004: 41.788 1989: 55.812 2005: 41.082 1990: 57.079 2006: 40.375 1991: 58.345 2007: 39.669 1992: 59.612 2008: 37.740 1993: 57.956 2009: 35.811 1994: 56.299 2010: 33.881 1995: 54.643 2011: 31.952 1996: 52.986 2012: 30.023 1997: 51.330 2013: 27.067 1998: 49.704 2014: 24.110 1999: 48.078 2015: 21.154 2000: 46.453	1985: 55.028 2001: 42.674 1986: 54.134 2002: 41.908 1987: 53.240 2003: 42.014 1988: 52.637 2004: 42.121 1989: 52.034 2005: 42.227 1990: 51.431 2006: 42.334 1991: 50.828 2007: 42.440 1992: 50.225 2008: 42.891 1993: 49.328 2009: 43.343 1994: 48.430 2010: 43.794 1995: 47.533 2011: 44.246 1996: 46.635 2012: 44.697 1997: 45.738 2013: 44.666 1998: 44.972 2014: 44.636 1999: 44.206 2015: 44.605 2000: 43.440

For scriptwriter and director issues, Love Not Yet (2011) Thailand is different from others. Because this film is divided into 4 parts which are introduction, Samet, I'm Mom, I'm Wife and Tom Hanks. The scriptwriter and director of introduction is May-Thus Chaichayanon. For Samet, the scriptwriter is Pass Patthanakumjon and the directors are Pairach Khumwan and Pass Patthanakumjon. For I'm Mom, I'm Wife, the scriptwriter and director is Anuchit Muanprom. For Tom Hanks, the scriptwriters are Chakorn Chaiprecha, Inthira Charoenpura and Thanyawan Hempanom and the directors are Chakorn Chaiprecha and Inthira Charoenpura.

According to the teen mom rank in 3 countries from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Nation Master report including with the report from United Nations Population Division, World Population Prospects since 1985 (researcher's year of birth) to 2015 (most recent report), it indicates the perception and behavior about adolescent pregnancy in each countries obviously. For teen mom rank, Republic of Korea has almost always been last in the row for teen mom rank out of 180-185 countries. For United States of America, even it is one of the most powerful countries in the world, but United States of America is still the middle teen mom rank which is similar to Thailand.

In the topic of teen mom rank and teen mom statistics (in Table 1.), the green letters mean better rank and decreased rate, the red letters mean worse rank and increased rate and black letters mean remaining in the same rank. As we can see distinctly from the dynamic of numbers that Republic of Korea is a country that is very good in reduction of adolescent pregnancy continuously. For United States of America, the birth rate of teen mom had been increased continuously from 1985 to 1992. Since 1993 to 2015, the birth rate of teen mom in United States of America had been decreased continuously which indicates that Republic of Korea and United States of America are in the right way for adolescent fertility rate reduction. But for Thailand since 1985 to 2002 the rate had be decreased, then, since 2003 to 2012 the rate had been increased and since 2013 to 2015 the rate had been decreased again. We can see the dynamic of teen mom statistics in Thailand which still cannot certainly say that Thailand is on the right way for adolescent pregnancy reduction. The researcher has attached the graphs adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15-19) of Republic of Korea, United States of America and Thailand since 1985-2015 for the clear view below.

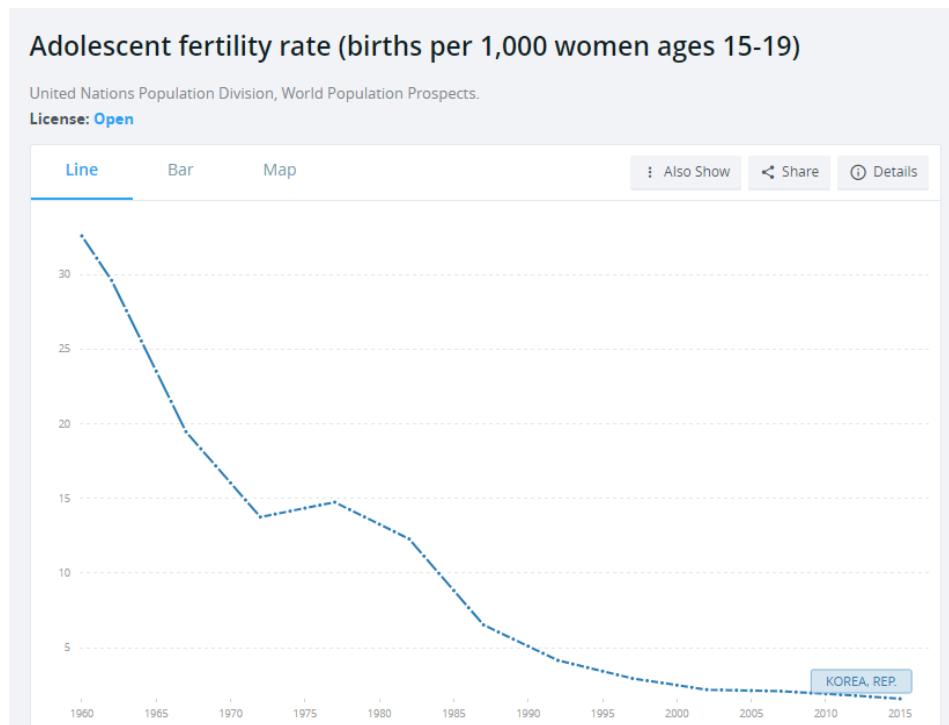


Figure 2: Graph of adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15-19) of Republic of Korea since 1985 to 2015

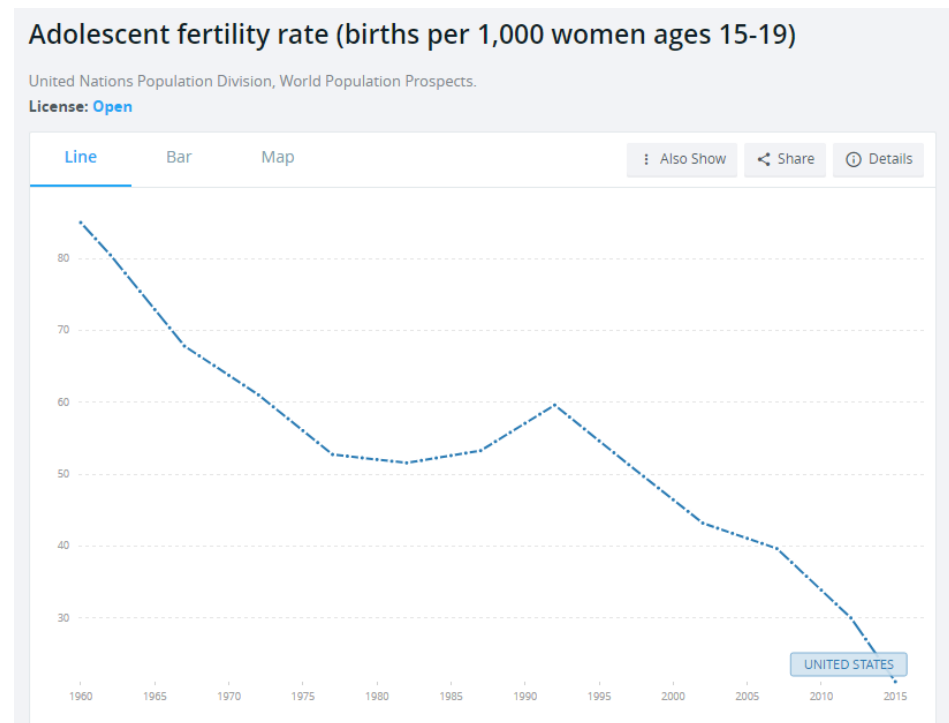


Figure 3: Graph of adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15-19) of United States of America since 1985 to 2015



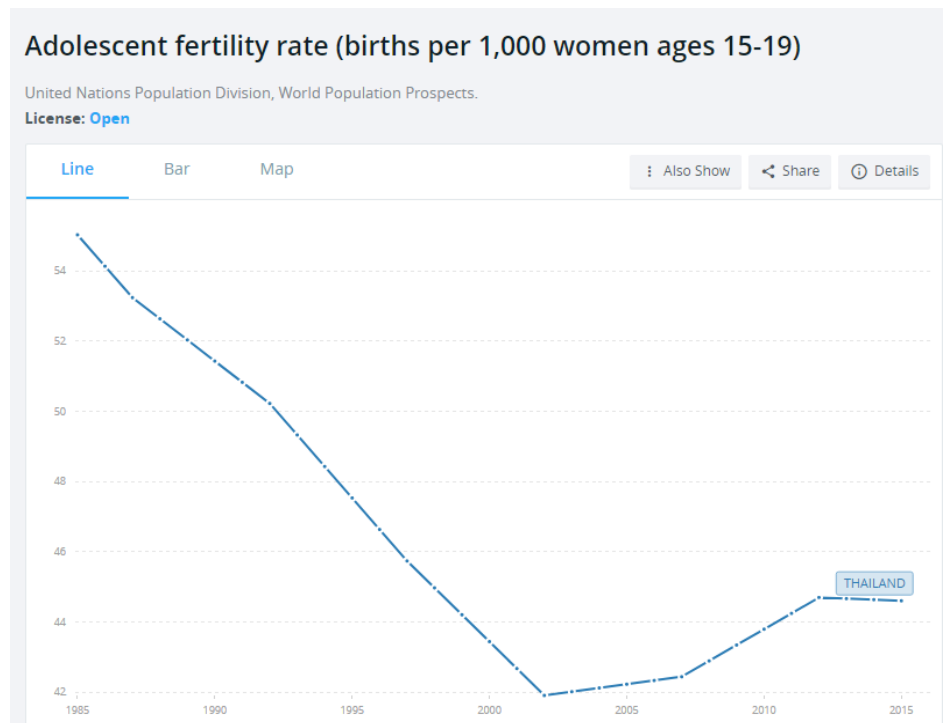


Figure 4: Graph of adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15-19) of Thailand since 1985 to 2015

We can clearly see the overall images of adolescent pregnancy in 3 countries through the table and graphs. It's very difficult to find the exact independent variables for all 3 countries' adolescent pregnancy. There are many independent variables which cause the adolescent pregnancy that may be similar or different depending on many factors. If we consider in the table 1 in the issue of teen mom statistics, the researcher has highlighted in grey for the year of film screening about teen mom in each country. For Jenny, Juno (2005) Republic of Korea and Juno (2007) United States of America, the film was presented in the year that the national adolescent pregnancy was decreased. It may mean that the mentioned films influenced in teenagers' knowledge, attitude and performance about adolescent pregnancy which caused the reduction of teen mom statistics. But Thailand's film, Love Not Yet (2011) was presented in the year that Thailand's teen mom statistics was increased. It may reflects the communication about adolescent pregnancy to Thai teenagers ineffectively or inaccessible to the real target group or teenagers. The film or mass media may influence the changes in teen mom statistics. But it is not the main and only independent variable to adolescent pregnancy phenomenon. In the frame of narrative theory, according to limitation of time, the researcher would like to compare selected 3 films in only the issue of plot or the content represented in these 3 films.



Issue	Jenny, Juno (2005) Republic of Korea	Juno (2007) United States of America	Love, Not Yet (2011) Thailand
Plot	<b>Exposition:</b> Sad Exposition (Juno found that she is pregnant when she is only 15 years old.)	<b>Exposition:</b> Confused Exposition (Juno did the pregnancy tests for many times.)	<b>Exposition:</b> Enticing to Follow Exposition (Introduce main characters with the beginning of problems.)
	<b>Rising Action:</b> Jenny, Juno tried to do the best for their kid as young parents.	<b>Rising Action:</b> Juno decided to give her baby for adoption from adult couples who need to have a kid.	<b>Rising Action:</b> 3 main characters got pregnant and faced with problems.
	<b>Climax:</b> Jenny and Juno's parents know that Jenny, Juno are having a baby, Jenny's family would like to send Jenny abroad.	<b>Climax:</b> The adult couples were about to get divorced because of Juno.	<b>Climax:</b> 3 main characters made decision to solve their problems.
	<b>Falling Action:</b> Jenny gave a birth.	<b>Falling Action:</b> The female adult still need and ready to raise the baby.	<b>Falling Action:</b> They tried to be as usual.
	<b>Ending:</b> Happy Ending (Jenny, Juno including with their family raised the baby their best.)	<b>Ending:</b> Happy Ending (Juno continued her teenager life and a female adult raised her baby.)	<b>Ending:</b> Happy Ending (There were someone support and stay by them.)

*Table 2: Comparison of 3 films in the frame of narrative theory in plot issue*

According to the analysis from plot or content of the films, for exposition of Jenny, Juno (2005) and Juno (2007) are similar which is the pregnancy test in the different feelings. For Jenny, Juno (2005), she took only 1 test but for Juno (2007), she took many tests. It reflects paradigm and perception of each character which are different because of many factors. For Love Not Yet (2011), according to this film has 4 parts, then it started with introduction to the other 3 parts with the beginning of the problem. The endings of 3 films are all happy ending in the different solutions which are raising the baby by themselves (Jenny, Juno), giving the baby for adoption (Juno) and surrounded by the people who will always support and stay by them which shows paradigm of each country about adolescent pregnancy.

Issue	Jenny, Juno (2005) Republic of Korea	Juno (2007) United States of America	Love, Not Yet (2011) Thailand
Reason of Pregnancy	No Pregnancy Prevention	No Pregnancy Prevention	No Pregnancy Prevention
How the parents know about their pregnancy?	Got Caught	Confession	Got Caught and Confession
Source of Medical Access	Female Family	Adopted Family	Female Family and Teen Mom
Solution	Raise by Themselves	Give for Adoption	Raise by Themselves and Abortion
Baby's Image	Their Angel	Others' Angel	Their Devil
Discourse to Teen Mom	Bad	Bad	Bad
Main Character's Reaction to Discourse	Not Care	Not Care	Care

*Table 3: Comparison of 3 films in the frame of discourse analysis*

For discourse analysis of these 3 films, the reason of pregnancy is all the same which is having sex without pregnancy prevention. But there is a difference in the way their parents know about their pregnancy. For Jenny, Juno (2005), she was caught by her sister and parents. For Juno (2007), she confessed to her parents by herself. For Love Not Yet (2011), there are both getting caught and confession. The significant difference in this table is the solution which is different depending on cultural paradigm. For Jenny, Juno (2005), the teen parents including with their parents raised the baby by themselves. For Juno (2007), she gave her baby to the adult who need to have a baby for adoption. For Love Not Yet (2011), there are raising by themselves and abortion. The result of teen mom phenomenon depends on the social discourse and the teen moms, themselves. In these 3 films, the discourse of teen mom is negative. But the characters reacted to the discourse differently. For Jenny, Juno (2005) and Juno (2007), they did not care about the discourse. But they cared about their love and baby instead. But for Love Not Yet (2011), they all cared about social discourse and tried to find the social accepted solution. Different behavior causes the different result to teen mom.

## Conclusion

In the past which was the age of agriculture, there was no discourse about teen mom. Pregnancy was the main role for female to produce family members or labors. The discourse of teen mom has been changed along the way with many influencing factors. The teen mom discourse had been started since the educational factor from the westerners which was the indicator for civilization of the country which was the age of industry. Thailand would like to be accepted by others, then female also had to be educated. After that the medical factor from the westerners also influenced the discourse of teen mom. The proper age for marriage and pregnancy was extended to be older from social construction of reality. At the present, there are economic and social factors that influence teen mom discourse to be negative and cause the stigmatization to teen mom.

Film is one of the effective media for communicating with mass audience. The researcher selected to study in 3 films of Republic of Korea, United States of America and Thailand which are intensively represent the story about teen mom. For 3 films in teen mom issue analysis, there is similarity in genre which the appropriate genres for this sensitive issue are romance, comedy and drama. There is also difference in production budget which depends on the country's economic and social status. For the content, there are both similarity and difference which depends on the social construction of reality in each country. These factors could cause the different result of film which influences the perception of the audience about teen mom. The norm, traditions or rules still remain in Thai film. If we could find the interesting content and form of the film for the target group which is teenagers, it may cause more effective communication with them in order to install perception about teen mom for them to choose if they would like to be teen mom or not. Another important audience is the adult who are conservative in a great number which cause stigmatization to teen mom and lead to their unsuccessful and unhappy lives. If we could find the realistic and in depth information that understand teen mom to represent in the film for this group of audience, it may could wipe out the stigmatization to teen mom more or less. The film or mass media may influence the changes in teen mom statistics. But it is not the main and only independent variable to adolescent pregnancy phenomenon. The collective education from family, institutes and society and medication are also important independent variables for adolescent pregnancy. If Thai people accept the truth and try to understand the problem about teen mom, we may find the effective solution in communicating for adolescent pregnancy reduction and stigmatization elimination.

## Reference

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). *Birth rates (live births) per 1,000 females aged 15-19 years, by race and Hispanic ethnicity, select years*. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/teenpregnancy/about/alt-text/birth-rates-chart-2000-2011-text.htm> (27 February 2017)
- DeYoung, J. E. (1955). *Village life in modern Thailand*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Fairclough, N., & Dawsonera. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. London: Routledge.
- Gatetade, B. (1989). *Thai Women Status*. Bangkok: Odeon Store.

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES  
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES  
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

- IMDb, (2005). *Jeni, Juno*. Retrieved from:  
[http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/intl/?page=&wk=2005W7&id=\\_fJENI,JUNO01](http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/intl/?page=&wk=2005W7&id=_fJENI,JUNO01)
- IMDb, (2007). *Juno*. *Box Office Mojo*. Retrieved from <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=Juno.htm>
- Intawong, J. (2009). *The Study of Adolescence Pregnancy's Opinion to Gender and Sexuality*. Thammasat University.
- Korean Film Organisation. (2005). *Commercial Releases in 2005*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.koreanfilm.org/films2005.html#boxoffice>
- Lee, S. (2005). A clueless fantasy of parenthood. *Hancinema*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.hancinema.net/a-clueless-fantasy-of-parenthood-2187.html>
- Luiyaphong, K. (2010). *Communication and Discourse of Elder's Identity in Thai Society*. Chulalongkorn University.
- Mongkonchatpirak, B. (2013). *Social construction of reality in character of 'Single Women' in Thai film*. Thammasat University.
- Nation Master. (n.d.). *Adolescent Fertility Rate, Birth per 1,000 Women Ages 15-19: Countries Compared*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.nationmaster.com/country-info/stats/Health/Adolescent-fertility-rate/Births-per-1%2C000-women-ages-15-19>
- Schlaflly, P. (2008). Message of 'JUNO': Fatherlessness Rocks. *World Net Daily*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.wnd.com/2008/03/58828/>
- Sookrad, B. (2014). *Pregnancy in teenager: Policy, operational guidelines and evaluation*. Bureau of Reproductive Health, Department of Health, Ministry of Public Health, Bangkok.
- Sotanasathien, S. (2013). *Communication Theories*. Bangkok: Rabeangtong Press.
- Spines, C. (2008). Juno: Inside a surprise hit. *EW*. Retrieved from  
<http://ew.com/article/2008/02/01/juno-inside-surprise-hit/>
- Sung-jin, Y. (2016). *Debate rages on teen pregnancy in 'Jenny, Juno'*. Retrieved from  
[http://www.koreaherald.com/common\\_prog/newsprint.php?ud=20050215000053&dt=2](http://www.koreaherald.com/common_prog/newsprint.php?ud=20050215000053&dt=2)
- United Nations. (1989). *Convention on the rights of the child*. *Refworld*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b38f0.html>.
- United Nations Development Programme. (2013). *Adolescent birth rate-women aged 15-19 years (births per 1,000 women ages 15-19)*. Retrieved from  
<http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/adolescent-birth-rate-women-aged-15-19-years-births-1000-women-ages-15-19>
- Wapeesin, C., & et al. (2016). *Course of political participation supporting for female of Tapra Municipality: Case study of Nongkoy village, Tambon Tapra, Amphor Muang, Khonkaen Province*. Khonkaen University.
- Wichiya, W. (2013). *Teen mom: Life experience, gender and sexuality*. Thammasat University.
- World Bank. (n.d). *Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15-19), United Nations population division: World population prospects*. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT>
- Working Group Cadre Network Moving to Fill the Social Space. (2011). *Seems like living in different world*. Nonthaburi: Working Group Cadre Network Moving to Fill the Social Space.
- Yodhong, C. (2017). *Premature sex?. The Matter*. Retrieved from:  
<https://thematter.co/thinkers/teens-and-sex/16907>

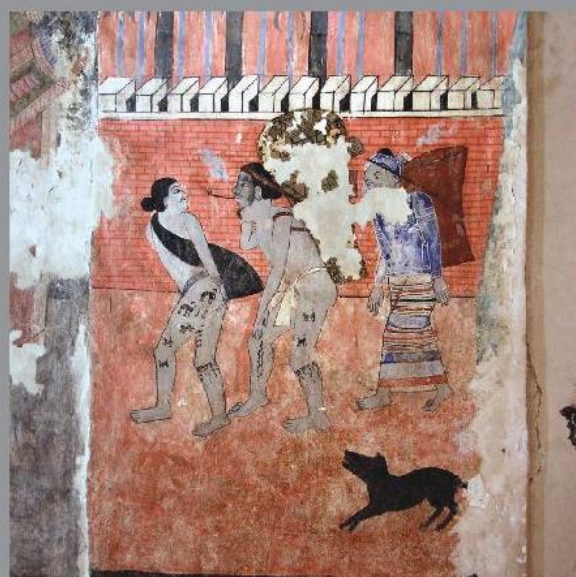


13<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON

# THAI STUDIES

GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT,  
AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES

15-18 JULY 2017 CHIANG MAI, THAILAND



# PROCEEDINGS

## *Volume 3*



Konrad  
Adenauer  
Stiftung



The Asia  
Foundation

