

Guidelines for Community Participation in the Woven Fabric Conservation for Cultural Tourism in Phai Hu Change Community in Banglane District, Nakhon Pathom Province

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Abstract

The aims of this research were 1) to study the woven fabric context of Phai Hu Change Community; 2) to study community participate in the conservation of woven fabric; and 3) to discover the guidelines for community participate in woven fabric conservation for cultural tourism. The sample groups consisted of 30 key informants, including local administrative offices, community leaders, woven fabric group members, shop owners, restaurant owners, and local resident in Phai Hu Change Community. In terms of the data analysis, content analysis had been applied and presented in this article.

The results were as follows; 1) the history of woven fabric of Phai Hu Change Community inherited for a long time when the Tai Dam ethnic group emigrated from Petchaburi province and settled at Phai Hu Change in Nakhon Pathom Province. They brought the woven fabric culture, which helped them earn their living. The fabric was commonly black and in watermelon pattern. They used “Ki Kra Took” loom in weaving. The weaving wisdom was uninterruptedly passed down to their descendants in their family; 2) local people in the community participated in decision making and planning of the activities. The community leaders would call for an assembly of the local people when a festival or an event was to be held. And 3) the cultural conservation of Phai Hu Change Community focused on the preservation of the Sen Roeun tradition and Pad Tong ritual, the two majors customs of Tai Dam ethnic people which had represented their history and lifestyle since the olden days .

According to the results, the research was able to found the guidelines for community participation in the woven fabric conservation as follows: 1) The environment conservation should be promoted as it assists to sustain the natural resources which provide the local people with necessary materials and ingredients like the color from True Indigo Tree; 2) more local people should be encouraged to take weaving as their part-time job for alternative career choice in the future; 3) the community should establish a channel to publicize their products, preferably on social media; 4) knowledge pertaining to the culture and its fabric should be shared between local people and tourists to understand the ancient wearing method for value added creation and conservation of weaving fabric and 5) their descendants should be raise awareness of knowledge and importance of conservation of woven fabrics as their heritage that creates value for their locality through cultural tourism activities. 6) The community should create a network of cooperation between their woven fabric group and other local weaving groups in linkage area.

Keywords: Guidelines for Community Participation / Cultural Tourism / Woven Fabric/ Tai Dam ethnic people

1. Introduction

Tourism is a growing industry and a major economic factor in Thailand. It attracts a great number of foreign tourists and creates jobs for Thai residents. According to Tourism Statistics 2016, the number of foreign tourists visiting Thailand about 32.6 million in 2016, increased from the previous year’s number by 8.91%. Due to the more stable political climate, drawing in more Chinese tourists, as well as European ones who could adjust themselves to the situation in the country, Thailand’s tourism sees a steady growth [1]. The tourism revenue is worth about 2,510,779 million baht, 1,641,258 of which come from foreign tourists, the rest from native ones. Compared to the last year’s figure, the overall revenue rises by 11.09%. In the international tourism sector, the revenue increases by 12.64%; while in the domestic tourism sector, 8.27%. Thailand’s tourism contributes to the Thai Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 17.7% [2]. However, tourism is a highly competitive

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industry and can be easily and inevitably affected by negative causes, foreign and domestic alike. The global outlook and situations always pose a challenge to Thai tourism. Their change and impact can greatly affect the development of many forms of Thai tourism, most of which are based on unique cultural identity and the collaboration among the local people in each community [3].

In these times, a local community seems to gain greater and greater popularity as the place of destination among tourists. The participation by the people in a community then becomes essential in sustainable tourism development because they, who have senses of place and ownership, know best how to optimize their own resources. Various forms of tourism also appeal to the tourist's interest, namely, historical tourism, ethnic tourism, and cultural tourism. Regarding this, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has reviewed the marketing plan accordingly, emphasizing "Thainess," for instance, "Thai smile," Thai cuisine, Thai textile, etc., in order to provide tourists with unique cultural experience. Furthermore, to help enhance the image of Thai tourism, the image of impressive products and services are encouraged to be presented, and tourism should convey the local people's feelings of happiness and pride in being born Thai [4]. In this respect, cultural tourism can be viewed as an instrument which is capable of encapsulating and expressing the local people's way of life, prompting them to preserve their cultural identity. Cultural tourism, thereby, can prolong the life of a culture. [5] Moreover, tourists can encounter local domicile and appreciate indigenous cultures and rituals and local folklores, so the community will be aware of the economic and social value based on their cultural and natural resources via tourism and this will encourage local people to preserve their own heritages [6].

Nakhon Pathom is one of the provinces adjacent to Bangkok, a suitable destination for tourists who have limited amount of time for vacation. The city was one of those most prosperous and culturally rich in times of older civilization in Suvarnabhumi [7]. Bestowed with fertile soil and being a trading hub, it welcomed new settlers from various ethnics, e.g. Mon; Lao Krang, whose weaving technique is remarkable and their textile is used in daily life, as well as in religious rituals; and Tai Dam, also known as Tai Song Dam and Lao Song. The Tai Song Dam people wear black, and their clothes are dyed with the use of indigo. The word "Song," or "Suang," in their ethnic name means pants. Accordingly, the way they are called reflects the way they dress and the clothes they put on them, both of which are now ardently preserved as a part of their identity. Tai Song Dam's weaving technique has been long inherited from their ancestors, originally for domestic purpose. The most outstanding textile is their watermelon-pattern sinh (a kind of a traditional skirt), woven with red weft thread and navy or indigo warp thread. Tai Dam's clothes are made of cotton yarn spun and woven, originally in plain white color. They will later be dyed using tree barks and other parts of some particular plants, say, Burma paduak, indigo, and ebony's fruit. Their weaving technique is also distinct. Normally, the weft thread will be thinner than the warp thread. In Tai Song Dam's weaving, the red weft thread is completely hidden from plain sight. But, when exposed to sunlight, the red weft thread will glow and its color will become visible to the naked eyes. [8]. In this regard, Tai Song Dam's weaving wisdom is indeed an important cultural resource for tourism in Nakhon Pathom.

Phai Hu Chang Community comprises Tai Song Dam people, who migrated from Dien Bien Phu, a city in the northern region of Vietnam, and settled down in Bang Lane District, Nakhon Pathom Province. They brought with them their culture, language, and way of life, all of which contribute to their identity. Their house can provide them a working space for weaving groups. Men, women, and teenagers are capable of weaving. A band of reed mouth organ players is formed to teach the children the instrument, one way to preserve their culture and make their children spend time beneficially. Basketry and other crafting are also taught. There is a Tai Song Dam language class in school. They grow fruit and vegetable without the use of chemicals. Nonetheless, it is found that the community still lacks community participation, which is a fundamental part in cultural tourism development [9]. A variety of fabric patterns are developed, reflecting the people's origin and way of life, for example, the star pattern, the fish scale pattern, the slating pattern, the water pattern, and the mountain pattern. Above all, the watermelon pattern is the most outstanding one. It is produced with the "Mudmee" technique: the selection to dye some part of the fabric, while leaving the other parts covered and unaffected. This technique employs mainly the colors black and navy in the process. The lack of people participation is also mentioned in the study by Nirachara Thongthammachat [10], stating that the local people are not interested in such a matter because they do not believe that cultural tourism can bring more income to the community. Cultural tourism, in fact, has already existed within the community and is officially organized by the community committee. However, in reality, there is only a very small group of people working towards it. Moreover, insufficient PR and advertisement cause the community to remain much unknown to the majority of tourists.

Therefore, this research aims to study the people participation in the conservation of woven fabric for cultural tourism in Phai Hu Chang Community, Bang Lane District, Nakhon Pathom Province, in order to promote cultural tourism and raise awareness of the community's significant role therein. The researchers also

hope to foster the cultural conservation idea in the people, the result of which will help Phai Hu Chang community develop into a place of sustainable cultural tourism.

2. Objectives

2.1 To study the context of the woven fabric in Phai Hu Chang Community, Bang Lane District, Nakhon Pathom Province.

2.2 To study the local participation in the conservation of woven fabric for cultural tourism in Phai Hu Chang Community, Bang Lane District, Nakhon Pathom Province.

2.3 To find guidelines of people participation in the woven fabric conservation for cultural tourism in Phai Hu Chang Community, Bang Lane District, Nakhon Pathom Province.

3. Methods

3.1 Population referred to 4,226 local residents of Phai Hu Chang Community, Bang Lane District, Nakhon Pathom Province

3.2 Sample groups of 30 people were comprised of 1) the official group, including the Phai Hu Chang Community Leader, the Tambon Administration Authority, and Tambon Administration Officers: through the method of purposive sampling, 2 people were selected; 2) the business owner group: through the method of accidental sampling, 2 grocery store owners and 2 food bistro owners were selected; 3) the local resident group: through the method of purposive sampling, 23 people were selected, including 2 village headmen, 1 sub district headman, 10 people of clothes weaving profession, and 10 local residents

3.3 Research instruments were comprised of an in-depth interview and observation techniques, the latter would be used to verify the information received from the interview and other secondary sources.

3.4 An analysis based on the gathered information would be conducted in accordance with the research objectives.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Results

4.1.1 The Context of Phai Hu Chang Community

It is found that the weaving of fabrics in Phai Hu Chang Community has been present since the olden days. The Tai Song Dam people, who migrated into the area, brought with them their culture, including weaving wisdom, the use of a unique kind of loom (Ki Kratook), and watermelon-pattern textiles. Their fabric is usually black. Tai Dam women are expected to be able to weave, regarded as a way to pass down their cultural heritage and preserve their identity, while men will opt for manual craftwork. The made fabric will also be used in the community's festivals and rituals. The weaving wisdom is inherited from one generation to another, the process during which begets new creative ideas. New patterns then emerge, which are more contemporary. The old loom design did not have a shuttle, while the new design has one to help to weave more quickly. The manual weaving process is still preserved: set upon the loom, two sets of threads are made interlaced at right angles, one is called the weft thread, the other, the warp thread. The popular patterns are watermelon, four leaf water clover, episcia flower, Khor Goot, and Sinh Tah Me; and the most common colour is black. These patterns can be made on blanket, handkerchief, pillow, bedspread, etc. The community can add more value to its textile product by informing tourists of the textile's cultural significance. Tourists can also learn the basic of Tai Dam weaving. Realizing that their wisdom can bring fortune to the community, the weaving technique will be passed down to the local's children, consequently contributing to the woven fabric conservation.

4.1.2 Community Participation

It is found that the local people have participation as the principle of participation in 4 levels as follows;

1) As part of getting information; the local people are usually well informed of news and events within the community.

2) As part of discussion; they express their opinion about those matters.

3) As part of decision-making; When organizing an annual event, the local will come together to talk about the details, make a plan and they execute decision for this event. The local are willing to give support in many ways; they will cooperate in preparing the place, cleaning the area, and bringing food, for example.

4) As part of implement; the local are willing to give support in many ways; they will cooperate in preparing the place, cleaning the area, and bringing food, for example.

Moreover, Community participate in Cultural tourism which it is found that the local people are aware of their own unique culture and are eager to preserve it. Some of the residents instruct their children of Tai Dam's way of life. Furthermore, many traditions and customs are still held, such as the Sen Ruan tradition and the Pard

Tong ritual, both of which are of great cultural significance and have been long inherited. Most of the tourists visiting the community are students who are interested in hand-woven fabrics. This group of visitors already has culture conservation mind and is cautious not to cause any damage to the community.

4.1.3 The guidelines for community participation in the woven fabric conservation

The research was able to find these guidelines as follows: 1) The environment conservation should be promoted as it assists to sustain the natural resources which provide the local people with necessary materials and ingredients like the colour from True Indigo Tree; 2) more local people should be encouraged to take weaving as their part-time job for alternative career choice in the future; 3) the community should establish a channel to publicize their products, preferably on social media; 4) knowledge pertaining to the culture and its fabric should be shared between local people and tourists to understand the ancient wearing method for value added creation and conservation of weaving fabric and 5) their descendants should be raise awareness of knowledge and importance of conservation of woven fabrics as their heritage that creates value for their locality through cultural tourism activities. 6) The community should create a network of cooperation between their woven fabric group and other local weaving groups in linkage area.

4.2 Discussion

The woven fabric of Phai Hu Chang Community has long been inherited, a weaving culture of Tai Dam people which is still alive. The fabric is made into garments for usage in daily life, which later becomes their identity. Burutpat Somsong [11] also supported the idea, saying that Tai Dam's fabric are manually woven and used in daily life. The loom used is in antique design. The process of weaving requires high skills and proficiency, as well as excellent memory. No written record thereof exists. The endeavor to either learn or pass down the wisdom, thereby, must be oratory and through memorizing. The weaving techniques, including dyeing and pattern making, are also strictly preserved. The pattern of their fabric is undeniably unique, especially the watermelon one, which is very well-known among the local as Suphan Somthai [12] regarded the fabric pattern as a symbol to convey their belief and traditions. The vertical lines of the watermelon pattern consist of two colors: indigo and white. The white lines appear alone and in pair alternatively. She believes that the pair lines on the pattern, called "Ta Kib" or "Ta Kad," represent other related ethnics, Lao, Thai, and Vietnames, for example, who can live together; whereas the single line, called "Ta Deaw," represents Tai Dam people, who have to leave their homeland. There are other two thick pair lines which do not stand so close to each other, called "Ta Moo," representing the separation of Tai Dam people in Vietnam and Thailand, both of which seem to be unable to come to live together again. Tai Dam people are eager to preserve the weaving wisdom, considering it to be a part of their identity and seeing that it can be used to draw financial benefit towards the community. Moreover, local people in the community participated in decision making and planning of the activities. The community leaders would call for an assembly of the local people when a festival or an event was to be held. As Theron [13] pointed out that there are different shades of opinion on public participation and it related to the process of giving people more opportunities to participate effectively in development activities by empowering them to mobilize their own creative potentials, manage the resources, make decisions and control the activities that affect their lives. Rachaporn Chansawang [14] mentioned this as well, saying that the community participation in tourism management is a fundamental part. To conserve a culture is to highlight its people's identity, which is proved beneficial to the community itself. In accordance with McCool & Martin [15] stated that it is of utmost importance that the people in the community realize their own potential in tourism development, for, then, they can optimize their human resource. The community will become self-reliant and develop a sense of ownership. Tourists will see the value of their culture and pay more attention to it. As a consequence, more tourists will come to visit. The sense of ownership of the community will then grow even stronger, and the people will continue to preserve its own culture and heritage. According to Boonlert Jittangwattana [16], good cultural tourism means plenty of information available, regarding the importance, the origin, and the history of a place. This will provide tourists with valuable travelling experience, and helps the residents learn their own unique value, instilling in them senses of place and ownership. The local will then participate in resource management and benefit from tourism. The guidelines are to offer ways by which the local people can realize the significance and value of their own culture. They also help to supply the information concerning tourists. The way people can benefit from selling merchandise is strongly based on the idea that prioritizes the conservation of their own culture and identity. The idea is in accordance with Payom Thammabut [17] saying that the local residents must participate in making decision regarding any project which has an impact of their way of life and always keep in mind the community's capacity to bear the effect of tourism. Income distribution amongst the local should also be the focus, and the local people should benefit from tourism in the long run. They should also put greater emphasis on environmental and cultural conservation than on tourism and aims to utilize local and natural materials.

5. Conclusions

The woven fabric in Phai Hu Chang Community is the product of the wisdom of Tai Dam people who migrated into the area. The fabric is mostly of domestic purpose and in watermelon pattern, with black as its most common color. It is also used in many local traditions and customs. The “Ki Kratook” loom is utilized in the making. This wisdom is passed down from generation to generation. Regarding the process, most of the fabrics are manually woven with the aid of loom. Two sets of threads are made interlaced at right angles: one is called the deft thread; the other, the warp thread. Most woven patterns are watermelon, four leaf water clover, episcia flower, Khor Goot, and Sinh Tah Me, all of which can be made upon blanket, handkerchief, pillow, and bedspread. The local people can sell the fabric as their community’s unique product and increase its value by informing tourists of the weaving process and its cultural significance. Accordingly, tourists can learn how to weave with the local. Regarding community participation in the woven fabric conservation in Phai Hu Chang Community, it is found that the local people are commonly involved, whether in organizing or taking action. A great number of people are willing to help with manual work during the community’s festival or other events. The culture of Phai Hu Chang Community has been long inherited, and the people are aware of that. Therefore, there is an attempt in culture conservation, including their weaving wisdom, the Sen Ruan tradition, and the Pard Tong ritual, all of which helps to accentuate Tai Dam’s identity. The tourists who come to visit the community are mostly students. They are interested in the weaving wisdom and so pose no threat to the culture.

From the study, the researchers are able to form the guidelines for community participation in the woven fabric conservation for cultural tourism in Phai Hu Chang Community, Bang Lane District, Nakhon Pathom, which are as follows: 1) environment conservation should be promoted, as it helps to sustain the natural resource which provides the local with necessary materials and ingredients; 2) more local people should be encouraged to take weaving as their occupation; 3) the community needs to establish a channel to publicize their products, preferably on social media; and 4) knowledge pertaining to the culture and its fabric should be shared with tourists as to help them realize the product’s cultural significance and to increase the product’s value; 5) their descendants should be raise awareness of knowledge and importance of conservation of woven fabrics as their heritage that creates value for their locality through cultural tourism activities and 6) The community should create a network of cooperation between their woven fabric group and other local weaving groups in linkage area.

Finally, culture tourism is the form of tourism that attracts tourists get satisfaction and adds value of experience so tourists revisit under many local activities according to cultural tourists’ expectation. Moreover, culture tourism can emphasize local people take part in their tourist activities and gain the equal benefits that mean it will generate income for local community

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